Unity, Fragmentation and the Moral Self

in South African High Schools

By

Christina Cappy

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Anthropology and Educational Policy Studies)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2016

Date of final oral examination: 12/5/2016

The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

 Claire Leone Wendland, Professor, Anthropology

 Amy E. Stambach, Professor, Anthropology and Educational Policy Studies

 Katherine A. Bowie, Professor, Anthropology

 Nancy Kendall, Associate Professor, Educational Policy Studies

 Gay W. Seidman, Professor, Sociology

Abstract

Drawing on the lives and experiences of students attending low-income, all-black rural and township high schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, this dissertation analyzes how youths' sense of belonging emerges from their understandings of morality. When students explain social divisions to themselves, they often draw lines between "good" and "bad" people based on notions of moral reciprocity, evaluating how people assist and aid one another. Students' moral lens extends beyond their assessments of individuals to encompass categories of people, such as immigrants, government representatives, and the older generation that refuses to let go of the "apartheid mind."

This research contributes to educational policy studies by analyzing the role that schooling plays in framing youths' moral views of the world. As young South Africans reflect upon and participate in schooling—particularly in morning assemblies, cultural activities, and English and history classes—they rework their sense of belonging, as well as their ideals of morality and the future. Through daily lessons they engage in the process of moral translation, transforming text, words, and actions into ideas of how they should live and behave as moral human beings.

This dissertation furthers anthropological theory about the self and society by showing that students use a moral lens to choose their friends and form relations with those more powerful than themselves. Many young people decide to associate with those who are "going forward" in life. Through schooling, youth express their understandings of "right" relationships through the idiom of kinship. By claiming to be the "good" child who is going places, students ask teachers to act as parents and provide them with material and emotional support. They draw on notions of moral reciprocity to pursue goals in contexts characterized by insecurity. These

findings offer insights into the lives, educational experiences, and future aspirations of the understudied majority of young people in South Africa.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Jehova sat toward the front of the room next to a few of his closest friends at Siyabonga High School. He participated in class discussion and took copious notes from the writing that filled the board. He had a quiet demeanor, yet when he spoke he did so with conviction and confidence. Sitting erect he repeatedly raised his hand to ask the teacher about Gandhi's role in South African history. When a student asked about the early aims of the African National Congress Jehova's voice cut through the chatter from neighboring classes, "To overthrow white supremacy and attain equal rights." Although Jehova struggled with some subjects, he often stayed after school with his friends to continue studying. He would talk of how school can give one information so "you look on the good side and you can see how you can live in life."

Throughout the day Jehova rarely left the classroom, and when he did he stayed just outside leaning against the classroom wall flanked by a few young men. While their uniforms were clean and pressed, stray threads revealed seams that had been re-stitched over and over again. Occasionally the young men would chat outside the classroom door while chewing on lollipops, but they explained that they never visited the women who sold bananas, apples, hot dogs and bread. They were hungry in the middle of the day, but they didn't have pocket money to buy food. If they brought food from home, they would be laughed at. They stuck together because according to Jehova, "We know the situation that we come from, we have chosen friends that are belonging to our stage," instead of choosing "friends that are rich that will not try to support you if you don't have money to buy food."

Jehova had moved several times over the course of his life. He was born in this large township, Umlazi, and lived with his mother until he was five or six when his father took him away to a rural area. He said that his mother drank a lot and he assumed she lived somewhere

nearby, but he hadn't seen her for many years. In the rural area Jehova stopped going to school in third grade so he could look after his sister's baby and the family cattle. When his aunt discovered this she brought him back to Umlazi to live with her. The best year in Jehova's life was shortly after he moved in with his aunt. He joined a soccer team and was given a bib and shoes to keep. The name he gave himself for this study, Jehova, was the name of a soccer player on the Kaizer Chiefs. It is in remembrance of his childhood dream to be a soccer star.

Now Jehova lived with his aunt and his brother; she supported him with the little money she made and his father visited every so often. Although he failed grade nine at this school—the fourth school he had attended in the last several years—he said it was because he was careless, he was playing. "I was not responsible to my work, yeah, that is all I can say," came his words. He recognized that one of his biggest challenges is navigating his social arena filled with people who want to push him in the "wrong direction." "What we are up against is children that I live with in my community." He spoke of how the kids with money would buy dagga or umgwinyo.[1] He had to watch out for "bad friends," who influence him to do things that are not good. If "you get friends that are older than you and they just push you, hey, do this and you will be strong, you will be a man." He said there were too many parents who were not taking care of children, who would just try to "forget" things if children were doing things that are "not good."

Although Jehova recognized many challenges he faced on a daily basis—lack of money, crime and drugs around him—he regularly spoke of his future plans. At times he claimed he knew he would be a businessman who would run a farm. He would manage people; telling them to do things that they liked sometimes, and that they didn't like other times. On other occasions Jehova said that he would be a policeman in order to make some money. He didn't have money

---

[1] *Dagga* is Afrikaans for marijuana and is used by different language speakers in South Africa. *Umgwinyo*, often called "data" or "Mercedes," is a popularly consumed drug among youth that is similar to ecstasy. It is often cut with different substances and resulted in several deaths among high school students in the past few years.

to go to university now, but if he could make some as a police officer then he could save up to study drama and become an actor. He would stay in school, finish grade 12, and then he could continue down this path.

<div align="center">*   *   **</div>

Like many young people living in South Africa, Jehova had lived a life that many would consider challenging. He had moved multiple times, lived with a relative who was not one of his biological parents, failed grades in school, struggled financially, and attempted to navigate an environment which was both physically and morally dangerous. Yet, throughout his narrative he not only accepted and claimed responsibility for issues he had faced, but regularly asserted where his future goals and potential lie. Although his imagined future changed in terms of career he always projected his life as moving "forward," representing a claim to who he is through his future aspirations.

Jehova's story reflects the experiences of many youth and therefore inspires consideration into the ways that South African youth embrace different forms of belonging through schooling. In a country fraught with inequalities, racism, high unemployment, and violence, citizens and politicians alike have frequently turned to education as a solution to these social issues. Schooling is claimed not only to provide skills that will lead to employment, but encourage social cohesion and tolerance among people of different races. Youth—the next generation—are presented as the bringers of change for the new "Rainbow Nation" who will help citizens of the new democracy unite. What is missing from this discourse, however, are the lived experiences that many youth face on a daily basis. For while many politicians see social divisions as rooted in racial difference, Jehova and his friends were more concerned with the financial and moral challenges they saw dividing their social worlds.

The disjuncture between the media-promulgated story of the new South Africa and Jehova's social experiences of belonging form the central pillar of this dissertation. I came to South Africa to understand how education addresses social fragmentation to develop a more cohesive society, to grasp what forms of social belonging schools conferred. Through my research I realized that most studies that examine questions of social unity and fragmentation among South African youth center exclusively in former white school contexts where many young, often middle-class people of different races intermingle. Consequently, research has focused on race as the key social division in the new democratic country. While valuable research demonstrates how race continues to be an important marker of identity in these spaces, it overlooks the lives and schooling of the majority of youth in the country. Reflection upon this disunion begs the questions: How do most youth experience social unity and fragmentation in their world? How do educational practices speak to and frame their views? And finally, what are the broader implications for understanding how young South Africans enact different forms of social unity? In other words, as anthropologists, educational practitioners, and human beings— why should we care?

Contributions of This Research: Youth Belonging through Morality

This research contributes to an understanding of how young South Africans experience forces that unite and divide their world and the role that schooling plays in framing this experience. I will show that youths' sense of belonging emerges from their understandings of morality—and most importantly, their *imagined moral futures*. When youth explain social divisions to themselves, they often draw lines between "good" and "bad" people in their society based on notions of reciprocity. This moral lens extends beyond individuals to encompass categories of people, such as immigrants, government representatives, and the older generation

that refuses to let go of the "apartheid mind." Schooling plays a transformative role in framing young South Africans' moral views of the world. As youth reflect upon and participate in educational practices, including morning assemblies, cultural activities, and English and history classes, they rework their sense of belonging and assertions of their moral futures. Through daily lessons they engage in the process of *moral translation*, transforming text, words and actions into ideas of how they should live and behave as moral human beings.

Moreover, South African youth use this moral lens not only to express a sense of self, but to choose their friends and form relations with those more powerful than themselves. Many young people choose to associate with people who are "going forward" in life—a term used by many students in this study. Through school practices youth and teachers engage in their understandings of "right" kind of relationships through the idiom of kinship. By claiming to be the "good" student who is going places, students could ask teachers to act as parents and provide them with material and emotional support. They could draw on the moral modes of reciprocity to seek stability to pursue future goals in contexts characterized by insecurity. These findings offer insights into the lives, educational experiences and future aspirations of many young people in South Africa, and contribute to scholarship in anthropological theory, South African youth identity, and educational policy. While contributions to these fields overlap at times, they are separately analyzed below for clarity.

Contributions to Anthropological Theory

This research contributes to anthropological literature on youth, the future, and morality by revealing how youth use imaginations of the moral future to make sense of and take action in the world. Although studies of youth remained of secondary focus to classical anthropological studies, their numbers have grown in the past two decades. Building from Margaret Mead's

(1928) foundational work on young Samoan women and adolescence, anthropologists have come to recognize how "youth" represent neither a fixed chronological or psychological stage in life. Rather, youth is both a relational and culturally constructed category (Durham 2000:115). Durham argues that youth must be understood as a "social shifter," where a shifter is "a special kind of deictic or indexical term, a term that works not through absolute referentiality to a fixed context, but one that relates the speaker to a relational, or indexical, context" (Durham 2000:116). Like the terms "here" or "us," youth can only be understood within their specific social and historical context. Youth as a category indexes a range of relationships through which personhood and moral agency are expressed, thereby offering insights into the ways in which social action and expectations are formulated within a context (Durham 2004).

Drawing on this understanding of youth as a social shifter, contemporary anthropological studies have analyzed how youth reveal different social phenomena, such as the globalization of goods and ideas, political struggles and national belonging, generational changes, migration, and crises of social reproduction, among other social phenomena (Cheney 2007; Coe 2005; Kaplan 2006; Kendall 2007; Khosravi 2008; Lazar 2010; Lukose 2005; Ngwane 2001; Sorensen 2008; Stambach 2000; Weiss 2009). These studies show how youth and schooling are good to "think with" across a range of social studies. While I engage elsewhere with how anthropological studies of youth and education contribute to our understanding of shifting consumerism patterns, cosmopolitan identities, forms of national belonging, and international mobility (Cappy unpublished), in this dissertation I build upon anthropological studies that focus on the relationship between youth and the future.

Scholarship that has analyzed youth as a social shifter frequently recognizes that "youth" is often perceived as a paradigmatic figure of potential and change in the future (Cole and

Durham 2008). The central focus on the imagined futures of youth emerges in media, voices of elders, and largely through educational practices. As Stambach (2017) points out, temporality is a central component of education. Through calendars, exams, and deadlines the "time of education orients continuously forward, toward the immediate or near-term future" (Stambach 2017:3). By attending school and studying certain subjects, youth are directed to ideas of who and where they will be in the future.

Contemporary studies have demonstrated how schooling has shaped youths' future aspirations and hopes in unequal ways (Mains 2012; Masquelier 2013; Sommers 2012; Weiss 2009). They draw on Appadurai's (1996) idea that the "capacity to aspire" is created through global geographies and expressed unevenly across contexts. In resource-poor areas, such as Ethiopia, Mains (2012) examines what happens when educated but unemployed youth are unable to attain their desires for the future. His informants completed high school with the expectation that this would lead to employment within the public sector, only to find limited jobs available due to neoliberal policies that cut public sector jobs. They then turned to consumption of international films, among other sources, to conceptualize unemployment as an issue of time with a spatial solution: emigration, particularly to the US. Similarly, Weiss's (2009) study of young men in Tanzania reveals that through consumerism practices, such as certain hairstyles and listening to rap music, many hope for a certain (cosmopolitan) future, yet due to unemployment they are unable to attain this vision. Other anthropologists, including Sommers (2012), have noted how young Rwandans' inability to make money and thereby get married and build a home prevents them from reaching adulthood.

Youth, in these contexts, aspire toward a future but experience a stagnation of time. Because of economic limitations their futures are placed "on hold," so to speak. They experience

what Ferguson refers to as abjection (Ferguson 1999:236), or a disconnection from the expected benefits offered by modernization (economic stability, integration into global consumerist practices, etc.). Youth then have come to be seen, in both political discourse and by the older generation, not as beacons of hope for a "better future," but as a problematic category in need of direction. Not only are they seen as problematic, but their use of time becomes moralized by the older generation and government officials. Masquelier (2013) highlights how Nigerien men's use of time, particularly their lengthy tea rituals in fadas, or male social groups, is moralized by elders. Elders claim that young men pick up immoral pastimes at the fada, like drinking and smoking, stealing from elders, developing addictions, or ignoring call for prayer (2013:481). Whether these activities are real or imagined, elders' words underscore how perceptions of time and the future are placed within a moral framework.

Rather than approach the topic of youth, temporality, and morality from the perspective of elders, other scholars have reviewed how youth moralize their use of time to represent and engage with the world. For instance, Frye (2012) examines how youth in Malawi don't formulate their future career goals as rational calculations, but as moral claims to a virtuous identity. They are aware that their aspirations are unlikely to materialize, yet their "forward thinking" makes them "morally worthy" beings (2012:26). Turning attention to South African youth, Swartz (2009) explores how township youth have a strong sense of right and wrong. While she does not explicitly theorize how they discuss the future to assert their moral identities, her fieldwork reveals how many young men and women speak of the future to do just this.

I build upon this research to demonstrate how youths' moral futures—as approached by young people themselves—not only represent assertions of a moral identity as analyzed in previous studies, but are a *means* to choose friends and justify requests upon others. To define

the meaning of "moral futures," I draw on Beldo's (2014) definition of morality as an unconditional "ought." Beldo explains that an unconditional ought does not merely represent a suggestion regarding what one should do—what constitutes "good" and "right" ways to act—but indicates an imperative that reveals a moral claim. This understanding of morality is by definition future oriented; it directs attention to actions that have yet to occur. When I discuss moral futures I am referring more specifically to the ways in which youth project their *life trajectories* several years into the future based on how they understand right and wrong in the present. Thus, while morality can be understood to focus on immediate action, moral futures can be understood as the ways youth envision their life paths beyond schooling.

The first theoretical contribution of this dissertation demonstrates that youth use imagined moral futures to divide the world between "good" and "bad" people. I argue that young people use ideas of how a person or a group of people is "moving forward" in life toward the future, or throwing away their future and sitting at home, as a central pivot for categorizing people. Young people did not speak of immoral futures, but sitting at home or engaging in crime was presented as having *no* future. While previous studies have focused on uneven future aspirations, my research reveals how youth will select friends according to their perception of others' moral futures. The central chapters of this dissertation further explore how this moral framing of the world circulates not only through young people's words, but also educational practices inside and outside the classroom. These methodological and pedagogical implications of performing messages of the right way forward will be further discussed below.

The second contribution to anthropological theory concerns the matter of how schooling both structures youths' performances of morality among their peers and shapes "right relationships" between students and teachers. In these hierarchical relationships, teachers and

youth draw on the idiom of kinship to emphasize the ideal forms of exchange both parties should enact. While teachers should provide students with material and emotional support like good parents, youth affirm their dedication to their education and futures like good children. By acting out these moral relationships, youth could justify their requests and expectations regarding how teachers should assist them. Conceptualizing one's own moral future and the moral futures of others is therefore not just an identity, but a tool that youth use to act upon the world.

Contributions to South African Scholarship on Education, Youth Identity and Belonging

In addition to contributions to anthropological theory, this research offers insights relevant to scholarship on South African youth identity and belonging by moving beyond the emphasis on race to examine how youth experience social belonging through a moral lens. Previous research has focused on race as the primary marker of social identification (Carter 2012; Dawson 2007; Dolby 2001; McKinney 2007; Nuttall 2008; Soudien 2010; Vandeyar and Jansen 2008). Most of these studies have taken place exclusively in former white schools. In her ethnography, *Constructing Race: Youth, Identity, and Popular Culture in South Africa*, Dolby (2001) explores how youth in a former white school in Durban, South Africa, express and develop their racialized identities through taste practices, including symbolic dress. She frames her research with the understanding that South Africa does not constitute youths' "imagined community" (citing Anderson 1983) as it would in other nations. Rather, she argues that youth experience attachment through the (globalized) notion of race. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1984) concept of taste, Dolby analyzes how taste practices both create and recreate representations of race. Although using the same framework of Dolby to explore how youth express taste, Carter (2012) turns attention to how South African schools can diminish symbolic (racial) boundaries in schools to shape the practices of adolescents. She concludes that taste corresponds more closely

to an ascribed racial identity—a racial identity structured by school practices and South African society—rather than through the diffusion of youth culture from around the globe (2012:61). Carter further highlights the salient feeling of place that many South Africans experience, yet analyzes place in terms of race—white (suburbs) and black (townships).

McKinney (2007) also takes a different symbolic approach, turning attention to how black South Africans' deployment of English shapes others' perceptions of them, as well as perceptions of themselves, in former white schools in Johannesburg. She details how the term "coconut" has been used by youth to refer to black people who speak like a white person, who speak English most of the time, who choose to speak English rather than an African language, and/or black people who are acting white (they are black on the outside, but are white on the inside). In doing so, she points to how language use intersects with youths' racial identities.

Although this valuable research demonstrates the continued importance of race as a marker of self-identity, in all-black secondary schools an exclusive focus on apartheid-era classifications can overshadow other important forces of fragmentation and unity. South African policymakers and scholars have regularly employed the term "social cohesion" to explore a wide range of social phenomena as will be discussed in Chapter 2. "Social cohesion" is central in policy language and implies smoothing over the divisions of apartheid to increase social integration within horizontal relationships. In this dissertation, I instead use the concepts of unity and fragmentation to analyze the forces that youth see bringing people together or pulling them apart. By focusing on forces of fragmentation I can analyze how youth experience their social worlds across hierarchical and horizontal relationships. Moreover, I employ the term "belonging" to examine how youth position themselves within the moral framework they use to divide the world. My use of belonging moves beyond an exploration of constructed social

categories or youth "cliques" to examine how youth place themselves within both hierarchical social networks and temporalized representations of morality.

In turning attention to youth belonging in former black schools—the most common, yet most understudied schools in the country—this dissertation reveals, first, how many young South Africans understand forces of social fragmentation in their world through a *moral lens*. As Swartz (2009) demonstrates in her study on township youth morality, young, poor South Africans have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pattenden (2017) further examines how marginalized, black students in the Eastern Cape learned about moral possibilities—namely hope—via the themes of betterment and responsibility through schooling. He observes how youth attempt to embody the moral discourses of their teachers by going to school to live a better life. Building from these works, this dissertation further examines how youths' moral lens is constructed through interpretations of what it means to pursue a *moral future*.

The second contribution this dissertation offers to South African scholarship entails the role that *educational practices* play in shaping youths' experiences of belonging. Previous research in South Africa largely overlooks how processes of schooling structure belonging and morality in schools, which is a central component of my research. Instead, most analyze students' sense of belonging to social groupings without paying close attention to school curricula and practice (Dawson 2007; Dolby 2001; Nuttall 2008; Soudien 2007; Soudien 2010; Swartz 2009). Despite government rhetoric that emphasized how schooling can produce "social cohesion" and "nation-building," many studies do not connect curriculum changes, teachers' daily lessons, or interactions in the classroom with students' social experiences.

A few notable exceptions to this trend analyze classroom practices to highlight the broader implications of pedagogy on youths' social interpretations and experiences (Fleetwood

2012; Hues 2011; Teeger 2015). Hues' (2011) and Teeger's (2015) studies of history education in former white schools reveal how teachers address race in the classroom through learning about the past. Hues' classroom observations demonstrate how classes developed a "we/they" dichotomy to highlight the differences between Afrikaans-speaking whites and non-whites. Teeger, instead, notes how teachers attempted to develop a rupture between the country's apartheid past and democratic present, thereby silencing black students' opinions on the continued effects of apartheid. Fleetwood's (2012) research in former white schools likewise deals with issues of national belonging and race through her examination of practice in life orientation courses. These studies demonstrate the importance of pedagogical practice in generating different modes of belonging, yet due to their research in desegregated, former white schools, they focus on how classroom practice deals with racial identities.

In contrast, this research examines how educational practice—both inside and outside the classroom—frames youths' sense of belonging through imaginations of the future. Chapter 4 examines how teachers and students perform messages of youths' moral futures through morning assembly practices. In this chapter I build on Butler's (1990; 1993) theory of performativity to analyze the ways in which youth enact visions of their "right" paths forward through daily repetitive acts. Chapters 5 and 6 explore how youth engage in the process of *moral translation* wherein they rework class materials and exercises into ideas of how they should live as moral beings. I use the term moral translation to analyze how youth reflect on the lessons they learn in the classroom and apply them to the context of their own lives. This dynamic process reveals how pedagogical practices contribute to the ways in which youth divide the world through moral imaginations of the future.

Contributions to Scholarship on Educational Policy

This final point on *moral translation*, or the ways in which how youth rework their lessons to recognize how they ought to live as moral beings, constitutes a contribution to studies in education more broadly. In short, it reveals processes of schooling that direct youth on how to live in the "right way," a discourse which circles and feeds back into how youth frame social unity and fragmentation in the world. As Zigon (2009) highlights, institutions have the power to promote different versions of morality among youth. Despite this, relatively little attention has been paid to the mechanisms through which youth embrace moral messages.

This research shows that when teachers select course material that relates to students' lived experiences, students will reinterpret their lessons into messages of their future actions and beliefs. Chapter 5 turns attention to life orientation and English classes. It shows that while life orientation has been promoted by scholars and policymakers as means to instill (moral) values among youth (Pillay 2012; Prinsloo 2007; Theron and Dalzell 2006), young South Africans take away little from this class in that regard. In contrast, students frequently engaged in the processes of moral translation with English class material despite a lack of scholarly attention to the subject. My analysis indicates that this is the case because English teachers more frequently select English material that engages themes that directly speak to youths' lives. In the contexts of former black schools, the themes that struck youth the most were poverty, violence, racial reconciliation, and hope. As Chapter 6 discusses, youth also frequently connect lessons about the past—particularly South Africa's past—to messages of how to act and live in the future.

Moreover, this research contributes to education scholarship by demonstrating that when youth engage in the process of moral translation, they consider a form of morality that emphasizes individualized morality over collective interpretations. In other words, youth reflect on how they should be personally responsible for their education and future with little thought of

the need to challenge existing injustices in society. This theme is raised throughout the chapters and its implications are explored in the concluding chapter. I indicate that this enacted form of individualized morality through schooling obscures structural inequalities of gender, race and class that shape young South Africans' daily lives. This individualized morality may hinder democratic action to foster social change that will address unequal power structures present in society. This analysis therefore contributes to educational research on best practices by offering insights into the broader implications of the moral frames employed in education.

And finally, this research offers a methodological contribution to anthropological, educational and South African studies through its analysis of moral messages performed in the "in-between" spaces of school morning assemblies. Much research has examined how classroom practices generate values and morality (Fleetwood 2012; Hammett and Staeheli 2013; Hues 2011; Hunt 2011; Teeger 2015), as well as how youth experience social belonging outside of the school context (Dawson 2007; Dolby 2001; Soudien 2007; Swartz, et al. 2012). Yet morning assemblies represent intermediate spaces of schooling that are *not* formally recognized by the curriculum. These meetings at the beginning of the school day offer important opportunities for teachers and students to enact messages of youths' "right" paths forward. In analyzing these performances, this dissertation points to the importance of examining the role of in-between spaces in future educational research on youth belonging.

To summarize, this research contributes to scholarship in anthropological theory, South African youth identity, and educational policy. It contributes to anthropological theory by arguing that youth use their moral imaginations of the future to understand social unity and fragmentation in the world. Youth further assert their understandings of moral relationships to justify their requests of material and emotional support from adults with more influence and

resources than themselves. This understanding of how youth see the world as divided through a moral lens moves beyond South African studies of social belonging that draw on race as the primary marker of social division. It further contributes to literature on South African youth identity by demonstrating the role that educational practices play in framing youths' experiences of social belonging and morality. Lastly, this research contributes to literature on educational policy more broadly by revealing how youth perform a morality centered on individual rather than collective action through practices both inside and outside the classroom.

Methods

To examine how youth experienced belonging through schooling, I conducted 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork in three school communities in KwaZulu-Natal. The details of these school sites, and their location within the broader South African education system, will be discussed in the following chapter. For now, let it suffice to say that these schools were selected due to their varied levels of urbanization (rural, peri-urban, and urban), as well as their former designation as black schools. All of these schools were in low-income areas that were designated as black areas under apartheid, and the apartheid legacy remains in these schools as they continue to serve black-only populations, the majority of whom are mother-tongue Zulu speakers. These schools are marginalized materially and economically to various degrees, with the most rural school lacking running water and the urban school managing a small science lab with limited resources. The purpose of conducting research in three field sites was to develop a broader perspective of the educational experiences of youth in the most common, yet most understudied schools in the country.

In each field site I lived in or near the school. In the rural school, which I call Ikwezi High School, I lived with teachers. In the peri-urban school, called Entabeni Secondary School, I

resided on a nearby goat farm next to several students. In both of these locations I commuted to and from school with fellow teachers and students by taxi or car. To attend the urban school, or Siyabonga High School, I drove from a nearby suburb independently by car, although other teachers at the school also lived in the suburb. Specifics of my residence, which will be detailed in the subsequent chapter, were fundamental in establishing positive rapport in these communities. By spending time with teachers, student-teachers, staff and students both inside and outside of the school grounds, I was able to foster a more open relationship that aided in carrying out my research.

Participant Observations

In each site I conducted participant observation within the school grounds and the community. Daily commutes to school offered a relaxed environment to communicate with teachers and students about daily activities, as well as school work. In addition, afternoons were a good time for socialization with members of the community, as I spent time on my front porch with visitors in the rural area or visited nearby shops in the urban area. These informal interactions gave me a deeper understanding of the world that students and teachers experience day in and day out, thereby providing a backdrop for my analysis of schooling.

I also conducted participant observations on the school grounds every day. I regularly arrived to each school one hour before classes began and remained at school until the last students left. With this extra time, I engaged students in a range of informal activities, such as language conversation groups, homework assistance, arranging student-run skits, and simply chatting with anyone who was interested. Morning conversation groups were open to all students in the school and frequently contained 8-12 students from eighth to eleventh grade. In these groups, students would decide what topics we would discuss. Topics they selected included

"school," "family," and "dreams," among others. I also selected some topics that were of interest to my research, including "history class" and "life orientation class." The structure of these groups was open ended. Some groups decided that we should alternate between English and Zulu, perhaps speaking in each language for five minutes before switching. Others focused on how each participant should take a turn speaking, in contrast to an open conversation structure that some preferred. These morning sessions allowed students to practice their language skills in a mode that they selected, as well as provided me with background conversations that aided in my subsequent focus group and interview sessions.

I further made announcements to students of all grade levels that any time throughout the school day I would assist them with school work if they did not have a teacher. Some students came and brought me to their classes where we would talk about a range of topics. In one such instance, many of the students asked me a number of questions about the United States, my family, dating practices, apartheid, religion, and how HIV is transmitted. Other times classes asked for assistance in their coursework, frequently for LO, history, English, and math subjects. Occasionally, students would fetch me in groups of two and ask to work independently in a quiet space such as the library. These individual sessions led to discussion of a similarly wide range of topics, but often with a more personal approach. Like morning conversation groups, these interactions offered insights that helped me understand topics that youth regarded as very important. Working with students on their schoolwork also allowed me to give something back to the students, albeit small.

In addition to morning sessions, classwork assistance and informal conversations, I attended a range of school activities, including morning assemblies, cultural activities, matric balls, debate team events, and football matches. I had not anticipated the importance of many of

these activities to youths' social experience, but came to learn how important they were in shaping youths' imagined moral futures and sense of belonging while in the field. Morning assemblies, in particular, proved a crucial space wherein youth learn and construct messages about their righteous paths forward in life. During morning assemblies, I either stood in the front of the assemblies with teachers or alongside students. Immediately following the morning assembly, I would write down field notes of the events that had transpired. Morning assembly activities will be dealt with explicitly in Chapter 4, while other school activities inform my analysis in chapters throughout the dissertation.

Participant observations enabled me to develop a "thick description" (Geertz 1973), or the ability to analyze action within a cultural context. Drawing on approaches from semiotic and symbolic anthropology (Mertz 2007; Shaw 1994), I could further observe how youth articulated their sense of self and projections of their moral futures through symbolic action, attire, and language. As Shaw points out, youth frequently "take an active role in substituting meanings that they hope will enhance their status and self-image" and "select categories and styles that reaffirm their loyalty to local moral worlds and status domains" (Shaw 1994:87). Young South Africans would not only verbalize their moral selves, but also demonstrate their moral status through posture, physical location, and performances. Teachers, likewise, contributed to the constructions of embodied aspects of morality both inside and outside the classroom. Through these ethnographic approaches I analyzed how youth articulated and demonstrated their senses of moral identities and social belonging.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations constituted a central method to my research. In each school, I observed eleventh grade classroom sessions, including English, history and life orientation

courses, attending closely to how educators and learners engaged with materials. During these subject periods, I would sit on the benches with students and take handwritten notes of class exercises. I also noted the number of students in the class, as well as approximate seating arrangements (gender divisions, location of my participants, etc.) and general behavior of students (chatty, cold, silent, rowdy, etc.). If the teacher was not present I remained in the room casually chatting with students. I conducted between 30-40 classroom observations in each site. Because LO was scheduled to be taught twice a week and English/history four to five times a week, I conducted more English and history class observations.

I had three goals in conducting classroom observations. First, I wanted to examine what topics and materials English, history, and life orientation subjects covered, as well as how teachers were teaching them. By attending closely to how teachers taught topics that pertained to shared values, I sought to uncover how students embraced different forms of social belonging. This leads me to my second goal in classroom observation—to understand how youth engaged with the materials that were covered in classroom sessions. I recorded youths' responses in class, including what questions they asked, discussions they held, as well as expressions of engagement, boredom, and disinterest in class happenings. These observations helped me grasp which topics and teaching styles resonated most strongly with students. And finally, through classroom observations I hoped to make students and staff more comfortable with my presence before commencing focus groups and interviews. Sitting next to students on benches during the day and sharing books helped break down social barriers of age, race, and nationality, which will be further addressed below.

Research approval for this study was received from University of Wisconsin-Madison's Internal Review Board and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Teachers consented to

classroom observations prior to the commencement of research. In addition, prior to commencing classroom observations I passed out consent forms that contained details of my research to the classes I planned to observe. Consent forms were written in both English and Zulu, and they notified students that I would be conducting classroom observations. If students were interested in participating in focus groups and interviews they could return a signed consent form to me. In the case of minors, a parent or legal guardian was required to sign the consent form.

Focus Groups

I led focus groups after at least six weeks of observation. Modeling my methods from Dawson (2007) who used "friendship groups" in her study of youth identity, my focus groups were also comprised of friendship groups. Participants were allowed to select group members—their friends and peers—so that participants would feel more comfortable and open during our sessions. Because of this, most focus groups were divided according to economic status and perceived moral positioning, a friendship formation trend that will be explored more in Chapter 3. When scheduling focus groups, I drew on information I gathered during classroom observations to try to select interested students from a range of economic and social backgrounds. I worked with between five to eight focus groups in each field site. Each group met between one to three times, depending on student interest, and lasted from one to two hours. We met when students had free periods or most often after school.

In focus groups, I first asked students to select their pseudonyms, or "fake names," that they wrote down on name tags. Most students found this exercise enjoyable, and readily explained why they selected the names that they did. The intention of this exercise was to "break the ice" before diving into discussion on other topics, yet also I found youths' selection of

pseudonyms an important means through which they asserted expressions of their moral selves and futures. They often selected names of people who were role models in their lives, people who had been kind to them, or as statements of ways of being in the world. Some of their names will be examined throughout this dissertation. Following selection of pseudonyms, I asked for some background information on students, including age, languages spoken, years they had been at this school, previous places they lived, and residential situation.

In the first half of each focus group I asked students to discuss their social interactions with members of their community and their peers. Students explained who they spent the most time with in school and out of school, and why they passed their time with these people. This topic often led to a discussion on friendship—what friends were the best friends, as well as the risks of friendship. Students also debated social problems they see in their school and community, as well as people and institutions they see as aiding these social problems. Partway through the focus group, I asked students to turn over their name tags and respond to the question, "Who are you?" This served as a welcome break in the energized conversations and allowed students to write things that they perhaps were too concerned to express verbally. If their discussion of social interactions extended for over an hour, which happened about half of the time, the next topics covered happened during a separate sitting.

The second half of the focus group, or second time a group met, centered on students' school and class exercises. I asked students to recall and reflect on their class exercises, as well as their favorite activities. Through this discussion I could gauge which exercises resonated more with students and why. I further asked them to consider what values they had learned through these exercises. By leaving this question open ended, students were able to bring up a range of values, such as respect and responsibility. I then named several values that are promoted by the

official curriculum (discussed in the following chapter), such as equality, non-racism, and ubuntu, and asked them to reflect on how and if they learned these values. These conversations shed light on how pedagogy and selection of course material spoke to students' lived experiences and framed the ways in which they viewed social unity and fragmentation in the world. Students were also offered space to express changes that they wished to see around their school and communities.

In most focus groups students talked over one another and finished each other's sentences. Students often expressed appreciation for these discussions and requested that we meet more than once, although that had not been my original intention. One student was inspired to form his own focus group discussion on the topic of love for inspiration for his future aspiration of being a film director. As students grew more comfortable in the groups, they took more control of the direction of conversations, asking each other about topics of interest to them. Multiple meetings allowed us to dive into topics that youth deemed most important in their lives, as well as clarify ambiguities that had arisen in previous conversations.

Table 1: Research participants in this study divided by gender.

Participant Category	Male	Female	Mixed	Total
Teacher Interviews	11	9		20
Student Focus Groups	7	5	7	19
Student Interviews	13	12		25
Total Student Participants	46	36		82

Interviews

Student interviews were conducted after students had already participated in focus groups. I let students know during focus groups that I wanted to do a few interviews that

centered on students' lives, and often one or two from each focus group expressed interest in participation. Half of the interviews were conducted with individual students and the other half took place with pairs of students, depending on student preference. These interviews were recorded and transcribed with participant permission, and took place in informal settings. For example, students and I spoke while reorganizing books in the school library, thereby limiting uncomfortable eye contact when discussing sensitive topics. Others took place outside during break time, while watching other students eat and interact with one another.

In individual interviews I simply asked students to tell me about "their lives." This open-ended question resulted in a wealth of information, allowing students to discuss topics they felt were most relevant to their lives. While many spoke of the places they had lived and schools they had attended, throughout their narrative they also articulated their hopes, dreams, and concerns for the future. Their stories helped me grasp the experiences that youth face on a daily basis, the agency or lack of agency available to them in their life circumstances, as well as how youth assert their moral sense of self. Student life stories were further helpful in understanding why students felt a stronger connection with some topics covered in classes, as well as certain teachers. I conducted interviews with 8-13 students in each field site and each interview lasted from 0.5-1.5 hours.

Individual interviews were also conducted with teachers after at least six weeks of classroom observations. All English, history and LO teachers were interviewed, as well as three teachers from different subject areas and the principal of each school. Interviews were recorded if teachers felt comfortable with this, although some teachers requested that I take hand written notes instead. Through teacher interviews I sought to understand how and why these individuals had become teachers, their insights on challenges facing schools, and their perspectives on the

purposes of education. I focused specifically on their opinions and approaches to teaching values in school. Teacher interviews likewise lasted from 0.5-1.5 hours.

