

# What Cultural Trauma? Whose Cultural Trauma?

## The Emotional Dynamic of Cultural Trauma of Afrikaners after Apartheid

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This paper is a first effort to synthesize the findings of my nearly finished PhD research on Afrikaners after apartheid in South Africa, and to use my research to rethink the role of emotions in cultural sociology. As a geographer and historian by training, and a relative novice to sociology, I was seduced by the promise of theories in cultural sociology and the sociology of emotions to explain both the cultural and emotional dynamic of change among Afrikaners after apartheid. Can a single sociological theory explain both the cultural and the emotional dynamic of a trauma without reducing the one to the other? To resolve this seeming incompatibility, I first attempt to problematize the theory of cultural trauma from Alexander and colleagues. I also try to reconcile the social constructivist theory of cultural trauma, as proposed by Alexander and colleagues (Sztompka 2000; Eyerman 2001; Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004; Eyerman 2008) with sociology of emotions.

Although emotions occupy a central place in the theory of Alexander and colleagues, I argue that their account for emotions suffers from a lack of specificity. If cultural trauma is a subjective, emotional condition, as the authors claim, the question their theory raises is not whether to integrate a theory of emotions into the analysis but which theory. Building on the strengths of the work of Hochschild and Kemper in the sociology of emotions, I argue that their work can be a springboard for including a cognitive appraisal theory of emotions into the theory. According to cognitive appraisal theory, each emotion has its own cognitive logic. I argue thus for the inclusion of specific emotions in cultural explanation, similar to the work of emotion sociologists Scheff and Barbalet (Scheff 2000; Barbalet 2002). I use two case studies from my PhD research: a former Afrikaans business organization and an Afrikaner

labor union, to exemplify the different cultural and emotional responses to the transition from apartheid to democracy. The case studies trouble the place of emotions in cultural sociological analysis. A note of caution: I am aware that this paper is a little theory heavy, but I hope I present the discussion in a readable manner. Any suggestions for sharpening the arguments are very welcome!

## **Introduction**

Dramatic political events such as revolutions, wars, genocides and democratic transitions have long been favored topics of study for sociologists (Skocpol 1994; Hinton 2002; Mann 2005). But only recently has attention shifted to the sociology of an event's aftermath (Olick and Robbins 1998; Jelin 2003; Kaplan 2005). It is hardly disputed that such dramatic events have a long lasting impact on societies, cultures and groups of people: political, economical, but also cultural and emotional. The events often upset the existing balance of political and economic power, and rupture the prevailing patterns of cultural meanings and emotional attachments. Some claim they cause cultural traumas.

The abolishment of apartheid and the inauguration of democracy in South Africa fit squarely in this category of events. For the black majority, led by Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC), the first democratic election was a moment of great promise, hope and empowerment (Waldmeir 1997). For the white minority, and particularly the white Afrikaans-speaking minority who ruled the country for almost fifty years, the transition from apartheid to democracy was much more ambivalent (Giliomee, Myburgh et al. 2001; Gibson 2002; Gibson 2006; Giliomee 2008; Giliomee 2010). True, many had great hope and rejoiced but there was also wide-spread shame and a sense of loss about the apartheid past.

Afrikaners are an ethnic group of roughly three million white, South Africans descended from almost equal numbers of Dutch, French and German settlers whose native language is Afrikaans.<sup>1</sup> Afrikaner nationalism emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a powerful political force that challenged the British empire (Giliomee 2010). In 1948, the National Party, the dominant party of Afrikaner nationalists, came to power (Marx 1998). In 1990, they gave up on apartheid and started negotiating with the African National Congress (ANC), a process that ended in the democratic elections of 1994 and the new constitution of 1996.

How do white Afrikaners culturally and emotionally adapt to the transition to democracy? The transition to democracy for Afrikaners resembles the faith of former elites in other postcolonial contexts (Luhrmann 1996; Young 2001). In the South African media, the predicament of the Afrikaners is also compared to the situation of the Germans after the Holocaust, as questions of collective guilt and shame loom large (Krog 1999; Branscombe 2004). South African poet Antjie Krog says that Afrikaners carry a heavy burden, but there is no alternative to change. "It is essential for Afrikaners to invest everything in redefining themselves in a positive and honourable way. It is even more

essential that the attempts of Afrikaners are respected and accepted” (Krog 2009). Their situation, however, can also be compared to the position of whites in the Southern United States, after the Civil Rights Movement (Fredrickson 1982; Fredrickson 2003). How do they adapt to racial integration and black political rule? How do they cope with the moral challenge of doing away with racism, white privilege and cultural superiority? How to study this process? This paper explores Afrikaner culture and identity change after apartheid from a cultural sociology perspective.

### **Theorizing Afrikaners and the transition from apartheid to democracy**

Historically, the Afrikaners have been often studied as a separate group and culture (Le May 1996; O'Meara 2009). Such a perspective, of Afrikaners as a coherent cultural group, we find in the beautiful ethnographic study of Vincent Crapanzano of white South Africans in the late 1980s (Crapanzano 1986). He was interested in the effects of domination on the dominated and how the anxieties of Afrikaners and their prejudices shaped their worldview. He argued that white South Africans were governed by a state of eternal arrest: the idea that they were waiting for some apocalyptic turn of events that they felt they could not influence. This cultural structure would explain their anxious psychic state.

In *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse*, Aletta Norval paints a complex picture of the formation of the Afrikaner *Volk* mythology (Norval 1996). She claims that the obsession of Afrikaner nationalist ideologues with the uniqueness of the Afrikaner people was in the end a hollow claim. Although rooted in the social constructivist tradition of discourse analysis, she assumes a one-on-one relationship between ideological discourse and cultural identities.

In the literature on post-apartheid South Africa, however, Afrikaners have received attention mostly as a secondary concern in the study of the political transformation (Jung 2000), the process of reconciliation (Gibson 2002), the collapse of Afrikaner nationalism (Westhuizen 2008), or the study of the new political economy in post-apartheid South Africa (Bond 2000; Bond 2003).

And yet we can differentiate between three general perspectives on the relationship between Afrikaners and the transition from apartheid to democracy. A first perspective is political. Specifically at the national level, it is clear that white Afrikaners have lost most, if not all, political power.<sup>ii</sup> Indeed, when the official negotiations ended with the first democratic elections in 1994, the role of the Afrikaners on the national scene quickly diminished. Explanations for this development vary. Some assert that Afrikaners found a new political home as their political identities transitioned (Jung 2000). Others assert that the political project of Afrikaners has all but collapsed (Westhuizen 2008; Giliomee 2010). They speak of a ‘power loss’ syndrome among Afrikaners.

The second perspective comes from political economy approaches. These scholars argue that during the democratic transition, the ANC Government was persuaded to give up on its communist and socialist roots and adopt a series of neoliberal economic policy arrangements that largely benefitted the affluent white minority (Marais 1999; Bond 2000; 2003; MacDonald 2006; Gumede 2007; 2011).<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, white South Africans, including Afrikaners, have retained much of their economic privilege, including wealth, jobs and business ownership. Inequality between the racial groups is still very high (Bhorat 2004; Leibbrandt 2010).<sup>iv</sup> The transition to democracy is dubbed an elite transition in which white business and political elites struck a class compromise with the ANC.<sup>v</sup> Some argue, like Patrick Bond, that it was particularly the Afrikaner business elite, together with its political counterpart, that steered the economic transition (Bond 2000; Bond 2003). White capitalism did not need the apartheid project anymore, and therefore negotiated a political transition in which they gave up political power in return for the continuation of economic and cultural power.<sup>vi</sup> However, rising inequality within the white racial group and the overall rise of unemployment should qualify to general statements that all white Afrikaners have done well since the transition.

From a cultural point of view, the third perspective is most interesting. This is the cultural and psychological viewpoint underlying the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. The TRC was seen as a natural compliment to the process of negotiations and political settlement and it provided a framework for the cultural and moral restructuring of society.(Krog 1999; Minow 1999; Gibson 2006).<sup>vii</sup> Reconciliation, the TRC claimed, did not only involve restoring memory but also a change of heart and a commitment to right wrongs. Desmond Tutu claimed that all South Africans were traumatized by apartheid, including the perpetrators, the Afrikaners. In the opening speech before the victim hearings at the TRC he said: “We are charged to unearth the truth about our dark past, to lay the ghosts of that past to rest so that they will not return to haunt us. And (so) that will thereby contribute to the healing of a traumatised and wounded people - for all of us in South Africa are wounded people – and in this manner to promote national unity and reconciliation” (TRC 1997).

The psychological language of the TRC casts the consequences of apartheid for Afrikaners in terms of trauma and societal healing.<sup>viii</sup> The TRC had as a goal to heal individuals - both victims and perpetrators - and society after the trauma of apartheid and the ‘traumatized’ Afrikaners were an integral part of this objective.<sup>ix</sup> The impact of the TRC on the average Afrikaners, however, and the response of the wider Afrikaner community to the process is unclear (Theissen 1996; Krog 1999; Giliomee, Myburgh et al. 2001; Johnstone n.d.).

The three perspectives present very different pictures of the position of Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa. Politically, Afrikaners have obviously lost. But economically they have done really well. The contradictory findings from the political and the economic perspective should make us weary about broad claims made by Tutu

and the TRC that all Afrikaners experienced a trauma after apartheid. Such broad and undifferentiated cultural claims seem problematic.

The idea of the existence of cultural traumas or collective traumas has also found its way into the social sciences, including sociology, law, cultural studies, and anthropology (Erikson 1976; 1995; Minow 1999; Robben and Suárez-Orozco 2000; Kaplan 2005). In cultural sociology, cultural trauma theory has been formulated specifically to address the intertwined dynamic of culture and emotions (Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004). What these theorists try to get at is the necessity to integrate emotions in their account of cultural change and cultural sociology. This is certainly Jeffrey Alexander's concern.

In Alexander's view, culture consists of structures like myths and narratives that both constrain and enable action at the same time (Wuthnow 1988; Alexander 2003; Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004; Alexander 2005). The task of cultural sociology, according to him, is to bring these unconscious cultural structures to light, show why they are meaningful, and illuminate their compulsive power. Cultural sociology aims to trace "the moral textures and delicate emotional pathways by which individuals and groups come to be influenced by them" (Alexander 2003, p. 5). His idea of cultural sociology makes "collective emotions and ideas central to its methods and theories precisely because it is such subjective and internal feelings that so often seem to rule the world" (Alexander 2003, p. 7).

## **The Theory of Cultural Trauma**

According to Alexander and colleagues, cultural traumas can exist in societies and collectivities that are dealing with crimes of the past. In other words, crimes that lead to traumas can either be committed by collectivities or on collectivities, a suggestion they illustrate with the various case studies they studied. Eyerman, for instance, analyzes the construction of black identity after slavery, Giesen explores the perpetrator trauma of the Germans after the Holocaust, and Sztompka focuses on the construction of a Polish identity after communism.

Jeffrey Alexander defines the concept of cultural trauma as: "A cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004, p. 1).

Alexander argues that cultural sociologists are not interested in the accuracy of the social actors' claims or their moral justification, but rather in how and under what conditions the claims are made. The focus on the claim-making process reveals that cultural trauma theory is social constructivist in orientation.<sup>x</sup> It is the emphasis on construction that sets their approach apart from more mainstream psychological theories of trauma. Indeed, Alexander writes that a social crisis only becomes a cultural crisis "if

collective actors decide to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go” (Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004, p. 10)

But there is a tension in the theory between the emphasis on the struggle to affix meaning to an event and the goal to explain cultural trauma as a subjective condition. A tension that is never quiet resolved (Joas 2005). The construction process is described by Alexander as a ‘spiral of signification’ through which collective agents make claims about ‘the nature of the pain and the victim,’ the relationship of the victim to the ‘wider audience,’ as well as ‘attribute responsibility’ to various institutional arenas (religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, mass media and state bureaucracy). This process of social construction ultimately results in the ‘experience’ of a cultural trauma. Alexander describes this condition as a mark upon the group consciousness (Alexander, Smelser et al. 2004, p. 10); Sztompka defines it as the damage inflicted by major social change on the cultural tissue of a society (Sztompka 2000, p. 450); and Eyerman refers to it as a tear in the social fabric (Eyerman 2008, p. 22).

While the theorists define the experience differently, they agree that cultural trauma is a subjective condition. Maybe surprisingly, given their emphasis on the process of construction, their definitions and theory suggest that apart from a process of cultural construction, there is also a role for pre-existing cultural notions such as a ‘cultural tissue,’ ‘group consciousness,’ and ‘social fabric.’ In other words, collective identity and culture in their theory is both presented as something structural, thing-like, and a construction. This double representation becomes problematic if the connection between culture and emotions is considered. The authors present the problem explicitly as having both cultural and emotional dimensions, and they express the ambition to explain the emotional impact of historic events. For instance, Eyerman talks about historical events that can be traumatizing incidents that trigger an ‘emotionally charged response’ and in order to ‘repair the collective’ the process involves “deeply rooted emotions” (Eyerman 2008, p. 166).

But where, then, do they locate emotions in the theory? What in their theory causes emotions and what do they see as the object of such emotions? Emotions in the theory seem to arise not from people but from culture and society itself. The authors refer to ‘deep cleavages’ that become exposed in the process of cultural trauma formation. They speak of ‘wounds’ that are caused by the ‘tear’ in the ‘cultural tissue’ and ‘social fabric.’ Such metaphorical language betrays a more structural understanding of culture and society than the initial emphasize on social construction would suggest. It also hints at the fact that rather than providing an analytic framework that does justice to both culture and emotions, there is a tendency in their theory to slide from cultural analysis to emotional analysis.<sup>xi</sup> Therefore, I argue that the theory of cultural trauma needs to be extended. And there is no reason to think, as Emirbayer argues, that Alexander’s

emphasis on the process of cultural construction does allow for such the inclusion of such a theory (Emirbayer 2004).

## **The Management of Emotions**

Hochschild's theory of emotion management can be used to clarify the connection between cultural change, cultural trauma and emotions. She addresses the question of the psychological and emotional effect of ideological change in societies from the perspective of the sociology of emotions. Her theory of emotion management conceptualizes culture's influence on feelings as a set of social norms (Hochschild 1979; 1983). The theory links "cultural ideas, structural arrangements, and several things about feeling" and conceptualizes the relationship between culture and emotions as following a rule-like structure (Kemper 1990).

Hochschild argues that people actively shape their emotions through their will. Such efforts, she argues, go beyond simple control or suppression but exist of an active shaping of our emotions either cognitively, physically or verbally. Together these activities comprise emotion management: the conscious efforts people make to direct their feelings. Indeed, her theory is also social constructivist in nature. The set of social norms that determine how we are supposed to feel are called feeling rules. Hochschild defines them as "a set of latent social rules" of which we are hardly conscious (Hochschild 1979, p. 564). Feeling rules often differ from what people expect to feel or from what people think they should feel, hence, expectations about our emotions plays an important role in her theory.