Critical Reflections

Developing rapport with students and teachers was a constant act of balance. I felt that my status as a white female in racially charged environments at times created barriers between myself and students and staff. When I first arrived at each site, students were more likely to address me as *umlungu* [white person], but after a few weeks they transitioned to calling me by my first name. This term, while meaning "white person," creates a label based on difference between the speaker and the addressed. I sought to minimize this difference through a number of means. I first emphasized my American and Italian national identities to distance myself from the historical and racial issues in South Africa. Very few of the teachers, and none of the students, had ever previously interacted with an American, and therefore based their opinions of Americans on media. Most students spoke of American musicians, black and white alike, and asked about President Obama. They held the conception that racism, while prevalent in parts of South Africa, was less significant in the United States. Students and staff knew little about Italy and found the words that I taught them quite entertaining. Furthermore, by emphasizing my foreign identity, I was able to ask students about race in South Africa in a way that students could talk about "white people" and Afrikaners that didn't include me in this category.

In addition, I spoke Zulu with students and staff from the onset at each field site. This limited potentially embarrassing moments of people talking about me without knowing I understood them, and reduced feelings of difference between myself and participants. Many students and teachers were surprised by my use of Zulu, stating they didn't know other white people who spoke their language. They were generally pleased and found my flawed Zulu a

source of laughter. Particularly embarrassing moments with my Zulu usage also helped break down barriers. (There are risks of asking a staff room filled with middle-aged teachers the slang terms you learned from teenagers.) Being able to conduct interviews and focus groups in both English and Zulu made students feel more comfortable and augmented communication.

My place of residence while in the field also helped to emphasize my similarities between myself, students and staff. As will be more fully explored in Chapter 2, at each field site I either lived with or near teachers and students. I frequently rode on public transportation with students and staff, or shared car rides with them. They saw me making tea in the afternoons, washing my clothes, and reading on my front step. By knowing where and how I lived students and staff could find similarities to their own ways of living.

Over time, I also learned that my perceived age helped students relate to me and teachers feel more comfortable with me sitting in their classrooms. Many students thought that I was two to three years older than themselves, which in the case of the older students was true. Because many of them had siblings my age, and due to my proclaimed status as a student (albeit a graduate student), most youth regarded me as an older peer mentor rather than a teacher. Also, unlike teachers at the school, I encouraged them to call me by my first name rather than my surname. Many teachers likewise treated me as a "student-teacher," offering me details of their teaching experience with less fear of repercussions from their superiors. They were able to schematically place me in the category of a student, rather than someone who sought to "correct" their ways of teaching. Many teachers also had sons and daughters my age and frequently likened my actions and behaviors—and consequently my status—to their own children. Thus, while my racial, economic, and national status differed from my research participants, I drew on commonalities that allowed me to break down these barriers and develop a positive rapport.

Dissertation Overview

Chapter 2 offers historical background on the shifting structures and curricula in South African education. It turns attention to the role of schooling in promoting shared values, morality, and social unity in secondary schools. The chapter begins by examining changes to the education system following the end of apartheid. It demonstrates that while these changes sought to desegregate schools, broaden educational access across racial and economic divides, and foster a sense of social unity through curricula reform, the South African education system remains bifurcated. With high performing former white schools on one end and low performing former non-white schools on the other, South African youth experience drastically different educational trajectories. Through an examination of scholarly literature on South African schools, I argue that an investigation of students' and teachers' experiences outside of former white schools is missing from current research. The remaining chapters of this dissertation seek to contribute to this much needed research among low-income, former black schools.

Chapter 3 focuses on South African youths' expressions and experience of social unity and fragmentation across the three school contexts. It demonstrates that despite an emphasis on racial divisions in contemporary research, youth in this study see social divisions as far more complex than a matter of "black" or "white." Rather, youth frame a large portion of how they view cohesion and division in moral terms. When youth explain social divisions to themselves, they often draw lines between "good" and "bad" people in their society based people's imagined futures. When individuals are seen to be "moving forward"—through the ways they spend and share money, work, study, and behave—they are recognized as moral persons headed toward a worthy future. This moral lens extends beyond individuals to encompass categories of people, such as immigrants and the older generation that refuses to let go of the "apartheid mind." Only

by looking at how youth understand their world, can we begin to grasp the ways in which schooling can frame and contribute to social unity in South Africa.

Chapter 4 steps inside schools to examine the ways in which educational practices performed at the start of the school day communicate moral messages among youth. It illustrates how teachers and students perform moral possibilities through daily morning assembly performances. These performances draw on four themes: Christian references, critiques of society, demonstrations of success, and commemoration of historical moments. By analyzing morning assembly practices, I argue that youth negotiate moral possibilities that articulate their futures premised on personal and social responsibility. Methodologically, this chapter offers important insights into the ways in which educational practices beyond the classroom contribute to youths' values, belonging, and morality.

Chapter 5 focuses on how practices in life orientation (LO) and English classes contribute to youths' sense of morality. It reveals that while policymakers have targeted LO courses as the primary subject through which to promote national values, this course does little to encourage reflection on values among students. Youth only recognized that LO *was supposed* to teach values, but did not feel that the course was achieving this. Instead, English classes inspired far more reflection because the literature that teachers selected spoke to students' own life circumstances. When youth relate to teaching and course material, they engage in the process of moral translation. Through moral translation youth rework their lessons into ideas of how they should live and behave as moral human beings in the future.

Chapter 6 continues with the analysis of curricula and pedagogy to examine how youth draw on lessons from their history classes to engage in the process of moral translation. It demonstrates how youth use moralistic language to distinguish themselves from previous

generations by recognizing themselves as the "good generation" in contrast to the "bad older" people with the "apartheid mind." Students further referenced historical figures, such as Nelson Mandela, to justify their moral beliefs and actions. History education, therefore, is not just about the past, but generates a sense of morality that is projected into imaginations of the future.

Chapter 7 builds upon these previous analyses of how education frames youths' moral understandings of unity and fragmentation by examining how students and teachers engage in exchange relationships in contexts of poverty and insecurity. Through school practices, students and teachers draw on the idiom of kinship wherein youth assert their future aspirations like good children and in return teachers support them the way a good parent would. Teacher are often complicit in constructing these "right" relationships, yet at times push back when youth are not seen as pursuing a moral future. This chapter thus demonstrates how youth construct relationships with teachers more powerful than themselves in order to act as agents in their future life trajectories.

The final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 8, outlines the main findings and contributions of this research. It concludes with the continued story of Jehova—how he imagined his moral future and the challenges he faced as he traveled toward his future. Moreover, it critically examines the implications of the individualized form of morality circulated through educational practices. Through a broad overview of contributions, it suggests directions for future research and educational reform.

Chapter 2: South African Educational Policies, Shared Values, and Social Cohesion

Often referred to as the "Rainbow Nation," South Africa has received much international attention since the country's transition from apartheid to a democracy in 1994. Despite government efforts to redress past inequalities and promote social justice, the country continues to face many social and economic challenges. South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world (World Bank 2016b). With unemployment hovering over 20% in the last few years and youth unemployment (aged 15-24) over 50% in 2014 (World Bank 2016b), many people struggle to get by on a daily basis. In addition, many people are affected by HIV which makes employment and economic stability challenging for both those affected and caretakers. Approximately 16.9% of the total population in KwaZulu-Natal was HIV positive in 2012 with higher HIV prevalence in rural communities (Shisana, et al. 2014). While racial discrimination has been legally dismantled in the post-apartheid era, it continues to represent a major concern. Race and class inequalities strongly overlap, with less than 1% of white children and 54% of black children in South Africa considered poor (SAHRC and UNICEF 2014:43).[2]

To address these social and economic issues, the South African government has turned to education reform. Because education was used to entrench the inequalities of apartheid, it has now been targeted as a primary means to promote values of the new Constitution including democracy, social justice and equality. These values often fall under the slippery, yet evocative term "social cohesion" in government policy documents. Education reforms have enabled students from low-income communities to attend school free of charge and set a standardized curriculum across schools. Certain subjects, such as history, arts education and the newly created life orientation courses, have been the focus of government attempts to foster nation-building and social cohesion.

---

[2] The poverty line was R575 a month (approximately $57) at the time of the study in 2014.

Through a review of primary policy documents as well as secondary sources, I argue that although the South African government desegregated schools and implemented pro-poor policies in an effort to broaden educational access and promote social unity, the South African education system remains bifurcated along economic and racial lines. With few high performing former white schools at on one side, and far more low performing former non-white schools on the other, young people who pass through the education system will have drastically different experiences. Despite these divisions, anthropological and education literature remains heavily centered on youths' social experiences in former white schools. Research that is exclusively focused in former white schools not only disregards the schooled realities of the majority of youth in the country, but has resulted in an overemphasis on race in research and government policies alike as the primary concern for promoting social unity.

Education and Social Cohesion

Over the past two decades, scholars have increasingly examined how education can foster "social cohesion" among people (Greaney 2006; Heyneman 2003; Koonce 2011; Sayed and Novelli 2016; Tabane and Human-Vogel 2010). Their arguments reveal an assumption about the role of schooling in communities – that schooling must not only teach the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also social values. Education creates certain types of citizens. Yet the term these scholars use to describe the process of citizen-making, "social cohesion," is used to analyze a variety of social phenomenon. Scholars have used social cohesion to describe social interactions that transcend set social boundaries (Tabane and Human-Vogel 2010), the degree to which members of a community trust one another (Koonce 2011), and solidarity, collectivity, and common purpose that are linked to social justice (Sayed and Novelli 2016).

In recent years, the South African government has also used the term "social cohesion" in

educational policy documents. Through educational reforms that label social cohesion as a priority, policymakers hope to address the country's social and economic challenges. Although the term is frequently used without definition, it is defined in a publication that summarizes the events of the "National Social Cohesion Summit" in 2012. At the Summit thousands of delegates representing government, civil society, business, cultural and religious groups gathered in Pretoria to discuss the national priorities of social cohesion. *Working Together to Create a Proud and Caring Society* (DAC 2012:62) defines a cohesive society as:

> "[T]he degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression itself among individuals and communities… inequalities, exclusions and disparities based on ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, age, disability or any other distinctions which engender divisions distrust and conflict are reduced and/or eliminated in a planned and sustained manner…. [community members work] together for the attainment of shared goals designed and agreed upon to improve the living conditions for all.

This definition connects social cohesion with the reduction of social inequalities and distrust, as well as the ability of communities to work together to improve living conditions. The latter component points to the idea of social justice, or equalized distribution of wealth and living environments. The above document describes social cohesion in terms of *measurement*. A society is understood to have more or less cohesion, which can be calculated. In contrast, as discussed in Chapter 1, I use the terms unity and fragmentation to explore the forces that bring people together and pull people apart. Rather than measuring the degree of social cohesion, I examine how young people experience the social fissures in their world. I use belonging to examine how youth position themselves within social networks and frames of temporal morality inside this fragmented world.

With this clarification of how social cohesion is represented by scholars and in South African policies, as well as my focus on forces of fragmentation and belonging, I now turn to a

historical review of the structural and curricular shifts in South African education over the past decades. Through this historical analysis, I point out that despite proclaimed efforts to foster equality and social justice through schooling, the education system remains bifurcated.

Historical Context of Schooling in South Africa

Education under Apartheid

The South African government has promoted education as a means to foster shared values and social justice, in large part because education historically served to fragment the population. In the early 1900s education was very different for black people and white people in South Africa; white students' schooling focused on the three Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic), while black students' schooling focused on manual training. Although variation occurred among this racialized system of education, particularly in missionary run schools, schooling largely functioned to generate African workers for a white elite. This informal bifurcated system of education became institutionalized under the apartheid government after the Afrikaner-dominated National Party came to power in 1948 (Ball 2006:20).

Under apartheid, all people were labeled as white, black, coloured, or Indian. People were required to reside in areas set aside for their designated group and, following the Bantu Education Act of 1953, were required to attend racially segregated schools. The Bantu Education Act was passed after Hendrik Verwoerd, the South African Minister of Native Affairs and later Prime Minister (1958-66), advocated for a form of education for non-white South Africans that limited their expectations in life so as to maintain racial harmony. In a speech given to Parliament in 1952, Verwoerd stated that racial relations could not improve "if the result of Native education is the creation of a frustrated people who, as a result to the education they received, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be

fulfilled immediately" (cited in Fiske and Ladd 2004:1). Parliament members ultimately passed the act, which enabled the government to take control of church-run schools and ban African teachers from criticizing the government (Fiske and Ladd 2004:1).

Education under apartheid then functioned to differentiate people depending on race. Resources were allocated unequally with white schools receiving the greatest resources and black schools the fewest. The government spent over two and a half times more money per pupil on white students than black students (Fiske and Ladd 2004:44). This differential allocation of resources provided white students with an education that could lead them to higher paying jobs, whereas black students' education perpetuated their lower economic status. In addition, educators in these institutions were paid unequal wages (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:2-3).

Not only did Bantu education prepare black students with manual and service work skills for white-designated areas (Eze 2010:33), but curriculum content served to justify this unequal social order. History textbooks taught Afrikaner *volk* nationalism which presented Afrikaners as having a privileged relationship with God, that South Africa rightfully belongs to the Afrikaner, and that whites are superior and blacks are inferior. This content clearly promoted a social group that identified themselves not through commonalities with others, but through distinct differences based on apartheid classifications of race. It promoted what Koonce (2011) referred to as group cohesion (among white South Africans), but it undermined possibilities for wide-spread social cohesion.

 In addition, apartheid school practice based on the Christian National Education (CNE) framework weakened trust and respect for differences in schools. CNE employed an interpretation of Calvinism in which the notion of original sin regarded youth as corrupt and in need of direction by authoritarian managers and teachers (Hunt 2001:46). This understanding

supported autocratic relations in schools; it did not leave room for parents, learners, or community members to express their grievances regarding public education. Apartheid education, in short, served to promote a national identity based on white supremacy that excluded non-whites from full South African citizenship.

Beginning the Transition in Education: School Governance and Model Cs

Although apartheid was based on a vision of separateness and racial inequality, it was not a static, coherent system. Rather, substantial social sector restructuring, including educational reform, began in the 1980s and early 1990s before the end of apartheid. By 1994 there were a total of fifteen ministries of education in South Africa: four for the "independent" homelands called the Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana (these were granted independence by South Africa but weren't recognized by other countries); six in self-governing territories or non-independent homelands (Gazankulu, KanGwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, and Qwaqwa); one called the Department of Education and Training (DET), which served Africans who lived outside of the homelands; three different ministries for the tri-cameral houses representing Whites, Coloureds, and Indians (from 1984); and one for the Department of National Education which was established in 1984 to set countrywide norms and standards (Naidoo 2005:20). Each of these ministries had different approaches to school governance and funding models.

Two education reforms, school governance and the creation of Model C schools, began before the dismantling of apartheid but have had lasting effect throughout the post-apartheid era. The first reform increased parental participation in school governance and took hold after the creation of the tri-cameral parliament. The tri-cameral parliament, created in 1983, was a centralizing force for education across the different apartheid racial categories. The House of

Assembly (HoA) took control of white education, while the House of Representatives (HoR) did so for coloured populations, and the House of Delegates (HoD) for Indians. Because black South Africans were not provided with the limited political voice that other groups were granted through the tri-cameral parliament, schools reserved for black students living outside of the homelands were managed by the DET. Within the HoA, HoD, HoR and DET school parents were able to participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs). This represented a shift from previous school governance practices, which were largely authoritarian rather than democratic. However, PTSAs from HoR, HoD, and DET schools largely held advisory roles and served at the pleasure of the principal (Lewis and Motala 2004:117). In contrast, parents with students in HoA schools adopted supervisory and advisory roles, maintaining stronger influence over school funding and teacher selection (Naidoo 2005:20-21). Yet, echoing international trends of school decentralization, the PTSAs represented a first shift toward localized school governance that would continue throughout the post-apartheid period.

A second major structural shift in education that began under apartheid and has had lasting consequences was the shift of former HoA schools (reserved for whites) to what became known as Model C schools. When F.W. de Klerk became president of South Africa in 1989 he began dismantling the structures of apartheid, lifted the ban on the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's current ruling party, and began restructuring a non-racial new South Africa with a unified education system. In 1990 Piet Clase, the Minister of Education of the HoA, offered HoA schools three options with which they could change – Models A, B, C (later model D was added for special needs schools). Model A was full privatization; the school could close and reopen with a management committee and dictate admission. Under Model B the school could continue to be funded and managed by the department of education, although the

school governing body had to admit students of different races. Model C offered a model of partial privatization; the school could set its own admissions policy and collect student school fees, and teachers would be partially subsidized by the state (Naidoo 2005:23). Model C schools were further required to maintain a 50% plus 1 white enrollment status (Carter 2012:26), a stipulation later removed when the new government came into power in 1994 (Fiske and Ladd 2004:51).

By 1992, all former HoA schools had converted to Model C schools, either through a parental vote (initially) or because the government required them to become Model C in 1992 (Fiske and Ladd 2004:51). While several scholars have argued that Model Cs were created to keep white schools in the firm control of white parents (Naidoo 2005:23), the transition to Model Cs was also born out of economic necessity. The South African state had been going through an economic crisis, and forcing former white schools to semi-privatize and charge school fees, sometimes very high ones, released the government of economic responsibility for them. However, at the same time Model C schools could set admission policies, both in the form of entrance exams and fees, that could limit participation of working class South African students—the majority of whom were black (Lewis and Motala 2004:117-118). These structural trends have had lasting effects on the current state of education, deepening divisions in access to quality education.

Pursuing a Dream: Re-envisioning South African Education in the 1990s

Following 46 years of apartheid, South Africa moved to democratic rule in 1994. This transition resulted in a new formulation of the government's social ideology and economic policy. Recognizing the inequalities promoted and persistent under apartheid, the new South African government (African National Congress) produced a flurry of policies containing the

proclaimed values of the new nation, including unity, democracy, and equity—concepts that

circled ideas of social cohesion without explicitly using the term. Many of these documents

referred to the role of education in promoting a vision for the "New South Africa."

Most prominent among South African government documents is the South African

Constitution (1996) which proclaims all people as equal, united through diversity and holding

fundamental human rights. The term "redress" is reiterated throughout the document,

highlighting the post-apartheid government's goal of righting the injustices that took place under

apartheid. In the Constitution the state is declared responsible for ensuring every person's right

to health care, food, water, social security and basic education; and the state must take measures,

legislative or otherwise, to allow each person to achieve these rights. Through promotion of

equity, or equal opportunity for all people, government policy sought to attain equality for all

South Africans.

Touching explicitly on the role of education in developing a democratic and just nation,

the *White Paper for Education and Training* (Department of Education 1995) outlines the first

steps to be taken in the creation of a non-racial Ministry of Education. A major function of this

document is to describe collective values that the new South African Ministry of Education will

uphold. Under a chapter titled "Transforming the Legacy of the Past," it reads:

> In a democratically governed society, the education system taken as a whole
> embodies and promotes the collective moral perspective of its citizens, that is the
> code of values, by which the society wishes to live and consents to be judged.
> From one point of view, South Africans have had all too little experience in
> defining their collective values. From another, our entire history can be read as a
> saga of contending moralities, which in our era has culminated in a historic
> agreement based on the recognition of the inalienable worth, dignity and equality
> of each person under the law, mutual tolerance, and respect for diversity (Chapter
> 3, number 3).

This excerpt clearly promotes a vision of a unified education system that upholds a specific set of

values to be recognized by all people in South African society. While the term social cohesion is not explicitly used, this passage draws on familiar concepts, including "collective values," "mutual tolerance," and "respect for diversity."

A third foundational policy document written during South Africa's transition period, the *South African Schools Act of 1996* (SASA), laid the groundwork for the development of a single, uniform education system across the country. Although Model C schools retained significant independence through governing bodies and school fees, SASA acted as a foundational document for a school system that was brought together under one ministry of education. The document, above all, emphasizes the explicit role that schools should play in developing a unified society. A section of the Preamble reads,

> "WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision… combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages…" (South African Schools Act 1996:1).

This language demonstrates the crucial role that education became expected to fill in the post-apartheid nation. Education was expected to not only fulfill a basic human right, as outlined in the Constitution, but instill learners with shared values to promote tolerance and help eradicate poverty across society.

Political Ideas within Economic Policies: RDP and GEAR

The transition to democracy resulted in promises and high hopes for a better life and equal opportunity for all. However, the transition did not happen in a vacuum; it was a slow and cumbersome process that occurred within a wider macroeconomic framework. Two government economic strategies, the Reconstruction and Development Programme: A Policy Framework (RDP) and Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macro-Economic Strategy (GEAR),

were adopted by the ANC after the transition, resulting in direct consequences for the types of educational reforms that were pursued.

The RDP was adopted by the ANC pre-election as the ANC's 1994 election manifesto (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:347). It embraced the need for economic growth while emphasizing redistribution and equity as a means to attain this goal (Weber 2002:271). As Weber explains, "The RDP's essential element was a state-driven plan that would provide access to services like electricity, water, communication, transport, health and education… The result would be a growing economy" (Weber 2002:271). Education was supported by the RDP's social welfare policy (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:347) as a means to redress past injustices and promote development, specifically economic development. Through welfare policies education would be available for all regardless of race and economic background; in short, it was meant to reverse racially discriminatory apartheid policies.

GEAR was adopted two years later in 1996. The aim of GEAR was to use fiscal policies to create a pro-investment society that would lead to development and growth in South Africa (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:349). GEAR was consistent with the "Washington consensus," which was being promoted by international organizations such as the World Bank and International Money Fund. It was intended to roll back spending and attract foreign investment, thereby creating jobs for the poor (Fiske and Ladd 2004:72-3). However, as Weber states, it had "hardly any echoes of the Freedom Charter's strong interventionist state, or the Base Document's [RDP's] development approach aimed at basic needs" (Weber 2002:274). The RDP office was shut down once GEAR was adopted, yet government officials still refer to social welfarist policies promoted by RDP (Jansen 2001:281). Yet government retained a public commitment to redress and equity, albeit subordinated to macroeconomic policies.

Many of these scholars argue that economic policies adopted by GEAR did not result in increased economic opportunities for the majority of South Africans. For example, Seekings and Nattrass (2005) cite the official unemployment rate in 1993 at approximately 12.7 percent, and at 28.2 percent in 2003 (Seekings and Nattrass 2005:318). Seekings (2011:39) attributed the raised unemployment rates to South Africa's growth pattern that has focused on capital and high-skilled workers (and high wages), rather than low skilled workers. Despite pro-poor policies and continued economic growth developed under Thabo Mbeki, South African president from 1999-2008, inequalities have grown overall since South Africa's transition to democracy (Seekings 2011). According to the World Bank GINI index, South Africa's inequality has remained consistently high over the last two decades, and it was the country with the greatest inequality in 2011 (World Bank 2016a). These inequalities have not only risen because of the differentiation of job opportunities across the country, but also from the bifurcated education system that has developed from the late 1990s onwards under the country's macroeconomic framework.

Educational Reforms to Promote Democracy, Unity, and Equity under GEAR

While many scholars (and popular media) present social sector reforms in South Africa implemented after 1994 as the result of a unified, post-apartheid vision, this is not the case. Many social sector reforms, including educational reforms, were underway before the end of apartheid and became co-opted by the "New South Africa" discourse. Education reforms underway before the end of apartheid, such as reforms in school governance and financing, a decade later were discussed in ways that supported the values of democracy, unity and equity while meeting the requirements of the GEAR development framework. Below I discuss how two structural reforms,[3] school governing bodies and school fees, were implemented to meet the

---

[3] Other major education reforms were initiated in this time, including Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). OBE received ample attention from scholars in educational policy, often critical of its unrealistic

political ideology and financial reforms of the new democracy—and how they have contributed to the contemporary education system.

The creation of both school governing bodies (SGBs) and school fees were part of a wider project of educational decentralization. Political ideas behind school decentralization matched with the government imperative to promote democracy and put more power in the hands of the people, although, as previously discussed, the government had already begun school decentralization under apartheid reforms that supported parent-teacher associations and semi-privatized Model C schools. Decentralization was also advocated as a way to strengthen school partnerships with their surrounding community, and allow for ongoing experimentation at the school level (Motala 2008:310). A main facet for promoting local governance came through the creation of school governing bodies.

School governing bodies were endorsed by the South African Schools Act (1996). The Schools Act stated that each school's governing body should be comprised of the principal and several elected members, including: parents of learners at the school, educators at the school, members of staff at the school who are not educators, and learners in eighth grade or higher. In addition, the governing bodies may have co-opted members, such as the school property owner or members of the community, who do not have voting rights on the governing body (chapter 3, article 23). Several school governing body functions include: adopt a code of conduct for learners, determine times of the school day, control school property, recommend educator and non-educator staff appointments, encourage volunteer services from parents, teachers, and staff, and charge school fees if desired (chapter 3, article 20). SGBs could also set entrance requirements for pupils. In addition, the Schools Act encouraged students (grade 8 and above) to

---

expectations for teachers. However, the OBE policies were largely reversed by the early 2000s and therefore have not had the lasting consequences on contemporary education that structural reforms have created.

participate in school governance by electing student members to a governing body in the

Representatives Council of Learners (LRC) (chapter 2). Thus, responsibility of quality education

was devolved from the state to the school level.

Many school leaders believed that that Schools Act would endorse school fees entirely.

Fees could, and still can, be used for anything in the school, from maintenance to hiring new

teachers. Teachers who are hired out of locally-raised funds are often referred to as "SGB

teachers." The decision made by school governing bodies to implement school fees, while going

against the international trend of free primary education, was justified for two reasons. First,

school fee advocates made the argument that offering school fees would prevent white flight

from public schools. Second, they argued that fees paid by wealthier communities could release

scarce funds for poorer schools,[4] thereby contributing to the ANC goal of redress and equity

(Fiske and Ladd 2004; Sayed and Motala 2012).

Furthermore, at the time advocates of decentralization pointed out that school governing

bodies and school fees met the state's pressing financial needs under GEAR. Already at the start

of the transition, South Africa was internationally recognized as spending too large a portion of

its GDP on educational expenses. On the eve of the transition, in 1993/94, South Africa was

spending 7% of its GDP on education expenses. This is a significant proportion of the state's

budget, especially in contrast to other developing nations that spend closer to 5%. However, in

keeping with global trends, South Africa decreased spending to 5.4% by 2004/2005 (Motala

2008), and 6% by 2014 (World Bank 2016). Education spending as a percentage of GDP has

remained stable around 5.3% in since 2015. Semi-privatization through school fees was justified

---

[4] In the late 1990s cutbacks were being made to all schools in the South African education system, therefore advocates of school fees argued that school fees could maintain high quality schooling in former white schools while allowing funds to be redirected toward poorer schools. As will be discussed below, this has partially happened as low-income schools receive more government funding than schools in higher income areas.

as a means to maintain the educational system throughout these significant cutbacks.

Under these decentralization reforms, the national Department of Education became responsible for funding schools, or providing a minimum amount per learner to be directed toward each province. In 1996, the government designed the Equitable Share Formula (ESF) which takes into account provincial variables, including school age population and number of schools, to allocate an equitable share of funds across the provinces. The ESF is part of a larger grant given each year to each province to be spent on health, welfare and education. Education is calculated as 41% of that fund. However, because provinces determine their own budgets, this does not mean that every learner across every province is provided the same funding for education. Rather, some provinces may prioritize health care over education, thereby offering less money for each pupil than what is provided to each pupil in another province (Motala 2008:305-306).

Within each province, individual schools could supplement the resources provided by the state through learner fees and other activities, such as coordinating with non-governmental organizations and fundraising. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE 1998) was implemented in 2000 and required that 60% of all school funding be allocated to the poorest 40% of learners within each province. And finally, in 2006 a national no-fee schools policy was put in place to prevent school fees for the poorest schools (DoE 2006; Sayed and Motala 2012:675-6).

While school governing bodies and school fees were ostensibly designed to further democracy and educational equity, the results have been mixed. For instance, while fees could help some schools hire more teachers and maintain higher quality education—mainly in former Model C schools—it left others behind. Using school fee statistics from the Western Cape in

2002, Fiske and Ladd (2004) point out that fees in former HoA (white) secondary schools averaged R2,701, whereas former HoR (coloured) charged R333 on average and former DET (black) charged R105 (2004:73). These reforms enabled former white schools to both charge higher fees to support teachers and maintenance, while simultaneously excluding students of lower class backgrounds through fees and entrance exams. Thus, rather than excluding students based on race, students have increasingly been barred from access to higher quality education on the basis of class (Sayed and Soudien 2005).[5] Students who are unable to pay high school fees must stay at schools with fewer, less qualified teachers.

The Department of Education has recognized the increasing inequalities in this education system, and has sought to address limited access to education by increasing the number of fee-free schools in South Africa and redistributing *non-personnel funds* to schools depending on their community poverty score. Sayed and Motala (2012:672) explain that in 2005, 40% of schools were declared no fee schools whereas by 2012, 60% of all schools were designated as such. In addition, the Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding, published in 2006 and amended in 2014 (Department of Basic Education 2014), allows schools that are declared no-fee schools to have increased allocation of state funding to offset revenues that had previously been generated by collecting school fees. Each school is assigned to a poverty quintile using data from the community surrounding the school, with quintile one being the poorest and five being the wealthiest. Most former white schools are in wealthier neighborhoods and therefore tend to fall in quintiles four and five while former non-white schools fall in the lower quintiles. The state developed national targets for school allocation, defined as a number of rand

---

[5] Sayed and Soudien (2005) also point out that language has become a means of excluding students from former white schools as well. Parents who do not speak English very well are less likely to participate in SGBs and learners are demoted to lower grades because of their English skills. African (black) parents, educators and learners are often complicit in this exclusion.

to be spent per learner, beginning in 2007 depending on the school quintiles. In 2009, schools falling in quintiles one, two, and three (the poorest schools) would receive R807, R740, and R605 per learner per year respectively, while schools falling in quintiles four and five (the wealthiest schools) would receive R404 and R134 respectively (Sayed and Motala 2012:677). By 2016, R1,175 was allocated per student in quintiles one, two and three; R588 for quintile four and R203 for quintile five schools (Department of Basic Education 2014).

While these pro-poor policies have been ambitious, inequities remain. Scholars have pointed out that many school governing bodies have become disillusioned with the no-fee status of schools. Some school governing bodies thought that by being declared a no-fee school they would receive additional benefits, but these benefits are slow to be distributed, if they ever even reach the school level. Additionally, higher school allocations cannot be used to hire additional teachers—which the majority of fee charging schools do with their revenues. As such, Sayed and Motala suggest that reforms must be made to address the cost of adding more, well-qualified teachers to poor schools as well as target poor students for additional grants (Sayed and Motala 2012:682-5).

Fragmentation across Schools: Contemporary Issues

The result of these structural educational reforms has been the establishment of a bifurcated educational system compromised of high performing former white schools and private schools on one side, and poor quality former black schools at the other. The former Model C (white) schools, which constitute approximately 7% of the total schools in South Africa, continue to charge school fees to hire additional teachers, experiment with curricula and after school programs, and maintain school facilities. The former white schools, as well as private schools, have higher student retention rates and more successful matric (grade 12) pass rates.

Although not indicative of school quality in its entirety, matric pass rates highlight this division between former white and former black schools. Taylor (2006) used national mathematics results to organize schools into three categories: top performing, moderately performing, and poorly performing. He then analyzed grade 12 mathematics performance according to former white and former black schools, and found that only 7% of former black schools can be classified as top performing, whereas 79% of these schools fall under the poorly performing category. In addition, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) documented that in 2009 the overall pass rates in former Model C schools was 94% compared to the overall national pass rate of 60%. Students across different racial groups consistently had higher pass rates if they attended former Model C schools, instead of other schools (South African Institute of Race Relations 2011).

The widespread recognition of the superior education in former Model C schools has resulted in a one-way movement of students away from poor quality schools to attend former white schools. Van der Merwe (2011) explains that the most significant factors in the migration of pupils to former white schools include: opportunity for educational growth, dedicated principals and teachers, standard of English in teaching and learning, resources, and school discipline. Because students attending former Model C schools are still (under most circumstances) required to pay school fees, the poorest students are excluded from attending these schools. Consequently, most students in former Model C schools come from different racial backgrounds, but are generally middle-class. In contrast, former black schools continue to be attended by lower class, black students.

Table 2.1: The differences between former black and former white schools, 2008 and 2009[6]

School Resources	Former Black Schools	Former White Schools
Proportion of schools with functional electricity	0.83 (0.33)	1.00 (0.00)
Proportion of schools with functional running water	0.68 (0.40)	0.98 (0.10)
Proportion of schools with functional toilet facilities	0.59 (0.38)	0.89 (0.33)
Proportion of schools with functional box library	0.24 (0.35)	0.80 (0.20)
Student-teacher ratio	34.90 (5.47)	24.00 (4.24)
Number of schools	218	19

Learners often travel long distances to attend former white schools. These schools are often located in former white-only suburbs, at some length from where non-white students have grown up. In order to attend these schools, learners may commute on a daily basis, or stay with friends or family during the school week to be closer to higher quality schools. Several researchers have noted that the daily commute frequently bars students from participating in after school activities, including academics and sports (Soudien 2012; Vandeyar and Jansen 2008). These long commutes contribute to learner racial segregation within school contexts, where white students who live closer to the school are able to participate and non-white students who travel from different areas, frequently by public transport, cannot participate. However, this dynamic is changing as non-white, middle-class families increasingly move into formerly white neighborhoods. In some cities, such as Newcastle, most former Model C schools currently do not have white pupils because white families have enrolled their children in private schools or

---

[6] Standard deviation is in parenthesis in this table. Data is take from the National School Effectiveness Study, which was collected in 2008 and 2009. These data are in the *Poverty Traps* report published by SAHRC and UNICEF in 2014.

moved. In addition, there has also been migration of black students to former HoR (coloured) and HoD (Indian) schools, which often maintain higher quality education than former DET (black) schools, although this migration is less pronounced than the move toward former white schools.

The other face of South African schools is comprised of poor quality schools in largely all-black neighborhoods. These schools are located in townships or rural areas, and have undergone little change since the end of apartheid. Despite government efforts to direct greater resources toward these schools, they continue to face issues of poverty, safety, immigrant populations, flight of families with high incomes, and high learner to teacher ratios (Balfour, et al. 2011; Bantwini 2010). Rising numbers of immigrant students have entered into poorer schools and face issues of xenophobia, violence, and exclusion from their peers and teachers. Both domestic and international students in poorer areas frequently relocate in search of better schools and work (Collinson 2008). This places stress on rural and township schools that have to manage the fluctuating movement of students into and out of their schools, and changes the dynamic between members of the student body and the community.

Teachers and principals working in lower income schools have identified several challenges that are less salient in former white schools, including: lack of a student value system (or discipline), limited parental involvement, inability to discipline students, limited professional development opportunities for teachers, and shortage of funds. Prinsloo (2007) explains that principals working in schools with mostly black and coloured student populations noted that it was very difficult to get parents involved in the schools because many children lived far away from their parents with other relatives who seldom troubled themselves about the children's schoolwork (Prinsloo 2007:162). Many educators I spoke with were frustrated by overcrowded

classrooms of students they felt did not have respect toward them or their peers as well as limitations imposed on them against corporal punishment. Other challenges they face center on professional development. In rural schools, teachers are offered fewer professional development programs to keep up-to-date with contemporary educational reforms and teaching methods (Bantwini and King-McKenzie 2011). However, the strongest constraint in former black schools remains lack of funds. Unable to charge school fees, lower income schools cannot hire additional teachers and struggle with basic school maintenance. Table 2.1 illustrates key differences in school infrastructure and student-to-teacher ratios between former white and former black schools (SAHRC and UNICEF 2014).

In summary, the history of South African education has been one of pushes and pulls between fragmentation and unity. Under apartheid, education was premised on separation. Educational resources were allocated differentially depending on apartheid racial classification, with white schools receiving the most and black schools the least. After 1994, the new government developed a radically new ideology based on unity and democracy—concepts related to notions of social cohesion without explicitly using the term. Government and social institutions were expected to redress the injustices of apartheid, and to promote equity and equality. However, the educational reforms that ensued were pursued within a macroeconomic framework that advocated reduced public spending, debt control, and decentralization. These neoliberal economic frameworks resulted in educational reforms that semi-privatized former white schools, established school governing bodies, and sanctioned school fees. And, most importantly, structural reforms have resulted in a fragmented educational system with higher quality former white schools at one end of the spectrum and poor former black schools at the other.

Social Cohesion and Values in Educational Curricula

In addition to structural reforms, the South African government has sought to encourage shared values through educational curricula reforms. The National Curriculum Statements (NCS, implemented in 1998) and the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS, implemented in 2003) promoted core values detailed in the *Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy* (2001). These values include: democracy, social justice, equality, non-racism, non-sexism, Ubuntu (human dignity), an open society, accountability (responsibility), the rule of law, and reconciliation. The *Manifesto* further elaborates on how schools could promote these key values through curriculum and classroom practice, rather than merely stating these as abstract goals. It emphasizes how the outcomes-based curriculum (Curriculum 2005—South Africa's curriculum statement for primary and secondary education in the early 2000s) focused on "knowledge, skills and values" at its core. This document, and the values it upholds, decorates teachers' offices today and continues to be widely-cited by policy documents and scholarly articles.

Certain subjects, particularly life orientation and history courses, have been targeted by government officials in the new National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, implemented 2011) as crucial venues through which to communicate shared values among learners. The primary goal of CAPS is to replace the previously used Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for each course into one concise document. CAPS describes each school subject (such as Mathematics or Life Orientation), outlines its specific aims for what is to be taught, lists the skills that students should acquire through the course, details the number of hours per week that should be dedicated to the course, and explains how the course should be internally and externally monitored. In addition, a new set of school textbooks has been approved by CAPS and were phased into schools between

2012-2014. Among the CAPS subject statements several subjects are targeted as the main drivers

of values education—mainly life orientation and history classes, followed by English and arts

courses.

Social cohesion is explicitly labeled as a primary aim in one subject: life orientation. Life

orientation courses were implemented a few years ago in lower grades (R-9) to address "skills,

knowledge, and values about the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and

productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity, careers and career choices"

(Department of Basic Education 2011d:6). LO has only recently been made mandatory for

grades 10, 11, and 12. Community projects are encouraged as part of life orientation coursework,

and notions of responsibility, respect for diversity, and relationships with others are emphasized

throughout the topic units. These values are closely linked with those outlined in the *Manifesto*,

and foundational documents that emphasize unity and democracy. In addition, for the first time

in curriculum documents, social cohesion is listed as something to be learned under the topic of

"development of the self in society" (Department of Basic Education 2011d:8).

The subject of history has also been a major focal point of curriculum reform to promote

values of unity and democracy among learners. Following the end of apartheid, policymakers

debated how history texts and teachings must change. A primary discussion was on how to

cleanse history texts of Afrikaner nationalist symbols and what must replace those texts

(Engelbrecht 2006). In 1992 a series of curriculum conferences were formed to discuss the future

of the South African curriculum. On one panel published by the History Education Group

(1993:27-8), Isman Vadi, professor of education at the University of Witwatersrand, emphasized

the need for history to teach a national history, regional and local history, people's history, and

African history. He understood the goal of teaching a national history is to "generate a sense of a

single nation" (History Education Group 1993:27). History textbooks were re-written for schools and old history texts have not been used in schools for the last several years.

The History CAPS policy statement for Grades 10-12 has explicitly tied history with values of unity, democracy, and social responsibility. After describing history as "the study of change and development of society over time," it states that history further supports citizenship within a democracy by:

> "Upholding the values of the South African Constitution and helping people to understand those values; reflecting the perspectives of a broad social spectrum so that race, class, gender and the voices of ordinary people are represented; encouraging civic responsibility and responsible leadership, including raising current social and environmental concerns; promoting human rights and peace by challenging prejudices that involve race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia; and preparing young people for local, regional, national, continental and global responsibility" (Department of Basic Education 2011c:8).

Other course policy statements, such as those for English and various arts classes, connect these subjects to notions of unity, identity, and cooperation, although to a less explicit degree. English is described as a tool for thought and communication. The English CAPS states, "Learning to use language effectively enables learners to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others, and to manage their world…. It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed, and it is through language that such constructions can be altered, broadened and refined" (Department of Basic Education 2011b:8). Music is described as having "the power to unite groups and mobilise community involvement for the quality of life, social healing, and affirmation of human dignity" (Department of Basic Education 2011e:8), while dramatic arts is recognized as "a powerful tool for developing skills of cooperation and collaboration" and "to preserve and promote our national heritage" (Department of Basic Education 2011a:8). Thus, ideas related to social unity, cooperation, respect—elements tied to notions of social cohesion—are explicitly addressed as

outcomes of life orientation, history, English and arts courses.

These structural and curricular reforms have spurred an abundance of educational research on how education creates social unity in South Africa. As reviewed in the Introduction, most research centers on belonging and social cohesion in former white schools (Carter 2012; Dawson 2007; Dolby 2001; Soudien 2010; Vandeyar and Jansen 2008). However, as this chapter has shown, the South African educational system remains bifurcated, therefore the ways in which youth experience cohesion and division through schooling will be very different across school contexts. Contemporary research offers valuable insights into teaching practices and youths' experience of racial integration. However, it does not take into account how policies to promote social cohesion are 1) implemented in the majority of South African schools and 2) how youth understand and experience different forms of inclusion and exclusion across school contexts. The final section of this chapter therefore introduces my three field sites in three former-black schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

Three Field Sites—Rural, Peri-Urban, and Urban Schools

In the mornings two teachers and I wake up before dawn to walk to the taxi rank and take the first minibus to Ikwezi High School. On the rocky half hour drive we pass windswept fields of yellow grass and dry streambeds that have eroded the landscape. Huge troughs, once narrow yet now as wide as ravines, zigzag alongside the hills. Thirty years ago this area was covered in forests filled with shrub-like native trees. Forced human relocations to the area combined with deforestation for fuel has turned these once green hills into a beautiful, yet barren landscape.

While the hills remain empty of trees and wildlife, they are speckled with homesteads as far as the eye can see. Each homestead consists of a cluster of one to two-room houses built of cinder blocks and clay. Half of the houses are square with tin rooftops. These single metal sheets

are placed at an angle to allow the rain to pour down one side of the house and are held down by stones sitting on top of them. The other half of the houses are rondavels, or single room round houses with grass-thatched roofs. Occasionally a homestead will contain a Zulu-hut, or a single room round house with a grass-thatched dome that extends almost to the ground; however, these are less common. In the center of the cluster of houses lies a cattle kraal, a circular ring built of stacked stones and scrap metal, to house the cattle—the wealth and pride of many families—throughout the night.

Extended families live in these homesteads, although frequently one or two of these small houses will be empty on any given day due to the absence of family members who are working in various cities or because of recent deaths. Many houses were first built in or after 1979, when relocation programs initiated under apartheid moved Zulu families from the surrounding areas onto this land. Today, the most common sights among these hills are single women, often grandmothers, sitting on their doorsteps with young children. In the mornings they can be seen wearing long skirts and aprons, hair covered by a patterned cloth, bent over washing clothes in round plastic basins. Later, brightly colored children's pants and shirts flap in the dusty wind on single wire clothes lines and half torn barbed wire fences. Meanwhile men, less often seen among these homesteads, drive past in weathered trucks or saunter down the road with wheelbarrows filled with building supplies.

The most striking sight, however, are all the young students filing over the hilltops. They walk in clusters through the morning frost cutting across roads, streams and fields on self-made paths. Red and green, navy blue and white, teal and black – the colors of their uniforms signal the schools they will soon enter. Some will walk as far as 20 kilometers each way to reach their schools, making coming to school on rainy days an unpleasant and at times impossible venture.

We arrive at Ikwezi to find students lined up against the sunny sides of buildings in an attempt to keep warm before heading to the shady courtyard for morning assembly. The courtyard is a slightly sloped rectangular plot of dirt and grass between three long blocks of classrooms and two shorter blocks housing teachers' offices and the kitchen. Back in 1965 when the school was founded, only one block was built to house a few farm children. However, as relocations moved families into the area the student population grew more than 10 times its original size and several more buildings were erected. That being said, the last major renovations took place in the late 70s, and today the walls are crumbling, doors hanging on their hinges without handles, and almost half the windows are broken.

Ikwezi High School

Who are the young people from these relocated families walking toward the school? And how did these teachers end up here to teach them? Set over 20 kilometers from a paved road, Ikwezi High School served students from places where cars couldn't even travel. KwaZulu-Natal is the province in South Africa with the most rural schools and Ikwezi High perhaps represented one of the most rural. Although the area appeared sparsely populated, the high and dry plateau struggled to support human activity—deforestation and overgrazing made farming almost impossible and cattle raising a challenge.

With approximately 750 students and 17 educators, Ikwezi High School rested in a state of disrepair. Aside from broken windows and doors, the school lacked adequate toilets and running water.[7] Although members from the Department of Education came to assess the school infrastructure in 2013, the repairs that were made consisted of repairing cracks in walls and re-

---

[7] Ikwezi has a few pit toilets for students, however these were overflowing and used only as a last resort by students. A portable toilet had recently been brought to the school and was locked and used by teachers only. During fieldwork there was no running water, however in 2015 a tap was installed that drew from groundwater.

installing broken doors on just two classrooms out of several that needed attention.[8] A library

remained locked at all times and had not been used for many years prior to my arrival. Over a

fourth of the books in the library had been eaten by terminates and turned into an intricate web of

dusty tunnels.[9] Despite infrastructure challenges, Ikwezi High School had a reputation in the area

for strong academics and respectful students. Few fights broke out in school; those that did were

quelled quickly by male teachers. The school also boasted matric pass rates (grade 12 pass rates)

of 60-80% in the past few years. [10] These matric pass rates were high for the area and comparable

to the national average, which was 78.2% in 2013. However, they also masked low pass rates

from other grades, which were closer to 60%. Frequently, teachers admitted to failing students in

earlier grades in order to keep grade 12 a more manageable size and increase matric students'

likelihood of graduating. In addition, many students and staff complained of a lack of textbooks

and notebooks. Students frequently shared one text book among three during the day and were

unable to take books home in the evenings.

Most of the student population at Ikwezi High School lived with distant relatives. Of the

34 learners who participated in focus groups and interviews, only four students had both parents

living. Of the remaining 30, half had one living parent and the rest had no living parent. Even

those students whose parents were alive did not live with their nuclear families. Three of these

students lived with neither parent; one lived with his mother and his father would visit on the

weekends. One teacher at the school said that he had read the population in this district had an

HIV rate of 70%, although I was unable to confirm this statistic. Still, many grandparents in the

---

[8] These limited repairs infuriated many teachers not only because more repairs were required, but due to the expense charged for them. The Department paid approximately R30,000 ($3,000) to fix the school by working with an NGO that in turn hired the workers. The repair men worked part time for two weeks. Teachers recognized that the true cost of repairs would be closer to R3,000 ($300) but claimed the money passed through too many hands.

[9] As part of my research methods and service, I worked with students to repair the library and acquire new books. I would like to thank the Rotary Club for multiple book donations.

[10] The pass rates would not be considered high in urban areas, including townships, but they were higher than several neighboring rural schools.

area talked of their children who had passed away due to a wide range of illnesses commonly associated with HIV, which points to the severity of the disease burden in this region. In addition, several students told me that they had relatives who were HIV positive or that they were HIV positive themselves, although they sought to keep this information confidential from their classmates.

Although limited local employment opportunities existed in teaching, nursing, and the police force, most people in these professions sent their children to former white schools in nearby cities. Consequently, the majority of students attending Ikwezi High either lived with unemployed family members or family that informally ran shops from their homes. Students were supported predominantly from money received from social grants. The most common social grant that youth received was the child grant, which supported low-income mothers with approximately $30 a month. At Ikwezi, every grade 8 student received this grant.[11] In addition, most students were supported by an old grandparent with whom they resided who received an age pension of approximately $100 a month.[12] In most households around Ikwezi, one grandparent's pension supported several people, many of whom were school goers.

Most of my student participants had moved several times over the course of their lives. Some were born in urban areas to working mothers, and were sent to live with relatives in the rural area. Others felt they were made to move to the rural area because of a history of fights they had in previously attended urban schools. Approximately one third of my participants were born and raised in the area, and these students regularly stuck together throughout the day.

---

[11] I use grade 8 child grant statistics as a poverty index indicator because most, if not all, grade 8 students were under the age of 18 and therefore could qualify to receive government support. In contrast, many grade 11 students were over the age of 18 and did not qualify. However, recent proposed changes to the child grant may support students through the age of 23 in upcoming years.

[12] These amounts for social grant recipients are from 2014. They have experienced incremental increases since then, and the income maximum amount for receiving the child support grant has tripled. The conversion to a dollar amount is also based on the approximate exchange rate throughout 2014. For more information on social grants see: http://www.sassa.gov.za/

Like many of the students who attended Ikwezi High School, I lived in a two-room cinderblock house with a sheet metal roof that was part of a homestead with four similar buildings and one centrally located rondavel. Two married teachers lived in the homestead as well as one teacher's cousin who we called *ugogo* (grandmother) and her ten-year-old grandson. Later, a younger teacher moved into the homestead as well.[13] We frequently ate our evening meal together, which either consisted of minced meat or chicken and pap (a maize-based dish). Most afternoons after school were spent together sitting on the front step outside of ugogo's house or inside on her sofa and chairs. A constant flow of visitors, particularly the neighborhood children, kept the days lively.

The male teacher had grown up in this homestead and was well-known in the community. The first week I arrived, he walked me around the town and introduced me to people as his daughter. I called him *ubaba,* or father throughout my stay, which is common practice when greeting people of an older generation. I had met and become friends with his daughters in Durban a couple of years prior in 2012, which is how I came to know him and became welcomed in the school. Consequently, I had a longer history with teachers at Ikwezi High School and I also stayed at Ikwezi High School for three months longer than the other two field sites. When ubaba introduced me to members of the community by Ikwezi, few people asked questions because news had already spread that I would come. I was happy to be part of this family, both for the friendship it afforded as well as the security. Although the rural community did not have organized gangs, many crimes such as theft, rape, and murder, often transpired without consequence. During my stay at least four murders occurred within walking distance, among

---

[13] Other regular residents included *ugogo*'s "husband" (they weren't married and others teased her for this), and an older, often intoxicated homeless man who would break into the rondovel frequently around 8:30pm to sleep after everyone had gone to bed. While the rondovel was locked and meant to be used for ceremonial purposes and communication with the ancestors, the old man was permitted to stay due to his advanced age (he was "close to being an ancestor").

other crimes. Most crimes occurred on pay-day when grandparents would receive the old age pension. However, I felt relatively secure because of the reputation that my father carried a gun, which was uncommon in this rural community.

Entabeni High School

Entabeni High School was a peri-urban school[14] 40 minutes' drive from a larger city in KwaZulu-Natal. With approximately 850 learners and 23 educators, the infrastructure of the school was well-maintained in contrast to Ikwezi, as it had running water, functional toilets, a disused library,[15] and a few computers that were occasionally used. When a window or door broke, someone came to repair it within a day or two. Like Ikwezi High School, this was a fee-exempt school. However, teachers requested donations of approximately R50/$5 from learners in order to pay for the security guard. Table 2.2 below outlines key difference in infrastructure between the three high schools in this study.

Although the building structure was intact at Entabeni, student management and academics suffered. Students lived in fear of local gangs, who didn't hesitate to push past the school guard and enter the grounds. Many students had witnessed fellow classmates be injured, stabbed, or killed. Teachers were afraid of the local gangs and some male students affiliated with the gangs in their classrooms. Consequently, they made feeble attempts to control their classrooms for fear of repercussions such as torched cars and physical violence. As a result, students regularly wandered in and out of the class throughout the lesson without consequence. Some arrived to school intoxicated and openly hopped the fence to leave when they wanted. Although many of my research participants asserted that they wanted to do well in school, concentrate, and pass their grade, they regularly spoke of the challenges to these aspirations that

---

[14] It is officially classified by the Department of Education as a rural school, however due to its proximity to a large city the socio-economic status of the population the school serves is drastically different from more rural areas.

[15] At this school I also worked with students to receive book donations and make the library functional once more.

they faced every day.

Academically, Entabeni Secondary school was considered a low-performing school; the matric pass rates ranged from 40-60% in recent years with other grade pass rates at a similar level. Some teachers referred to it as a "mop up" school, because it was where learners went after they had been expelled or failed classes in higher quality schools in the area. These statements were true, as many learners had moved to Entabeni after failing and not wanting to experience the shame of remaining behind a grade in their previous school while their classmates progressed. Those that had transferred frequently expressed regret and wished they had stayed in their last school or just tried harder. This regret was particularly pronounced among learners who had previously communed into the city to attend former white schools. Still, some learners and educators remained dedicated to furthering their education in spite of these hurdles. A regular influx of NGO workers from various organizations came into the school to assist with academics, but most teachers found them to be more irritating than helpful. Teachers frequently claimed that NGO workers did not understand student and staff needs and interrupted their lesson plans.

Most of the learners at Entabeni lived with either one parent or other relatives. Within each household there was often at least one wage-earner who commuted into the city or lived there during the week and returned to the peri-urban location on the weekends. The most common form of employment mentioned by students was having a mother or aunt who was a domestic worker, yet students also spoke of relatives who worked in shops, banks, petrol stations, and as taxi drivers. Generally, they were more economically well-off than learners at Ikwezi, yet most grade eight learners still qualified for the child grant. There was more economic variation among the student population, with one of my student participants living in a two-room

house with seven other people and another living in a two-story house with her own bedroom, a garage, and a family car. Unlike at Ikwezi, most students had been born in nearby areas.

While I attended Entabeni Secondary School I lived in a nearby rural area on a white-owned farm. The owners of the farm rented out rooms, often to construction workers of various racial backgrounds who I occasionally spent my evenings with. There were several students from Entabeni that lived nearby and we would ride the same taxi to school in the morning along with students from other nearby schools. Half of the days I drove my own car, in which case I would offer students lifts home. This gave some opportunities for me to speak with students in informal settings and also allowed me to see students' homes and meet some of their families. I found this helpful because I felt my racial identity was more pronounced at Entabeni. Many students called me *umlungu* (white person) and it was a few weeks before I could convince them to call me by my first name. Unlike at Ikwezi High School, I was not as closely connected with the school community because most of the student population lived within a 10-minute walk of the school.

Table 2.2: School Field Site Statistics from 2013-2014.[16]

School	Location	Student Enrollment	Matric Pass Rate	Infrastructure
Ikwezi High	Rural	750	60-80%	No running water or functional toilets, buildings in disrepair
Entabeni Secondary	Peri-Urban	850	40-60%	Water, toilets, disused computer lab
Siyabonga High	Urban	1000+	65-80%	Water, toilets, computer lab, science lab

Siyabonga High School

The final school I worked at was Siyabonga High School. This large school is located in a township close to Durban. The school was the largest of the three by far, with over 1,000

---

[16] Enrollment and matric pass rate numbers are approximate to ensure anonymity of the schools.

learners and over 30 teachers. The school boasted a well-maintained computer lab and recently opened space for a science lab. A room for a library was in place and while attending Siyabonga I worked with several students to receive books and develop a functioning system for checking out books and using the room as a quiet study space before and after hours.[17] Security cameras curbed crime and violence on the school grounds, and a 24-hour security guard monitored those who entered the school. A relatively low school fee of approximately R350/$35[18] helped maintain these resources, as did donations from private companies. Although students often spoke of crime in the surrounding areas, they reassured me that crime did not happen on the school grounds.[19] Teachers further encouraged young male students to commute to and from school together and fight back if they witnessed thefts or violence, particularly against any of their fellow learners. Consequently, most learners felt safe from violence while at school.

Siyabonga had a strong reputation for academics. Although it was not considered the best school in the area, many students and community members recognized the name and associated it with academic success. Matric pass rates ranged from 65-80% over the past few years with similar pass rates for the lower grades. Several students attending the school had family members who had graduated from Siyabonga and attended higher education or were employed. I also met a few students who had previously attended Siyabonga and returned to school to thank their teachers after finishing at a university, including one who had just become a medical doctor.

Near to Siyabonga High School are two-story houses with garages, one-room cinderblock

---

[17] Students were given far more independence at this school, and consequently the library became entirely run by student volunteers. Books were checked out regularly and returned, and the room was kept quiet for students to work on their school work throughout 2015. I would like to thank the Rotary Club for book donations that went to all of these schools.

[18] All staff agreed that student income base for the school should qualify the school as a fee-exempt school, however this was not the way it was officially labelled. I will not discuss the politics behind this decision because it would compromise the anonymity of the school.

[19] Since 2014 crime on school grounds has risen dramatically. By 2016 all the materials, stools, and taps were stolen from the science lab. It is no longer in use. In addition, all of the doors were stolen from every classroom on the school grounds. I was told that no violent crimes have taken place on the school grounds, however, since 2013.

houses with sheet metal roofs, rural rondavels in the distance, and a large informal settlement with shacks. Several small shops could be seen from the school, as well as a larger mall where students like to hang out after school. Siyabonga drew on students from all of these areas, and as a result there were greater socio-economic disparities among the student population when compared to the other schools. Some students brought tablets to school, while other lacked pocket money to buy themselves lunch. Most of the learners lived with one parent, who often was earning money. Several of my research participants lived with both parents, which was extremely rare in the previous field sites. Some learners were born and raised near the school, whereas most had moved multiple times to live with different family members at different times of their lives.

Unlike at the previous field sites, I lived fairly far away from the school in a suburban neighborhood in Durban. A few teachers who worked at Siyabonga lived nearby and commuted to school, although I most often drove my own car because I arrived early and remained after school almost every day. Because I did not live in the same neighborhood as many of the students, I may not have had as strong of a grasp on their living situations. However, I would at times hang out at the shops with student-teachers who were attending the school and see some of the learners there. In addition, I gave students lifts home fairly frequently and this offered ample time for casual conversation.

Different Contexts

Let me offer a bit of comparison between these three school contexts and the former white schools where most educational research is centered in South Africa. While commuting to Siyabonga, I would drive past these semi-privatized schools. I would walk past them in my neighborhood. Peering through the fence I could see large blue swimming pools, green sports

fields and three story buildings. Cars were backed up outside the schools in the morning as parents dropped off their boys and girls before work, something that almost never occurred at Ikwezi and Entabeni, and rarely at Siyabonga High. These students appeared black, white, Indian, and everything in-between. Other learners poured out of taxis, mostly black learners, but quickly ran over to join the rest of their classmates. Some walked from their nearby houses with their school bags. This image, the daily existence of these youth, contrasts sharply with those young people attending Ikwezi High, Entabeni Secondary, and Siyabonga High.

My purpose in selecting to do research in three schools as opposed to one was to gain a broader perspective on the youths' experiences in the majority of South African schools. Although there are differences between the school contexts, throughout this dissertation I take them as representing a range of former-black schools in KwaZulu-Natal. They hold far more in common when compared to private and semi-private former white schools. Students are far closer to experiences of poverty, insecurity, and violence, and the teachers in these schools struggle to teach in light of these contexts and limited resources. Consequently, the educational experiences that young people undergo at these three field sites, the ways in which they understand forces of unity and fragmentation in their world, and the imaginations of their futures sharply contrast with the lives of most middle-class youth explored in scholarly literature. The remainder of this dissertation, therefore, centers on how young South Africans in these average school contexts understand and engage with their educational environments.

Chapter 3: Social Fragmentations and Collectivities Through a Moral Lens

We sat in the stuffy, unused library filled with insect eaten books and shells of computers that had their hard drives stolen several years ago. Future (19m), Unpredictable Virus (19m), Lost Angel (20f), and MaCherry (18f)[20], giggled as they wrote their chosen pseudonyms on scrap pieces of paper. After gathering some background information on the students, such as their age and how long they had attended Ikwezi High, I asked them to explain why they picked the names that they picked. MaCherry selected her name because her father used to call her that when she was a little girl, while Unpredictable Virus said the name just came to him. Lost Angel explained that she was lost in the world, but now she had found the "right way." After having a child at age 13 and being made an example of by teachers and parents, she had returned to finish school.

Then Future explained the meaning of his chosen name, "I think that it's because I have a lot of things that are heading... (He raises his hand high above his head). So I think that when I thought of 'Future,' it's where I want to be." Later in the conversation he articulated how he plans to get to the future. After telling me he only made friends who were also planning for their futures he said, "We put education first. We must put the education here (he puts both hands on his head) on your skull so that we will reach there. We won't reach there if we just stay at home and eating now and again. We must put things up in your skull*, so that we reach there." Again, his hand reached high above his head.*

Over the next year I spent more time with Future. He wasn't as focused on his academics as other students in the class, but he was confident in where he wanted to go. He told me the story of his life; the hardships he had endured as he moved again and again, how he lost his mother and grandmother as a child and failed grade 9 and then grade 10 before being sent to

---

[20] Throughout this dissertation I include students' age and gender in parenthesis next to their pseudonyms as indicated above.

live with distant relatives in this rural area. He also shared his happiest years, like when he travelled around to neighboring provinces with a financially-supported soccer team when he was 14 years old. And finally, he talked of how he had fallen for a young woman at school and the highs and lows he felt with her. Throughout all of our conversations one constant theme colored his experiences with others and his sense of self—how he was going toward the future.

   *   *   *

When I asked students who they enjoy hanging out with, they never spoke of wanting to be with only boys or girls, black or Indian people, Zulus or Sothos—social researchers' prized social categories of gender, race and ethnicity. Instead, like Future, they talked of spending time with people who shared their values in life. More specifically, they often described how they chose friends who were moving forward in life, who were going places, who were heading toward their future.

Contemporary literature on South African youth identity and belonging, as discussed in the previous chapters, has emphasized race as the key social division in the newly democratic country. This assumption is in part driven by a reality of the importance of race as a marker of social identity in urban, particularly middle-class spaces. Yet, while race continues to be an important marker in these spaces, this chapter addresses how youth envision forces of fragmentation beyond the confines of former white, middle class schools. Because the South African education system remains so bifurcated, youth attending former non-white schools have drastically different social and educational experiences.

In former black schools of KwaZulu-Natal, which almost exclusively continue to only serve black students, how do youth see their world as unified or divided? How do they make social collectivities, or separate themselves into different groups? After listening to youths'

words and participating in their daily educational experiences, I argue that youth see social divisions as more complex than a matter of "black" or "white." Rather, youth frame a large portion of how they view social unity and division in moral terms. They divide the world between the morally "good us" and "bad others," where the good are "moving forward" in life and the bad throw their futures away.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section analyzes how youth contrast morally "good" us with "bad" others in their daily lived experiences. It highlights how youth see divisions according to those who are headed toward moral futures by studying, having respect, and aspiring toward future employment, in contrast to those who sit at home and go nowhere. The second section explores how youth view money—the attainment of money, spending of money, and circulation of money—through the same moral lens that both separates and unites people in their world. The third section reviews how youths' understanding of morality encompasses their opinions of foreigners from other parts of Africa.

The fourth and final sections of this chapter cover social divisions that remain of secondary concern to youth and fall tenuously within this moral framework—namely divisions based on language, race, gender and reproduction. South African youth often express ambivalence about these social divisions that they witness; they feel they cannot be easily placed within the categories of "good" versus "bad." I suggest that these latter social collectivities fall partially within a moral framing. In environments where young people are constantly bombarded with concerns of safety, nourishment, and economic security, social experiences that do not directly correspond to these needs—or as obstacles to their future aspirations—remain a secondary interest in many young people's lives.

Assertions of Moral Identities and Aspirations in an Unstable World

Young South African students regularly explained that they wanted to stay with good friends, who were doing good things. Many statements echoed those of Lungstar (18m) from Entabeni Secondary school who asserted, "I like to stay with people that will get me something that is of value… Like when a person tells me that I'm doing something wrong, then I will change to do something good… Like us. We don't smoke, we don't do drugs. We're just peaceful." Even other students who didn't claim they avoided drugs,[21] explained that they liked to have friends that are, "doing good things, not bad things. Because if you are doing bad things you can end up – nothing" (Amanda, 17m). Such regular statements reveal how South African youth frame their world—and their own identities—through the language of "good" people who have future aspirations, against the "bad" others and behaviors that surround them.

These findings both support and build upon the work of Swartz (2009) who conducted qualitative research on the morality of South African township youth. Swartz found that despite a popular discourse that proclaims poor, urban youth as lacking morals, township youth have a very strong sense of right and wrong. While many young people in her study held conventional representations of morality that abhorred theft, robbery, stealing and materialist values, others expressed what Swartz called "emancipated representations of morality" that placed actions within an unconventional hierarchy (Swartz 2009:57). For these youth, stealing was wrong if it

---

[21] I use the term "drugs" throughout this paper in the same way that many students used the term. In conversations students explained that the most common types of drugs prevalent in their communities were marijuana, *starter pack, ihhashi,* and *wonga*. Marijuana was at times considered a drug used by "bad" people, while at other times students recognized its use for religious purposes. Youth described *Starter Pack* as a dangerous, and addictive pill that has a stimulant effect similar to cocaine. Its name comes from the understanding that once one starts taking it, one can never stop. *Ihhashi*, meaning "horse," was rumored to be a pill used to tranquilize horses. *Wonga* was discussed most frequently as a drug that was used by bad people. It was described as a pill that is comprised of many other drugs, including anti-retroviral drugs, that makes one lose control of their behavior so that they may even rob or murder.

involved unwarranted violence, but it could be right if one was stealing from someone who had more than enough.

Swartz analyzed youth morality through three representations: enacted morality (what you do), embodied morality (who you are), and moral locations (where you are) (64-5). This framing is helpful for thinking through how people express their moral identities in terms of different from others. While the statements from Future, Lungstar, and Amanda above focused on the "goodness" of what one does, or enacted morality, other students in my study highlighted the significance of moral locations. Many youth said that being *in* school was good, regardless of what happened in school. These students often contrasted their status as a student with other friends or siblings who were not in school. For instance, Rick Ross (18m) spoke of his brother, "I have a brother who left school in 2001. But he's nothing. Just because he's not educated. He left the school, he was doing grade 10. He is smoking there, drinking, doing *bosa* (tobacco)." Although youth in this study didn't place themselves into the same four morally embodied categories that Swartz identified (Mommies Babies, Right Ones, Kasi girl/boy, Skollies), they regularly expressed a form of embodied morality by describing themselves as the "good ones" against the "bad others."

This study contributes to Swartz's research on youth belonging and morality by examining the underlying theme that shapes how youth see their world as divided or united—their ideas of the future. The way young South Africans see themselves and those around them as striving toward a moral future, or neglecting their futures, influences who they seek out as friends. Moreover, the way people work, live, and spend money all fall under this framing of moral futures. Young people see the world as divided between the good and the bad, and the

good and the bad are determined by the way in which one is seen as pursuing their undetermined, yet ever-desired future.

Friends Who Are Going Forward

With regard to friendship groups, many students explained that they "felt different" from people who lacked a future orientation. Spoke contrasted those who wanted to attended school in order to pursue future aspirations, with other students who dropped out of school or simply went because they were forced to go. A young man from Entabeni who called himself Orange Grove (18m) articulated this point as such,

> "Maybe some children are just forced to go to school, but to others they are not forced. They know that he or she have that goal for his future and that is why they go to school. And I'm saying that I am different from children; I know what I deserve and what I desire, why I am at school, and when I will keep on furthering and going forward."

Diva (20f) in Ikwezi High School likewise expressed how she felt different from students who lacked a future orientation. She expressed that although she may be the same race as other students, she felt that her mind, or moral being, was different. She explained,

> "I feel the same in color, and umqondo wethu (our minds)- it's not the same because other people they think the bad things, like eating ama-drugs, doing all these things, but me, as I am, I'm not eating that. I've chosen to be at school so that I'm getting a better future. Some of them, they're eating drugs, they don't finish the school. So in our mind we are different."

While other students think and do bad things, she sees herself as different because she has chosen to think about her future. Diva then continued to talk about the dangerous, bad people in her community, who not only steal things but would rape her if she was alone early in the morning.

Other students talked about how bad people would *bamba* (jump/grab) them early in the morning to steal their things. Others, particularly in the peri-urban school, recalled fights

involving guns and knives on school grounds. By regularly asserting their own future moral

direction, they constantly contrasted themselves with other "bad people" in their world—who

they often regarded as far greater in number.

Many young South Africans in these impoverished communities expressed feelings of

hopelessness and isolation because of the violence and crime they had witnessed. Shabeni (18m)

explained, "Ah there is a lot of violence at the school. If you are learning at Entabeni, every time

you are always scared. You are always scared that they fight to you." His words were reiterated

by many students who said that they often did not come to school for days at a time due to fear

of violence.

The fear of violence shaped the way young people perceived the benefits and dangers of

friendship. Students viewed friends who did not live up to an appropriate moral standard as

dangerous, and therefore asserted that they had no friends. For instance, Amanda (17m) stated,

> "According to me *nje*, I don't have friends. I have people that I talk to them, they
> are not my friends. At home they told me that friends are not good. You have to
> choose good friends. So during this I don't see anyone who can be a good friend. I
> just have people who I am talking to them, not that they are my friend but I'm just
> sharing conversation with them."

In the rural school a focus group of three students, Diva (20f), Candice (20f), and Music (21m),

all asserted that they did not have friends. Diva asserted, "I don't have friends. In school, I'm

always *ngahamba ngedwa* (I went alone). At break times, I'm always alone." Candice explained

that she had a few court cases for fighting underway in a city where she previously lived, but she

just wanted to be a "good girl" and "just focus on her studies" at Ikwezi. To accomplish this, she

stated that she wanted to, "Forget about friends. Friends are more problems in life."

Although some students claimed to have no friends, most of my research participants

stated that they felt connected with other young people who followed the right path—by staying

in school, discussing their futures, and not engaging in violence, crime, and drugs. In school they spent time with those who identified with the "good" us, in contrast to the "bad" others. I also met with several students who were placed in the "bad" category by other classmates, because of their tendencies to skip school, or come to school drunk or high on marijuana. These students often did not self-identify as "bad," yet would talk about how they have done many things that are wrong and now they want to look toward the future.

For example, Ministar, a 20-year-old male who participated in a focus group and whom many others considered to be with the "bad" students at Entabeni, explained in a low voice, "I can say that there are many things that we do that are wrong and it is not easy sometimes to quit something." He then continued to explain that is why he chooses good friends "who are going forward, that are doing something, that are not just doing nothing." Thus, although Ministar recognized that his current actions may be considered "wrong," he claimed a moral existence through his association with good friends who look toward the future. Similarly, other male students such as Jehova asserted that they had previous failed a grade because they were busy "playing." As presented in the opening excerpt of this dissertation, Jehova adopted an individualized narrative of failure when explaining that he failed grade nine, rather than highlighting the economic and social challenges he faced when having to move multiple times over the course of his life. Like Ministar, during our conversations he asserted that he was now on the "right path" toward his "future."

Narratives of failure and reform took a different form for female students. Although some young women were considered "bad" by peers due to their drinking or smoking habits, more frequently women felt they were placed in the "bad" category due to becoming pregnant at a young age. As will be discussed below in the section on gender and reproduction, young mothers

held that their pregnancy was a "mistake" and were stigmatized by their peers for "falling pregnant," while young fathers were not considered culpable for pregnancies. Yet, like young men who might be considered at the edge of the bad sphere for "playing", young women asserted their intentions to stay in school and to seek a better future for their children.

As all of these examples illustrate, South African youth tend to express differences in social groups based on moral judgments that project into the future. They came to interpret their social world, all the people and their actions in it, by looking through the moral lens of good versus bad. Most students viewed themselves as separate from "bad" others, and others who felt themselves at the edge of this sphere would assert their moral identity by looking toward the future. In the subsequent sections we will see how this moral framing comes to embrace many other forms of social division in their world.