Ideology, she says, has for too long been studied from a cognitive framework. In every ideology there are implicit rules for the management of emotions. The term she uses for the implicit rules are framing rules, which she defines as the rules on which basis we define and ascribe meaning to situations. The same of course can be said about culture. If someone changes his or her ideological position, he or she has to rid him or herself of old feeling rules, and adopts new responses to new situations, cognitive and emotional. Ideological, social or cultural change, she says, can lead to conflicting feeling rules. In a situation of social change, Hochschild argues, the:

Sets of feeling rules contend for a place in people's mind for governing standard with which to compare the actual lived experience of, say, the senior prom, the abortion, the wedding, the birth, the first job, the first layoff, the divorce. (...) Part of what we refer to as the psychological effect of 'rapid social change' or 'unrest' is a change in the relation of feeling rule to feeling and a lack of clarity about what the rule exactly is, owing to conflicts and contradictions between contending sets of rules. (Hochschild 1979, p. 567)

As Alexander and co-authors suggested, cultural traumas do not occur naturally but are created through a process of social construction in a culture. Hochschild suggests that emotion management and changing feeling rules play an important role in this process. She identifies two mechanisms that cause the 'psychological effect': first, the relationship between feelings and the feeling rules have changed and this changes experience. Second, there arise possible conflicts and contradictions between contending sets of rules. Cultural and ideological change could lead to a lack of fit between what people feel and what they are supposed to feel. Thoits refers to the difference in quality or degree of feeling between what is expected in a given situation according to the feeling rules and the actual experiences as emotional defiance (Thoits 1989).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the framing rules indeed have changed and with strong repercussions for white Afrikaners. On the one hand, have a new set of framing rules been introduced? In post-apartheid South Africa, all South Africans are to embrace the new democratic, multicultural society and to feel patriotism towards the country and respect the new constitution and its institutions. Citizens are asked to take pride in the new South African identity - the rainbow country - and the relative orderly nature of the political transition. On the other hand, have old framing rules become discredited? Racism is outlawed and Afrikaner Nationalism and white supremacy ideas have become discredited. For Afrikaners, the emotional ties to their culture and past have become severed. Indeed, the new framing rules demand that the past should be condemned and the present celebrated; that Afrikaners should feel shame and guilt for what they have done; and that no feelings of loss about the apartheid past are allowed. Alas, they experience various forms of emotional defiance. The quote below is from a man reflecting on the experience of change after apartheid.

I don't like to sound negative. There are enough negative developments, like crime and if you read the newspapers it is murder, murder, murder. I said to my wife or we said to each other: the biggest challenge this year is to focus on everything that is positive in this country. That is what we try to focus on. So, my frustrations about things that happen, I don't talk about it anymore with my wife. It is good to talk about positive things. I think our continued existence in this country depends on being positive. (Nicole, a 51-year-old white man)

While Hochschild's theory of emotion management is strong in answering questions on why and how people act upon their feelings, Kemper has argued that it is vague about two other questions: the nature of the feelings which are being acted upon and how these feelings are related to someone's social location.

Kemper's first argument is about Hochschild's failure to incorporate the effects of social structure on our experience of emotions (Kemper 1981; 1990). Together with Randall



Collins, Kemper argued that emotions are at least partly dependant on power and status. Within social situations, individuals possess relative power (authority) or the ability to tell others what to do, and status (conceptualized as prestige or honor rather than as positions in a structure). Changes in the relative power and status (or prestige) of individuals have large effects on the arousal of negative and positive emotions (Kemper 1990) (Turner and Stets 2005). Although Kemper originally opposed his positivist approach to that of Hochschild's social constructivism, I suggest that his argument about the influence of social structures can also be seen as a specification of the theory of emotion management.

It is not difficult when applying these theories to imagine how the new social norms vary depending on power and status, and thus on class. It is evident that the white Afrikaner working class has experienced much stronger change since the abolishment of apartheid in comparison to the white upper class. The working class has fewer opportunities to avoid integration with the new black middle class and also fewer resources to invent new forms of segregation, like gated communities. Confronted at work and in the public space with the newly empowered blacks, the new social norms and framing rules will be much more strictly imposed on the white working class. Where they used to benefit, like the white elite, from their skin color, they are now forced to change the way they feel. White Afrikaans working men often complain that they can no longer say what they want. That is: they feel they cannot say anymore what they want because many things they say are today seen as racist, as one man complained: "it feels like we have to put a lock on our mouth." What they still see as an innocent joke to bond with their (black) co-workers can now result in the loss of their job.

Before 1994, this was totally different. You could make jokes. You could make certain racist remarks. This was not a problem. This is... from 1994 this has all changed, you have to be careful in what you say. If you say certain things like 'yes kaffer' you have always said to this man. You know, this means nothing to him. He is used to this since he was very small. You have grown up together in the company. But then this suddenly started to be a thing. Others would listen. Other blacks would listen and hear you use this word. Or that you say 'hello hotnotjie' and he says nothing of this, but then this other black guy will approach him and ask why he lets a white man call him this name. And this has caused that many men – especially men – have been fired from the company for racism, because of this culture, which started in 1994. This has hurt the relationships between blacks and whites. (Herman, 45-year-old white Afrikaans working man)

The men feel that the shift in power and social norms forces them to monitor every joke they make and every word they say, and thus, to fully rethink their old ways of speaking and socializing – justly or not. They consequently lament the loss of a time where they

feel they could talk freely and speak to and ‘socialize’ with their fellow black workers without restraint.

The second important criticism of social constructivism that Kemper made is that they underplay the role of biology. Because they exclude biology they also fail to provide a ‘category scheme’ for different emotions and their various effects. Any sociological theory that includes emotions “cannot be indifferent to the psychophysiological theory with which it must ultimately link in any complete theory of emotions” (Kemper 1981, p. 339).

However, in the last twenty years, research on emotions in various disciplines, including psychology and neuroscience, seems to suggest something completely different. Emotions are not rooted in our expectations, such as Hochschild suggests. Rather, they are related to what we find valuable in life, what gives our life personal meaning and it is through the process of appraisal that we determine what this is. Cognitive appraisal theory is now common currency among psychologists and neuroscientists working on emotions (Frijda 1986; Lazarus 1991; LeDoux 1998).

In support of appraisal theories, research has found that people exposed to comparable events, either in the laboratory or in a natural setting, will display a wide variety of emotional reactions depending on their appraisals of the event (Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Scherer and Ceschi 1997; Siemer, Mauss et al. 2007). At the heart of the theory is the assertion that an emotional experience is an intentional state: it is about something and this emotional experience always entails some kind of appraisal of the situation around us. Emotions are a complex and patterned reaction to how we think we are doing in our efforts to survive and flourish and to achieve what we wish for ourselves (Lazarus 1991, p. 87).<sup>xii</sup>

It is not a particular event that causes a particular emotion but it is, rather, a person’s subjective appraisal of the event that leads to an emotional reaction. Emotions are defined by the fact that they have an object, that they are intentional, and that they are rooted in our beliefs and connected to our evaluations. Such a theory fits well with Scheff’s argument that emotions should be named and defined in order to be usefully investigated within their social contexts is supported by cognitive appraisal theory (Scheff 1988; Scheff 2000). In order to incorporate a wide spectrum of emotions in sociological studies, their different ‘cognitive logics’ should always be taking into account.<sup>xiii</sup>

How does a cognitive appraisal theory of emotions connect to the variability of cultural trauma? It is easier to answer these pertinent issues if we relate these questions to different groups of Afrikaners and to the cognitive structure of specific emotions. Indeed, the explanatory power of cognitive appraisal theory for cultural trauma theory and emotion management theory is considerable if we examine the specific cognitive logics of particular emotions. For sake of brevity, I will discuss two emotions that are salient in

two case studies in my research. In the first case study, I analyze the emotion of pride in the cultural discourse of elite Afrikaner businessmen, who are members of the former Afrikaner chamber of commerce. In the second case study, I analyze the workings of shame in the cultural discourse of lower-middle-class Afrikaners, who are members of the labor union Solidarity. The presence of very different emotions in the cultural discourses of both groups of Afrikaners, suggests that class plays an important role in determining whether Afrikaners suffer from 'cultural trauma' ( See also Sayer 2005).