The Morality of Money: Respect and Responsibility

Early in the morning, Bomgoh, a 16-year-old female student, entered the classroom before other students arrived. She began talking about her life, explaining how she had recently moved to the peri-urban school from another area, and the challenges she faced here. "Girls here think they are up here," she said motioning with her hand above her head. "They just look at me," she tilted her head down, looked up from under her brow, raised her eyebrows, and continued, "And then they say, 'Hi come here.'" They push her around. Bomgoh said they think they are up there because they live in nice houses, their families are living a good life, whereas she is living with her aunt and her three cousins in a two room house.

*   *   *

The majority of former black schools in KwaZulu-Natal, particularly those outside of large townships, exist within poverty-ridden communities. Often times several people in one

household will be supported on one elderly pension (R1000/$100) and smaller child support grants (R300/$30). A telling marker of such poverty in schools is the number of students who qualify for the child social grant, which at the time of this study was provided for children under 18 whose single primary caretaker makes under R2,500/$250 a month. In both rural Ikwezi High School and peri-urban Entabeni Secondary School every single grade eight student received the child social grant. In the better-off, urban Siyabonga High School, approximately 75% of grade 8 students received this grant, although teachers asserted that more families would qualify if they received information on how to apply for the grant. This means that the overwhelming majority of students came from families who were officially below the poverty line.

Although schools uphold practices intended to minimize the visibility of contrasting household incomes, such as enforcing a standardized uniform and restricting costly hairstyles, youth still recognized economic divisions amongst themselves. Many felt that money—in particular the morality of money—divided them from other students. As will be discussed below, students felt money united or divided according to how money was used and shared in ways that neglected or furthered students' imagined moral futures.

Young South Africans felt economic divisions most acutely during lunchtime, when witnessing who brings or buys food from the sellers marks one's economic status.[22] For example, in the urban school I discussed the prospect of what would happen if the school offered free lunch for learners. Dlebstar, a young 17-year-old male student, said that such a project would not be feasible due to embarrassment. He stated that he would never want to stand in a line and hold a plate to wait for food, particularly in front of a girlfriend. Yet Dlebstar, who boasted a family

---

[22] There were no food sellers in the rural school, however the other two schools were regularly visited by sellers. In addition, greater income disparity existed among students in the peri-urban and urban schools.

car and flashed a tablet at school, didn't make the connection that students who *couldn't* buy things from sellers felt different and separated themselves from those who could.

Learners from low-income families explained how friendship groups tended to form in school according to how much money students' families had. Yet, friendship groups didn't just form because of differing economic status per se, but because of a *mentality* and *morality* that came along with using money in different ways. An exchange between Nelisa (19f), Kim (19f), Babyface (18f), and T. Pain (18m), illustrates the way that youth understand how money affects people's moral behaviors towards others.

Nelisa: Mostly those who doesn't carry money to school, they don't become friends with those who carry money. Like me - I don't live with my mother so I don't carry money that much. So I can't mix with people-

Kim: Who have money, who come from the right family-

Nelisa: Because we have different hearts. Because some like to give and some, they don't.

Christina: So people who don't carry money to school – why can you not mix with the people who are carrying money?

Kim: It's because they will think they are better than you.

All: Yes!

Nelisa: And they will try and boss you, because you don't have money.

Kim: And always tell you to go and buy-

Nelisa: They don't understand Christina, they don't understand why don't you have money to school. So yeah. So I think if you mix with someone like you, like you can understand each other.

In the excerpt above the students talked about being made fun of, or bossed around, by students with more money just like Bomgoh. Students regularly challenged their peers who acted on a "higher level," asserting instead the equality of all students. As will be discussed in Chapter 7,

youth did not seek out a patron-client relationship (Ferguson 1985) with peers of a different economic status like they did with teachers. However, they considered sharing—without ordering others around—to be indicative of having a "good heart." Babyface, a member in the group above, was considered to be of a good heart later in this conversation because her father usually gives her R30/$3 to take taxis to and from school, and with the excess money she buys food for all of her friends. As Jeske (2016:191) indicated, this form of gift giving or sharing among Zulu people of different social-economic status represented "social nearness," rather than an indication of social distance that can be formed through charity in other contexts (Graeber 2014). Yet, the students note that people like Babyface are the exception rather than the rule.

At times, I witnessed this "good way" of circulating and sharing money firsthand. For instance, one morning the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), a government department that deals with corruption among the South African police force, came to morning assembly for a presentation. Two women came and explained when people should contact IPID. They gave examples and then passed out gifts in the form of water bottles and T-shirts to learners who later repeated these examples. Everyone was thrilled! One grade 12 boy who received a t-shirt promptly ran to Mrs. Mbatha, who regularly conducted the morning assembly, and gave the t-shirt to her. This public display of gift exchange elicited even more joy from the students than the original gift.

Later that day, I donated R50/$5 of money for the *isicathamiya* (traditional male choir) group to take a taxi to a competition one day. When I offered the money for the ride, the boys were delighted. Yet within several minutes I watched part of the same cash pass hands yet again. Several of the isicathamiya boys were in a history class that had been taught by a student-teacher for the last several weeks. As this was her last day, they decided to buy her a lollypop, two hot

dogs, and give her R12 ($1.20) cash. She was touched and ecstatic. Both of these instances reveal good forms of money use and exchange that learners frequently discussed under the terminology of ubuntu.[23]

Youth also frequently discussed the "bad" uses of money among the "rich" that they felt were divisive in society. Smash (19) and Jehova (18), two young men from lower-income families in the urban school explained that they could not afford to buy things at school for lunch, but refused to bring things from home because they would be teased. Indeed, during break times these young men stayed close to their classroom, rather than venturing off with other students to the sellers. They further analyzed how students who tend to have money often use it in the wrong way that will not push them "forward."

Smash: What I can say about this – oh yeah richer students—is they
             always do wrong things with this money, with this pocket money.
             Because they only buy cigars, what they call this thing-

Jehova: A cigarette…

Smash: Whether they buy *ugwayi* (a cigarette) or alcohol because with
             this money they are wasting it. They are wasting it.

Jehova: *(Sighs)* They don't know how to use it.

Christina: Well that is something that I noticed in this school that I haven't
             seen in other schools, is that you have some people who have
             really nice phones and they are using all this money and then other students who-

Smash: -Take out the Motorola, the old one. And they will make fun of it.
             Even the bag. They are using Nike, Adidas. Once you have a red bag with no
             name they will laugh at you and wave it like this… I promised myself not to
             waste money to those things because it
             might happen that they have an expensive bag but inside that
             expensive bag there is nothing that can push you from where he or she is. *Mina*
             (myself), I know what is in my bag although it is an ugly bag, but it can help me
             to go forward. [24]

---

[23] In South Africa ubuntu is often translated as meaning humanity. However, students discussed the meaning of ubuntu through examples. The examples which they provided regularly entailed sharing money and food with people who needed it.

Jehova: Yeah the other thing is that those children that have better homes,
                 they don't work hard to have their own, their own work and their own cars. What
                 they focus on is the money from their families, their mothers. It's like if they died
                 all their money would belong to them. So-

Smash: And they spend it. If others they have much money they use it
                 girls. To girls, to show girls that I am a rich what-what, eish.

Jehova: They wear expensive shoes and clothes.

Smash: They do that to attract girls, which I think is foolishness…
                 If I were to have a sister I would beat her down! *(Laughs.)* I'd rather to tell her to
                 just choose someone like me who will have similarities like me. Because if she
                 takes a rich one, rich one shows shoes to her, shows bags to another one, show –
                 he will have much more girls than one.

These statements that South African youth regularly made about the good and bad uses of

money speak to a broader anthropological literature on the morality of money (Jeske 2016; Nash

1979; Shipton 1989; Taussig 1977). South African tensions over money reveal a perceived

problem of the rise of individualism in historically community-oriented societies. However,

unlike Shipton's analysis of Kenyan Luo people's conception of "bitter money," which is made

through stealing, winning, or selling land, these students did not recognize moral issues with

ways of *acquiring* money. In fact, many youth expressed moral ambivalence when it came to

making money in different ways. Although most asserted that they sought to make money

through various jobs, others admitted to stealing—particularly food—due to family needs. They

did not attempt to justify these actions as right, however they talked of them as acceptable

because the money was not used for individual purposes, but in order to support others.

Instead of concerns of money acquisition, young South Africans attached moral weight to

how money was *used* and *redistributed*. Students, like those above, spoke of how people

wrongfully use money in ways that neglect their futures. Instead of spending money on things

---

[24] Students regularly spoke of "moving forward," or "pushing" from where they are to highlight how they are
pursuing a moral future that often entailed finishing school and finding work.

that push one "forward," they recognized how some of their peers use money irresponsibly to impress others or "waste" it on alcohol, cigarettes, and women. This moral language applied to both young men and women however it was often deemed more acceptable for men to drink or smoke a little more, outside of school grounds, than women.

In addition to speaking of the moral uses of money, young South Africans used their lower-economic status to claim a superior moral identity. In Ikwezi High School, Umlando (21f) explained that she felt different from other students in South Africa because, "Kids who come from poor families are respectful and nice, whereas those who are rich brag and are not so respectful." Many students articulated the idea that poorer students in public schools have "respect," in contrast to rich students who are rude. During a focus group discussion River (18f), Angel (17f) and Bruno (16m) discussed the morality of rich students.

River: I feel different because as we are the learners, we are learning in public schools, we have respect. We respect the elderly, we respect people who are like us, we respect everyone. Whereas the learners who are learning from ama-private-

Angel: Private schools![25]

River: They only respect themselves. They don't care what other people think. They don't care- they just do anything that they please. Even if there are adults, they only swear nje. They do things that you as a child must not do in front of adults….

Bruno: Some of them they think they are on top because of the wealth of their families. And those persons, I just tell them you are poor like me. It is just your mother and father who are rich because they work hard. You are just poor like me. And I told him that after 5 years or 10 years working we will compete. *(Laughter from all.)*

This discourse of "respect" was prevalent among both teachers and students, and indeed even outside of school communities. Jeske (2016:179) noted from her fieldwork among Zulu

---

[25] While some students in the rural areas may have imagined interactions with wealthier, private-school students, many students at Entabeni and Siyabonga lived in the same neighborhood as students who travelled over half an hour by taxi to attend former white schools. Thus, their opinions may be based on previous interactions.

workers that respect acknowledges your dignity as a human being. Yet "respect" does not require the conception that all humans are socially and economically equal. She explains, "Zulu people do not consider inequality itself as problematic, so long as respect marks the behaviors of parties across inequalities" (2016:173). Similarly, in these excerpts students are not arguing against the existence of hierarchy in society. In fact, Bruno on other occasions prided himself in kneeling before elders and obeying his parents, common Zulu signs of respect. He even expressed difficulty in calling me by my first name, because he said that he felt it was disrespectful. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, students acknowledged that their teachers were at a different "level."

Rather than challenge the existence of hierarchy in society, youth were contesting the way their peers act as though there are "different levels." Bruno's assertion that "You are poor like me," highlights how many poorer youth feel that their peers are wrongfully acting like they are something they are not—and in the case of Bomgoh making her run errands for them. They divide themselves from those who use money in the wrong way and develop false conceptions of their status due to their parents' money.

Money in this context was not seen as containing a morality within itself, morality is contained within the way people who have it act towards others or think about their futures. As youth described, often those with money do not respect other people, nor do they use their money to push themselves forward toward a better future. By claiming the status of poor, but hardworking, giving, and future-oriented, many young people claim a positive morality that places them within the confines of "good" people in a world where right and wrong actions and beliefs divide the population.

African Foreigners: Stealing Jobs versus Creating Futures

After school one day three boys shared their opinions of non-South African foreigners from Africa around here. "Christina, you've hit a sensitive point," Ministar (20m) said. He talked about how "they" steal our jobs. They work for very little money, and then you will find that the Zulu person is fired while the other one is hired. He said that other times they steal our wives and girlfriends. They have so much money to spend that the women go to them. Shabeni countered his argument. He said that on the other hand they also create jobs and hire our sisters. For instance, one migrant in his neighborhood started a hair salon and is hiring Zulu women.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

In all three communities, foreign African immigrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, and Nigeria, among other places, resided near local Zulu populations. Many of these foreigners came from contexts of extreme poverty, and arrived in South Africa prepared to make a living for themselves through whatever means possible. As young South Africans saw them moving into their neighborhoods, working for pay below minimum wage and starting their own small businesses, they came to interpret their actions through a moral lens of "good" or "bad" behaviors that connected to conceptions of the future. Throughout our conversations, groups of friends regularly, and vehemently, debated their moral interpretations of foreign Africans living in South Africa.

By seeing the world through a good-bad polarizing lens, youth who asserted that foreigners should return to their home countries regularly focused on the inappropriate behaviors of foreigners. Top among these negative behaviors was the belief that many foreigners work for (too) low wages. As 18-year-old Rick explained,

> "I'm just thinking that –eish – foreigners, sometimes they are good but sometimes they are bad… Somehow they tolerate the jobs that are not good. The South

Africans refuse that jobs, but *makwerekweres* [26] are working with the lower prices… It's bad because they interfere with job opportunities. The employers they will prefer them to us just because they aren't thinking about the money. They only want the 5 rand to take food, to buy food. But us, at the end of the month we want to earn a good money. That's why we don't have jobs as we are South Africans. That one we must take out [remove them from the country]."

Many young people expressed their frustrations over foreigners having work, while their family members did not. For instance, Future stated, "We don't have a job, like your father doesn't have a job and they have a job, from outside the country, they have a job. But your father is still at home, he has nothing to do, he has no job."

In the peri-urban and urban areas where students met more skilled African foreigners, they centered on how foreigners stole skilled jobs from South Africans. For example, the debate team in the peri-urban school was requested to debate the statement, "The government does not serve the interests of the youth." In response to this statement, students brought up how the government allows African foreigners to "steal" South Africans' jobs. They come to South Africa and work as doctors and teachers, while many South Africans are still unemployed.

Other male students were irritated by the ways in which male foreigners came to South Africa alone and would "steal" the local women. As illustrated in the excerpt above, they drew the connection between foreigners having jobs and money, and therefore attracting women. Young female students also recognized this trend, explaining that often Zimbabwean men date and marry Zulu women, but not the other way around (Zama, 17f). However, they often contested the notion that women were being "stolen" by foreign men, thereby contesting an underlying notion that Zulu women are perhaps the rightful property of Zulu men. In general, young women expressed more positive opinions of foreigners, whereas young Zulu men were very divided on their opinions of foreigners. Specifically, 14 female student participants made

---

[26] This disparaging Sotho term is often used as an onomatopoeia to refer to foreigners who have incompetent speech.

explicitly positive statements about African foreigners, whereas 7 male student participants made positive statements and 5 made negative statements about them. No female students made negative statements about African foreigners. These perspectives were almost evenly divided across rural and urban contexts.

Other youth expressed distrust of foreigners because they forge identity documents, illegally receive South African social grants, and engage in prostitution in order to obtain money. Discussion of social grants often led to a heated debate among many students, who were angry and appalled that immigrants would take government money in light of so many South Africans who needed it. Future argued that foreigners should never receive social grants, "Because here in South Africa we have a huge number of people who need this money. They must go back to where they come from. Serious. They must go. Ok, we need them there to stay, but we don't need them to receive that money for our nation. No, they must fly back." Other students, like Snduduzo (17m) and Smash (19m), recognized that foreigners frequently come to South Africa out of necessity, but were still frustrated with how they behave once they arrive.

> "There is something wrong. Like in their countries, those people are there who are running from there, and here they don't even have IDs to apply for a work. What they do, they steal from us. What they do? They are selling even their body like sexually. And here they fake the money, they don't mean to do that but it happened because they have a problem there and they don't have another chance." Smash continued, "They are causing trouble to live…. sometimes they just do it very wrong, because they hurt other people."

South African youth in both rural and urban schools often expressed their opinions of foreigners according to the perceived rightness of their actions. If they recognized foreigners' actions as "bad" behaviors, they thought they should return to their home countries. Yet those students who identified the "good" works they did for their families and the community supported their rights to live and work in South Africa.

Works from Hickel (2014) and Gade (2012) on black South Africans' conceptions of moral personhood offer insights into why these youth hold negative perceptions of foreigners. Hickel argues that while anthropological theories tend to view xenophobic attacks as a result of globalization and increased flows of people across boundaries, Zulu people—and in particular men—instead have experienced a crisis in social reproduction which makes such anti-immigrant violence conceivable. By coming to work in South Africa without families, keeping money to oneself, and working for lower wages, foreigners are seen as "anti-social agents" that disrupt productive and reproductive processes (2014:108). Like witches, they act as immoral human beings and therefore can be regarded as less than human. Viewing African personhood through the lens of ubuntu, Gade (2012) similarly argues that black South Africans recognize that only some *Homo sapiens* count as persons: those that are black, those who have been incorporated into personhood through certain ceremonies, and those that behave in a morally acceptable manner. If a being does not belong in the category of "person," then they do not need to be treated as persons.

Youth in this study also justified their negative views of foreign Africans by arguing that they did not act as moral persons. Yet, through this same framing of moral personhood youth also justified their *support* of foreign Africans—a fact not seen in Hickel's and Gade's studies. Youth often saw foreigners holding a moral identity and assuming responsibilities to their families and others in the community. They were acting as moral beings who were "moving forward" in life by attaining an education and working to support their families. By depicting foreigners as moral beings with a future

outlook, in the same way that students saw themselves, they welcomed them. As Hero

(21m) articulated,

> "I think we must accept them. They are our brothers. They are our sisters.
> We are all from Africa. We are all from mother nature. So I think we must
> respect and welcome them, because they are not here to steal or to harm
> anybody. They are here for a living, they are here for a better life. Those
> who are studying here, they want to study and be something else so that
> maybe in the future they can develop their countries."

According to Hero, and many other young men and women, foreigners sought "a better future"

for their families, communities, and countries. As Amanda (17m) asserted, "I don't mind

[foreigners]… They are here to make money so they can go back to their countries and feed their

families." Others focused on the positive experiences that foreigners brought to their

communities, explaining how they "teach us skills," such as creating things to sell from scrap

metal, and provide jobs from businesses that they open. They continued to discuss how

Zimbabweans in their community were discriminated against initially, but now they are accepted

in part due to their linguistic skills and morally appropriate behavior. Zama (17f) stated,

> "In my location we have the people who are from Zimbabwe… But now it's like
> they are Zulus. Because they speak the Zulu, but sometimes they get lost and
> speak their language. But they are liked, because they are helping each other.
> Even if you are doing a special occasion they buy some cakes, drinks, beers,
> things that are given when you are doing something like an event..."

Zama's words highlight how she views divisions in her world—based on language and ways of

spending money rather than nationality per-se. By seeing foreigners as acting in morally

appropriate ways, youth welcomed them.

At times South African youth believed that African foreigners held a higher moral status

when compared to South African citizens. For example, Lost Angel (20f) stated, "I like [African]

foreigners, so much. And they always work hard and earn less and they don't complain. We

blacks[27] are always complaining while we are lazy." Likewise, Nelisa (19f) affirmed her positive affection toward African foreigners (Kenyans and Zimbabweans specifically), "I love them too much, and I love them because they work hard. Yeah, they work hard. Not like us. We're just relaxing. And wait for something to come to our hands." By comparing hard-working foreigners who work toward their futures with relaxing or lazy South Africans, these girls assert the perceived moral appropriateness of foreigners.

In a focus group, River, Bruno and Angel elaborated on their opinions of why foreign Africans, such as Zimbabweans, are more motivated to work hard.

Angel: South Africans don't want to study. That's all. Zimbabweans are
            very very want to study and they are very focused on that. South Africans they
            say OK, I want a company. So what I can start?

Bruno: Yeah same as their president. *(Laughter.)* Robert Mugabe! What a
            very studious person! He is very clever!

Angel: How can you study in South Africa when you want to just chill,
            and say, "Everything will come!"

River: Africans used to play.

Angel: Yeah used to play. If you are in Zimbabwe you can- there is no
            money that is offered to you in the end of the month because you
            have a child. In South Africa if you have a child, you get the money. They don't
            study because they have the money.

Bruno: The reason that make them study hard is because they are under
            pressure; they are so poor. They want to have good life, achieve good things in
            life. But here I will just chill and say my mother and father is rich, when they die
            I'll take over their legacy and live a good life. So there is nothing for school.

These three students point out that foreign Africans have the moral upper hand because their poverty requires them to work hard toward the future. Perhaps some youth discussed the moral superiority of these impoverished people because they too saw themselves in this light—as

---

[27] Young Zulu and Xhosa South Africans often used the term "black" to refer to black South Africans. Non-national (black) Africans are not included in this category.

poorer than others, but not any lesser of a person. Whereas they think South Africans expect social grants to be given to them, these youth claim that Zimbabweans value education and seek to "achieve" their futures.

Gender and Reproduction: Attaining Money and Considering the Future

"When I am president I think I am going to take away social grants, because most of the teenagers get pregnant to receive the money," Morgan (22m) asserted amongst his friends. This was an argument that I had heard many times before; girls were getting pregnant because they wanted the R300 ($30) that is given to single mothers so that they could do their hair and buy new clothes. Only this time I decided to probe deeper past this superficial recitation. I ask the five young men in the room if they have children. Morgan nods, Hero eagerly shows me a picture of his newborn on his phone, and all the guys tease Touch saying that he has one on the way. I inquire if they themselves and the mothers of their children got pregnant just to receive the child grant—after all it takes two to make a baby. There is an uproar in the room about who needs child grants and why people get pregnant. Hero's voice rises above the others, "Not for the social grant! It's just natural. Life is too short, you must enjoy it before you die." As the laughter surges and recedes the young men proceed to explain how having a child is difficult for the girl who is in school, but the boys remain relatively unaffected.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

Throughout the course of fieldwork, discussions about the problem of teenage pregnancy abounded in schools, on the radio and television, and even through songs at cultural activity competitions. Indeed, rates of pregnancy among high school students was fairly high, particularly in rural areas. Although there was some debate on whether schools should record learner pregnancies, Ikwezi recorded over 20 pregnancies in 2013 among approximately 350

female learners. Attention was regularly placed on the "irresponsible" or "greedy" girls, who—as public media, teachers and students often claimed—got pregnant simply so that they could obtain a social grant for R300/$30 per child each month. When the Department of Health came to Entabeni Secondary School to address the issue of teenage pregnancy, they collected all of the girls from grade 10 through 12 in one room to discuss contraceptive options.[28] Just as Morrell et al (2009) found through their research on gender equality across different school contexts, most of the time fathers were left entirely out of discussions on teenage pregnancy.

Young South Africans often viewed the act of getting pregnant through the same moralizing lens that they saw fragmenting their world; only premarital sex had little to do with this conversation. Although teachers talked about young people having sex as immoral, youth rarely took this approach. Some young people would identify their peers who abstained as "Christians" (although according to participants, most youth who self-identified as Christians did not abstain), but did not attach a moral weight to the decision to have sex or not. Having sex with a boyfriend or girlfriend did not constitute a morally "bad behavior"—in fact many youth asserted that sex was important so that when you decided to get married you would be well-prepared. Instead, becoming pregnant, disregarding your future, and spending social grants improperly was interpreted through a moral lens.[29]

---

[28] The Department of Health personnel promoted injections as the preferred contraceptive methods because young women could receive them for free from the local clinic, they prevented pregnancy for three months, and the male partner did not have to be involved in the process. Despite high HIV rates in the area, STDs were not discussed at this intervention. KwaZulu-Natal has an HIV rate of 16.9% of the population, with 12% of youth aged 15-24 HIV positive. (See http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Local/Greytown-Gazette/kzn-highest-new-hiv-rate-20160621)

[29] Becoming pregnant was generally moralized more than engaging in various sexual practices or sexual orientations. However, at Ikwezi High School one student asked me why "cities turn people gay" because she had a friend who announced she preferred same-sex partners after moving to Johannesburg. This student viewed homosexuality as "wrong" and hoped her friend would "change." At Entabeni Secondary there were a few male students who were openly dating other men. They spent most of their time with female students at school. While some teachers and students at Entabeni stated that they found orientations other than heterosexuality unusual, I did not hear them assert that these young men's preferences for same-sex partners was "wrong." According to one teacher, at least they weren't "making girls pregnant."

Students regularly debated amongst themselves whether young women were getting pregnant for social grants, if it was right that they should receive this money, and if young mothers used the money in a correct way. On many occasions young men and women blamed the government for encouraging teenage pregnancy. For instance, 16-year old Bomgoh explained, "Some teenagers they just got pregnant because they think that it is something that we've learnt from the government. Government told us to be pregnant so that we can get this social grant." Many students suggested that the law should be changed so that people would only receive a social grant if the mother *is* married to encourage responsible spending of the grant. Even during cultural activities young men in *isicathamiya* groups (a form of male choir) sang about how awful it is that the government stays so silent on the issue of teenage pregnancy that their policies encourage.

Aside from criticizing the government, many young women were directly blamed for getting pregnant because they wanted the money "to do their hair," "buy clothes," or "drink alcohol." Youth claimed that this was wrong because this money should only be used for the child. As Morgan above first claimed, women got pregnant out of greed. Future (19m), Unpredictable Virus (19m), MaCherry (19f), and Lost Angel (20f) also vehemently debated whether young mothers should receive the social grant, citing personal experiences.

Unpredictable: Unpredictable Virus says [he likes to refer to himself in the third person] this grant money should be taken away because some of the parents don't take this money well. Some of them they use it on their needs, forgetting about the child. Some of them drink this money on alcohol, and forget to buy food for a child so that is why it should be taken away.

Lost Angel: What about us? I'm not drinking this money. What about me?

Unpredictable: You need it for yourself.

Lost Angel: I need it for myself, but (*Unpredictable starts talking*). Listen, listen! At home, once I fall pregnant we take this decision, you are out and you take care of your baby. I'm *out*.[30]

Unpredictable: Ok let's say for you, it may be like that. But for *others*.

Lost Angel: Not just me, not just me. There are other people who need that money more than I do.

Unpredictable: More than you do. Ok, I understand that.

Future: There are families outside who need this money.

Unpredictable: But there are also families, in fact let me say parents, who use this money unwisely.

Lost Angel: But most of the families-

Future: Let us say those who do it, that money is taken away from them. Let us say like that.

Unpredictable: If you say like that, how will the government know that this one will use it wisely, this one won't use it wisely. He will he...

Lost Angel: You will tell us!

Unpredictable: No I'm not the government. That is why I say it should be taken away.

Lost Angel: No.

These students never came to an agreement, yet their conversation highlights the morality attached to ways of using money once someone is pregnant, rather than the morality of having sex itself. Furthermore, the question of the father's role in the pregnancy and the receiving of social grants is entirely disregarded.

Stigma and blame attached to young mothers in schools—and not the young fathers—is not a new phenomenon. Many studies have documented the ways in which women's sexuality is moralized and policed in Southern African secondary schools (Bhana and Mcambi 2013;

---

[30] Lost Angel was arguing that her parents no longer support her financially because she became pregnant.

Mirembe and Davies 2001; Morrell, et al. 2012; Morrell, et al. 2009; Smith and Harrison 2013). As Bhana and Mcambi (2013) and Morrell et al. (2009) highlight, both teachers and students in schools in KwaZulu-Natal stigmatized girls for becoming pregnant. Students and staff believed that girls should control their urges and not have sex with boys, while not making the same arguments in support of abstinence for male learners. Girls were deemed "irresponsible" (Bhana and Mcambi 2013:15; Smith and Harrison 2013:77) and the fathers' role in pregnancy was never discussed as an issue.

This dissertation research reveals the new forms through which women's sexuality has become moralized in South Africa. Rather than shame young women for being sexually active, students claimed that women are immoral for the ways they receive and spend government grants. Additionally, youth saw teenage pregnancy as a problem due to the implications that it had for a young woman's future. Female students with children often asserted that their child was a "mistake," and then continued to explain that now they were on the "right path" to pursue their futures. Lost Angel, who fell pregnant when she was in eighth grade, gave herself this pseudonym because in her words, "In the last few years I was lost, totally lost, but now I'm found. It's like I'm an Angel." She explained that she was now found because she was continuing her studies and on a path toward her future.

Many young mothers spoke of pursing their future so that their child(ren) could have a better life. Strong (24f), who has two children, explained, "But now I am never thinking to make the same mistake. I want to focus on my study to help my children. I don't like to–so my child— living a poor life. Maybe I will try to make a better future, even to like spoil my child *(she chuckles)*." Her friend, Nature (18f), continued, "At our school we all have children. But sometime we did tell ourselves that we made the wrong mistake. Everybody just look us as if we

are planning. Because last year we all—we all learning a half year at our school. We just stay at home to take care of our children." These young women express the pressures that they felt from others in the community—judgment that they planned their pregnancies—while also affirming their own moral selves through their future orientation.

The divisions young people spoke of due to reproduction, like perceptions of African foreigners, often came down to perceived the perceived morality in money use and future orientations. It is "wrong" to get pregnant to access limited government resources, just as it is "wrong" to become pregnant and neglect your future. This moral framing based on the future encompasses the way in which most youth see social unity and fragmentation in the world; yet, as I show below, divisions of race and language fall only tentatively within this moral framework.

Moral Ambiguities: Race and Language?

Thandiwe was sitting on the front step of my house as I arrived home from a long day at Ikhwezi High School. She lived a few doors down and regularly visited me in the afternoons. Today she sat with several papers in her hand and an old identity booklet. "Can you help me fill out these papers?" she asked, handing me the forms her guardian should complete so that she could graduate and continue on to grade nine. She had filled in most of the blank lines on the form, save one. The long, splotchy black line from a photocopier low on ink extended next to the word "race." She didn't know what to fill in for her race, because she didn't understand what the question was asking. I suggested that she could probably write black or African; Thandiwe scribbled African along the line.

<div align="center">*</div>

Bruno was explaining the different activities he did in an afterschool program. I asked him if there were any learners of different races that participated in the program. "No," came his initial response. "Well… there is one girl but she speaks Zulu and Xhosa perfectly like a Zulu person," he continued while scrunching up his face. "You can only tell she's Indian because of the hair." He squinted his eyes and glanced to one side while touching the hair on the back of his head.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

In post-apartheid South Africa, most young and old people alike will identify people of different racial groups within their country. Most Zulu children will be able to distinguish *umlungu* (white person) from *umuntu* (person).[31] Yet, when it comes down to the concept of race, many young South Africans like Thandiwe either didn't understand the term, or like Bruno "forgot" that people who spoke Zulu fluently might be classified as a different race. On many other occasions, when I would initiate discussions of race students immediately and seamlessly transitioned into talking about people who speak different languages, such as Xhosa, Sotho, Shona or Swahili speakers. Rather than think of different social groupings among people in terms of skin color, youth firstly conceived of different language groups. However, social groupings among people of different linguistic groups and races were *not* the first things that youth discussed when talking about unity and fragmentation in their social worlds. I argue that these social groupings remain of secondary concern to youth because they don't view race and language differences as holding moral weight, unlike acts of violence, misuse of money, and—most importantly—neglecting one's future.

---

[31] While *umuntu* is literally translated to person in English, it was most often used to refer to a black person, and more specifically a South African black person.

Students often discussed how they felt different from people who spoke languages other than Zulu, or noticed that people who spoke a common language tended to hang out with one another. For instance, in Ikwezi High School a group of boys explained that they felt "very different" from other people in South Africa because there are many people in South Africa who don't speak the same language as them. They simply couldn't understand other people. This includes both South African nationals, such as Sotho-speaking people, as well as people from Ghana and Zimbabwe. Students in Entabeni noted that there were Xhosa speaking people living in their community but they were "under pressure" to speak Zulu and therefore didn't identify themselves.

While youth did not attach moral weight to speaking one language over another, they identified that sometimes older people cared because they had the "apartheid mind." At Siyabonga High School a focus group of students with either one or two Xhosa parents discussed how sometimes they are teased. Nelisa explained, "If I speak Xhosa in the class they will say, this is not Eastern Cape! This is KwaZulu-Natal, so you have to speak the language that we are speaking. And so it becomes sad. Very humiliating. But me I just don't care! If I like to speak Xhosa, I just speak Xhosa." These girls attributed discriminatory behavior toward people who speak different languages or are different races to people with the "apartheid mind," or "old people" who "still believe in the past," unlike the new, "modern" generation. By labeling people who seek to separate people according to race and language as having the apartheid mind, these young women placed a morally negative connotation on this attitude. The young women later emphasized that every person should learn multiple languages, so that they can easily switch depending on who they are speaking with in order to be friends with everybody.

Boxer (19m), 2Cool (18m), and Bongazonke (18m), Hero (18m) and McKenzie (16f) at Siyabonga High School likewise discussed the tension between how race and language generate social grouping and division—a social division that they found morally undesirable and that they attributed to beliefs of "older people." While they recognized that "ama-born frees," or South Africans born after 1994, are "free for everything," older people still discriminate against people of different races. This theme of "older people" with the "apartheid mind" will be discussed more indepth in Chapter 6 because many youth reflected on these generational divisions when considering their history lessons. Interestingly, these focus group participants felt that in high school young people were more likely to mix with people of different races than in university.

I pressed them on why they thought people of different racial backgrounds didn't mix in universities, and how they had learned of this trend. They referenced their older siblings who were currently enrolled at universities and suggested that this racial separation not only happens because old people have an apartheid mentality, but also because of linguistic barriers, course selection, and individuals' actions.

2Cool: The other thing is that people they just don't like switching languages.

All: Yeah.

2Cool: So they just hang with people that they use their own language with. So when the whites hang together they just use English, so it's hard for-

McKenzie: For them to understand. Maybe other languages like Zulu, Xhosa.

2Cool: Maybe when you have to make jokes, some others don't find that joke, so they just hang together.

Christina: I guess that makes sense.

Hero: For my sake, I think it depends on a person, or on that person, if she or he wants to be included in that group. Yeah that's what I see things for myself. Yeah.

Christina: So it's like individuals who decide where to go?

Hero: Yeah yeah, even those who are not their race of color or language, it depends on if you want to start new friends in university, it depends on you.

2Cool: And maybe it depends on the classes that you take. Maybe if there are a lot of white people, you hang with them and help each other on the school work. Things like that… And also it's how they accept you, if you want to come to them. If you see that they are not happy when you are around. (*Everyone laughs.*)

Hero: It does happen!

These young South Africans expressed a frequent sentiment among more urban populations—racial separation was a thing of the past, language barriers often divided people, yet people still had *some* agency to negotiate which group of people they would like to hang out with. They could try to make new friends, but ultimately needed to be accepted by others as well.

In other conversations, students regularly either expressed positive opinions of people of different races or referenced their inadequate knowledge on the topic. In the rural school, Future talked about his Indian friend who had recently moved to Pietermaritzburg. He worked with his friend at a shop on the weekends, and proclaimed that the Indians who owned the shop were very friendly and didn't judge "us blacks." A couple of students named themselves after individuals of different racial backgrounds whom they admired. Naidoo (21f) named herself after an Indian couple that her mother used to work for because of their kindness and meals that the Indian woman cooked for the student's family. Candice (20f) also named herself after a white South African girl that she met through sports activities whom she strongly respected because of her skills and tendency not to gossip.

Several students in the rural area overtly stated that they did not personally know any white South Africans and therefore they were unable to speak about them. When I asked Future for his opinions on white South Africans, after he had talked extensively about Indian South Africans, he stated, "Unfortunately I never speak with them, so I can't say nothing… So for me,

I don't think that it matters to judge them because they are white and we are the black. And the fact is that we are from one continent. We are South African, and we love each other as a South African. That's all I can say." Because of his lack of experience with white South Africans, he could only turn to what he had learned in school and on the radio about loving the "Rainbow Nation."

Rick, in Ikwezi High School, likewise stated that he couldn't talk about white South Africans because he didn't know anything about them. He did not seem interested in continuing our conversation on this topic, however his friend John spoke up and said that he doesn't like the Boers so much but he likes the English. I asked why, and he explained, "Because the English are more open. The Boers are discriminating." He wrinkled his nose and shook his head as he said this. Although he didn't personally know any white South Africans, he had negative opinions about Afrikaners because of his perception of how they treat people of other races.

In many of these cases young South Africans perceived a person's behavior and language use as indicative of who they will become friends with or get along with, which they expressed was separate from skin color at birth. Young people hesitated to place people into racial groups and share their opinions when they had not met people personally. Only in one instance did I find a young man who suggested that people of a different racial group feel different because of their race, and therefore act in a different way. Leo (17m) at Entabeni said that a few coloured boys had been causing a lot of fights in the community. He suggested these guys were fighting because they felt different from Zulu people.

> "There are these coloured guys, their surname is Ahmed, they like fighting a lot, so I think it is because—like I've seen a lot of coloured people, they like to fight a lot. So I don't blame them when they are fighting at school because I've seen a lot of coloured people fighting… Maybe they are doing it because they think we are different from them. They treat us different. I don't know."

As Leo was thinking through his observations of seeing Zulu-speaking coloured South Africans in his community fighting a lot, he drew a correlation between people of a racial group and violent behavior. While other students "forgot" race, expressed a lack of knowledge, or shifted to talking about how language use generates social divisions, Leo considered how race marks social difference based on his personal experiences.

This pattern of "not knowing enough to speak about race" among students attending low-income, all-black schools points to how entrenched South African social segregation and the bifurcated education system remain. South African students—particularly in impoverished rural areas—do not perceive inequalities and social fissures based on race due to their limited experiences with students of different racial backgrounds. In short, youth are unable to care about something that they have not *experienced*. Consequently, they draw on limited personal interactions, narratives of the "Rainbow Nation," and lessons from those around them to formulate opinions. Deep racial divisions and inequalities disappear from students' view due to the extent of segregation.

Moreover, I do not intend to argue that young people truly could not see color when I speak of how some youth "forget race." Although most students in these schools had limited interactions with people of different races, I felt that my "whiteness" was quite noticeable from the onset. Many students, particularly at Entabeni, referred to me as *umlungu* initially before calling me by my first name. Race was the first thing they saw. However, as friendship formed and conversations in Zulu continued, students like Bruno in the opening excerpt didn't see race as a necessary dividing feature in their world.

While many youth considered those who think people of different racial and language groups *must* be separate as members of "the older generation," they consider

themselves as the future-oriented "ama-born frees." Believing that white people and

black people should not socialize, or Zulus and Xhosas should not socialize, was a

morally backward point of view according to youth. However, youth also recognized that

people frequently socialize with people of different racial groups due to linguistic

differences. Speaking a different language does not make one a "good" or "bad" person,

nor does hanging out with people who speak your own language. Consequently, the ways

youth viewed groupings and divisions through race and language fall at a tenuous

location in their moral interpretation of the world.

Conclusion

Many scholars and educational policymakers supported the idea that educational

practices can contribute to a more unified and peaceful society. Given economic and social

challenges that many face on a daily basis, this is not an unworthy pursuit. Yet, before we can

begin to understand how education can bring people together, we must first understand how

youth see people being pulled apart.

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the ways in which young, black South

Africans living in KwaZulu-Natal experience forces of fragmentation in their world. This

research demonstrated that youth use a moral lens to variously map their social experiences, to

understand social unity and fragmentation, and to determine with whom they should become

friends. They spoke of how they navigate moral challenges by connecting with those who think

like them, or, in some cases, by acting alone and claiming no friendship with anyone.

Within youths' moral framing of the world, ideas of the future—how they are moving

toward their futures or throwing away their futures—constitutes the dividing line between the

"good" us and the "bad" others. Youth claim to associate with those who are "moving forward"

toward their futures and who use and share money responsibly for the future. They cast judgement on African foreigners and young pregnant women according to perceptions of whether these groups of people are working toward their futures. By dividing people based on their proclaimed and perceived moral aspirations, certain social divisions such as race and language fall to secondary concern among youth. This is not to say that social divisions among people of different races and people who speak different languages cease to exist. Rather, moral issues—pertaining to actions, (mis)use of money, and future orientations—are a more important concern for youth than racial and linguistic differences because of the insecurity that many experience daily, as well as the educational practices that reinforce these moral frames and obscure racial fragmentations. These representations of morality that create social fissures are performed through schooling, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

When going into the field I was aware of the limitations of contemporary research and that other forms of unity and fragmentation beyond race were prevalent within all-black, low-income school contexts. I knew that the ways young people lived and learned in school looked very different across school contexts. However, the centrality of moral aspirations and actions as dividing structures were not things that I expected to find. After days of conversations, both in formal and informal settings, I learned that youth interpret unity and fragmentation in their social worlds through this moral lens. Moreover, I came to understand how their concern with moral futures was both shaped by their educational experiences and used as a filter through which to understand their daily lessons.

The following chapters of this dissertation now turn to how educational practices frame and speak to youths' moral visions both inside and outside the classroom. Chapter 4 reveals the messages of moral futures that are performed by teachers and students during morning

assemblies, while Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate how youth rework classroom activities into ideas of how they should live as moral beings. Chapter 7 returns to the ways in which schooled ideas of morality not only determine youths' friendships, but also structure ideals and expectations of teacher-student relations.

Chapter 4: Enacting Morality in Morning Assemblies

On a calm morning in March, students began filing into the grounds of Ikwezi High School through the bent wire gates. They entered in small groups, some having walked 15 kilometers over the grassy hills from neighboring towns. The dust rose from the shuffling of their feet, and slowly settled as they stood in the meeting area surrounded by four long buildings of classrooms. The students, clad in standard public school uniforms, arranged themselves in 10 lines; two lines per grade by gender. They chatted quietly, facing the raised red-washed platform attached to one strip of classrooms. A bell rang and several teachers filed along the platform facing the students. A male teacher walked to the center and requested, "Let's have a song."

One young man began as the rest of the morning assembly followed his lead in harmony.

> *In the sorrows of the Earth*
>
> *I thank you because you have supported me thus far*
>
> *Atone for me my advocate*
>
> *Please atone for me[32]*

Teachers and students then closed their eyes as the teacher led the assembly in prayer, thanking the Lord for forgiveness and asking for students' protection and guidance. When the prayer ended everyone lifted their heads in silence and the teacher said, "Good morning learners!" calling students to attention. "Good morning," rang the response. The day had begun.

The teacher made a few morning announcements regarding class schedules and picking up garbage around the school. He then spoke at length about respect; how the Bible says you must respect your parents and how, by extension, "You must respect your teachers." As he spoke

---

[32] In the song "my advocate" is referring to Jesus. The song is translated from Zulu.

the faint morning assembly songs from a nearby school echoed through the air. After his speech the students were dismissed to head to their respective classrooms.

<div align="center">*   *   *   *</div>

This story reflects a typical morning at Ikwezi High School in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In many schools across the country, all the students and staff gather anywhere from the first few minutes to hour of the day to watch, listen and participate in these morning assembly performances. Although different individuals participate in different schools, most morning assemblies hold a similar structure. A teacher often opens the assembly by asking students to sing hymns, then leads students in a short prayer. After this, teachers, students, and invited guests (like priests and health care workers), enact performances on the platform in front of all the students and staff. Through these performances students are both confronted with and generate messages of morality—conceptions of "right" and "wrong"—or ideas surrounding how they must think, behave and act, and with whom they must associate.

The preceding chapters detailed how the South African government has sought to foster shared values among youth amidst a bifurcated education system, and how youth divide their social world through a moral lens premised on conceptions of the future. This chapter now turns attention to how educational practices frame youths' views of their moral futures. By exploring how teachers and youth perform messages of morality during assemblies through four different performance styles—including Christian references, critiques of society, demonstrations of success, and commemoration of historical moments—I argue that youth perform messages of their righteous paths forward. I further demonstrate how youths' moral futures expressed through these performances express overlapping ideas of personhood. While some performance styles express how youth must pursue moral trajectories that question social order and demand change,

other demonstrations underscore an individualized morality focused on personal responsibility and the maintenance of the existing social order. This tension, and the implication of it, are explored in the subsequent chapters that focus on classroom practice.

Performing Morality in Schools

It is worth reiterating that an extensive body of literature has long documented the intersections of education, youth and morality. Educational theorist John Dewey recognized that schools may reinforce or even act as a substitute for the moral education that children learn outside of school (1909). He argued that moral principles—which form a central part of a person's social life—infuse the curriculum and should not be considered apart from it. Durkheim (1973) too regarded formal education as a ritual that socialized youth into a "moral culture." Building from these theoretical works, more contemporary studies have pushed forward arguments about how the status of "being educated" is incorporated into a moral discourse of personhood (Frye 2012; McLaren 1986; Ngwane 2001; Stambach 2000), how curriculum, pedagogy, and school structures shape youths' values (Ghosh and Naseem 2010; Hammett and Staeheli 2013; Hunt 2011), and how out-of-class activities generate forms of collective belonging (Benei 2008; Coe 2005; Lazar 2010; Sorensen 2008; Woronov 2007).

This chapter builds upon studies of personhood and out-of-class activities to examine how morning assemblies generate messages about what it means to be the "right" kind of person travelling toward the "right" future. Studies that utilize the concept of personhood recognize that what it means to be a person is culturally constructed and varies in different parts of the world (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Hickel 2014; Hickman 2014; Ngwane 2001; Stambach 2000) Furthermore, they offer insights into how schooling plays a prominent role in creating persons.

Additionally, a growing literature has turned attention to additional school practices to understand how youth develop a sense of belonging and values through schooling (Benei 2008; Coe 2005; Lazar 2010; Sorensen 2008; Woronov 2007). Lazar (2010) not only observed classrooms in Bolivia, but also out-of-school demonstrations to understand how practices of political agency are enacted by youth. Through classroom observations and attendance of cultural competition rehearsals, such as choir, poetry-recital, dance-drama, and drum language events, Coe (2005) examined how teachers and students in Ghana appropriated governmental cultural interventions intended to foster a sense of national belonging and attached new meanings to them. In particular, she revealed how teachers' identities, especially Christian identities, came into conflict with state goals and undermined state objectives. These studies point to how out-of-classroom practices are central to the formulation of persons.

My research contributes to studies on how education shapes different forms of moral personhood by examining how the daily rituals at the start of the school day contribute to youths' expressions of themselves as moral. To understand the significance of morning assemblies in youths' moral frameworks, I draw on Butler's performance theory (1990; 1993). Butler's concept of performativity emphasizes the ways in which gender is performed through a stylized repetition of acts, or an imitation of dominant conventions of gender. As Lavi explains (2013:698), "performativity implies that the subjective experience of identity as an internal, authentic and coherent core is not the source but rather the product of repetitive performance of a set of practices that match that identity." Gender identities exist through the ways in which they are performed. Lavi and others (Calhoun 1997; Feldman 2005; Woronov 2007) have extended Butler's theory beyond gender to look at other aspects of performativity. One such aspect speaks to the ways in which nationalism and national identities are constructed through performativity.

For instance, Woronov (2007) draws on the theory of performativity to argue that nationalism in China is performed through daily activities and practices of children. Lavi (2013) similarly asserts that national identity in Israel is the result of constant, cyclical performances that draw on a chronological national narrative.

In this chapter, I extend Butler's theory one step further to recognize how teachers and youth perform moral visions of their futures through morning assembly practices. Concerns over how to address and study morality have come to the forefront of anthropological research in recent years (Beldo 2014; Cassaniti and Hickman 2014; Heintz 2009a; Rasanyagam 2009; Robbins 2009; Shweder and Menon 2014; Widlok 2009; Zigon 2009). As discussed in Chapter 1, I build on Beldo's (2014) and Lambek's (2010a) works to explore how moral selves are expressed through morning assembly practices. Beldo (2014) defines morality as an unconditional "ought." An unconditional ought is not merely a suggestion or preference of what one should do—what constitutes the "good" and "right" ways to think and act—but an *imperative* that reveals a moral claim. These moral claims may either be embodied and habitual or explicitly stated; they therefore may or may not entail conscious reflection (Beldo 2014:269). By drawing on Lambek's (2010) framework of ordinary ethics, I recognize how morality and ethics (Lambek uses these terms interchangeably) are linked to speech as much as action. Assertions of morality therefore constitute features of everyday life that are performed into existence through symbolic physical and speech acts.

In South African high schools, teachers and youth are active participants in performance of morality during morning assemblies. They regularly engage in collaborative demonstrations: while teachers would invite, even command students to perform in front of the assembly, students would then use the space to construct their own visions of morality. For instance, as the

excerpts below reveal, teachers frequently draw on Christian beliefs to express their views of righteous paths, whereas youth more often commented on social ills to communicate moral possibilities. Like McLaren's (1986) study of Catholic school students, at times youth even openly defied teachers' views by ignoring their speeches, or, in one instance, refusing to attend the assembly. Yet despite these broad differences, the roles of teachers and students in the making of morality cannot be easily separated. In what follows I analyze how young people communicate and transform meanings about how to be the "good person" who follows the "righteous path" through morning assembly performances, and the insights these performances offer for understanding collective and individualized expressions of moral personhood.

Christianity and Right Way Forward

One way that teachers and youth performed messages of morality was through explicit reference to Christian beliefs.[33] Chapter 2 examined how the South African government has sought to develop "social cohesion" by fostering shared values in schools that are rooted in the new Constitution. However, it is important to highlight that historically—and in practice—values have often been promoted through a religious framework.

During the colonial period, schools were often run by Christian missionaries, which generated new sets of moral principles and loyalties among people (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). In addition to teaching basic reading, writing and arithmetic, converting people to Christianity and fostering industrious habits through manual training were primary objectives of missionary schools. Schools sought to educate and moralize people, teaching them how to live through the word of God. Yet, as the twentieth century progressed, many missionary schools

---

[33] Christian messages of morality that were performed through songs, lectures, priests' sermons were described by students and staff as drawing on a variety of church practices in the area. These churches were Zionist, Baptist and Catholic among others. They were not associated with state agencies. Practices common in the Nazareth Baptist Church, known as Shembe in rural communities, were not included in morning assembly practices. This will be discussed further below.

came under the control of the national government that had different objectives (Fiske and Ladd 2004).

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the Christian National Education framework was adopted in government schools to justify apartheid's unequal social order. This religious educational framework glorified Afrikaner nationalism while seeking to Christianize (through Calvinist interpretations) black South Africans. As Cross notes, supporters of Christian National Education felt that black South Africans must undergo a Christian transformation while maintaining their "Bantu," or black African, characteristics (Cross 1986:187). This content served to differentiate levels of citizenship among people according to their racial status, while advocating common moral principles based on religion and white dominance.

Following the end of apartheid in 1994, policies on religion in public education shifted. Christian National Education was abolished, but new policies allowed for religious education in schools throughout the 1990s. Individual schools could determine their own religion policy according to a vote by the school's governing body, which should consist of teachers, parents and students. However, participation in religious activities in schools was intended to be free and voluntary. In 2003, this policy was reformed in favor of "religion education" (Department of Education 2003). As Ntho-Ntho and Nieuwenhuis (2015:5) describe, while "religious education" previously supported a single-faith approach based on Christian biblical teachings, "religion education" should teach what other religions are about "in ways that increase understanding, build respect for diversity, value spirituality, and clarify the religious and non-religious sources of moral values." Religion education became officially secularized; it is encouraged insofar as it supports a national identity and reaffirms the constitutional values of democracy, equality, and diversity, among others.

Despite policies that ban the promotion of a single religious view in schools, many

schools, including those in this study, continue to draw on Christianity during morning assembly

practices. Much like the teachers in McLaren's (1986) study in a Canadian Catholic school,

teachers would directly reference Christianity to frame their arguments about the appropriate

ways youth must behave and pursue their futures. For example, an older female teacher who

regularly spoke at morning assembly in Entabeni Secondary School, Mrs. Ndlovu, explained that

the Lord is always watching so you need to be careful. "He knows and he sees if you are doing

right things or wrong things." Building on this momentum, the deputy principal, Mr. Mbatha,

took the stage. He asked the learners if they had seen the movie *2012*. There were many yes's

and no's. Mr. Mbatha then went on to say that the movie portrayed what would happen in the

near future. "The movie had the date wrong, but sometime soon a huge storm would come and it

would wash people into the sea. Many will suffer and many will die. So you need to be acting in

the right way," his voice boomed. Without saying the word, he spoke of the apocalypse. Through

both encouragement and threats to young people through Christian interpretations of appropriate

behavior, Mrs. Ndlovu and Mr. Mbatha sought to direct students down the right spiritual and

physical paths in their lives.

Many teachers were more explicit in defining the right way for students as obeying one's

elders and studying hard. On a separate occasion, Mrs. Ndlovu gave a speech at morning

assembly in which she constantly reiterated the world *indlala*, or famine. She explained that if a

learner does not follow the word of God, he will experience famine, or starvation of the soul.

Likewise, if a learner does something repeatedly that their elders tell him not to do, something

will go wrong. When this happens and when he is thirsty for food and advice there will be

nothing left. *Indlala* in her speech was akin to starving, both in the metaphorical and physical sense. Mrs. Ndlovu was warning students to do the right thing lest they starve**.**

At Ikwezi the deputy principal, Mr. Buthelezi, who often led the morning assembly regularly connected teachings from the Bible to justify how students must study for their exams. One day after a student led the assembly in song, Mr. Buthelezi gave a short talk explaining that if he were to read from the Bible today it would be from the book of Genesis. He raised his hands by his waist when he said this as if he were opening a book. He spoke of Noah's Ark, and how the Lord came to Noah and told him that in two years' time there would be a large flood and that he must prepare. Like Noah, the students must prepare because in nine to ten months' time they would have to take their final exams. He concluded his speech with a prayer, thanking the Lord and asking him to protect students and help them as they work hard toward their futures.

Additional connections between Christianity and moral messages occurred through students' and visitors' performances during the morning assembly. Over the course of several weeks, students at Ikwezi High School experienced outbursts of "Satanism" or "bad spirits," which required immediate attention directed toward the entire school. I recorded teachers' response to one outburst:

> Right after morning assembly was dismissed I heard screams and the sounds of students running around. A girl who had been possessed by spirits yesterday was crying out again, and yet again four of the largest boys from the class pulled her up to the room next door to the teachers' office. She had fainted. All of the teachers rushed out of the office… After some minutes a second girl started crying out and she too was carried to the room next to the office. There was chaos for a bit. Students from that class were crying and shouting and praying with the door closed… A teacher entered the class where I was sitting and announced to the class that if you believe in God you must pray. And if you do not believe in God you must pray, just to be sure… The teachers held an emergency meeting in the lounge. Everyone talked about what to do. One recommended that we hold an assembly with the whole school to pray. Another said that we needed an ordained priest for this. One other teacher said that we should only talk to the two affected classes, because the other students don't know about it. "I don't want it to

spread," and he didn't want fear to spread because "spirits will target fear." Many of the teachers are worried and afraid.

Ultimately, the teachers decided that a priest should visit the morning assembly a few days later. Their decision had the full support of students with whom I spoke after the event. The priest came from a nearby community, and was experienced in dealing with issues of bad spirits in schools. Bad spirits had been targeting one school after another in the area, teachers explained to me, but this was the first time they had come to this school. Many teachers suggested that the outbreak started from a female student who received a sim card from a stolen telephone. The students needed protection. My field notes describe the content of the priest's sermon:

> Throughout his sermon the priest spoke of "packages." You study life sciences because you want a certain kind of job or future, you want a certain package. Likewise, you study physical sciences because you want a certain kind of job or package. When you choose Satan you chose a certain package, a bad package without love, whereas when you choose Jesus Christ you select the right and good package. Five letters J-E-S-U-S. That is the package you must choose... Two prayers were performed. The first one was more standard, whereas the second was call and response and specific to this school. He spoke phrases in Zulu like "protect this school" and "protect our classes," which all of the students repeated.

The next day the girl who had bad spirits came on the platform during assembly after the songs and prayer. She announced that she was not a Satanist; that she just had bad spirits. She walked off the platform with tears in her eyes and a female teacher attended to her. Two similar outbursts of bad spirits also occurred during morning assembly practices at Siyabonga High School.

These outbursts of bad spirits and corrective measures taken by priests, along with teachers' warning of the apocalypse, generated messages of morality by drawing on emotion. They demonstrate how emotionality may construct moral imperatives. As Heintz (Heintz 2009b:16-17) elaborates, "A father might appeal to his son's emotions in order to convince him of the rightfulness or wrongfulness of his actions. A dictator might use fear to induce certain

beliefs." In these circumstances, both teachers and students created and fed on fear of spirits and what could happen to them if the end of the Earth arrived. Through fear students were directed down the "right" spiritual and physical paths. And through corrective measures taken by priests, students could experience relief and hope. This theme of using emotionality to generate messages of morality—and the righteous paths forward—is further explored in Chapter 5 on classroom practices.

The righteous paths that youth were directed toward and performed themselves centered on following Jesus, as well as obeying and respecting God, elders, and teachers. Many young people were complicit in constructing visions of their moral paths. Teachers and students alike projected respect for elders as required by the Bible, as well as essential to obtain a future orientation dedicated toward studies. They drew parallels between completion of academic work and obedience to God's will in order to justify how students should work and behave. By connecting spiritual faith with academic work, priests and teachers made pursuing an education even more pressing. Moreover, the messages that were generated through Christian performances supported the maintenance of social norms through individual action, rather than challenging the way the world works. Youth were encouraged to continue to respect elders and continue on their paths, rather than walk astray. Performances highlighted the importance of hierarchy, obedience and generational order, which contrast with messages performed through critique of social ills as discussed below.

Occasionally, students would engage in passive and active resistance to these Christian-based moral assertions of the self. At Entabeni Secondary School, students at times passively contested morning assembly practices. Half the students would arrive at the assembly on time and only one third of the students standing in the front would sing hymns. Then light chatter

would continue throughout the teacher's often religious-oriented speech (aside from when Mr.

Mbatha was speaking). Their passive "disrespect" of teachers' speeches served to challenge the

generational authority that teachers asserted. Yet, I only met one student at Siyabonga High,

Bruno, who openly refused to attend assemblies due to explicitly religious reasons. He

explained:

> "My religion, I am a Nazareth. Especially I believe in the ancestors. Ancestors yeah, like slaughtering cows and goat for them. And kneeling down when I'm praying. That is my reason why I don't go to the assembly… It was Matthew 6 verse 5. It said that those who pray in the street, or those who pray in front of people, they are just pretending, doing that to get attention of other peoples. It says that when you pray you must go to your room, close the door, and kneel down and talk to your God. Your private God."

Bruno self-identified as a member of the Nazareth Baptist Church, referred to as the Shembe

religion in more rural areas.[34] He, unlike many other students, felt that his religious identity

distinguished him from many of his peers (see Chapter 3). Perhaps because religion seemed less

important than other lines of division and cohesion in society to most students, questioning

Christian morning assembly religious practices was the exception rather than the rule.

Commentary on Social Ills

While teachers, visitors, and students all participated in the making of morality through a

Christian framework, students played a more central role in conveying moral visions through

creative commentaries on social ills. These commentaries came in the form of poetry or hip-hop

performances, as well as *isicathamiya* or male a cappella performances. Several interesting

---

[34] Among my research participants, most self-identified as Christians who believe in ancestors, while only five of 34 described themselves as Shembe. If asked subsequent questions, students would mention the specific churches they attended, which included Catholic, Zionist, Baptist, and African Pentecostal churches. Several students talked about debates in their churches between those who thought church members should communicate with their ancestors and those who didn't, but asserted that they believed in ancestors. Although some Christian students recognized that Shembes worshipped in ways that seemed odd to them, such as staying out all night sometimes and not cutting their hair, I did not see religion as a significant factor in determining friendships. Friends would at times recognize and playfully tease each other for their differing religious practices, but, as discussed in Chapter 3, students primarily selected friends according to their perceived moral futures.

studies have centered on the ways in which *isicathamiya* performances express power relations among migrant Zulus (Erlmann 1996), as well as Zulu, national, and masculine identities (Gunner 2006; Gunner 2014). Likewise, important studies have pointed to the ways in which community theatre, including poetry demonstrations, contribute to South Africans' senses of personal and collective identity (Brisinski and Spitczok 2003). However, these works have not examined how these performances contribute to youths' moral assertions, while I found these performances to be crucial to youths' expressions of morality in morning assemblies.

For example, one morning Entabeni Secondary School students slowly walked in to the assembly to see a teacher holding a Bible and giving a speech. Unlike morning assemblies at Ikwezi and Siyabonga, many students often arrived late to Entabeni with little consequence. They listened to Mrs. Ndlovu speak of how students must behave themselves, lest they experience *indlala*, or famine of the body and soul. Many students paid little attention to the teacher, shuffling their feet and lightly chatting while only a few people standing close to the platform listened to her. After concluding her speech with a prayer, she announced that students had planned poetry performances for the assembly. Faces turned to the platform for the first time and the crowd hushed as a young man took the stage. He passionately rapped about how horrible it is that so many children are being murdered in our community. He marched back and forth across the platform, shouting out words and waving his arms, rallying the crowd as the students broke their line formation and pressed closer toward the stage. After his applause subsided, a young woman dramatized the stealing of the Chibok school girls in Nigeria, which had been flooding the news for the past week that April in 2014. Her legs shook with excitement, or nerves from performing in front of so many people, as she asked why the world had come to this today. Teachers, many of whom never came to morning assemblies, trailed out of their offices to

observe the performances. As the assembly was dismissed, students erupted into excited chatter about the morning spectacle.

As the excerpt above illustrates, students occasionally asked to come in front of the morning assembly to perform poetry demonstrations. At Entabeni Secondary School, these performances commented on how young people today were being murdered, threatened and kidnapped. They questioned the immoral state of their communities and of the world through verbal and physical dramatization. Similarly, months later in Siyabonga, a boy came on the platform and rapped about a young man who fell in love with a woman, married her, and then things began going out of control and she began abusing him. He acted out the man's passion, his confusion, and then his pain. Teachers and students alike came closer to the platform and cheered as he spoke. Both sets of performances rallied students in the assembly far more than teachers' words, and caused a ripple of excitement that lasted throughout the day.

These performances also speak to experiences of violence and abuse that many young people in these schools faced on a daily basis. During our focus groups and informal conversations students regularly discussed the fights that broke out in school and the community. At times these fights resulted in the death of their friends or physical harm to themselves. Young people talked about how they sought to avoid these conflicts, yet if they found themselves too close to the conflict and were told that they would be beaten they would just have to "accept it" (Zama, 17f). They sometimes spoke of avoiding school out of fear, particularly in Entabeni where gang violence entered the school gates. When I would ask the students in focus groups what they would change about their school and South Africa—if they could just change one thing—the most commonly cited changes were to heighten school security and to create jobs. Many students regarded employment not only as a means to make money and reach economic

security, but also as a way to keep people "out of trouble" because their time would be occupied. These morning assembly performances, which elicited some of the most enthusiastic and vocal responses from students, critiqued and addressed the violence and fear that many young people experienced. They identified these "wrong" actions that young people hoped to avoid and one day change.

Other student performances that critiqued social ills came from *isicathamiya* practices. The *isicathamiya* group at Siyabonga practiced together most mornings, and one morning they practiced in front of their school in preparation for the cultural activity competition they would be attending later in the afternoon. The boys went on the platform after the morning prayer, filing out in a line in front of the assembly. They moved and sang together about their fathers. They sang about the pain of their fathers, how all of their fathers have HIV/AIDS, but they still love them anyway. They rallied everyone up and students broke the line formation, several coming up on the platform to drop one or two rand coins at the singers' feet. This only fed the fire, and Mrs. Zondo, the teacher who regularly ran morning assembly, dramatically placed a 10 rand note in front of them. The students in the assembly loved this and cried out louder.

On a separate occasion, I attended a cultural activity competition near the rural school. Although Ikwezi students were not participating in the event, other rural schools did and their students had practiced at their morning assemblies. All of the *isicathamiya* songs touched on teenage pregnancy. Some groups spoke to the girls, asking why they were doing this, why they were getting pregnant and ruining their futures. The lyrics of the songs expressed concerns over teenage pregnancy loud and clear with statements such as, "It is nonsense to be pregnant," "the money [social grant for unmarried women with children] is finished," "you have ended your

studies," and "you have ruined your future." Other groups spoke about the government, asking "why the government was keeping silent about this growing problem."

The issue of teenage pregnancy was regularly brought up by students in our focus groups as a "wrong" action. Yet, while teachers talked about young people having sex as "immoral," youth rarely took this approach as discussed in Chapter 3. Most youth, even those who self-identified as Christians, did not attach a moral weight to the decision to have sex or not—in fact many young people asserted that having sex was important so that when you decided to get married you would be well prepared. But becoming pregnant and thereby disregarding your future and spending social grants improperly was interpreted through a moral lens. As previously discussed, in South Africa, the government provides R300 ($30) to single mothers, and many young people believed that the grant encouraged girls to become pregnant and misuse the money. Girls were often criticized for being "greedy," and using the money to "buy clothes" and "do their hair." Students asserted that the government encouraged girls to get pregnant so they could access the grant. Several students even suggested that the grant only go to married couples so that young girls would not be encouraged to ruin their futures. Even many of the young students who had a child asserted that what they did was wrong, but now they were on the "right path" because they were able to return to school and used the grant for their child(ren). Like the *isicathamiya* songs that were created and performed by young male choirs, youth commented on the ways in which girls were "ruining their futures" and critiqued the government for encouraging this behavior. These practices reflect a larger school and societal narrative that places the burden—and blame—of reproduction on females alone.

Through their words and performances, youth pointed out and questioned the bad actions people were continuing to do in their communities and elsewhere. Performances such as poetry

demonstrations highlighted the tragedy of the violence that many people experience to implicitly turn youth away from this path. By not turning toward gangsterism and abuse, youth could pursue better futures for themselves and those around them. In the case of *isicathamiya* songs, young men would explicitly instruct girls to not get pregnant and remain in school. By staying in school and not becoming pregnant, young women were said to not only help themselves in the future, but not drain limited resources from the government that could be used for other social support. Thus, through telling stories of how to behave through their performances, youth created a model of how people ought to live in the world. Yet, as is explored more fully below and in subsequent chapters, while performances that critiqued social ills addressed social well-being on the collective level, they rarely offered wide-scale solutions to issues of violence, illness, kidnapping, and pregnancies.

Demonstrations of Success

Expressions of the "right path" not only came through critiques of social ills and Christian references, but through praise of those who had walked in the right direction. In Siyabonga High School, students were regularly called onto the platform in recognition of their accomplishments, including students who had participated in academic and sport competitions, and students who had received scholarships for university. Depending on the importance of the award, the student would approach the platform and give a speech. One student who had received an athletic scholarship to study abroad spoke for almost an hour on his efforts, goals and dreams, thanking his teachers and fellow students for their support. He was publicly praised by several teachers and students who ran up from the crowd onto the platform.

One performance at Entabeni Secondary School revealed not only how teachers and students enact models of moral success, but how young people experienced the significance of

morning assembly activities. On a brisk morning in May, Mr. Mbatha brought a former student onto the platform to talk about his studies at a Further Education and Training College (FET). FET colleges in South Africa specialize in teaching students' skills and trades and offer a degree similar to an associate's degree in the US. They support students who did not finish high school by offering entry-level classes at the grade 10 equivalent. In South Africa, students over the age of 18 are supposed to go to FET colleges, rather than traditional high schools. However, many students, particularly in rural schools, are over 20 years old. The 24-year-old FET student talked about his positive experiences in the college, for example how he doesn't have to wear a school uniform, how the government pays for his fees and transport, and how he is learning a viable trade that will help him get a job. By inviting the college student back to school Mr. Mbatha was hoping to show students the "right path" that many of them could pursue which didn't involve finishing high school. Students listened attentively throughout this presentation; however, the message resonated even more when Mr. Mbatha began talking about his own son. "My son, he does not like books the way that his father does, so he will be going to an FET college next year. I know that it will be the right place for him." A hush and murmur ran through the assembly following this comment.

For weeks afterward students began telling me for the first time that they were thinking of applying to an FET college. If Mr. Mbatha's son was going there (and Mr. Mbatha was the strictest teacher) then maybe we should go there too, they reasoned. Students further discussed how they thought that Mr. Mbatha cared about them *because* he always talked to them during assembly. "Every day he spends here at assembly talking with us, speaking with us," explained Cheetah (16f). Her friend, Lion (17f), added that he often points out when students are doing

something wrong, and makes an example of them because "he wants this to be a great school" and "show students how to find their future."

These demonstrations of success during morning assemblies underscore a key component of teachers' and youths' enacted visions of their righteous paths—that they should pursue a future rooted in education. Similar to Frye's (2012) research into how Malawian youth make moral assertions through their educational aspirations, speeches from students who embodied academic success and teachers who supported multiple academic paths highlighted the ways in which teachers and students demonstrated models of success via *educational* pursuits. Students regularly upheld this vision of the right way forward in our conversations. As discussed in Chapter 3, young people frequently described themselves and their closest friends as "moving forward" in life. For example, Ministar (20m) talked about how the best kind of friend is moving forward in life, despite challenges in taking this right direction. "I can say that good friends are people who are going forward, that are doing something, that are not just doing nothing." In another instance, the young man who called himself Future (19m) explained that he gave himself that name because that is where he wants to be in life. He brought up throughout our conversations how he regularly discusses the future with his closest friends, where they want to be in life and how they will get there. In all of these instances, the path to "get to the future" required completing grade 12 and either attending university or an FET college.

The morning assembly demonstrations of success, therefore, enacted and reflected youths' understandings of the moral ways to pursue their future through education. And these performances resonated with many students. I heard students citing these performances of success and positioning their moral selves in ways that reflected what they had seen. They would claim the moral status of "moving forward" in life in contrast to those who were just sitting at

home. Yet, unlike critiques of social ills, the messages that were generated by the performances focused on individual action as opposed to action within communities. Students promoted the idea of "working hard" to continue their education, get a job and leave their communities, rather than improving their communities by addressing social ills.

Commemorating Historical Moments

Another way in which visions of morality were conveyed through morning assemblies came through the commemoration of historical moments. By commemorating the actions of national historical figures in assemblies, teachers and students sought to send other young people along the same righteous paths these figures had taken. For example, I was in South Africa for Women's Day celebrations in 2013 and 2014, and on both occasions this public holiday was announced during morning assembly. In Ikwezi High School, the physical science teacher explained to students what had happened on Women's Day on August 9, 1956:

> *Omama* (the mothers) went to parliament to speak with the prime minister about passes, about 20,000 of them. But the prime minister would not meet them; he left out the back door. Some women were even arrested and shot. But the women had *inhlakanipho* (wisdom) and *hlonipha* (respect). (This was repeated a few times.) And tomorrow we should celebrate and remember this moment and treat them well.

In Siyabonga High the following year Mrs. Zondo likewise talked about what happened in 1956. She talked about how the women "saw something was not right, so they made a petition and marched." Then she transitioned into talking about the importance of self-esteem, especially for women. With self-esteem you can achieve your goals, she declared. "If you don't do this then you may walk the Earth like a failure," a status she imitated with hunched shoulders. Her actions highlighted what Lambek (2000) refers to as the "embodied quality" of morality. Not only is morality spoken and enacted, but it is also demonstrated through bodily actions, stances, and

postures. Mrs. Zondo then encouraged the learners to study hard and pass, and closed her talk with a prayer.

On other occasions staff and students would cite historical figures, most commonly Nelson Mandela, to express the "good" ways in which one must behave. Throughout daily conversations at the schools, students regularly referenced historical figures to give themselves the moral upper hand to win debates and express national pride. During morning assembly performances such references were used in a similar fashion. For instance, in the rural school Xolani, an 11th grade student, asked to lead the students in worship. He approached the platform and first read from a Zulu Bible, speaking of how children must respect their parents and the Lord. An engaging speaker, he extended this lesson to respecting teachers and one another, regularly inciting periods of silence and laughter. He concluded this speech by saying that Jesus died for our sins, which quieted the crowd. And then, in English, "Mandela went to prison for 26 years for our freedom! We must respect one another." By invoking the name of the country's father, as well as the Lord, he sought credibility for his message of how young people must "respect."