### **Pride and the Afrikaans Handels Instituut**

A first case is the Afrikaans Handels Instituut (AHI), the former chamber of commerce for Afrikaners, which today remains a prominent business organization with a majority of white Afrikaans members.<sup>xiv</sup> Arnold Steenkamp, the former president of the AHI, is upbeat about the prospects of the new South Africa. "I am excited about the future, the country has a lot of potential and with the right policy decisions..., the future is bright." In the early 1990s South Africa chose democracy, he argues, where war was another possibility. "If we can make that work, we can make everything work." Steenkamp argues the AHI has been a key player in the transition from apartheid to democracy. When the time was there, the AHI recognized that apartheid was wrong. The exclusion of black people had to stop, and it did. He talks about the position of AHI in those years. He says:

The chamber of commerce was one of the transition agents, in the way that they realized that the system of apartheid did not work. The exclusion of the blacks from the economy could not work. Our members, the AHI people, were one of the first from the side of business who negotiated with the ANC. The chamber of commerce is not a political organization; we are a business organization who looks at the business side of things. But if along the way we encounter something that obstructs the growth and prosperity of the country, we act. The AHI was strongly criticized by its members for doing so, when they initially said they would get involved in the transformation process. But the AHI switched gears without any trauma, because they saw the problem of apartheid, they saw the problem of excluding people from the economy. Of course there were people who said: 'you are selling us out' and 'this is not going to work.' But the AHI has seen the bigger picture.

Steenkamp presents the AHI as a key transition agent, an organization that was at the forefront of change and that realized, before anyone else, that apartheid had to end. He argues that change for the organization was a smooth process. "It was nothing dramatic

and certainly without any trauma,” Steenkamp says, “Business people are not emotional creatures but pragmatic people. We want to solve the problem.”

When I first met Steenkamp, I was surprised by his version of the history of the transition and the role of the AHI. Where the media tends to focus on the discontent of Afrikaners about the transition to democracy, Steenkamp takes pride in it. This pride is rooted in his perception that the AHI led the way towards change and that the transition process of the organization was relatively easy. Many AHI members spoke in a similar way about the transition. This, of course, has little to do with the unemotional nature of businessmen, as Steenkamp claims. What is the reason for this pride and how does it relate to the continued existence of AHI? The survival of AHI as an organization in the post-apartheid period is at least a little strange. Its former powerful political patron, the National Party, has ceased to exist (Westhuizen 2008). Many former exclusive Afrikaner organizations have declined in membership, lost influence or simply ceased to exist. How did the AHI survive? What still legitimizes a specific Afrikaner chamber of commerce? And what does that tell us about the Afrikaner business elite and cultural and identity change?

The AHI stood at the heart of the Afrikaner nationalist project (Marx 1998; Giliomee 2010). The Afrikaner chamber of commerce was founded in 1939, amidst a period of economic empowerment driven by Afrikaner nationalists (Giliomee 2008).<sup>xv</sup> For a long time, the white English population had dominated the South African economy, particularly mining and other large industries, with white Afrikaners representing mainly farming and agriculture (O'Meara 2009).<sup>xvi</sup> When in 1948 the National Party came to power, an age of economic ascendance arrived for Afrikaners. Organizations like AHI relied on the National Party to execute what was best for Afrikaner business and to further the economic interests of Afrikaner corporations. Economic growth was not only achieved through a growing Afrikaner private sector, but also through rapidly expanding state-owned companies. By the end of the 1970s, however, the private sector became increasingly worried about the poor management of the state under apartheid and pressured the government for political reform (O'Meara 1996).<sup>xvii</sup>

Most business leaders felt the cost of apartheid had become too steep and pushed to open the door to negotiations (Giliomee 2008; 2010). Although not a political organization, the AHI became involved with the political talks. In the late 1980s, the leadership of AHI was involved in the early Codessa negotiations that ultimately settled South Africa's transition to democracy (Waldmeir 1997). Later the AHI helped to set up Nedlec, a new economic forum that transitioned into the economic advisory board of the first post-apartheid government under President Nelson Mandela. Internally, however, the structures of AHI never changed throughout apartheid. In 1994 it had the same structure as it had during its inception in the late 1930s. Only white Afrikaans speaking businessmen could be members, and on its board there were only members from Afrikaans businesses.

After 1994, the AHI has changed its discourse and public profile to confront its crisis in legitimacy. It adopted a new slogan: *Saam skep ons welvaart*, or together we create prosperity. The goal of the organization became ‘to deliver successful and high quality services to our members and the country.’ AHI began cooperating with black business organizations through cooperative agreements. The aim was to show that the AHI had not just changed its slogan but also its attitude towards ‘black’ business. Such changes, however, could have undermined AHI’s legitimacy to stay an independent organization. In the media, ANC government officials and various black organizations tried to pressure the AHI to merge with black organizations. AHI carefully steered away from a merger to not alienate its white Afrikaner membership.

The real test for the AHI came with the invitation to admit a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in 1997. The Afrikaner and English business community, of course, profited from the apartheid system (Nattrass 1999).<sup>xviii</sup> AHI was challenged by the Committee to reflect on the role of business during apartheid and the human rights violations that occurred. Although various board members objected to a submission, AHI President Van Wijck led a team to prepare a submission. “We were not going to ask amnesty,” he says, “we were going to submit because we felt it is right to say certain things, we have to make a statement, and we want to play a constructive role in South Africa.” Van Wijck saw the TRC as an opportunity for the AHI to play a more constructive role in the future.

In the submission to the TRC, the AHI admitted major mistakes in the past. But the narrative revolved not so much around admissions of guilt but rather around the effort to reposition the AHI. In the document, the AHI actively distanced itself from its roots in the Afrikaner community. It argued its political viewpoints were nothing but mainstream and it highlighted the contribution of AHI to the democratic transition. “The AHI helped pave the way for and contributed to the preparations for the eventual transition. The political initiatives of 1990 were greatly facilitated by the AHI who helped to secure support for them country-wide among business people.” The AHI thus presented itself as a major force in facilitation of the transition and the conclusion was drawn with a certain pride, a pride that was at odds with the overall purpose of the TRC submission. Finally, the AHI said it is committed and involved in “economic growth, which benefits all sectors of the population” and is opposed to “emigration in body, mind and attitude,” a reference to more than a million South Africans that have left the country since 1994. Although the TRC hearings were focused on the past, the AHI used their submission effectively to recast its role in the future as a racially inclusive, pro-growth organization that has a positive track record as an agent of democratic change.

After its discourse, and the TRC submission, the AHI changed its top leadership. Its first non-white and non-Afrikaner president, in 2000, was a former ambassador Franklin Sonn during the Mandela government. It is striking that the first non-white Afrikaans presidents emphasized a focus on the future and whitewashed the past of the

AHI. In the yearly address of the president of the AHI he argued that while “the uncomfortable past is still important, South Africans are future-people, like all good businessmen.” The AHI consists of “today- and tomorrow-people” and this is what made him proud to be at the AHI. The AHI consists of “opportunity seekers and creators,” who reach out to government and are able to change poverty into prosperity. Six years later, in 2006, former ANC politician Mathew Mphosa became president and in his yearly address he said: “We should not punish ourselves for the past, but we should use our expertise to create possibilities for other people. We live in a place of forgiveness and, more importantly, of possibilities. It is our role as AHI to responsibly open up these opportunities for our members.” In 2009, the first colored female president said it is her duty “to protect at all cost the image of the organization with her rich history and that its fleckless reputation will be carried into the future.”