Teachers further referenced the injustices of apartheid to encourage students to vote. At Entabeni a teacher explained during morning assembly, "If you are 18 or older and have your documents you must exercise your right to vote. You must vote because your parents and grandparents fought and died for the right of black people to vote." These references to the apartheid era were more common at Ikwezi High and Siyabonga Secondary to motivate students to not "waste" the hardships that their ancestors had endured. They were used to encourage students to respect elders as well as themselves, and therefore work harder.

These historical commemorations during morning assemblies demonstrate models of the moral self. In both assemblies, as well as conversations, youth would draw on national events and national figures to suggest how they must live and act today, and in the future. These actions included maintaining personal self-esteem, as well as respect for other people. Like critiques of social ills, they direct attention to how students must live in relation to other people as a society. As I discuss in Chapter 6 in an analysis of history education in South Africa, these performances reveal how youth enact and translate lessons about the past into ideas of how they must act as moral beings.

Righteous Paths: Performing Moral Futures

While previous scholarship on South Africa has centered on the role classroom practice and educational policies play in shaping youths' set of values and moral principles, I have demonstrated how teachers and youth generate messages of morality through daily morning assembly performances. Methodologically, the focus on morning assemblies contributes to anthropological studies of education by revealing how the daily performances disregarded in educational policies offer spaces where teachers, students, and invited guests construct overlapping messages regarding the "right path" forward. By furthering Butler's notion of performativity, anthropologists can examine how the daily repetition of movements and speech in these collective spaces shape youths' moral positions.

Substantively, this chapter demonstrates that messages of morality created through assemblies emphasize how students must uphold personal responsibility, respect elders, and pursue social change. From the start of the school day, youth are recipients and active participants in projecting images of how they should be as persons and how they should continue toward their future. Morning assemblies are a medium through which youth recognized,

experienced, and created moral visions. Day in and day out, teachers and youth engaged in repetitive acts to push forth their ideas of how they ought to live—the "right way" forward.

The messages that students and staff enacted through these different performances entailed both individualized and collective models of moral personhood. Debates about different forms of personhood and the question of whether "Africans" have a more collective notion of persons than Westerners, have pervaded anthropological research for years. John and Jean Comaroff (2001) explain that crude contrasts between European and African selfhood make little sense because a sense of the "individual" exists everywhere. Differences in selfhood exist, rather, in how personhood is connected and created through social interaction. Drawing on fieldwork among the Tswana, they point out how Tswana see persons as always in a state of "becoming," meaning that a person can only exist in relation to others and that one's identity is forged through an ongoing series of practical activities (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001:266-268). But this does not eliminate the recognition of an individual with personal agency, privacy, and property. Likewise, when I discuss how messages of the "right person" draw on collective relationships, this does not undermine ideas of individuals.

Certain morning assembly performance styles, particularly demonstrations of success, focused largely on how youth should follow the right path as individual persons. Through presentations by fellow students who had continued their education and received scholarships, youth were presented with messages about "working hard" to achieve their goals. The "right person" here is projected as an individual who studies for themselves, who works alone. They are responsible for their own individual actions. By embodying the right way, the presenters provided an in-flesh representation of the moral possibilities that students could also achieve in the future. The visitors who came were not praised for actions taken within communities, but for

their abilities to maintain hope and diligence and to get out of their home areas. These messages spoke directly to how many youth see themselves as moral persons heading toward futures outside their communities through education.

Other performances that centered on critiques of social ills highlighted how students ought to live *in relation to those around them*. By critically commenting on the crime, violence, and insecurity that they witnessed in their communities and the news, they questioned immoral behavior in an effort to direct others to live in a better way as a community. This collective model of moral personhood stressed the need for structural change in society. Even when singing about teenage pregnancy, young men sought to direct their peers and the government toward a path of social responsibility. They highlighted how pregnant teenagers drained limited government resources. These performances were more independently student-led and received far more enthusiasm from the crowd. However, while these social commentaries and commemorations directed youth how to live in moral ways with other people, they were limited in terms of discussing what collective action could or should be taken to achieve this.

Performances that drew on Christian references and historical moments blended emphasis on personal responsibility and working collectively toward moral futures. Although the spread of Satanism was seen as a social threat entailing social action in the form of group prayer, the messages that teachers, priests, and students projected centered on an individual's responsibility to take the right path. By concentrating on the individual's relationship with God and elders, Christian references drew on how individuals must live well with others through ideas of respect and academic success. However, these ideas of respect served to uphold existing social hierarchies, rather than suggest structural change. Commemorations of historical moments praised people who stood against apartheid by coming together to change South Africa. Yet

many of these historical performances ended in discussions of how students must have respect and not "waste" the efforts made by people in the past. Through these conclusions youth were encouraged to maintain individual responsibility, study hard, and maintain social order rather than question it.

This chapter has demonstrated how youth and teachers generate messages of morality in the in-between spaces of morning assemblies that are not formally recognized by the school curriculum. As the previous chapter indicated, young South Africans recognized forces of unity and fragmentation in their world through a moral lens. Morning assembly practices—as performed by both students and staff—produce messages that connect to youths' moral visions of the world. They create messages that at times tell students how they must act toward the future as individuals, and at other times as moral people working to address the needs of the community. The broader implications of these forms of morality will be further explored in the subsequent chapters on classroom practices, as well as the concluding chapter. The following chapter now turns to how youth engage with materials taught in English and life orientation courses.

Chapter 5: Engaging in Moral Translation through Life Orientation and English Classes

The students at Siyabonga High quiet their voices and look toward the front of the room when Mr. Dumisa enters. They oblige as he instructs them to pull out their photocopies of the short story called "Story Teller" by Agnes Sam. This story is about how an Indian girl came to South Africa with her brother: they were kidnapped, tricked by white sailors, and taken as slaves.

Mr. Dumisa prefaces the story: "This is the story of Indian people in South Africa." His words linger at the end of the sentence so that all the students say the words "South Africa" with him. "In 1652, when white people came to South Africa with van Riebeeck, they used Cape Town as a refueling station, and white people had their own businesses. White people made sugar cane fields. Black people did not want to work in the fields, so people of Europe and the US got people from India to work there. So Indians were taken as slaves. They had no choice." He continues, "They were slaves but now they are rich; richer than white people."

The students silently follow along as Mr. Dumisa reads the short story aloud to the class. For a class that is known to be rowdy, regularly inviting reprimands from neighboring teachers due to the noise, today there is no chatter, and they turn the pages of the story in unison. They take notes when Mr. Dumisa flags new vocabulary terms—ragamuffin, inquisitive, and cheeky.

When Mr. Dumisa reads about how the Indian girl was tricked into coming on the boat to South Africa, he elaborates, "Most were not asked if they want to come to South Africa for a big job; they were just taken like they don't have brains to think. They arrived at the Bluff in Durban. Do you know where the Bluff is?" The students affirm that they know where it is. "They were brought to work on sugar cane plantations because black people didn't want to because at that time they were rich with 500 cattle each. But today you see no Indians working on the farms. You

see mostly Xhosas working there." The teacher finishes class ten minutes before the buzzer rings,

and I stay behind to chat with the students.

This day and for days after I hear students mention this class exercise, pointing out that

although many Indians today are quite wealthy, they first came to South Africa poor and by

force. They claim this—use this new knowledge—to indicate that they should not feel animosity

toward Indian South Africans. It wasn't their choice to come here.

<div align="center">

*   *   *

</div>

This high school English class illustrates one of Mr. Dumisa's favorite parts of teaching—to be able to teach young adults about South African history. He was deliberate in his selection of class literature, striving to find stories that his students could connect with their own life experiences. Yet, his class also raises important issues about how the next generation of South African citizens experience belonging in a country fraught with a divisive history of racism and inequality. It begs the questions: How do Mr. Dumisa's students develop a sense of social belonging through their education? What moral values do they take away from their classes? And how do students use the values learned through their classes to make sense of their lives?

This chapter examines how high school students in KwaZulu-Natal experience social belonging and moral values taught through life orientation and English classes. Through analysis of classroom practices and conversations with teachers and students, I demonstrate how pedagogical approaches encourage different forms of moral citizenship. This analysis highlights that while policymakers have targeted life orientation courses as the primary subject through which to promote national values, this course does little to encourage youth to reflect on moral values. Instead, youth found the material taught in English classes far more relevant to their daily

lives, and consequently, they frequently reworked their English lessons into ideas of how they should live and behave as moral human beings. By engaging in the process of *moral translation*, young South Africans draw on their educational experiences to consider how to imagine their moral futures. Yet, youth did not consider a morality based on social justice—a central component of the national curriculum—instead they reflected on how they should have personal responsibility and hope for a better future.

Teaching Life Orientation and English Courses

The previous chapter examined how teachers and youth enact moral messages through morning assembly performances at the start of the school day. These practices, while highly significant in youths' minds, are unrecognized as a means of inculcating values by South African educational policymakers and scholars. This chapter now turns attention to the primary subject that policymakers *have* been promoting to develop values and social cohesion: life orientation. In addition, it focuses on English as a second language (First Additional Language in the curriculum), a subject policymakers and scholars have not considered important for teaching values, yet one that was considered very relevant for this task by teachers and students alike.

As discussed in Chapter 2, life orientation was created in 1998 with the aim of addressing social problems and values. While initially intended for grades kindergarten through nine, in 2002 it was made mandatory for the upper level grades of 10, 11, and 12. According to the national curriculum framework implemented in 2011, six topics must be covered by life orientation courses in the upper grades: "development of the self in society, social and environmental responsibility, democracy and human rights, careers and career choices, study skills, physical education" (CAPS 2011:6). Through these topics teachers are expected to teach about sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse, as well as promote values of personal

responsibility, respect for diversity, and human equality. These national values, I argue, are intended to direct students in how they should think and act in moral ways.

Various studies have examined the role of life orientation courses in promoting shared values; this research emphasis is largely a result of how the national curriculum explicitly targets LO in policy documents (Adewumi and Adendorff 2014; Ferreira and Schulze 2014; Pillay 2012; Prinsloo 2007; Theron 2008; Theron and Dalzell 2006). Many of these studies have centered on teachers' experiences when teaching about values. Teachers experience challenges due to limited training (Prinsloo 2007), lack of understanding regarding what values should be taught (Ferreira and Schulze 2014), and discomfort teaching about sexuality (Francis and DePalma 2014; Shefer and Macleod 2015). Turning attention to students, Theron (2008) discusses how grade 9 learners in three provinces prioritized learning about work skills, entrepreneurship, parenting skill and HIV/AIDS over other areas of the curriculum. However, he does not provide an analysis of the lessons or values that students take away from their classes. Adewumi and Adendorff (2014) draw on student focus groups and teacher interviews to argue that LO may be more effective in creating awareness in terms of imparting knowledge rather than leading to behavioral change particularly regarding drug use and safe sex. Thus, research has represented LO as an important subject through which to communicate values to students.

However, values are not only produced through one subject, but through the entire educational experience. While the previous chapter on morning assembly performances revealed how moral messages are performed outside of the classroom, my preliminary research in 2012 and 2013 also indicated that youth often spoke of how they learned curricular values through English as a second language courses. But the role of English courses in fostering social cohesion and national values is marginally referenced in the revised national curriculum

statements. According to the curriculum, the primary aims of English as a second language are to: "use language as a means for critical and creative thinking; for expressing their opinions on ethical issues and values; for interacting critically with a wide range of texts; for challenging the perspectives, values and power relations embedded in texts; and for reading texts for various purposes, such as enjoyment, research, and critique" (Department of Basic Education 2011b:8). Policies for English courses are focused mainly on written communication, with little attention to promoting democracy and responsibility that are to be stressed in life orientation courses. Consequently, research studies that examine broader implications of English as a second language classes focus primarily on how speaking and learning English contributes to racial identities (Kajee 2011; McKinney 2007; McKinney and Soudien 2007), but neglect how youth embody alternative values and forms of morality through English coursework.

This chapter draws on classroom observations of English and life orientation courses in conjunction with focus group and interview conversations to demonstrate the moral messages that young South Africans recognize through their classes. Classroom observations of grade eleven life orientation classes revealed that teachers cover a wide range of themes, including life goals, puberty, HIV, jobs, democracy, racism, drugs, and community service. Often times, teachers would cover one topic during one class session and never return to the topic in future classes. Furthermore, aside from Ikwezi High School, I observed that while LO classes were scheduled to meet two times a week, LO teachers only taught approximately 20% of these. Frequently LO teachers were on the school grounds during their scheduled classes, but remained in the teachers' office during class times.

When LO teachers discussed the importance of their subject, they focused far more on their role as a mentor than the course material itself. For instance, the LO teacher at Ikwezi, a

woman in her early thirties named Mrs. Zuma, described the most important aspect of her job as "giving guidance to learners—to find themselves… and to find exactly what is it that they want to become in future. Yeah. And preparing them for the future." Several students at this school confirmed that if they had life challenges they would approach Mrs. Zuma for assistance. This was especially common among young female students who had concerns about sex or child rearing. Compared to other teachers in the school, students claimed that they found their LO teacher young, "cool," and approachable. She was willing to talk about sex and contraception inside and outside of class, whereas the older teachers avoided the topic.

The life orientation teacher at Siyabonga, Mrs. Mbuso, likewise emphasized her role in helping students with life problems. She stated, "I like that the most because I like to attend to some people's problems. So sometimes when you go to a certain chapter the learners became emotional just because they have experienced that thing. So by that time I can notice that this learner has a problem, then I ask him or her aside and then talk about his or her issue. Then try to solve it." For Mrs. Mbuso, the curriculum acted as a jumping off point for working individually with students. However, when discussing the subject as a whole the teacher quietly asserted that overall LO is of "no value" because it discussed too many things that students "already know." Like the teachers in Ferreira and Schulze's (2014) study, Mrs. Mbuso expressed an unclear understanding of the purpose of life orientation as a subject. She had been trained as an accounting and business teacher, and became a life orientation teacher following a three-day workshop. Due to her lack of interest in the LO subject, she rarely attended her LO periods and when she did she would focus on non-curricular tasks, an example being a collection of donations for a student's parent's funeral.

At Entabeni, the life orientation teacher, Mr. Sibiya, reiterated many of the values that he thought life orientation was meant to teach, including respect, tolerance and a common identity, but claimed that he did not think his classes successfully taught these values. "Maybe even us as teachers we need to put more emphasis on it [teaching values]. We have not done enough. We stick to the syllabus. We stick to the files. Because I don't think that we have sufficient time to put that emphasis… We are bombarded with the syllabus and there is not sufficient time to cover all stuff that is expected of us." As with the other life orientation teachers in this study, Mr. Sibiya felt that LO was not a course that was living up to its expectations of preparing young students for the future and instilling the values of the new democracy. When he did attend class, which occurred about 20% of the time, he taught in a frenzied and abstract manner. He practiced narrative instruction, or "telling" students what values they should hold rather than letting them infer meaning from exercises. Like life orientation teachers in Dasoo and Henning's (2012) study, Mr. Sibiya indeed largely "stuck to the script" when he taught; he had students copy notes outlining key components of the constitution and human rights, but neglected to encourage reflection on how these abstract concepts connected to students' own circumstances.

Whereas LO teachers reflected little on the significance of the content they taught, English teachers highlighted the role of course content in shaping young students' values and sense of morality. Mrs. Nkosi, the English teacher at Ikwezi,[35] decorated her office with the official values of the curriculum outlined in the *Manifesto of Values*. During our interview she discussed the importance of values like ubuntu, respect, and accountability. She explained how she could teach these values through her English classes:

---

[35] Mrs. Nkosi was scheduled on the timetable to only teach grade 10 and 12 during the terms I was there. However, the scheduled grade 11 English teacher rarely attended her class that I was observing; she visited the class only three times in one term even though the class was scheduled three days a week and she was at the school almost every day. Because of this Mrs. Nkosi sometimes taught her classes. I had observed grade 10 English classes that Mrs. Nkosi taught in 2013 and then followed students on to their grade 11 classes.

"I think respect is one of the important values that our learners should have... We integrate these values in our own lessons... At times you will find that maybe I'm doing like a poem, a poem that will touch something in respect or comprehension that will touch something in being accountable. So they are interpreting just like that. And then you go further and talk about accountability in their own lives now."

Over half of the teachers interviewed for this study asserted that they believed "respect" was the most important value that students should learn through education. Hammett and Staeheli (2011) critically note that South African teachers tended to emphasize respect in a unidirectional and unequal manner. I too found this trend: most teachers told students to respect (and obey) their teachers as figures of authority without highlighting their responsibilities as educators towards their students. This discourse was also quite pronounced during morning assembly performances, particularly those that drew on Christian references. Yet, some teachers also noted that students should respect themselves as well as their peers. As Mrs. Nkosi explained, "[I]f they respect themselves they will know how to respect other people. And if they are respecting they can go a long way in life." She further highlighted how she selected course material that would teach values such as respect.

The English teacher at Siyabonga, Mr. Dumisa, likewise said his selection of literature was intended to teach young students about their past and their future. He described his favorite part of teaching as being able to teach short stories about South Africa's history:

"I like short stories. I like short stories, but those short stories that talks about South Africa. Stories that are written by South Africans mostly… It is because they are there to make sure our children understand where we came from and where we are going to. Because mostly they talk about that. So you must know your origin, your destination, everything."

Mr. Dumisa was very selective about the materials he used—his goal was to find stories that young South Africans could relate to as well as to guide them in their future life trajectories. He

was also well aware that some English materials that were provided to teachers were not relevant to students' lives. For instance, he described how students could not connect with a short story he previously taught, called *The Luncheon*. "Last term I was teaching about the luncheon-something that took place. The luncheon, somewhere some fat lady was eating more than, you see. It happened in America or Britain, so it was like of no value to us. So you teach like what people can associate easily with, and I think it is ok. That is why I like that the most." Thus, rather than speak of teaching curricular values outlined in the *Manifesto*, Mr. Dumisa selected materials that would help lead young students toward a well-informed future based on a strong knowledge of their collective past.

Mrs. Ngcobo, the English teacher at Entabeni, likewise chose materials that she thought students could relate to. She decided to have students give oral presentations on sugar mamas and sugar daddies because it is something "they can see around them." However, she reflected relatively little on her role in teaching values or guiding students into their futures. Compared to the other English teachers in this study, she was rather apathetic about her teaching because of the difficult circumstances of violence and discipline her school faced. She believed that her school did not contribute to a culture of learning, asserting that, "We tried a lot, but now we are fed up… I just wait for the 15th to get paid and live my life."

These teachers' words highlight the ways in which they interpret—or disregard—national educational policies. According to national policies, the goal and purpose of life orientation classes is to promote values of democracy, human rights, responsibility, and social justice, yet these three LO teachers did not approach their roles with this in mind. Rather, they chose to act more as counselors to the students or failed to see the point of their subject and rarely attended class. When they did teach course content, the LO teachers' delivery was abstract with heavy

reliance on handouts or having students copy notes from the board. They did not use discussion or personal reflection to teach the LO curriculum. English teachers, by contrast, were far more reflexive on how the materials they chose could either promote values of respect and accountability, or could connect to students' lived experiences. While only the English teacher from Ikwezi recited official values in the curriculum and reflected on how she taught them through course content, all of the teachers strove to select literature that was "relevant" to young peoples' circumstances. As I will discuss below, this fact was not lost on students and had profound implications for the ways youth used their educational experiences to reflect on and perform their moral selves.

Speaking to Students' Lives

> *"[LO teachers] will teach people, but you can't teach me. I don't know how to say this… we are old enough to know what we have been taught is correct to what we are doing… so the LO lesson on the spare time should focus on the young ones so they grow knowing that this thing is not good…." (Smash, 18m)*

Students across the schools recognized that life orientation was *supposed* to teach about values in life—particularly equality in relationships and equality among members in society, as well as avoiding pregnancy or drugs. Several students talked about how LO teaches students "how to behave ourselves" or about "our behavior," but this was mostly in the rural school. Most students, like Smash in the excerpt above, felt that LO classes were unable to teach them anything new, including the differences between doing things that are "correct" or "not good." His assertions demonstrate a point that many older students made—life orientation courses are meant to teach certain values to students, however the class is not relevant to their lives at the moment and therefore students didn't take the class seriously. These findings contradict studies conducted by Theron (2008) who found that grade 9 school students expressed positive opinions of their life orientation course. The discrepancies in opinions of LO courses could be the result of

the age difference of participants or differences in research methodologies. While most of my student participants were over the age of 18, many of Theron's students were between 14-17 years old. Additionally, Theron's study relied on a survey analysis which might incline students to respond according to what they "should" learn in LO, rather than encourage a critical evaluation of the subject.

In contrast to life orientation classes, many students felt that what they were learning in their English classes better addressed their lived experiences. I found this surprising because educational policy documents tout life orientation for addressing student needs far more so than English courses. In focus groups, students would regularly debate why certain exercises from their English classes were their favorites. Through these debates students would recall the values raised through their class exercises and determine which of those values were important to their lives.

At Entabeni a group of male students called out the English exercises that they liked the most—these exercises ranged from a poem about life in a shantytown to a story about a political prisoner who was incarcerated during apartheid. This poem, *Shantytown*, by Anonymous, described life in a shantytown—the dirt, the violence, the hunger—as well as the hope that one day the land would change and be filled with joy and laughter. It is transcribed below.

High on the veld upon that plain
And far from streets and lights and cars
And bare of trees, and bare of grass,
Jabavu sleeps beneath the stars.

Jabavu sleeps.
The children cough.
Cold creeps up, the hard night cold,
The earth is tight within its grasp.
The high veld cold without soft rain,
Dry as the sand, rough as a rasp,
The frost-rimmed night invades the shacks

Through dusty ground
Through freezing ground the night cold creeps
In cotton blankets, rags and sacks
Beneath the stars Jabavu sleeps.

One day Jabavu will awake
To greet a new and shining day:
The sounds of coughing will become
The children's laughter as they play
In parks with flowers where dust now swirls
In strong-walled homes with warmth and light.
But for tonight Jabavu sleeps,
Jabavu sleeps. The stars are bright.

The *Prisoner Who Wore Glasses*, by Bessie Head, was a short story about an apartheid

era political prisoner who endured his incarceration with dignity and wit. The story explains how

Brille, the prisoner who wore glasses, is punished for stealing by Hannetjie, the prison guard.

Later Brille catches Hannetjie stealing fertilizer and they strike a bargain: Brille and his fellow

prisoners will enjoy privileges and in return they help the guard steal materials for his farm.

One young man from Entabeni named Shabeni (20m) explained why he liked these

exercises:

> "It taught us something in life that the prisoner who wore glasses, he taught me
> something, that in life you must never give up. Even if you are in a hard situation
> you must believe that one day I will rise up…. Like the person who wrote that
> poem he has a hope that one day he will get out there. And one day he will live a
> better life. He is a good believer."

To provide a bit of background on Shabeni's life—he had lived a life of poverty, loss and

violence. He told me his life story in an open interview and one of the first things that he said

was, "Ah there is a lot of violence at the school. If you are learning at Entabeni, every time you

are always scared. You are always scared that they fight to you." In addition to fear of violence

at school, Shabeni lived in an unstable home environment. He explained how a few years ago he

lived in a house with 21 people from his mother's family to attend a better school closer to

Pietermaritzburg, but eventually moved back to this lower quality school because living conditions were better. He now lived with a brother and cousin off of the money his mother made as a domestic worker. In this region of South Africa, domestic workers typically made 100 rand (approximately $10) a day. Not only had Shabeni's father passed away, but so had his uncle who had been a strong parental figure in his life. Following his death, Shabeni became a Christian and has been trying to find stability and hope in life through faith. He frequently spoke of that year as a turning point in his life.

Consequently, these powerful stories from English class about enduring hard situations and "getting out of there" spoke precisely to Shabeni's hopes and dreams. As discussed in previous chapters, many youth in these rural and township schools lived with daily insecurity, yet regularly spoke of how they were moving toward the future. Although youth articulated different visions of their futures throughout our conversations, students' ideas always focused on education, employment and security. Like the prisoner who wore glasses, Shabeni saw himself as a good believer who will one day have a better life. When speaking of his future dreams he laid out a plan that traced his educational trajectory until opening a small grocery store in the area that would improve his quality of life.

Naidoo (21f) was another student at Siyabonga High School who talked about how an English exercise taught her values and resonated with her past experience of friendship across racial divides. Naidoo, along with Nelisa (18f), explained that they learned about non-racism, equality and reconciliation through a short story called *1949*, by Ronnie Govender. This short story recounted the violence that broke out among Zulu and Indian populations in Durban, and a Zulu man's unsuccessful attempts to protect his Indian neighbors from the violence. As described in Mr. Dumisa's class before reading the short story, the 1949 riots ensued when an

Indian man killed a Zulu youth for stealing from his shop. White people stood by as Indian businesses were looted, and then the violence extended beyond shops. Approximately 142 people were killed and over a thousand injured.[36] Naidoo and Nelisa recalled the short story they read and the values they learned from it:

Naidoo: I've learned it [values of non-racism, equality, and reconciliation] from history. And in English – 1949? Eh 1948. Like Ndumi was trying to help some other families, i-Indian families and he was friend of Paboo. And he was an Indian and Ndumi was a Zulu; he was working in a garage. And Paboo came to Ndumi and told him that he saw a Zulu boy stole in a shop of Indian and they hit him. And the white ones were looking and don't do anything. And Paboo asked why they don't do anything, and Ndumi said no, maybe the police, because they are the white ones so they don't do anything. And after time goes Ndumi tried to help the Indian family- they hide them-

Nelisa: - In the house –

Naidoo: - Under the bed and what what. So in the end he got died. They didn't give him a peace, and *yena wayezama*. [He was trying.]

Nelisa: He was asking for peace for the blacks, and they didn't listen to him. They just killed him and the Indian family.

Naidoo, who spoke softly and rarely throughout focus groups, talked extensively about this story because it connected with some of her life experiences. This young woman named herself "Naidoo," a very common Indian South African surname, after he mother's former employer. Her mother worked as a domestic worker for a family with this surname, and the wife regularly made delicious Indian food for Naidoo's mother to bring to her Zulu family. She admired and cared for this Indian woman, despite living in a context where animosity continues to thrive between Indian and black South Africans. Thus, this story about interracial friendship and caring spoke to her and she drew connections between this story and the moral values that it taught. Mr. Dumisa, who selected course material that covered South Africa's past, encouraged

---

[36] Information was taken from http://abahlali.org/files/HWS-Edwards_1949.pdf.

students to think about how to live as moral beings. His short stories connected with his students'

moral ideas of how the world is united and divided by speaking about friendships that extended

beyond racial divisions. These are just two examples among many wherein students reflected on

their favorite English stories and connected them to their own lives.

These excerpts reveal how many students recognized that life orientation was *supposed* to

teach certain values, but students felt a disconnection between LO course content and their own

lives. Rather than foster critical reflection on their environments, LO classes seemed irrelevant to

youths' daily concerns. In contrast, their English classes inspired far more reflection because the

material that teachers selected spoke to these young students' current life circumstances. These

findings counter arguments in educational policy documents and scholarly literature on the

importance of life orientation courses in fostering key values among youth.

Moral Translation

> *"[The short story] taught us something in life that the prisoner who wore glasses,*
> *he taught me something, that in life you must never give up. Even if you are in a*
> *hard situation you must believe that one day I will rise up…." (Shabeni, 18m)*

When teaching and course materials resonated with students' life experiences, as

in the case of English classes, youth were more likely to engage in the process of *moral*

translation. In other words, they would rework lessons from class and apply them to their

own lives. Through this process youth reflected on how they ought to live as moral

beings. In the excerpt above, Shabeni is not only stating that a short story taught him

about hope and dedication, but he is relating how this literature speaks to how he should

live today and in the future. His fluid transition between the use of "you" and "I"

highlights how youth interpreted their classes as instructing them on how to live.

Occasionally students reflected on what they had learned in life orientation classes and applied these lessons to their own lives. At Entabeni, Amanda (18m) explained that life orientation teaches about drugs and how students must behave. He stated:

> "LO subjects. That subject teaches us a lot about those things—drugs, pregnancy. So I think we have to be responsible for ourselves and learn from that subject because to use drugs when we are at school it's not good because you can end up leaving school, going to find jobs so you can make money, so you can have money to buy those particular drugs."

He connected lessons from life orientation classes with his life experiences of seeing students take drugs and drop out of school. Similar to Swartz's (2009) study of township youth morality, many young people in these communities viewed attending school in-and-of itself as a morally "good" behavior (regardless of what happened in school), and dropping out as "bad." In connecting lessons about drugs and school leaving, Amanda was translating life orientation course content into his moral framework on how "we" should behave.

Far more frequently, students reworked stories from their English classes into ideas of how they should live as moral human beings. For example, during a free period I sat with several students in English class at Siyabonga High and we chatted about their favorite English exercises. Students said that they liked the story about Ha'Penny, an orphaned boy who invented a mother for himself and told others about her. Many students in these schools had lost parents and reading this story in class struck a somber note. When I inquired as to why students liked it so much, they gave several related answers, such as, "I like Ha'Penny because it teaches don't pretend you have things you don't have. Don't lie," or "You need to be satisfied with what you have." Through these statements—and their use of the pronoun "you"—students were reflecting on a story and translating it into a lesson of how they must live. Although unaware of the

expression, "the moral of a story," they developed their own moral of speaking truth and applied it to interpretations of how they must live.

In another instance, Lion (17f) and Elephant (17f) thought about the short stories they had read about sugar daddies and pregnancy from their English lessons at Entabeni Secondary School. After speaking with these girls for over an hour, I asked them if there was anything they wanted to say that they thought was important. Of their own volition, they brought up topics from English class and embarked on a discussion of their own experiences. Lion asked the question, "I think that in these topics that we are doing in essays, in orals— [there is] the topic that says abortion is legal but is a sin – what do you think?" While "sin" was never used in any of these English materials nor mentioned in class, Lion translated class activities into this question. She then described how girls get pregnant and have abortions because they are afraid to tell their parents, and recounted a recent incident in which her friend had an abortion when she was six months pregnant. She considered how abortion was bad in general but good in the case of rape where you don't know the father. She further reflected on sugar daddies:

> "I think sugar daddies- I agree with the topic that sugar daddies are the ones who spread HIV and AIDS, because if they are doing sex with teenagers they don't want to use the condom. Yes. And on the other side, I don't blame the teenagers, because other teenagers, I blame the sugar daddies because other teenagers they don't have money. They don't have parents. They live on their own. And they want to support themselves with the money that they get from the sugar daddies."

Here, Lion raised topics brought up in English class as a means to reflect upon questions of morality, poverty and insecurity. Her words further reveal a hierarchy of morality; while she recognizes engaging in sex with sugar daddies as morally wrong, she also understands why this happens. Because materials used in class spoke to her and her friend's life experiences Lion engaged in the process of moral translation.

These students' reflections on "right" and "wrong" behaviors through school practices counter Prinsloo's (2007) findings that there is a rapid moral decline in South African education. Prinsloo's study on the implementation of life orientation programs in a range of historically, racially and economically diverse schools indicated that high school principals felt that students "lack a value system." In contrast, my research demonstrates that youth regularly reflected on English class exercises to consider how they ought to live in the future. As I discuss in an article on teachers as agents of change (Cappy 2016), pedagogical practices that allow students to infer meaning from literature and enable classroom discussion foster more critical reflection on moral actions than didactic methods. However, this emphasis encouraging students to reflect critically on their own life experiences, which proved so successful in English courses, is notably lacking from policy discourse.

Conclusion

Since the end of apartheid, policymakers have revised educational policies to promote key national values of democracy, non-racism, ubuntu, and social justice. As discussed in Chapter 2, life orientation courses have gained attention in policy statements and research articles as a primary mechanism through which to instill these values in the nation's youngest citizens. Yet, the ethnographic case study I present problematizes the assumption that LO effectively teaches these values. It reveals both a lack of reflection on curriculum objectives on the part of the teachers, as well as a greater influence of English classes in promoting shared values than outlined in previous research. Rather than simply evaluating educational policies against centrally identified outcomes, my work demonstrates how educational practitioners develop their own objectives and approaches in teaching.

While most life orientation and English teachers neglected to consider how their subject teaches official curricular values, they did develop their own framework for their classrooms. Life orientation teachers viewed their role more as mentors for youths' practical problems, such as a death in the family, pregnancy, or economic challenges. They often failed to attend their scheduled classes and when they taught simply "instructed" students on how to act according to the curriculum. Students often acted listless in these classes, and later discussed how the topics covered in LO taught them nothing new. English teachers at times considered how they teach national values, yet they were more focused on using materials in class that connected to students' lived experiences. Through their use of course material that touched on topics of poverty, inequality, endurance, (non)racism, and hope, students reworked their lessons to consider how they must live as moral beings.

By reflecting on short stories, poems, and presentations in English classes youth engaged in the process of moral translation—they took messages from their class lessons and applied them to the context of their own lives. This process of moral translation demonstrates the importance of selecting course material that mirrors youths' lived experiences. When youth reflected on issues they witnessed on a daily basis they were encouraged to consider the "right" ways to pursue their futures. These findings support Freire's theory of critical pedagogy (1997 [1970]), wherein education should lead to dialogical exchanges among students to help students see issues central to their own lives and then take action to improve their situation. However, unlike Freirean pedagogy, youth do not always engage in the process of *critical reflection* to inspire action.

While youth embraced stories that discuss poverty and violence because these stories connect to their own lived experiences, they were rarely critical of the power structures that

shaped their environment. The forms of moral behavior youth took away from classes entailed friendship, personal responsibility, and hoping for a better future. These are ideas rooted in individual action that remain detached from addressing the social and economic inequalities and insecurity that many youth experience on a daily basis. Life orientation courses did not promote active involvement in social justice in youths' minds, while English classes only at times encouraged proactive behaviors to improve students' lives and the lives of those around them. Rather than offering critical reflection that youth convert into action—through democracy or social justice—these courses fostered a morality directed toward an idealized future but not present forms of action. Like morning assembly practices, youth enacted messages of how they should stay in school and respect elders, but they were not directed toward options of collective action. The broader implications of this performed individualized morality will be explored in Chapter 8.

This chapter has described how class exercises and materials that resonate with students' past experiences enable students to engage in the process of moral translation. English classes, far more so than life orientation classes, allowed students to consider how they must live as moral beings through the use of short stories and poems. The subsequent chapter now directs attention to how students practice moral translation through their history classes. Like this chapter, it points out how student do not interpret history classes as abstract lessons about the past, but rework their daily lessons into messages about the future.

Chapter 6: Learning about the Past to Imagine Moral Futures

A steady hum of voices resonates throughout the classroom. At times the noise grows deafening between the jokes and the shouts, but today the cold morning air blowing in from a broken window causes some students to bundle up in their jumpers and refrain from talking. Several students are hunched over their desks asleep, while others casually stand in-between the rows. Most of us are sitting three to a narrow bench. We are 74 students in a room intended for 40. Suddenly, the class door swings open and Mr. Mbatha enters the room.

Mr. Mbatha: Good morning learners!

His voice booms and students scatter to their seats, sitting erect and close-mouthed. I find myself straightening up, beginning the prompt response, "Good morning," with the rest of the class before remembering that I am in fact not in eleventh grade. Mr. Mbatha explains that we just finished discussing US history and now we will turn to South African history for the first time. He is three months ahead of schedule according to the national curriculum.

Mr. Mbatha: The apartheid policy was implemented by the government to govern the country. In Russia we see communism was used to govern the country; in America capitalism. But here in South Africa it was done in an apartheid way… *The teacher points to a word he has written on the board – apartheid.* In 1948 we saw a new policy introduced as apartheid. Before 1948 we see segregation. Both policies are about separation. How many races do we have in South Africa? The original ones?

Female student: Nine.

Mr. Mbatha: Name them. *She is silent.* Stand up. If you don't know stand up.

He asks seven students, none of whom know, and they all are made to stand up. They stand awkwardly in a half crouch because they are unable to fully straighten their legs at their small benches. After a few minutes, the eighth person finally lists the "races" correctly and everyone is asked to sit.

Female student: Blacks, whites, Indians, coloureds.

Mr. Mbatha: Race policy is about how each racial group should behave itself. The separate development of the races. If you are a person and you want to better yourself and your position, this is development. This policy was based on discrimination. What is discrimination? Can you tell me?

He tells students who are chewing things to spit them in the bin. "I said no chewing in my class. If I see you chewing again you will be punished," he reiterates. He asks a student with a dictionary to read the definition of discrimination.

Female student: To treat one person or a group in a wrong way to others.

Mr. Mbatha: All races were treated, but in the wrong way. Some groups were treated better than others. People according to this policy were going to be treated in an unequal way. Implementation – what is implementation? Look it up in the dictionary.

Female student: To do or start something that you have planned.

She is asked to repeat it louder; she repeats it three times. The teacher repeats it twice.

Mr. Mbatha: The government planned to separate people, to treat people differently; the government planned to treat people in an unequal way. Many laws were passed to ensure that apartheid would become a reality in South Africa and for South Africans. Apartheid became a reality in 1948 through many laws… From tomorrow we will look at all the legislation that were introduced to see that this plan becomes a reality… The Bantu Education Act was for us as blacks because we have this color of skin. Today we have an interracial government but before the government was a white government with Afrikaans speaking whites and English speaking whites. The word they used to describe black people was Bantu. To ensure separate development we were offered separate education from white people... You all are so fortunate. I wanted to be a doctor. But to be a doctor you have to do mathematics and physical sciences, but black people were not offered physical science in their schools. Certain jobs were reserved for white people only, like being a doctor, so I could not become a doctor. But soon I will be an academic doctor because I am continuing with my studies. People will not call me Mr. Mbatha, but will call me Dr. Mbatha.

*   *   *

This scene epitomizes a typical history class in Entabeni High School outside of Pietermaritzburg, the capital of KwaZulu-Natal. This history teacher, Mr. Mbatha, takes his work seriously and is determined to use his historical knowledge and past experiences to create "well-rounded people." His teaching and perspectives reflect a fact that government leaders have stated about the purpose of history education; that it should instill values such as non-racism, non-sexism and civic responsibility among the new generation of South African youth (Department of Basic Education 2011c:8). Although students did not agree that that they learned all the values outlined in the opening pages of their history textbooks, in conversation after lessons such as this

one they would condemn the actions under apartheid and speak about the older generation that was "discriminating." From these lessons they did not simply come to understand what happened in the past, they would consider how they should live as better people in the future.

As discussed in previous chapters, South African education has become laden with the responsibility of fostering shared moral principles based on democracy, equality, non-racism, and Ubuntu (human dignity). Recent debates on whether or not to make history education a requirement through Grade 12 have centered on history education's potential to develop an informed citizenry that will create responsible future leaders. Yet, while many such claims have filled the media and government documents (Fredericks 2016; Makinana 2014),[37] few studies have examined the broader implications of history education for young South Africans in former black schools. Contemporary research therefore still begs the question: How South African youth attending former black schools *re-deploy* the history lessons taught schools through their daily actions?

This chapter argues that South African secondary school students engage with and translate lessons from history class into ideas of how they ought to live in the future. Through this process of *moral translation*, youth take lessons from the classroom and apply them into ideas of how they should think and act. They further morally distinguish themselves from previous generations by recognizing themselves as the "good generation" in contrast to the "bad older" people with the "apartheid mind." By referencing key historical figures, such as Nelson Mandela, they use their understandings about the past to justify their moral positions. History

---

[37] Since mid-2014 advocates among the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and ministers of the Department of Education have become more vocal in their demands to make history education compulsory. News articles from a range of sources, including *Independent Online*, *Eyewitness News*, and the *Mail & Guardian*, regularly report history education debates. These new articles cited above represent just two among many that present policymakers' arguments in favor of compulsory education.

education, therefore, is not just about the past but is projected into imaginations of how youth should pursue their moral futures.

Making Moral Citizens through History Education in South Africa

Many studies have examined the ways in which government leaders use history education to produce citizens who embrace certain moral values and feel a sense of national belonging (Coe 2005; Kendall 2007; Koh 2006; Lazar 2010; Levinson 2005; Reed-Danahay 1996; Sorensen 2008). To establish ideologies of nationalism and a sense of commonality among citizens, states utilize what Smith (2003) calls "ethical stories of peoplehood." Ethical stories of peoplehood provide a blueprint for the ideal type of citizen in a given state, in order to foster an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). Although they may articulate shared moral values among any political group, they are often used to foster a sense of belonging among members of nation-states. Stories of peoplehood are constantly being reformulated by political actors and reworked by citizens. One of the ways in which stories of peoplehood can be shifted is through education and the re-writing of history and biographies of national heroes.

South African political leaders have used education to reconstruct ethical stories of peoplehood over the past century. As discussed in Chapter 2, the values taught through education during apartheid served to uphold the dominance of a white minority. History in particular taught students the stratification of races was part of a justified social order (Engelbrecht 2006). History education emphasized racial differences whereby white people and (in particular) Afrikaners were portrayed as naturally dominant. The ethical stories of peoplehood in history texts focused on achievements of the white settlers and the ways in which white settlers brought civilization and religion to the "Native" populations.

Since 1994, the new South African government has embarked on an agenda to

redress past inequalities and mitigate social conflicts through structural and curricular reforms. In addition to offering more financial support to low-income schools, curricular reforms have sought to promote values of the new democracy (Fiske and Ladd 2004; Sayed and Motala 2012). History texts were cleansed of Afrikaner nationalist symbols and new textbooks were written (Engelbrecht 2006). The South African history portrayed in these textbooks focuses largely on the struggle for freedom, particularly by members of the African National Congress, and includes a broader history of black and Indian South African populations. The opening pages of all National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) approved history textbooks explain that the goal of history education is to promote the values of the Constitution, civic responsibility, responsible leadership, and human rights. In addition, history education should challenge prejudices that involve race, class, gender, ethnicity, and xenophobia (Department of Basic Education, 2011c:8). Despite these changes, many scholars have critiqued the way in which history curricular reforms were implemented, claiming that changes were politically motivated and neglected input from teachers and historians (Hues 2011; Kallaway 2012).

While the contemporary secondary school education curriculum makes history education an elective for grades 10-12, recent debates within the Department of Education and South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) have suggested that history education may be made compulsory through grade 12. These debates center on the importance of history education in fostering national unity and teaching about the past so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future. These debates reveal that despite current national educational policies' emphasis on mathematics and science education (DBE, 2015), history education also remains a prominent target of educational reform.

Contemporary South African history education research has offered valuable insights into the history of curricular reform (Kallaway 2010; Kallaway 2012; Sieborger 2011), teacher training initiatives (Cole and Murphy 2010), and pedagogical practices in history classes (Dryden-Peterson and Sieborger 2006; Hues 2011; Teeger 2015). As explored in Chapter 1, research by Hues (2011) and Teeger (2015) demonstrates that history education creates racial divisions among students, develops a rupture between the apartheid-past and democratic present, and fails to offer a critical examination of current social, economic, and racial inequalities. Yet missing from this notable body of literature are the ways in which history educational *practices*—both material selection and pedagogy—in former black schools shape youths' enactments of morality.

By examining how youth in the most common schools in South Africa translate teachings about the past into lessons regarding how they ought to live and how society ought to be, this chapter sheds light on how youth formulate ideas of their moral futures through history education. In my analysis I demonstrate how youth reference "ethical stories of peoplehood" (Smith 2003) when translating history lessons into the context of their own lives. Citation of these historical references is but one method through which youth engage in the process of moral translation with their history education. Before embarking on this discussion of how youth rework their lessons, let us first turn to teachers' perspectives of the purpose of teaching history in high schools.

Teachers' Perspectives on the Purpose of History Education

Compared to both English and life orientation teachers, history teachers in this study held a greater belief in the importance of their subject. They felt that history was essential to the creation of a moral, well-educated person, as well as for the future of the nation. Mr. Mbatha, the

history teacher at Entabeni Secondary, asserted that history education should be compulsory for

every student in school through graduation. He explained that it should be compulsory because:

> "[I]t is the matter of all substance. Second, because it is a social science. It talks about people's lives, and teaches people about life and how to interact with people. It can help people in this country, because it looks at all aspects of life. For example, biology looks at how the body works. But how to behave – you won't get that from life sciences. History is all rounded…. Through my research I have found that among many well performing schools, the principals are all historians. It is because history teaches a person; it completes a person."

History, for Mr. Mbatha, helped teach young people how to behave appropriately in

society. It was important not only for learning about the past, but for the development of

individuals. He regularly explained how history can teach young people the "right" way

to live. By examining the "social" aspects of life, history can fulfill a need that subjects

like biology and physics cannot teach.

Mrs. Magwaza, the history teacher at Ikwezi, likewise affirmed her belief that history

education must be made compulsory before the media began circulating this idea. She explained:

> "If I was the ministers of education, I would enforce history to all schools as a compulsory subject because most of the learners, these new generation learners, they know not what was happening before 1994. Because most of them they were born 1994, so they don't know what was happening. They don't know this transition of before 1994 and this transition of now, so that means that our learners they won't be true leaders, because they have to know the old system of government. And they must compare with this old system of government with other countries so they know if I'm going to be a good leader of a country what should I consider most. I think- to me history is really really so important to the learners because it's to teach them where do they come from. How do you rectify the mistakes of the past so that you can be able to face the future?"

Mr. Shabalala from Siyabonga emphasized how history classes could help young people

of South Africa unite for a better future for everyone. He was twenty years younger than the

other two history teachers and regularly affirmed that the purpose of history was for racial

reconciliation—to teach about the success of the "Rainbow Nation." He claimed that history was the only subject that:

> "Brings about unity and a good social structure… For someone who doesn't know history, if you were to ask him or her about the issue of black and whites here in South Africa—to him or her he will still take that as hatred due to that particular group. But for me who understands history and who studied history very well, I know that, ok right for now, there is no difference between me and a white person. It's just that it's a matter of color, but we're both the same. Why? Because we are South Africans and if I were to rely on that… we can sit together in a table and discuss progressive issues, something that will bring a good future to us."

Mr. Shabalala regularly reiterated that if people could understand how and why inequalities exist today, they would be able to recognize the true equality among people and possibilities for change. He emphasized national and interracial unity with his interpretation of history education.

These history teachers not only expressed that their subject was vital for the growth of their students and their nation, but attended their classes with more regularity than English and life orientation teachers. Whereas LO teacher only went to their classes a fraction of the time and English teachers, like Mr. Dumisa, occasionally took "Fridays off," all three of these history teachers attempted to teach during their allotted class time. When Mr. Mbatha and Mrs. Magwaza were unable to teach during their class time due to commitments to the school management team, in-school moderations, and staff meetings, they would reschedule to teach before the start of the school day or during a free period. Mrs. Magwaza often expressed extreme frustration over being taken out of her class for other responsibilities, which happened during a number of my observations.[38] Despite these challenges in having time to teach, history teachers across these schools remained some of the most dedicated teachers in their schools. Moreover, their intentions in teaching history—to help young people develop into moral beings who can

---

[38] On one occasion when a teacher came to remove her from class Mrs. Magwaza turned to me as she was walking out the door and said, "You see what they are doing? They are raping me! I can't even teach my classes." When I returned to Ikwezi in 2016 I learned that she had retired early to go into business instead and I can't help but wonder if she did so because of repeated frustrations she faced while attempting to teach.

face the future—were not lost on their students. The remainder of this chapter examines how

young people reworked their lessons about the past to understand how they must live in the

future as youth of the "new generation."

"We Should": Learning History to Inform Moral Actions

I attended the first grade eleven history class of the year. The teacher, Mrs. Magwaza, began in a very direct way, "Let's go straight to page 1." Students pulled out copies of New Generation History, *and passed them around the classroom so there was one shared book among three to four students. Mrs. Magwaza began talking about communism and capitalism in preparation for a segment on Russian history.*

Mrs. Magwaza: I'm trying to show the characteristics of capitalism, so we can learn the characteristics of communism. Most of the capitalists ended up being so rich that the workers, or proletariat, were exploited. How were they exploited?

Male student: They get low wages.

Mrs. Magwaza: Workers ended up poor because they earned low wages. By the way, what is capitalism guys?

A female student reads a definition from her book. Then the teacher discusses characteristics of capitalism.

Mrs. Magwaza: That means communism was there to address the inequality in the country… In communism the workers control the means of production. Do you see the difference?... Here in South Africa we are using capitalism together with communism. Education and justice are in the hands of states, but other things are capitalism. Some countries adopt only one economic system, but other countries they adopt two. In communism all are equal with wealth. Is this the same way here in South Africa?

The teacher reiterated all of these points in Zulu so that all of the students could understand.

Male student: No, because there are some factories that are not under control by the state.

The teacher gives an example of how there are South African workers in gold mines, but the gold goes to the U.S. ("Christina's country," she reasserts) and then it becomes American Swiss gold chains and watches. South Africans do not benefit.

Mrs. Magwaza: But you can change that, you. *You* can take back the American Swiss and make it African Swiss…. If you are working for the government you can't have your own business... But you can have people who are richer in South Africa because

they own their companies and businesses and farms, and people are exploited by them. With communism all should be equal.

        *   *   *

Mrs. Magwaza regularly directed her class to transform current political and economic systems and her instructions to motivate change were not missed by her students. Although some students thought that history just teaches "things in the past" and didn't have direct relevance to their daily lives, more often than not, students across the schools engaged in the process of moral translation. Like many students in English classes, youth translated their history lessons, such as the one above, into moral ideas about how they should act in the future.

The most common inference that students drew was that history taught them about responsible leadership and citizenship. Students from Mrs. Magwaza's class connected what they were discussing in history class, specifically Russian history, into lessons regarding how they should be responsible citizens. Twenty-year-old student Candice translated history lessons about the Tsar of Russia, a violent leader, into an understanding of how she should behave in the world. She stated, "We learn that things about Tsar, things against people killing people. We learn that if I have to be a good citizen I don't have to kill people. I have to be kind to other people." In shifting the subject from the Tsar of Russia to herself, she is using the lessons to recognize how she should act. She later also reflected on how she learned human rights in history class by recalling how the Tsar deprived people of rights, namely the right to life. She then related this history lesson about the Tsar to her own situation, stating, "I have the right for no one to kill me. I have the right to be alive."

Amanda, a 20-year-old male student from Mr. Mbatha's class in Entabeni Secondary, articulated a similar point. He explained that history "teaches us that in future- like if you want to become a president you have to be responsible for your people. You have to bring change in your

whole country." Like Candice, he recognized the way in which history taught a sense of responsible leadership, although this time focusing on Stalin as a role model, further reworking this information into an understanding about what "you" should do. Amanda's use of "you," like Candice's use of "I", highlights how history class was interpreted as a means of *instructing* individuals on the ways they should behave as leaders in order to bring positive changes for the future. As will be discussed below, students regularly referenced the actions of historical leaders—their ethical stories—to justify how they must live as responsible leaders.

Moreover, while the values that students took away from their history classes reflected curricular sanctioned values of human rights and responsible leadership, the *form and meaning* of responsible leadership differed considerably from Hues' (2011) findings of history education in Afrikaans-medium schools. Whereas Hues noted that teachers condemned the ANC for being anti-capitalistic and therefore "irresponsible" because they developed an "inefficient" system, Mrs. Magwaza and Mr. Mbatha condemned the inequalities promoted through capitalism. These differences highlight the stark political divisions among Afrikaans and Zulu speaking populations as well as how these political differences infiltrate history education in South African public schools.

In other instances, students took away moral lessons from history that did not pertain to national leadership but rather how they must conduct themselves as moral men and women. One animated performance by Mr. Mbatha led several students to consider the issue of prostitution in their community. In discussing the New Deal in the U.S., Mr. Mbatha shifted to the topic of child labor. He explained,

> "A person 18 years and below was not allowed to work and be employed because
> that is child labor. In South Africa you find girls 15 years old deciding to work;
> work in towns selling her body. So what do you think – it is his or her choice? All
> over Pietermaritzburg you see 15, 14, and even 13 years olds wearing short skirts

like this standing by the robot [traffic light]. *He imitates the length of her skirt and her strut across the front of the classroom, inciting copious laughter.* When you stop they cross the street at the robot to attract your attention. *He acts out how when you are driving you need to look around and beware of your surroundings but when you see this girl you do a double take. The class is cracking up.* But you are lucky. Your parents ensure that you have an education and you must appreciate that opportunity. *The class immediately sobers up and goes quiet.* Don't sell your bodies. If I see you there I will take you and personally drag you back to your place."

Mr. Mbatha's performance draws on young people's emotions—both those of amusement and sobriety—to push forward his ideas of right and wrong actions. He further invokes the students' relative privilege in relation to the child prostitute to underscore both the unfairness of inequalities as well as how students need to take advantage of the privileges (education and parents) that they have. Like practices described in Ladwig's (2009) study, this performance effectively used emotional appeals in order to promote a form of morality and project a message of how youth ought to live. Following this lesson, students brought up issues of prostitution as a key challenge in South Africa. For instance, Zama, a female student from the class, told me later that week that if she could change one thing about South Africa it would be to stop child prostitution, because this would stop girls from dropping out of school in order to get money.

The ways in which youth engage in the process of moral translation through history education counters Swartz's (2009) previous findings that pedagogical practices do little to influence South African township youths' sense of right and wrong. Swartz argues how youths' assertions that "in school you learn… what is right and what is wrong," represent largely symbolic statements (2009:113). As discussed in Chapter 3, she described how youth presented "being in school" as a positive moral location; so long as you were within the school grounds this made you a moral person.

While I also heard students references how "being in school" is "good," my research reveals how youth reflected upon specific history classes—pedagogical practices—to formulate how they should live as moral beings. I found youth engage in the process of moral translation across all three schools. Four of the five focus groups with student participants who were studying history in schools (16 of 23 students) discussed how history informs their moral behaviors in various ways. The one focus group at Ikwezi High School that did not reflect on the moral implications of their history education asserted that they were only studying history because they were required to if they didn't want to study physics or business studies. The examples below further illustrate how young people used ethical stories of peoplehood and topics covered in their history classes to reflect not only how they should behave in moral ways as individuals, but as the new generation of South African citizens.

The "Apartheid Mind" is "Not Us": Generational Separation

Mr. Shabalala: Yesterday we were talking about how South Africa is a Rainbow Nation. Does anyone want to talk about why it is a Rainbow Nation?

Male student: Because we have white, Indian, colored and black people in South Africa.

Mr. Shabalala: It is a Rainbow Nation because we have different races. *All students finish this sentence.*

Male student: Because South Africa is a democracy.

The teacher walks around with a full page photograph from a magazine of four girls of different races, showing it to the students. The girls in the photograph are laughing and visibly enjoying themselves. The title on the picture is "Making Friends."

Mr. Shabalala: This picture shows us clearly that South Africa is a Rainbow Nation because it has different races. We are free to socialize and mix together. But back then different races could not mix. Here they are socializing together and they are making life easy. Now we want to find out why we are having Indians in South Africa. Pan-Africanism was saying that Africa is for black people only, but today we will find out why Indian people are part of South Africa and why they came to South Africa. Indian people were discriminated against by white people.

*   *   *

In this excerpt, Mr. Shabalala is doing what Teeger (2015) also found from her classroom observations in former white schools: he is creating a rupture between the apartheid past and present, using an image to indicate the benefits and possibilities of today against the backdrop of a past filled with discrimination and division. In many other lessons he allowed for open debate on sensitive and moral questions—such as whether or not it was right for white settlers to come to South Africa in the first place. In a session moderated by Mr. Shabalala, accusations that settlers had no claim to this land flew across the room against challengers who asserted that without Europeans South Africa would not have been able to build a strong infrastructure and utilize natural resources. Yet at the end of each class, Mr. Shabalala emphasized how the ultimate goal of learning history was for the betterment of not only individual students, but the nation. He employed the image of the "Rainbow Nation" not only in the instance above but throughout his classes to highlight how all the different races of people who live in South Africa must unite in the future.

Youth participated in their history classes and reworked their lessons to understand how they should live as moral beings. They used their history lessons to determine what kind of society "we" want in the future through the process of debate. This temporal dimension of youths' learned morality through education affirms Lambek's (2010b) assertion that temporality is critical to ethical commitments. While exemplary research has highlighted how thinking about or verbally asserting images of the future is central to youths' sense of morality (Frye 2012; Swartz 2009) this study demonstrates how youth reinterpret historical lessons to morally distinguish themselves from the past.

Students would frequently explain that they learned about the past in order to "move forward." For instance, a focus group with Boxer (19m), Sylvester (18m), Bongazonke (18m), Hero (18m), McKenzie (16f), and 2Cool (18m) from Mr. Shabalala's class, spoke of how they believed history education was meant to "correct the youth" from the bad ways of the past. I asked the students what they thought the main purpose of history education was and four explained:

McKenzie: To know better about where you come from.

Sylvester: So that we must not-

Hero: -Do the same thing that older people did-

Boxer: -As older people said, you cannot move forward if you don't know your history. That's the main thing about history…. History is telling us that back in the days people were doing this and this, and the outcome of this is this and that. That's to correct us as a youth to not do those bad things that they did in those times… And also not going around saying some names that you heard your father say at home [derogatory racial terms] without knowing the meaning of that word--

This group of lively students connected what they were learning in history to *their* everyday behavior—both today and in the future. They reworked lessons from history class, with details they learned about how South Africa came to be the multi-racial "Rainbow Nation," to draw lessons about what "we" should do as the younger generation. In the words of Boxer, history should "correct us as a youth to not do those bad things that they did in those times." Later in this focus discussion Sylvester elaborated, "When you are doing history you have a lot of experience to know how to treat other people." Then 2Cool chimed in, "And also how to handle or manage a situation or problems of things that happen." As the conversation continued they discussed how history education "helps us" to understand how to act "without using violence."

By expressing a rupture between the apartheid past and the democratic present, as in the excerpt above, students came to recognize differences in the moral status of people from different generations. They often articulated this moral and temporal rupture through the concept of the "apartheid mind." The first time I heard this term used was in a focus group at Siyabonga High with Nelisa (19f), Kim (19f), Naidoo (21f) and T. Pain (19m). Nelisa self-identified as Xhosa, and Kim as half-Xhosa, unlike my other entirely Zulu focus groups. At one point in the conversation we were talking about discrimination. The students said that there was not discrimination in South Africa, but then said they did see discrimination against African foreigners, including Malawians, Zimbabweans, and Mozambicans. They attributed this discrimination to the concept of the "apartheid mind":

Nelisa: There is discrimination, but… to those who come from *other* countries, not to the South Africans…discrimination is being done by those who have apartheid mind. Those old people-

Kim: -Who still believe in past-

T. Pain: -Because the new generation doesn't.

Nelisa: We are the modern…

Christina: What do you mean "the apartheid mind?" ...

Nelisa: The whole stereotype thing that a black person doesn't get involved with a white person. And like a Zulu with a Xhosa doesn't get involved, so they live separately.

Christina: So it goes between both races, and people who are speaking different languages-?

All: Yes. *Promptly spoken.*

Nelisa: Yeah Zulu and the Xhosas used to [be separated] back then. There is actually a river where the Xhosas wouldn't cross.

In this excerpt all of the students understood well what Nelisa meant when she brought up the "apartheid mind." They rapidly finished each other's sentences and contributed to the

discussion. When I asked for clarification on the meaning of "apartheid mind," the students explained that it is a mentality older people have when they stress that people of different races, nationalities, ethnicities, or linguistic affiliations should remain separate. It is a marker of the "old people who still believe in the past," and stands in sharp contrast to the "new generation," which is "modern." The people with this old mindset are the instigators of discrimination, according to youth. The historical knowledge that these students had acquired through their life experiences, including schooling, home life, and media among others, encouraged them to think of people who believe in the ways of the past as separate from themselves—the new generation. Thus a broad implication of history education is that it creates a strong generational divide in the minds of youth – a divide based on a moral premise that older generations have the morally wrong "apartheid mind."

In a second focus group meeting with 2Cool, Boxer, Bongazonke, and Sylvester, the history students more fully elaborated on the "apartheid mindset." They, like the students above, saw the older generation that lived during apartheid as morally different from contemporary South African youth. They named themselves the "ama-born frees," marking the fact that they were born after the end of apartheid. Unlike the girls above, they highlighted the need for continued change due to the lingering influence of the apartheid mentality.

Boxer: Yeah there is a lot of change, and a lot of things that we need to do. Basically the apartheid time or period is still left in the mindset of older people, older than us. The South African youth is free, for everything. And we are now staying fine, peacefully. We can stay anywhere we want to stay. Jobs or to play. You know having those good times of different types of racial people. The thing is that *(clears throat)* the South African youth is the first youth under the democratic country. Yeah so a lot needs to change-

Bongazonke: Ama-born frees.

Boxer: Yeah, ama-born frees. The older people they still have that mindset of apartheid.

All:	Yeah.
Boxer:	When you go somewhere, maybe in the mall or doing something else, you find an old person, maybe it's an Afrikaner or a white person say, "Eish, wow look that black person do that." You know when they have their own conversation the elders you will see there is still a lot to do. They still have to change a few things, the few things that need to be changed. But under the born frees everything is more than fine. Yeah so I can say that, that South Africa still have that freedom.

By creating a moral and temporal divide between elders and youth, Boxer was highlighting how everything is fine among youth in the new South Africa. Yet, as the conversation continued 2Cool later challenged this by explaining that a lot needs to change because racial segregation is still prevalent in university settings. He heard this from his older sisters and teachers; I too regularly heard this reiterated by student teachers who were currently attending university. As conversation continued, we discussed why students thought racial segregation happened in university settings and whether they thought it needed to change or not. The discussion underscored an alienation that students felt from the older generation or even people just ten years older than them, as they felt that people who encouraged racial separateness were representative of another way—a morally negative way—of thinking and being in the world.

"Mandela Fought for Us": Asserting Ethical Stories of Peoplehood to Justify Beliefs

"And this country it is where the person who is like a father, the person who is like a mentor to all of us- Nelson Mandela… That person, mmm, he is very very popular to other people, and the special thing is that he comes from here to this country. And that made us proud to have such a good person…. And even president Obama, president of the United States, also said that Mandela was like a mentor to him. He showed him the way and the right path to success. And that made this country so proud, and it's a very popular country because if people know Mandela, they will want to know where is he from. And when they know where is he from, the will know he is from South Africa, and want to know more about South Africa." (Bruno, 16m)

*   *   *

Youth not only used lessons about the past to morally distinguish themselves from an older generation, but also articulated how they should act through recalling historical actors. Youth drew on and created "ethical stories of peoplehood" to justify their beliefs and actions. Referencing ethical stories of historical figures represents one method through which youth engaged in the process of moral translation. Frequently, these ethical stories of peoplehood were circulated in the media and by teachers throughout class sessions and on the school grounds. As Abrahams (2016) critically notes, South African government leaders increasingly use national heroes, like Nelson Mandela, to create a national identity that will support the current ruling party. While Afrikaaner teachers in Hues' (2011) case study presented ANC leaders as irresponsible and unfit for leadership, history teachers in my study often presented ANC leaders as founders of the nation. Students would, in turn, use these stories about the past to make moral claims, although not always politically motivated ones. For example, citing Nelson Mandela could serve to indicate national pride, as well as explain why young people need to participate in politics, remain in school, be kind to their neighbors, or obey their elders. As discussed in Chapter 4 on morning assembly practices, youth would refer to political leaders and events in public spaces such as the assembly, in class discussion, or even to justify their opinions in small group conversations. Mandela's image, in particular, was regularly used by youth to frame their understandings of morally just behaviors that one must follow.

The following is an example of such a justification from a discussion among four of Mrs. Magwaza's students regarding how foreigners in South Africa must be treated. Future (19m) believed that African foreigners needed to "fly back" to their home countries and under no circumstances should they receive government assistance in South Africa. He claimed they were stealing jobs from local South Africans and draining social service support. Unpredictable Virus

(19m) and Lost Angel (20f) strongly disagreed and brought up Nelson Mandela in an effort to

win this debate.

Unpredictable:	Let me tell you something neh. *He speaks in a deep, serious tone.* Nelson Mandela fought for us to have freedom.
Future:	I know that. *His response is quick and blunt.*
Unpredictable:	Which tells that he didn't want apartheid anymore. *Lots of talking over one another.*
Lost Angel:	You are discriminating-
Future:	I'm just telling you that the fact is-
Unpredictable:	Aiiy!!
Future:	-I never thought that I'm using the old system that is apartheid. I never thought about that…

The heated discussion continued for several minutes. In the end students never resolved this argument, and only changed topic when I redirected the conversation. Even half an hour later Lost Angel stated that if she could just change one thing about South Africa, it would be to change Future's mind regarding his opinion of foreigners… The students continued to debate this topic any time it arose over the next several months.

Because students recognized that Mandela behaved in a morally just way, these students

understood that they should emulate his actions; or at least not waste the just struggle that he

endured. They used their lessons about the past to assert how they should act as moral beings

today. However, this use of Mandela's representation was still challenged and contested by

Future who demanded that the injustices poor South Africans faced should take precedence over

the inclusion of immigrants.

Across all the schools, students reflected on their history education and historical figures

to determine how they should think and behave. A focus group with four of Mr. Shabalala's

students Jehova (18m), Smash (19m), Alex (19m), and Snduduzo (17m) highlights the use of the

image of Mandela to justify students' beliefs and actions.

Jehova:	It's what our teacher teach us is that we must not get angry about what has happened. We must leave the past-
Smash:	We must leave the past in the past-
Jehova:	Because it will affect us if we are focusing on this. Yeah, we must just focus on what we want because we have the freedom now.
Alex:	And our last president kept saying that we must forget about the past and keep on doing what we must focus on--
Snduduzo:	He said *(the student imitates a deep voice)* "Never and never again shall we see in this beautiful land oppression over one another." He fought against white domination and black domination. You must come together and become one nation.
Smash:	That's happening now. We are now to combine; we are together in this thing.
Snduduzo:	We must be together.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a focus group with Boxer (19m), Sylvester (18m), Bongazonke (18m), Hero (18m), McKenzie (16f), and 2Cool (18m) engaged in the process of moral translation to understand how history helps youth manage problems. In forming their argument a few of the students drew on ethical stories of peoplehood from Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. When I asked the students to give me an example of how they have learned to "manage a situation or problems" they continued:

2Cool:	Like a lot of people in history-
Hero:	-When the Indians were oppressed and they were struggling for the tax they were paying, then Gandhi was fighting without using violence-
2Cool:	Also Martin Luther King. History helps us to solve problems without using violence *(overlapping talking)*-
McKenzie:	- Violence, you can't stop things by violence. Like instead you just make them worse.

In this example and in other instances beyond the school walls, students used Nelson Mandela as well as historical figures including Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi to

frame their moral actions. In a debate competition among several former non-white schools around Durban, students debated the topic "Twenty Years of Democracy." Each student typically discussed the transition from apartheid to democracy, defining democracy and highlighting contemporary challenges that South Africa faces. Three of the seven speeches ended on words and beliefs of key historical figures like Mandela and Martin Luther King to emphasize ideas of social justice and the need to work together in the future. The final speaker, who ultimately won the debate, began his conclusion by explaining that, "South Africa has a good future, and if it were not for democracy I would not be able to stand in front of you. Just as Martin Luther King said, 'I have a dream.'" He continued by stating that Nelson Mandela knew there was easy road to freedom; the walk to freedom was long and challenging. Even Mandela had faltered at times, but he kept going. The speaker then called on everyone to remember the freedom fighters who fought for democracy. By recalling their actions, he asserted, "We must stay together and fight for a real democracy."[39] His point was that democracy in South Africa was not perfect, but by working together the next generation could improve the country. By utilizing these ethical stories of peoplehood, or stories about national leaders that provide an example of how citizens must live, youth were using their historical knowledge to justify a certain way of being and living today and into the future.

Conclusion

Look to the past, and then look beyond to see the bright future of the famed "Rainbow Nation," the popular story goes. This metaphor permeated classroom teaching, particularly among the younger teachers. Teachers artfully covered notions of responsible citizenship and leadership, as well as sensitive topics of race and ethnicity, drawing on emotionally charged

---

[39] Hand-written notes were taken throughout the debate; therefore, these quotations are paraphrased.

personal experiences to make their claims. Most students recognized core values of leadership, responsibility, non-racism, and equality as the primary purpose of their history education, thereby affirming current curricular statements.

Yet learning about the past extended beyond ideas of national values for these young South African students. Previous literature on history education has overlooked how youth in former black schools—the majority of youth in South Africa—recognize the broader implications of lessons about the past. As this study illustrates, the ways that youth in these schools learn about their country's past is quite different from the history education that students in middle-class, former white schools receive. Although students in both former white and former black schools learn messages about a "rupture" between the apartheid era and current-day democracy, these messages take different form. While students in Hues' (2011) study in an Afrikaans-medium school learned negative aspects of past ANC leaders, students in this study learned positive stories about their "national heroes." If history education is indeed made compulsory through grade 12 in South Africa, the content that youth learn must be known.

Moreover, while past studies have disregarded the role of history education in developing South African youths' morality, this research demonstrates how youth reworked their daily lessons about the past into moral instructions on how they ought to be think, behave and act, and what form of society they want. Casually switching between third person stories about the Tsar of Russia or Nelson Mandela into messages of what "I," "you," or "we" should do, they used their history education to formulate ideas about how to live their own lives. Similar to how youth interpreted their lessons from English classes, students drew on history education to engage in the process of moral translation—they converted curricular content and pedagogical practices into formulations of their own morality. In contrast to English classes, however,

students were more likely use their history lessons to recognize and assert how they should take collective action as a younger generation. Teachers, like Mrs. Magwaza, were more forthright in their intention to shape future political leaders, and history students more often drew on ethical stories of past leaders to justify their beliefs.

This study of history education therefore reveals two additional phenomena less clear in English education and morning assembly practices. First, it shows how young people rework their history lessons into ideas of generational separation. By embracing lessons about the rupture between the apartheid past and democratic present, youth came to moralize their young generation—the ama-born frees—against the older generation with the apartheid mind. They wove together their teachers' personal histories, experiences from their own lives, and lessons about the past in order to separate themselves from the immoral older generation who still believe in the past. Second, this analysis demonstrates how students used historical stories about ethical persons to justify their moral beliefs and motivate action. While historical figures were referenced by teachers and students alike during morning assembly practices, this study of history education uncovers how students recalled and drew on leaders' lives to consider how they should live to move their country forward. History education, in the minds of many young South Africans, was not only about the past but about their moral position and imagined futures.

The previous three chapters have demonstrated how youth perform, express, and rework their educational experiences into understandings of their moral futures. Students transform educational practices that speak to their daily life experiences into ideas of how they should behave and act as moral beings. The following chapter now turns attention to how youth use their experiences of social belonging to enact moral relationships with their teachers.

Chapter 7: Structuring Right Relationships among Students and Teachers

Shortly after the final buzzer rang the students poured out of their classrooms into the dusty field by the gates of Ikwezi High School. On any normal day they would stream out the gates in small clusters, trailing miles over the grassy hills toward their respective communities. But today they gathered by the gate, swaying to and fro in anticipation.