The presidential addresses reinforced the self-image of AHI, of an organization that does not dwell on the past but provides leadership for the future. The presidents never threatened the assumption that the AHI is a natural home for white, Afrikaans speaking business men. Indeed, the shift at the top was hardly mirrored in the overall membership, which is still mainly white and Afrikaans. Within a period of ten years the AHI was able to change its public face in a dramatic way and represent an image to the outside world of an organization that has become open, multicultural and transformed. It is an achievement most AHI board members take great pride in.

There are three reasons for the survival of AHI: First, it demanded political reform before 1990. Second, it submitted to the TRC. Third, its leadership is now racially mixed. The survival of the organization matters because participation in the AHI allows its white Afrikaans members specific discursive resources to embrace the new South Africa: a discourse about change; a positive identity as transformation agents; a sense of belonging to their organization and its goals; and a sense of continuity. The example of AHI shows how the Afrikaner economic elite has been able to construct a positive cultural and emotional narrative about the transition. Most importantly, the discourse provides various anchor points for the members to feel pride in the organizations and themselves; a pride that is actively cultivated by the organization.

What sustains this pride? First of all, AHI by its mere survival as an organization gives its members a sense of pride, there are not many formerly exclusive Afrikaner organizations that survived. Secondly, the members take pride in AHIs’ record of transformation. The submission to the TRC plays a central role here. Former president van Wijck says: “If we had not made a submission, it would have been a great mistake. Look at the legitimacy the AHI still has. How many organizations are there still? The National Party has died...All the other things have just disappeared, but the Afrikaanse Handels Instituut... I am unashamed Afrikaans.” Thirdly, the members still take pride in the Afrikaans language, although the organization became officially bilingual in 2009 and distributes its documents in both English and Afrikaans. However, pride in the Afrikaans

language is even promoted by new members. Former colored president Klein says: “AHI is predominantly Afrikaans. I do speak Afrikaans but it is not my first language. One thing I realized is that we all have pride in our heritage. Afrikaans, the language, is still very much part of the pride of our country...” Fourthly, white Afrikaans members express a sense of pride from the ‘sense of community’ and ‘brotherhood.’ Instead of the perpetrators and economic exploiters of the past, AHI allows its members to identify as transformation agents.

### **Shame and the Labor Union Solidarity**

The second case is the white Afrikaans labor union Solidarity. Like the AHI, Solidarity as an organization successfully survived the transition. But that is the only aspect in which the stories of the organizations resemble each other. Dirk Hermann, the vice-president of Solidarity, is 37 and <sup>xix</sup> Hermann is leading a team of young Afrikaans men that have revived the former white extremist Mijnwerkers Unie, or mineworkers union (MWU), into a growing and respected labor union. What puzzled me in Hermanns’ interviews was how he told two seemingly incompatible stories about the goals and role Solidarity plays in relationship to the position of Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa.

The first story line is all about cooperation and rights. “After 1994, we realized we are actually in Africa,” Herman says, “and we are from Africa. We need to have more open conversations with black South Africans.” Afrikaners, as a minority, have to cooperate with the new black government, while still fight for their rights. Solidarity is a vehicle to fight for labour and cultural rights of Afrikaners. The second story, however, presents Afrikaners as the new victims. “We are a discredited minority” Hermann claims, “Although minorities all over the world are protected, Afrikaners are discriminated against.” The reference is to affirmative action policies that disadvantage whites in the labour market. Hermann says that the ANC government does not care anymore about them, as they have lost political influence. “We are a sheep among the wolves (...) Afrikaners are on their own.” In response, he argues, Afrikaners should become independent and self-sufficient. Solidarity provides a vehicle towards this goal.

As it turned out, many Solidarity activists shared the two story lines, although to a different agree. How to explain these two lines of thinking and their inconsistency? I argue that the emotion of shame plays a large role in the accounts of many Solidarity members. This shame is rooted in the history of Solidarity and its role during the transition. It is also connected to the current ambivalent political position of the union. Solidarity is influential in South Africa’s public debates on numerous political issues like affirmative action, labor law, crime, cultural and integration politics and civil rights. Since democracy, the union has grown rapidly, and now represents more than three times the workers it did than in 1994, Solidarity in 2010 claimed to have 120.000 members. But why did Solidarity become so successful? How did the organization transform from a union with extreme right-wing ideas to a mainstream organization that is accepted by the

popular South African media? And what does its success tell us about the transition of working class Afrikaners?

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Solidarity went by the name of the Mine Workers' Union (MWU). The MWU was originally erected in 1902. In those days, the uncertainty of permanent employment in the South African mines was the central concern for the white working class (Wolpe 1976; Clark 2004). The ever present threat of utilizing cheap black labor was often used by mine owners against organized white labor to enforce lower wages. Unions like MWU demanded rights for white workers while they pleaded for continued exclusion of blacks. Historically, white working class Afrikaners thus occupied a tenuous position between the class of mine capitalists and the large black labor contingent. When the National Party came to power in 1948, MWU became a stable partner and would remain so until the late 1970s.<sup>xx</sup> Only then did the first political disputes emerge about lifting the color-bar for various positions in the labor market, including the mine industry.<sup>xxi</sup> When the National Party made the first steps in the early 1990s towards the abolishment of apartheid, the MWU defiantly called on the other white unions to form a 'white super union' to protect the white working class. It blamed the National Party for the unrest and chaos in the country, and it took an uncompromising stand on the politics of apartheid.

It took the MWU a few years to realize the rules had changed in democratic South Africa.<sup>xxii</sup> As the National Party moved to hand over power to the ANC, the prospects of MWU as a prospering or even viable union seemed dim. MWU became politically isolated, in the early 1990s, because of its obstructive politics and racist rhetoric.<sup>xxiii</sup> Although the idea of a white 'super' labor union was accompanied by reports of rapidly increasing membership, the actual union membership of MWU declined in the early 1990s. Many started to doubt whether unilateral obstruction should not be replaced by some conditional cooperation. The uncompromising rhetoric of threat and self-defense, however, obscured the emergence of a new political tactic and discourse.<sup>xxiv</sup> The MWU started to speak of a process of *verontregting*, or the taking away of rights, that needed to be protested. The leadership called for a new 'protest culture' and 'communication strategy.' It started to explore collaboration with black labor unions like SAKU (Suid Afrikaanse Kommunkasie Unie) and COSATU. The turning point is 1997.<sup>xxv</sup>

The single most important factor in the union's turnaround and growth as a labor union after 1997 was the *Wet van Gelyke Indiensneming*, or the Employment Equity Act.<sup>xxvi</sup> In response to affirmative action, MWU started to portray Afrikaners as a 'disadvantaged minority' whose 'civil rights' deserved protection. Organizationally, the union set up a platform, *Afriforum*, to campaign for "the protection and consolidation of civil rights" and to give the Afrikaner community "a voice in a society where minorities are increasingly being ignored." The new slogan of Solidarity, *Ons beskerm ons mense*, or we protect our people, resonated with the threat that affirmative action posed to most white employers. The union's discourse of rights functions through a series of three



oppositions: the domination of majority rule is posited against minority rights; the gain of black rights is pitted against the loss of the rights of whites; and the ANC politics of transformation and racial integration is opposed to the loss of Afrikaans identity.

The first opposition presents the majority rule of the ANC as an infringement upon the rights of minorities, specifically Afrikaners. CEO Flip Buys says: “Look, the problem we have had is that the majority accepts many things as self-evident, for which the minority has to fight. A majority accepts as self-evident that you can decide over the taxes you pay. A majority accepts as self-evident that you have a say in the governing of a country. And a minority does not have those things, those rights.” Buys central complaint is that the majority fails to understand the difficult position of minorities. As the apartheid past is all but ignored by the union, it now portrays Afrikaners as a victimized minority under threat; a group not privileged but discriminated against. In a second opposition, the gain of black rights is pitted against the loss of the rights of whites. Dirk Hermann says:

In the constitution it says that everybody has a right to labor, but if there is not a union to protect those rights then those rights mean little. We have a right to safety but we are not safe. We are killed in our houses every night. (...) We looked beyond Mandela’s pretty words, which were great words and we appreciated them. But we also looked at what many of the other ANC leaders said. And then we found out that in practice, we are excluded in many cases.

The cultural discourse of rights claims that the Afrikaner identity should be recognized as a legitimate identity. In a third opposition, the claim for recognition is posited against the transformation discourse of the ANC government. Union members argue that the hopeful days of reconciliation and democracy are over. The state has moved on from being a ‘constitutional state’ to a ‘transformation state.’ Afriforum director Kalie Kriel says:

Everything is governed by the state. And anything that has an Afrikaner character is being viewed as ‘untransformed.’ I think in this country we have swung the pendulum, where apartheid placed great stress on identity, now it has swung to the other side, where the state is actually unable to tolerate any form of identity, particular the identity of the Afrikaner. I want to make sure that Afrikaners can participate as first class citizens in this country with self-confidence and self-respects.

Kalie Kriel presents the discourse of transformation of the ANC as a threat to Afrikaner identity. Respect is demanded for the Afrikaners, so they can participate as ‘first class citizens’ in the new South Africa and go through life as ‘self-confident’ people. But the fight for self-confidence also spills over in rage about the position of Afrikaners. A

common trope in such angry outburst is to use Afrikaans children as the innocent victims of the transformation. Flip Buys says:

Why is it that everybody in the world talks their own language but we cannot speak our language? Why is it that we cannot protect our language? Why is it that our children cannot... is there something wrong with our children? Are our children lepers? That we cannot take care of our children at school and make sure they get food, if nobody else gives it to them? Why is it that that the whole world is concerned about black children – they are right in their concerns about Africa – but I cannot be concerned about hunger among white children? Because they talk Afrikaans, because their grandfathers brought apartheid, now they have to starve from hunger? What rubbish is this?

Buys' frustration escalates as he describes his perspective that nobody cares about Afrikaners. On account of this lack, Afrikaners do not want to depend on the recognition of others, and they stress the value of independence and being responsible for your own fate. But why does he think that he is not allowed to care for his children or language? Is it because people argue that Afrikaners must take some responsibility for their past behavior and historical privileges? He feels he is not allowed to care for anything Afrikaans. Such angry outbursts speak to the burden of shame. Buys and other union members feel that 'nobody' cares about Afrikaners. They fight for recognition of their rights, language and their culture, but they fear rejection. This sentiment underlies their arguments against depending on outside recognition; they stress the value of independence and being responsible for their own fate.

The union Solidarity/MWU survived the transition from apartheid to democracy against all odds. The union supported apartheid policies long after the music had stopped. The main reason for their revival is the introduction of affirmative action, and Solidarity's successful reimagining as a labor union that protects white employees from these policies. In response to affirmative action policies, the union presents Afrikaners as a discriminated minority, who are the victims of the new South Africa and whose rights are under threat. In a constitutional democracy like post-apartheid South Africa, a discourse of rights might not be surprising. Such language is an effective and seemingly neutral medium to make political demands. Its neutrality is particularly useful if the claims to rights obscure the historic reality. The three false oppositions in the discourse of rights achieve the following goals: they obscure the privileged past of the Afrikaners, they mask the protection of white racial interest, and they represent Afrikaners as the new victims.

But the discourse of rights represents both a politics of recognition and a politics of resentment. The emotion of shame is, cognitively, related to acts of denial and the

obstruction of empathy. It is surprising to hear union members claim that the black majority would not know how it feels to not be represented in the government. It is as if apartheid never happened, and black South Africans would have no idea about the consequences of lack of power. Shame is also related to egocentric distress and anger, and this seems the emotional dynamic present in the discourse. Solidarity members focus on Afrikaners as victims. They blame the black majority and the ANC government for their position, not their forefathers who instigated apartheid.

Why is the emotion of shame so dominant in Solidarity's discourse, particularly when compared to AHI? I can give three reasons for this. First, the history of the union prevents members from taking pride in anything relating to the democratic transition. The union supported apartheid long after it ended. Second, the focus on victimhood prevents reflection on the apartheid past. Whether shame causes victimhood and this prevents a look at the past, or whether the discourse of rights and victimhood causes shame is unclear. Third, the fight for recognition is underlined by a fear of rejection. Shame turns into anger about the dependence of recognition, this feeds into older nationalistic fantasies of an Afrikaner culture of self-autonomy and invulnerability re-emerge.

## **Conclusion**

The terminology of trauma is omnipresent in public debates in post-apartheid South Africa and is used in reference to various publics. In this paper, I explored the idea that cultural trauma theory can be used to describe the condition of Afrikaners in relation to their past as perpetrators and supporters of apartheid.<sup>xxvii</sup> In an effort to include emotions into cultural sociology, sociologists like Jeffrey Alexander have introduced the cultural trauma concept. My research shows that if the theory of cultural trauma wants to have empirical relevance, it needs to integrate a better approach in regards to emotions. The work of Hochschild and Kemper presents a more convincing theory of emotions. I show how Hochschild's theory of the management of emotions provides constructive building blocks to theorize emotions' influence. I gave examples of how changes that have occurred since apartheid's end in feeling and framing rules can matter for understanding Afrikaners.

However, the theory leaves unclear which emotions precisely are being managed. This was pointed out by Kemper who further argued that the experience of emotions is mediated by power and status, and that we should not underestimate the biological component of emotions, as to provide for the differential effects of various emotions. I suggested that a cognitive appraisal theory of emotions allows for precisely such a differentiated framework and is very sociological in application. The case studies show that if we shift our attention away from the top-level of politicians and the TRC and focus on the lives of ordinary Afrikaners, the flexibility and variety of emotional responses

becomes clear. Exploring the shifting terrain of culture, emotion and class I contrasted two cases studies of formerly exclusive Afrikaner organizations. I showed how the elite businessmen at AHI produced a cultural discourse anchored in pride, while the union presented a conflicted discourse underlined by shame.

## **Appendix: Emotions**

In the appendix, I give a short overview of the cognitive content, or 'logic', of the emotions of shame and pride

### **Shame**

If there is one sociologist who explored the notion of shame, it is Thomas Scheff. He argued that shame is the primary social emotion (Scheff 1988; 2000). Indeed, shame seems to be a pervasive emotion in social life. In his work, Scheff not only built on sociologists like Elias but also on work by psychologists like Lewis (Nathanson 1987). He defined shame as a large family of emotions that includes many cognates and variants, most notably embarrassment, humiliation, and related feelings such as shyness. Strangely, given that he built on Lewis, Scheff argued that shame arises when there is a threat to the social bond. Every person, he argued, fears social disconnection, being adrift from understanding and being misunderstood by others. Although it is true that shame involves reactions to feelings of failure or inadequacy, as Scheff argued, the emotion is not merely (or even primarily) about rejection or a threat to the social bond.

More recent research in psychology and philosophy relates the emotion of shame to feelings of failure and inadequacy of the self, rather than about real and imagined judgments of others (Tangney and Dearing 2003; Leary 2007; Tangney, Stuewig et al. 2007). What is the cognitive content of shame? Philosopher Martha Nussbaum argues that the content of shame revolves around the idea that shame is a painful emotion to a sense of failure to attain some ideal state of self. Shame involves, says Nussbaum, the realization that one is weak and inadequate in some way in which one expects one's self to be adequate (Nussbaum 2003; 2006). Development psychologists have shown that the trouble with shame (its primitive form) starts with the measure of what we consider adequate selves. These self-images form as we grow up in the world, and thus shame has deep roots in our upbringing and development. Too often, we build and hold ideas of completeness or perfection - some kind of ideal state - that are untenable in real life. Our sense of failure, and of shame, is thus connected to the kinds of selves we imagine. In this theory, shame is connected to narcissism. The more that individuals, but also groups or cultures hold untenable ideas about themselves, the more likely they are to experience shame.

## **Pride**

Aristotle famously thought that a proud person is someone who thinks he is worthy of great things and actually *is* worthy of great things (Aristotle 2007).<sup>xxviii</sup> In his moralistic view, he believed that it is not possible to be a proud man without also possessing virtues like nobility and goodness of character. But since it is possible to possess such virtues in the absence of pride, pride can be seen as the “crown of all virtues.”<sup>xxix</sup> Since Aristotle, however, psychologists have provided a more empirical definition of the emotion. Traditionally, pride is classified as a ‘secondary’ emotion, an emotion that is constructed by society without a strong biological basis (Frijda 1986).

Tracy and Robins, however, argue that pride has its own universal, nonverbal expression, which is characteristic of ‘primary’ emotions; the emotions with a strong evolutionary background (Tracy and Robins 2007). They found that when someone is proud of something, he wears a low-intensity smile, expands his posture, tilts his head slightly and places his hands on his hips or raises them above his head in fists (Tracy and Robins 2007). Even congenitally blind people show this behavior, indicating that it is innate.<sup>xxx</sup> Together, these findings lead them to conclude that pride is a universal and biological emotion.

They recognize that pride is different from other primary emotions. Pride is a self-conscious emotion, meaning that it requires complex self-evaluative processes (Tracy, Robins et al. 2006). Pride is postulated to emerge when someone develops a sense of the self and learns to evaluate his or her achievements in terms of successes and failures.<sup>xxxi</sup> This makes pride particularly sensitive to modulation by culture, in comparison to other primary emotions. Since pride is a self-conscious emotion, it is reasonable to assume that its' function lies more in the social domain, by increasing ones' social status and value (Williams and DeSteno 2008).<sup>xxxii</sup> The expression of pride is associated with success across cultures and people who feel proud are seen as more dominant and attractive in group situations (Tracy, Robins et al. 2006; Williams and DeSteno 2008). Pride can motivate people to perform socially valued behaviors.

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<sup>i</sup> This is a Germanic language which derives primarily from 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch, and a variety of other languages.

<sup>ii</sup> The regional exception is the Western Cape where the Democratic Party has remained a powerful political force, a party that is dominated by whites.

<sup>iii</sup> The transition to democracy firmly ingrained a set of capitalist principles like private property rights in the constitution. Furthermore, the ANC adopted a pro-growth strategy GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), a limited set of social policies, stable interest rates, tight control of government expenses, an independent national reserve bank, and the privatization of various public companies. In short, the economic transition transformed the closed economic system during apartheid into a neoliberal economic order that has left existing economic inequalities largely intact and difficult to change.

<sup>iv</sup> In the period from 1975 to 1996, the national Gini coefficient was close to 0.66, but since 1996 it has actually grown to 0.7 mainly because of the growing intra-group differences among blacks.

<sup>v</sup> The question why this happened is still widely debated and explanations range widely: from a crisis of capitalism, the ANC failures to wrestle white control away from the economy or pressure from the international community. Patrick Bond for instance argues in his book *Elite Transition: from apartheid to Neoliberalism* that it was particular the Afrikaner business elite, together with its political counterpart, that steered the transition. But MacDonald argues that the ANC was neither weak nor seduced but simple opted for neoliberalism based on economic principle. They simply believed that poverty is solved by growth and that growth results from giving capital incentives to invest. Most likely, a combination of these factors have played a role.

<sup>vi</sup> Others argue that the ANC was neither weak nor seduced by the white Afrikaner elite but simple opted for neoliberalism based on economic principle MacDonald, M. (2006). Why race matters in South Africa, Harvard University Press. The ANC started to believe that poverty is solved by growth and that growth

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results from giving capital incentives to invest. What these observers share is the idea that the initial euphoria about the political transformation and the TRC for too long obscured this third revolution. Enraptured as many observers were by the first two processes, they failed to see the economic transformation and its implications Gumedde, W. M. (2007). Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC. Cape Town, Struik Publishers..

<sup>vii</sup> The model for change - the imagery and language in which the process of change was captured - drew from religion and psychology. It used an eclectic mix of religious styles, symbolisms and vocabulary together with concepts drawn from the psychotherapeutic register like wounds, healing, and trauma. The TRC aimed to address the “deeper meaning” of the word reconciliation: reconciliation as a process of confession, repentance, cleansing, regeneration, reparation, and restoration. Borraine, J. L. a. A., Ed. (1995). The Healing of A Nation? Cape Town, Justice in Transition. The idea that culture and cultural practices had to change was central to the TRC, but this change was formulated on a very abstract level: through a reckoning with the past, the truth would be revealed, and a human rights culture would be established. The TRC was to bring healing to the nation through public testimonies of victims and perpetrators in front of the commission. Truth could heal a divided nation.

<sup>viii</sup> Although few deny the positive impact of the TRC on the country, its model for ‘societal healing’ builds on shaky theoretical and empirical grounds. It relies on the application of psychological theories on the collective that have only been proven to work for individuals. Minow emphasizes that we actually know very little about the process of societal healing. She argues that “victims, perpetrators, and bystanders stand in different relationships to the underlying events and to the prospect of healing.” Indeed, she writes that “(w)hen it comes to the goal of national healing, it is simply unclear whether theories and evidence of individual recovery from violence have much bearing” Minow, M. (1999). Between vengeance and forgiveness: facing history after genocide and mass violence, Beacon Press.. Like the political transition, the effects and consequences of the TRC have been studied mostly at the national level Gibson, J. L. e. A. G. (2002). Overcoming intolerance in South Africa. Experiments in Democratic Persuasion. New York, Cambridge University Press, Gibson, J. L. (2006). Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation? New York, Russell Sage Foundation..

<sup>ix</sup> The TRC never provided a definition for trauma. An individual victim trauma is often defined in terms of an over stimulation of a person’s psychic structures, so that the individual needs to reinvent or repair the basic ways of making meaning and bounding the self and others (Friendlander, 151).

<sup>x</sup> The various proponents of the theory agree that the condition of cultural trauma is only achieved through a contentious process of claim-making and social construction. In other words, a cultural trauma does not occur naturally but is constructed by society, or, in the words of Sztompka, by a traumatic sequence Sztompka, P. (2000). "Cultural Trauma: The Other Side of Social Change." European Journal of Social Theory 3(4): 449-466..

<sup>xi</sup> Smelser is actually the exception here, but his theory about emotions builds on outdated psychoanalytical notions. See page 40 in Alexander, J. C., N. Smelser, et al. (2004). Collective Identity and Cultural Trauma. Berkeley, University of California Press.

<sup>xii</sup> In other words, emotions express the intimate personal meaning of what is happening in our (social) lives: they combine motivational, cognitive, adaptational and physiological processes into a single complex state. Central to cognitive appraisal theories is the understanding that “the way we evaluate an event determines how we react emotionally” Page 6 in Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Emotion and Adaptation. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>xiii</sup> What is striking about appraisal theory is how it is amenable to concerns of sociologists. It is through and through sociological. Emotions are always about the relation between people and their surroundings. Emotions tell us a great many things about how we relate to our surroundings and how this in turn relates to how we see ourselves. They tell a complex tale of how we value our relationships and attachments, and how they impact our well-being. Vice versa, emotions also tell us how changes in our surroundings affect us. Such a conceptualization seems also compatible with the new relationalism of sociological thinkers, for instance Mustafa Emirbayer Emirbayer, M. (1997). "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology." American Journal of Sociology 103(2): 281-317, Emirbayer, M. (1997). "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology." The American Journal of Sociology 103(2): 281-317, Emirbayer, M. (2004). "The Alexander School of Cultural Sociology." Thesis Eleven 79(1): 5-15, Emirbayer, M. and C. Goldberg (2005). Pragmatism, Bourdieu, and collective emotions in contentious politics. Theory and Society, Springer Netherlands. 34: 469-518..

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<sup>xiv</sup> Its strong position is for instance signified by the regular meetings between the board of AHI with the ANC government, monthly meetings with the independent reserve bank, the top politicians of the ANC at the AHIs' yearly conference, and the economic positions of the members of the AHI itself.

<sup>xv</sup> It was created at the Eerste Ekonomiese Volkskongres, or the First Economic Congress of the (Afrikaner) People, a conference organized by Afrikaner nationalists and Afrikaner businesses to empower the Afrikaner people economically. The congress created three institutions: an investment bank for Afrikaner businesses, an organization to assist the Afrikaner poor, and an Afrikaner chamber of commerce, the AHI. The finance house, the Federale Volksbeleggings, was the most important. It was controlled by Sanlam and encouraged Afrikaners to invest in 'sound' Afrikaner enterprises. One of the first to receive a loan of this investment fund was the young entrepreneur Anton Rupert, who within two decades built up the Rembrandt group, one of South Africa's largest conglomerates. The aim of the congress and the three organizations was to make the Afrikaners 'autonomous economically' by introducing a form of volkskapitalisme, or capitalism for the people. Afrikaner business, including the AHI, from the beginning supported the developing apartheid program and in particular the demand that the African urban labor force did not receive labor rights.

<sup>xvi</sup> P. 157 O'meara, Dan (1983) *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*

<sup>xvii</sup> Although President Botha managed to appease the Afrikaner business community, economic troubles would only increase during the 1980s: central government expenditure, inflation and unemployment kept rising through the early 1980s

<sup>xviii</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was not set up to do economic analysis or particularly focus on economic crimes, but it did include 'business hearings' and the AHI was part of it. The hearings on the business community, including AHI, were only a small part of the process. Of course, the crimes of the business community were of a very different character and category than the human rights violations that were at the core of the Committee's work. In general, the crimes were more subtle and indirect, while not being without extremely severe consequences for the non-white population of South Africa. Of all the parties who were invited to submit to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and to reveal and reflect upon what they had done wrong during apartheid, the business world was not the most important. Most serious crimes were committed by the army, the police and the security forces. Most responsibility for those crimes was carried by the politicians.

<sup>xix</sup> In 2008, I have interned for four months at Solidarity. They provided me with an office at the research department, In that time, I did over 40 interviews with the management of Solidarity. I also did interviews with activists and members. Apart from interviews, I participated in meetings, conferences, fieldtrips, and other activities. The internship provided me with unparalleled access but also opportunity for many informal conversations. For that opportunity, I am deeply grateful to the people of Solidarity. I have made a return research visit in 2010.

<sup>xx</sup> The apartheid government assured support of the white working class by extending the state apparatus, setting up various state owned companies related to transportation, electricity, telecommunication and the steel industry. Apart from jobs, white workers obtained pension rights and health care. It was only when black protest became more effective, and business demanded a larger and better skilled labor force, that unions again would play an important role. O'Meara, D. (2009). *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Giliomee, H. B. (2010). *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. Charlotte, University of Virginia Press.

<sup>xxi</sup> When in the late 1970s, the Wiehahn-commission suggested the color-bar be lifted for various positions in the labor market including the mine industry, the proposals was interpreted by the union as a 'betrayal' of the white mineworkers and uncertainty increased among the members. Growing black resistance to apartheid was followed by increased state repression. In 1982 the first black union, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was born. In the same year, the Afrikaner Conservative Party separated from the National Party, an ideological split which resulted from apartheid system reform and its consequences for the white working class.

<sup>xxii</sup> Most white unions took a different path than the MWU. The union for municipal workers, for instance, opened their doors to blacks and became one of the first integrated unions. Instead, MWU aligned itself with the Conservative Party and various militant organizations like the Afrikaner Volkswag and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, to protest against the abolishment of race-based laws. They also supported

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the political idea of a volksstate, or a separate state for white South Africans, an idea that was taken up in the transition agreement between the National Party and the ANC but later deemed unviable. Although it must be noted that the MWU never formed a coherent coalition with the Conservative party and the right-wing militants, its members and leadership were often active in multiple conservative and extremist organizations.

<sup>xxiii</sup> The union stressed the threat to blankendom, or whiteness and the Afrikanervolk, or the Afrikaner people. Racial integration is objected because whites wanted the right to have a 'their own (white) identity.' They demand group rights and protection for the white workers in the corporative industry. It is important to note that the MWU did not only protest against increased access for blacks to jobs, but also against new regulations for the mixed use of facilities at work and the new programs to educate blacks for employment in the mines. It waged not only a fight for economic means but also for segregational practices on the work floor.

<sup>xxiv</sup> For instance, the MWU speaks of the coming 'national disaster' and the need for an 'operation self-defense.' The fear of a loss of privilege was palpable: 'Everything' the Afrikaner had built with 'sweat and tears' would fall back to 'third-world standards.' The old racist discourse was still firm in place. Racial integration remained depicted as a 'health risk' and the MWU presented itself as the only 'pure white union' that is culturally 'unconditional Christian' and 'unashamedly' for white workers. Integration in schools is protested for the 'infiltrasie van kultuurvreemdes,' or the infiltration of cultural strangers, as it was called in the racist language of the time.

<sup>xxv</sup> When the current CEO Flip Buys started at the union in 1997 the organization was in poor condition. Membership had dropped below 30,000 people and the union was all but financially bankrupt. Perhaps most importantly the public profile of the union was tarnished by years of supporting and defending apartheid. Buys thought a different politics was possible for Afrikaners and envisioned a broad-based movement for the interests of the Volk (or the Afrikaner people), much like the Israeli labor union Histadrut had been in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century for the Israelis.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Rechtstellende Aktie*, or affirmative action programs officially became law in 1998 by the ANC government. Since then, Solidarity has assisted white workers who felt that the way these programs were executed in their companies was unlawful. In 1998, the MWU adopted its own official position on affirmative action. Instead of direct opposition, the union argued for support of affirmative action. They said it was necessity but it should be 'balanced' and not create 'new inequalities.' Affirmative action was not to 'hurt' whites and should not lead to 'deterioration of public services.'

<sup>xxvii</sup> Maybe, empirically, such claims are justified if they are limited to the many ex-combatants among the white population. But today, commentators like Desmond Tutu suggest that all Afrikaners suffer from trauma. Even young Afrikaners, some claim, experience a perpetrator trauma Jansen, J. (2009). Knowledge in the blood: confronting race and the apartheid past, Stanford University Press..

<sup>xxviii</sup> He actually speaks of magnanimity, which can be loosely translated to pride.

<sup>xxix</sup> Pride thus requires but also enhances the other good virtues. When someone who is not worthy thinks he is, he is called vain and conceited. These people are seen as mistaken and as ignorant fools.

<sup>xxx</sup> In addition, they found that the expression of pride is reliably recognized by four-year old infants and adults over different cultures. This included a highly isolated pre-literate tribe.

<sup>xxxi</sup> This process starts around the age of two-and-a-half and depends quite a lot on the social environment of a person as the self is construed based mainly on culture.

<sup>xxxii</sup> It can do so in several ways: one of which is the reinforcing and motivating of someone to perform behavior and acquire skills that are socially valued. Research further shows that a proud person perseveres longer on an array of tasks and, importantly, that good results did not lead to perseverance if they were not accompanied by feelings of pride Williams, L. A. and D. DeSteno (2008). "Pride Adaptive social emotion or seventh sin?..." Association for Psychological Science 20(3): 284-288..