I recognized one student in the middle of it all—he was one of my participants who had given himself the pseudonym "Future." I would like to say I was surprised to see Future in the midst of this agitated crowd, but I wasn't. A few days prior he told me that he had begun to carry a knife to school because other students wanted to fight him. He had been seeing a girl and had even met her family; now she had been hanging around with another student from the school. "And one day I- I came here with a knife," Future stated. "I know I was breaking the rules, but I brought it here at school. And on that day I was very angry for them, and they never come. Because I was carrying this (motions to his pocket) – eeiish. I was hungry for them… I was hungry for them…"

Future waited outside the gate and began a heated discussion with a couple of students. The crowd of students pressed closer. Mr. Buthelezi heard the noise, straightened up and with his nose in the air, marched toward the crowd. "Hamba, hamba!", he shouted at them, waving his arms. "Go! Get out!" He pushed them further from the school gate. Mr. Buthelezi stood outside of the gate until both boys had walked far away from each other in opposite directions.

The following day I saw Future sitting across a desk from Mr. Buthelezi. Each man hunched forward, elbows resting on top of the table and hands in motion in intent conversation. They talked for over an hour. Future later told me that Mr. Buthelezi helped him resolve the matter with the other student. Future was thankful that his teacher had prevented the fight. He

reflected on the situation during a conversation with Unpredictable (19m); they considered how it would have been a mistake to throw his future away like that over a girl. In the words of Future and many other students, Mr. Buthelezi acted as ubaba, a "father."

           *   *   *

Across South African schools most teachers are referred to as mister or missus. Yet at times certain teachers, like Mr. Buthelezi, were called *ubaba* or *umama* (father or mother) by students in my field sites. Students would use this familial terminology when addressing teachers directly. During conversations, they also recalled how teachers had acted as a father or mother to them in specific moments. Why were students calling teachers mother and father?

In using familial terminology, I propose that students were signaling their understandings of a "right" kind of student-teacher relationship in contexts characterized by insecurity and inequality. In this chapter I argue that schooling structures understandings of moral relationships not only among youth, but across social hierarchies. The previous chapters of this dissertation have examined how youth use a moral lens to understand different social groupings in their world and to choose their friends. Youth rework their educational experiences to understand how they should act as moral beings. This chapter now turns attention to how ideas of the "right" kind of relationships among teachers and students are enacted through school practices, including assembly performances, classroom activities, and daily interactions. Students and staff emphasized how teachers should provide youth with material and emotional support, while students in return should respect elders and pursue their futures through education. Both parties describe these "right" relationships through the idiom of kinship reciprocity. By acting out these moral relationships, youth could justify their requests and expectations regarding what teacher should provide.

The Rightness of Relationships

This chapter builds upon anthropological studies that have analyzed how people maintain social relations with one another through reciprocal exchanges (Graeber 2014; Mauss 1970 [1924]; Sahlins 2013). Scholars have highlighted how forms of exchange constitute moral economies (Scott 1976; Thompson 1971). affective economies (Hyden 2006), and reveal moral logics (Graeber 2014). These models describe how different kinds of exchange develop different forms of relationships and networks of support. Rather than view humans as economically driven to maximize their own wealth, forms of exchange create, shape, and dismantle connections between people. The ways in which gifts—material items, food, services, and even affections— are given shape the nature of relationships that are being created.

Africanist scholars have examined how exchange fosters certain kinds of relationships not only among lateral friendships, but across social hierarchies. Through redistribution of resources certain members gain status, prestige, and power. This form of exchange has been referred to as patron-client relations (Ferguson 1985) or wealth-in-people (Guyer and Belinga 1995). As Ferguson notes (2013), in the South African historical context relations of hierarchy and obligation enabled one to reach full personhood. "Hierarchical dependence here, as throughout the region, was not a problem or a debility – on the contrary, it was the principal mechanism for achieving social personhood" (Ferguson 2013:226). Jeske (2016) further explores in her study of South African workers and employers how exchanges across social hierarchies are important in creating "right" relationships. Her participants identified the right ways of maintaining relationships—through respect and material exchange—both with those above (bosses) and below (workers) on a social hierarchy. The rightness of a relationship ultimately

determines how one understands their quality of life through one's position in a social hierarchy and not in spite of it.

As I explored in Chapter 3, South African youth recognized certain forms of exchange that constitute the right kind of relationship. Youth recognized their peers as being on the same social "level" as them and challenged peers who acted as if they were on a "higher" level than others. In the words of Bruno some students, "Think they are on top because of the wealth of their families. And those persons, I just tell them you are poor like me. It is just your mother and father who are rich because they work hard… And I told him that after 5 years or 10 years working we will compete." With this understanding, young people expected that balanced reciprocity in exchange would foster appropriate friendships. These exchanges consisted of money, motivation to "move forward" in life, and affection.

While students regularly criticized peers who acted on a "higher level," they did not question hierarchies with their teachers. Rather, many reiterated teachers' assertions of the value of respect toward teachers and their elders. As discussed in Chapter 3, students staked a moral claim by "respecting" namely elders even when they were poor. Because students recognized social hierarchies with teachers, their interpretations of the "right" kind of relationship—and the exchanges expected—took on a different form. By building upon previous scholars' work on moral reciprocity, I analyze how expressions of "right" relationships among teachers and students were structured through schooling. In these hierarchical relationships, I point to how people outlined appropriate teacher-student relations through the idiom of kinship. These ideas were enacted through school practices, such as "Grade 12 Adoption" lists, morning assemblies and matric balls. Students strove to attain forms of kin-like exchange with teachers that provided them with material and emotional support. Teachers were often complicit in forming these

relationships—particularly when student asserted their dedication to their futures—yet at times challenged the responsibilities that had been placed upon them.

Wanting, Making, and Challenging Relationships

"I want to take teachers as parents" (Written by Ministar, 21m)

While Zulu students often referred to elders as mother or father*,* this was *not* the standard practice in schools. Students would typically call their teachers Mr. Xaba or Mrs. Shabalala. Yet I discovered some exceptions to this rule. In all three of the schools, some students would call certain teachers *umama* or *ubaba* when they were recognizing or seeking out a certain kind of relationship with a teacher based on their understanding of a "good" child-parent bond.

In focus groups and informal conversations students would regularly project images of a "good" child-parent bond. They would claim that they had "good" parents who gave them "everything they could," either in the form of pocket money for lunch and transportation, making them meals in the evening, or keeping them on the "right path" by encouraging them to stay in school. In return, students would frequently project an image of themselves as a "good" child by describing their moral actions. Young people would declare their goals to make their parents or grandparents proud by respecting their parents, not doing drugs or drinking, attending school, and planning to support their parents in the future.

Youths' explanations of a good child-parent bond affirm anthropologists' views that kinship—like all relationships—is not inherent at birth but is produced through a number of means, such as naming, care, mystical influences, gift exchanges, and shared substances or residencies (Agha 2015; Faubion 2001; Harkness 2015; Robbins 2013; Sahlins 2013). Through these actions—particularly care, nurturing and exchange—specific cultural understandings of the

moral modes of reciprocity are revealed. People construct relationships with one another through different actions of exchange.

Young people often entered into relationships with elders in which both parties would use kinship terms. Naming an elder "mother" or "father" served both as a sign of respect and a request that an older person behave like a good mother or father. As Agha's (2007; 2015) research on social-semiotic practices demonstrates, individuals around the world "invoke the idiom of kinship to perform or construe interpersonal behaviors, whether their own or those they meet or try to imagine" (2015:402). By invoking kinship, either through naming (i.e. calling someone father) or by acting as kin according to cultural models (i.e. acting as a father), participants assert their agency to demand a certain relationship.

The practice of invoking kinship terms to establish a certain kind of relationship with others has also been noted by scholars working in South Africa (Ashforth 2005; Hunter 2015; Jeske 2016). Ashforth (2005:32) argues that among low-income residents in Soweto, "The metaphor of 'family' serves to establish a structure of redistribution that incorporates the core of the network into obligatory transfers in the name of 'kinship' while simultaneously excluding others on the same grounds." I suggest that the metaphor of kinship is also hierarchical when students are involved because they are regularly the recipients of wealth redistribution due to their life stage while teachers hold a higher status. Thus, by using the metaphor of the family the socially and economically marginalized can legitimately request support from those more powerful—those seen as higher on a social hierarchy—than themselves.

Across the three field sites, South African students regularly asserted either their desire to take teachers as parents or claimed that teachers were acting like parents. In the opening excerpt we see how Mr. Buthelezi was called *ubaba* by Future. According to Future, he was *acting* like a

good father. Many other students also named Mr. Buthelezi as their favorite teacher and called

him *ubaba.* For example, when 18-year-old Rick talked about ubaba Buthelezi, he said, "Aiy

he's the father that guy. He is the most tremendous father." (I asked why). "In how teach us way.

And – he acts like he's our biological father. All of us. He can treat this girl like me." Students

told me that if they had troubles at home, or with other students, they would go to ubaba

Buthelezi to discuss their problems, and he would support them. He was a strong mentor to

students, typically leading morning assemblies where the whole school would gather together for

songs, prayers, announcements and motivational speeches.

At Entabeni Secondary several students also spoke of their gratefulness when teachers

acted as parents through expressions of emotional investment in their students' futures. A focus

group with Orange Grove (18m), Bananas (18m), and Spinach (18m) identified their favorite

teacher as Mrs. Ndlovu, a life science teacher who often spoke during the assembly. They said

that they liked how she taught them because it was:

Orange Grove: Like spoon feeding us. Not that I like spoon feeding, but the way that she does it
　　　　　　　is like we are her biological children, the way she teaches us.

Christina:　　So the way she cares about you?

All:　　　　Yes!

Orange Grove: She *cares*…

Spinach:　　Yes. The way she tells us the notes about how things happen… Sometimes
　　　　　　she even uses isiZulu for us to understand because sometimes there are very
　　　　　　difficult words in life science... And we like it a lot because she makes sure that
　　　　　　you pass. Even if you don't do assignment she gets *angry* because she really
　　　　　　wants you to pass.

These students explained why they liked Mrs. Ndlovu—she shows that she cares about her

students' well-being and their futures. She showed her care both through her efforts to teach

subject matter in the classroom as well as her emotional reactions. Her anger indicated to the students that their lives and actions matter.

On another occasion, I witnessed a student publicly name a teacher as "a mother" and state his desire to make her proud through the future he had attained. At Siyabonga High, I attended the matric ball, which is a hybrid between an American prom and a graduation ceremony. The matric ball took place one evening in a nearby casino and many of the grade 12 students and teachers arrived in formal dress. Throughout the course of our dinner many speeches were given about education and the future, yet one stood out above others. A student who had graduated several years prior had returned to give a speech. He had just graduated medical school—the first one from this high school to do so—and he returned for the ball to speak with the students at the request of Mrs. Mbatha. Mrs. Mbatha regularly sought to motivate students during morning assemblies and was visited by several students in her office for family advice while I was attending Siyabonga. Students in the school would say that she truly cared for them "like a mother." In his speech, the young doctor did the same. He explained how when he was in high school he was struggling. He had moved into his aunt and uncle's house, and they had no money to pay for his school fees, which were 150 rand (15 dollars) at the time. *Umama Mbatha*, as he called her, "who had no relation to me before" acted as a "mother," paid for his fees and uniform and supported him. On this day, the young doctor was returning to give this speech to motivate fellow students and to make her proud. He was upholding his moral obligation to support her desires to encourage other youth. I heard many more examples from students who stated that teachers "acted like a parent," by helping students acquire clothes, shoes, dishes, and university supplies, or helping them with college applications.

Other times students would more explicitly indicate their desire to engage in kin-like relations with teachers. For instance, one of the exercises that I asked students to do during focus groups was a free writing exercise where students would respond to the question, "Who are you?" on the back of their pseudonym name-signs. Most students took this opportunity to write more about their family, where they lived, their personality, or their desired moral futures. One student, 21-year old Ministar, wrote a few lines about himself such as where he lived, how old he was, but on the last line he wrote, "I want to take teachers as parents." Ministar was a quieter student who was struggling academically and came to school intoxicated from alcohol and marijuana on a number of occasions. Yet he regularly asserted that he wanted to reform his life and "do good things." He, in writing, expressed a feeling that I heard students make a number of times: the desire to take teachers as parents.

There were a couple of instances in which I felt myself getting pulled into these teacher-student relationships (taking on both the role of a daughter and a mother) that drew on moral notions of responsibility and exchange. On one of my last days at Ikwezi High school, 16-year old Fantasia (who I had grown close with) ran up to me and said she was happy to see me. She said:

> "I told my grandmother that I have a mother at school and her name is Christina. She told me to go and speak English with you and study and get good marks. Some of my family members died so I have a small family so I don't want to embarrass them. I want to make them proud. My sisters are in university and they told me, 'Don't fall pregnant at school! We didn't.' So I didn't. I want to go and study in the US."

Fantasia had never referred to me as her mother before. After Fantasia referred to me as mother, she talked about how she wanted me to help her with college applications over the next few months.

As previously discussed, most students acknowledged that they had siblings my age and considered me more as an older peer than a parent. Fantasia referring to me as mother therefore stood out. In calling me mother, she was requesting that I engage in a certain reciprocal relationship. She was invoking the idiom of kinship and her cultural understandings of moral reciprocity to assert her moral status as a child in saying that she would study hard and not fall pregnant, and in return requested that I help her get into university—something a good "mother" would support. Other students, like Zama (16f) at Entabeni more overtly offered, "I can be your child." Such requests were sometimes playfully inserted in conversation and I would jokingly diffuse the request by claiming to be too young to be the mother of an eleventh grader. Yet, around these statements I noticed students talking about their future goals more assertively and more openly asking for academic, and occasionally financial assistance.

Among Zulu people it would be considered highly rude and disrespectful for a young person to directly ask for money or gifts from an older person. I witnessed adults' reactions to children asking for money or material items on a number of occasions, which ranged from verbal reproaches to physical punishment. For instance, when a 12-year-old boy asked a school visitor if he could have the visitor's watch, teachers were outraged, claiming that the boy should "know better" than to ask for something and telling him that his hands should be struck with a stick. However, by invoking the of idiom kinship reciprocity—by claiming the status of a good child headed toward a good future—students could ask for resources indirectly.

Often teachers, like Mr. Buthelezi, were active participants in creating this child-parent relationship with students. They engaged in educational practices that structured these desired forms of relationality. In one instance, the practice of forging child-parent relations among students and teachers was institutionalized by the school. At Entabeni Secondary, a teacher came

into the teachers' office one day and passed out a piece of paper with the title, *Grade 12 Adoption List 2014.* The paper had a list of 17 teachers' names and each teacher's name had three students' names next to it. I talked to the teacher who passed out the sheet and she explained that with this system a teacher could check in on their students and make sure they were performing well in school. "And if the learner has trouble or needs money, they know where to go," she explained. She continued, "Now they can know their new mothers and fathers," and proceeded to explain that because so many parents don't assist their children, the teachers will adopt them.

I found myself at times also getting pulled into the role of student-child. At Ikwezi High School Mr. Buthelezi referred to me as his daughter. I knew his daughters and lived in the same homestead where he had grown up so this form of address seemed normal at home. However, over time he began naming me as a daughter more often at school, even during public venues such as morning assembly. After I had been at the school for a few months he asked me to motivate students during an assembly and afterwards he too gave a short speech. In the speech, he praised me for continuing my studies and said that I was like his own daughter—I even called him *ubaba.* Upon making this last statement a murmur rippled throughout the students and they shifted around breaking line formation. Until this point I hadn't fully reflected on what naming someone "daughter" or "father" meant. I realized that I had begun a familial exchange, sharing material items freely with my "family" and receiving support for my research and studies from them. In modelling our relationship during the assembly—where I continued by schooling and made my parents proud—Mr. Buthelezi was reaffirming his efforts to take students as children. This instance of being called "daughter" therefore highlights not only how students seek out

certain relationships with teachers, but how school practices and teachers themselves construct these right relationships.

Some teachers took pride in providing students with emotional and material support like a good parent would. One life orientation teacher, Mrs. Mbuso, explained how she loved helping students with their personal issues. She recounted a few instances where she had assisted learners:

> "Sometimes if you are a teacher you act like a mother, like a nurse, like a social worker, because some of the learners are ill. Some of them have the personal problems, some of them financial. So you have to help them. Like for instance in grade 11B there is a learner who has issues with broken [shoes], so I ask him where are the parents. He told me that they passed away. They've been taken care of by the grandmother, so I have to buy him shoes. I'm still trying to buy him shoes. I went to Pep Store,[40] the lady said that I must not buy the children's shoes right now, she will try to get some donations."

This teacher further stated that it was her duty to act as a mother to students—both as a mother of her own children and a Christian. She took pride in fulfilling obligations that a mother would fill for her children.

Mr. Zuma likewise emphasized the importance of acting like a parent to students by enacting ubuntu. He explained:

> "At times learners have to see us as educators sacrificing, and they have to see us sacrificing, so we have to be empathetic to them… And you know being empathetic to learners, learners will take you as "this is the father" or "this is the mother." And we can lean on. We become the shoulder to lean on. And learners if they have problems they will just rush to your office."

Mr. Zuma talked about helping students solve issues that they had. He also openly supported corporal punishment, although he claimed that he never struck students without sitting with them in his office beforehand and discussing how what they did was wrong

---

[40] Pep is a discount clothing and goods store in South Africa, much like Dollar General in the US.

and how they could approach the situation differently in the future. I witnessed these

conversations on a number of occasions, and students confirmed what Mr. Zuma said.

Many viewed their punishments and discussions with him as a sign of caring and

considered him one of their favorite teachers. [41]

Other teachers asserted that developing child-parent relationships was good because this

meant that teachers were "respected" like parents. These statements were most frequently made

during speeches by teachers at morning assemblies, as discussed in Chapter 4. Teachers would

draw on statements from the Bible discussing how children should respect their parents, and then

they would extend this to mean, "You must respect your teachers." They often used these kin

analogies to promote school discipline and classroom management. However, these teachers did

not talk about their reciprocal obligations to students. Students never cited teachers who used this

notion of respect without supporting actions as favorite teachers. These teachers were disrupting

their understandings of appropriate exchange—students give respect and work toward the future

while teachers express care for them through words and material items. When teachers

demanded respect and failed to offer support in return, the perceived rightness of relationships

was broken.

While these above examples highlight how teachers were complicit in and encouraged

fostering kin-like relations with students, some teachers were exhausted from the expectations

placed upon them. One teacher, for instance, was incredibly frustrated that educators were

---

[41] Corporal punishment was made illegal in schools several years ago, however it was practiced in each of my field sites. Typically, it took the form of a learner holding out his or her hands and getting struck with a plastic pipe from one to three times, depending on the offense. Some students believed that corporal punishment was important for maintaining school order and appreciated conversations with teachers that followed punishments, even though punishment discussions did not happen with many teachers. Other students, particularly ones that had previously attended former Indian or white schools, were aware that corporal punishment had been made illegal and detested the practice.

expected to prepare school materials for pregnant girls and bring them to the girls' homes. She exclaimed:

> "Who is going to pay for the petrol? If the department does, ok, but they don't! And what if she starts having her baby at school? It will take the ambulance an hour to arrive. You may see something you don't want to see. We are educators! But at school we need to be a police officer, a nurse, a social worker, a mother. We cannot do everything!"

This teacher, like many others, was overwhelmed because she had to play so many roles at school due to policies supported by the Department of Education and individual requests from students. Teachers talked about how they were particularly frustrated when they were expected to support students they viewed as problematic—who became pregnant, engaged in crime or took drugs. In these cases, the pride of providing for students dissolved as teachers felt these relationships entailed an onerous set of social obligations.

Discussion

We gathered in an empty classroom half an hour before the start of the school day. A few students trickled in to join the conversation group. We spread out tabs of paper with different topics written on them that we had created yesterday morning. "My Life" was the first to be picked, and students went around speaking about the topic. I always find this to be one of the most interesting topics because it is so open-ended.

In the previous school, Ikwezi High, students would talk about brothers and sisters or dreams of the future when they chose a similar topic. The conversation was generally pretty upbeat. Today at Entabeni, however, was a bit rough. One girl talked about how her life is hard. She had no parents and she was left all alone. Her English was much worse than the other girls, and she was struggling to speak. A younger boy was a chatterbox on this topic. He talked about how some people around here make trouble, but he wanted to stay on the right track. Teachers

can help him stay on the right track. He wanted to have a job and make his mother proud. One

girl then spoke very softly and wouldn't look me in the eyes. She also said that life was hard. She

was alone and she had no parents. Another said she had never known her mother because she

died when she was young, but her grandmother gave her everything that she needed. She bought

her books and made her dinner. Only one student said that she had both her parents and they

gave her everything she needed.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

The practice of creating kin-like relations with teachers reveals how teachers and youth

express and enact right relationships amidst hierarchy in low-income situations. We need to ask

the question: Why are these types of relations between students and teachers established in the

first place? Many young people living in these understudied, "average" schools live off of social

grants and come from low-income families. They are economically vulnerable. They have lost

either one or both of their biological parents and frequently move from house to house staying

with distant family members. In worse situations, they live alone. They cannot afford the fees for

former white schools, where information about opportunities for higher education and future

employment are easily accessible and guidance counselors are available to help. Typically,

former black schools in South Africa do not have a built-in system for connecting youth with

future life opportunities. In this socio-economic context, young people hope to form kin

relations "in place" of formal economic and educational structures that help them attain future

life goals.

Youth in these contexts not only experience economic vulnerability, but emotional

vulnerability as well. Many students lacked care at home, either due to having lived on their own

for many years or instability in their home environments. On several occasions I traveled with

the social worker at Entabeni to visit students' homes. The students' caregivers often expressed

apathy toward a student's failing marks, drug and alcohol use, acts of violence, or on one

occasion even when the student had been missing for several days. These social work visits are

not representative of all students, yet individual interviews further revealed students' hardships at

home including feelings of being unwanted, rejected, or a burden on their family members. Even

though few students had someone they could depend on, they wanted a good parent figure who

would help them move forward in life. I found that students were eager to talk to me about their

lives, particularly those who said they didn't have anyone to talk to about their difficulties. Some

students would request to meet multiple times to continue talking about their lives, and on a few

occasions expressed concern regarding who they could speak with once I left.[42] As indicated in

the excerpts above, they praised parents and teachers who provided them with material support

(books, food, clothes), as well as encouragement to "stay on the right track." By creating kin-like

relationships with teachers, students could further justify requests that teachers care for them.

In these school contexts, teachers were recognized by students and the wider community

as powerful people. They often had a higher level of education than their neighbors and received

a reliable government salary. By invoking a family metaphor with teachers, students sought to

connect themselves to those who were seen as most likely to be able to help them reach security

in the future. As many scholars have pointed out, development of strong social networks is

essential not only for the economic resources they provide, but for the emotional support

necessary for survival (Alexakos, et al. 2011; Ashforth 2005; Cook and Williams 2015;

Dominguez and Watkins 2003). Teachers were often complicit in the creation of this form of

---

[42] On the few occasions this happened I directed students toward a social worker or a life orientation teacher. Some spoke with the life orientation teacher; however, they did not want to speak with the social worker. I suspect they didn't want to speak with the social worker due to stigma attached to speaking with her. The social worker regularly assisted students who had recently lost a parent or students with drug use issues. The thought of speaking with her about other issues made students uncomfortable.

relationship. They named themselves mother or father to maintain school control, yet also for the satisfaction and recognition provided through this relationship.

This analysis further reveals how schooling not only structures how youth come to distinguish themselves from their peers through moral interpretations of what one "ought" to do, but also generates ideas of "right" kinds of relationships with teachers. School practices performed by teachers and youth highlight how students should pursue their futures like good children, while teachers should provide them with emotional and material support as a good parent would do. This ideal form of relationship, while enacted by all teachers and students, highlights the importance of reciprocal actions in forming relationship. In short, the moral lens youth used to divide the world generated expectations about the nature of exchange relationships among different groups of people. In the next chapter I explore how these findings—how schools structure expectations of moral reciprocity in "right" relationships—could be useful for interpreting other social phenomena including recent university student protests.

The final and concluding chapter now turns to the broader implications of the moral messages performed in schools and areas of future research my findings support. By offering insights into students' lives two years after this research was conducted, the final chapter further highlights the possibilities and the challenges of educational practices as a transformative force in society.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Students lingered outside of their classrooms at the end of the school day at Siyabonga High. Although it had been two years since I walked the school grounds, the scene appeared quite the same. Some students cleaned the classrooms, while others chatted in groups and met up with their classmates who were headed home in the same direction. Only on this day most of the grade 12 students remained behind and gathered in the largest classroom. They sat on desks and talked over one another, waiting for their English teacher who had been reassigned to another school two weeks prior to come and tutor them. I noticed several familiar faces—some of my former participants who hadn't passed grade 11 or 12 in 2015 were tucked into the back corner of the room. T. Pain and Bongazonke were among those who didn't pass.

Bongazonke told me about events which had transpired in 2015 and 2016 that other teachers mentioned earlier in the day. There had been an upsurge of crime at Siyabonga. All the materials and stools had been stolen from the science lab. It was an inside job; it happened overnight while the security officer (now fired) had been on duty. No locks had been broken. Feeling betrayed, the principal had elected to keep the lab locked up. After this event all the doors were stolen from every classroom entrance just before winter, which made students shiver for months until the doors could be replaced. The library had been closed since December, when Bruno, the "king" of the library as students and staff called him, had graduated to study chemical engineering. Many teachers had also left the school, reassigned by the Department of Education because numbers in enrollment had dropped or because they went on medical leave. Many teachers had not been replaced so students were left alone in empty classrooms; the English teacher arriving today was coming on a voluntary basis because she did not want to see her senior students fail.

Bongazonke also gave an update of what had happened to many of his friends from his former grade 11 history class, among them Jehova, Boxer, Sylvester, 2Cool, McKenzie, Smash and Hero. Sylvester had started to attend a nearby college with help from the money he gained selling snacks around school. McKenzie wanted to go to the University of Zululand, but Bongazonke wasn't sure if she made it. 2Cool went to Howard College to study marketing, although he may not have been attending classes regularly due to student protests against rising fees. And Jehova whose story initiated this dissertation 200 pages back, had failed a couple of subjects and was now staying at home preparing to retake his exams.

I left the school feeling deflated. When conducting fieldwork in 2014 Siyabonga High seemed to offer hope to students, yet now there had been an upsurge in crime and a drop in graduation rates. Despite this decline in graduation rates, far more students passed at Siyabonga than at Ikwezi High School. In 2015, less than 50%[43] of the grade 11 students at Ikwezi finished high school. The classes had become overcrowded due to a policy that made teachers "progress" students to the next grade even though they had not received passing marks. Not enough teachers were sent to Ikwezi to compensate for the rising numbers of students, leaving many classes without teachers. After so many students had failed their matric exams, the principal refused to let anyone repeat grades like Bongazonke had at Siyabonga. Instead, Ikwezi students had to leave and attend other schools or drop out altogether. Future was one of the few—and the only Ikwezi research participant in this study to my knowledge—who had graduated with passing marks. I imagined the situation at Entabeni to be even more difficult, although I cannot say for certain because I did not feel comfortable returning there two years later due to ongoing violence in the neighborhood.

---

[43] I am not providing exact pass rates for these schools in order maintain anonymity of the schools.

*   *   *

Visiting Ikwezi and Siyabonga High two years after conducting fieldwork made me

realize even more so the paradox central to South African education. Schooling produces

messages about how one ought to live in the future and youth embody these ideas—they use

their own and each other's moral aspirations to frame their experiences of social belonging and

expectations of right relationships. Yet the majority of youth will never be able to attain their

hoped for futures. Most young people in these "average" schools face daily insecurities of food,

residence, and education. Few students had lived just in one place; far more often they were

shuttled between different family members who at times welcomed them and other times

resented having to support them. While schooling provided some structure to students' lives, the

former black schools most South African youth attend are likewise characterized by insecurity.

With teachers coming and going, classrooms left unattended, and overburdened staff, students

are often left without the academic and personal support that they desire and need. They perform

their moral futures in assemblies and classes, but struggle to turn their future imaginations into a

reality.

This dissertation has demonstrated how many South African youth attending former

black schools experience social fragmentation and unity through a moral lens that is produced

through schooling. While previous studies have highlighted how youth see race as a dividing line

in society (Dolby 2001; McKinney 2007; Soudien 2010; Vandeyar and Jansen 2008), young

people in former black schools instead often draw lines between "good" and "bad" people in

their world. Young people represent the "good" as going "forward" in life, while the "bad" sit at

home or engage in crime, drugs, and violence. The good are characterized as pursuing their

moral futures, or life trajectories based on the young people's own understandings of right and

wrong. This moral framing is not only used by youth to select their friends, but also structures youths' experiences of unity and fragmentation with foreigners and the older apartheid generation.

This work not only offers insights into South African youth identity and belonging, it also contributes to anthropological understandings of how morality and temporality affect the way youth experience and express social unity. Previous anthropological studies have analyzed how youth represent a "social shifter" (Durham 2000; Durham 2004), or an indexical category that reveals the social relationships through which personhood and moral actions are expressed across contexts. Youth categorically signal both hope, as well as problematic entities in need of moral direction (Mains 2012; Masquelier 2013; Sommers 2012; Weiss 2009). Other studies have highlighted how youth themselves moralize their time and their futures (Frye 2012). This dissertation research builds upon these analyses by demonstrating how youth moralize their own and each other's futures to understand cohesion and division in the world. As outlined in Chapter 3, young people use this moral lens to decide who they should select as friends. Their future imaginations have tangible effects on how they think about others, as well as their social interactions in everyday life.

Schooling helps to produce the moral lens that youth use to frame their experiences of belonging. By performing ideas of how they ought to live as moral beings through educational practices, youth positioned themselves within social networks and temporal representations of morality. In daily morning assemblies—or "in-between" educational spaces unrecognized by the formal curriculum—teachers and students performed messages of the "right path" forward by drawing on Christian references, demonstrating models of success, critiquing social ills, and referring to historical figures. Youth also reworked their daily lessons into ideas of how they

ought to live in the future through the process of *moral translation*. By reflecting on short stories and historical accounts presented in the classroom, youth took messages from their lessons and applied them to the context of their own lives.

An examination of classroom practice also shows how certain pedagogical practices and course content may frame youths' experiences of cohesion and division more than others. Chapter 5 demonstrates that while South African educational policies have lauded life orientation courses for their ability to instill the values of the South African Constitution in the next generation of citizens, students rarely use LO classes to critically reflect on society. Most LO teachers were trained in different subjects and were not invested in the course; when they did teach they often engaged in narrative instruction, "telling" students how to be good citizens. Students expressed apathy toward what they were learning when teachers focused on narrative instruction, at times even viewing such lessons as condescending. Pedagogies which used material that connected with students lived experiences and allowed students to infer meaning from literature or teachers' stories—as more commonly practiced in English and history classes—inspired critical reflection on social practices. English teachers selected literature that they felt would speak to youths' daily experiences. They were able to teach short stories and poetry that discussed issues of poverty, hope, and violence, which are matters that youth in rural and township schools regularly face. Students in these classes were more likely to transform, translate, and re-contextualize their classroom lessons into understandings of how to live as moral beings.

This analysis of how contextually relevant literature enables students to engage in the process of moral translation has policy ramifications, particularly given recent educational reforms that standardize English literature selection for grades 10-12. In 2016, a policy was

instituted in South Africa that removes teachers' flexibility in selecting reading materials.

Teachers are able to select two out of three forms of literature (novels, short stories, poetry) to

teach each year, yet the materials for these forms of literature are now pre-selected by the

Department of Education. Some teachers have expressed positive opinions about this policy

because it will ensure that low-performing schools use the same materials as high-performing

schools. Additionally, it lessens their teaching preparation workload. However, given the

findings of this dissertation I suggest that this move toward more centralized lesson planning

may diminish students' interest in and critical reflection on the material because teachers will

have limited opportunity to select literature they deem relevant to students' lives.

This research further uncovered how the morality produced in these school contexts often

focused on how students as *individuals* must "work hard" to achieve their goals. Youth were

bombarded with and enacted messages about personal responsibility, respect, and hope. In

English classes youth translated their short stories and poetry into ideas of how they must have

hope as individuals and act in peaceful ways towards other people. The moral messages that

youth took away often pertained to how to be kind, respectful, and open minded toward other

people. Most morning assembly performances centered on ideas of respect and working hard as

an individual to graduate and pursue higher education. When history and assembly performances

did address social ills, they did not inspire reflection on contemporary structural issues like

social, gender, economic, and racial inequalities.

Through an examination of these individualized discourses of morality, this research

contributes to studies that highlight how educational practices obscure, normalize, and even

perpetuate inequalities of gender, race, and class (Apple 1982; Bhana and Mcambi 2013;

Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Brown, et al. 2003; Carter 2012; Mirembe and Davies 2001;

Morrell, et al. 2012; Willis 1981 [1977]). The lack of acknowledgement of young male students'

role as fathers by teachers, students, and even the Department of Health rests "blame" on young

school-going mothers. While women's sexuality is moralized through discourses that see

pregnancy as an individual "girl's problem," the broader gendered inequalities are left

unaddressed. Likewise, although the history of apartheid and racial inequalities are addressed

through classroom practices, teachers and students do not discuss how these historical

inequalities affect students today. Rather, students are told that because they have more

"opportunities" than the older generation they must not waste them. Students are told and talk

about how they should instead work hard toward their futures like "good" children. Moralizing

individual "work" and "responsibility" masks the intersectional effects of economic and social

inequalities, which in turn fails to inspire reflection on ways of collectively improving these

circumstances.

If we are to take claims of the transformational power of education seriously, it is

important to understand how the country's next generation of leaders will be able to challenge

such inequities. This research shows that youth rarely consider how their collective action may

influence society. They are not presented with the option of considering what collective action

they could take to develop a more equitable and socially just society—a proclaimed goal of

South African education policies and the policies of many other nations. These conclusions

suggest that the implications of the individualized morality produced in schools may hinder

democratic action later in life. Although a study of how the morality produced in schools is

utilized by students after they leave school falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, it may

be a fruitful topic to explore in future research in order to grasp the transformative potential of

education.

And finally, this dissertation builds upon studies that analyze how people maintain relationships through reciprocal exchanges (Ferguson 2013; Graeber 2014; Jeske 2016), by demonstrating the ways in which schooling structures youths' expectations and enactments of "right" relationships across social hierarchies. As youth rework classroom activities and assembly performances into ideas of how they ought to live, they base their understandings of right relationships with their teachers on notions of moral reciprocity. Youth expect their friends to act on the same "level" as them and encourage them toward their future goals. Yet they view their relationships with teachers as hierarchical. Through school practices teachers and students drew on the idiom of kinship to highlight the form of exchange both parties should enact to establish right relationships. Teachers were expected to provide students with material and emotional support like good parents—in return students would assert their dedication to their studies. By portraying themselves as good children who were striving toward the future, youth could justify their requests that teachers provide them with material resources and care. Schooling therefore does not only frame understandings of social belonging among youth, but configures different forms of relationships in which youth engage.

The insights provided into youths' experiences of unity and fragmentation, morality, and temporality can be used to help explain social processes that extend beyond the school walls in subsequent studies. For instance, an understanding of youths' moral lens could be used to shed light on the motivations and consequences of recent student protests in South Africa. Over the past year university student protests have rippled across South Africa. These protests have rocked the media both within South Africa and internationally (Allen 2015; Calland 2015; Davids and Waghid 2016; Nicolson 2016). They have come under the name of "Fees Must Fall," which demands that university education be free for all students. Young people proclaim

frustration over being barred from university due to rising fees and the ineffectiveness of the government to distribute scholarship and grants in a timely manner. My analysis of how schooling structures notions of "right" relationships across social hierarchies highlights how youth may feel that the government has "broken" unspoken agreements with them. Although young people have acted as "good" children who study hard and strive toward the future, they see the government as unable to reciprocate their moral actions. Further research on contemporary social issues could reveal the applicability of how youths' moral lens is used to motivate and justify social action.

<div style="text-align:center">*   *   *</div>

Jehova (18m), Smash (19m), Alex (18m), Makhululeskopho (18m), Snduduzo (17m), and Rebabes (18m) gathered together in the empty classroom. This group of friends often stayed after school to study together, sharing two calculators among the six of them. Some lived far away from Siyabonga High and commuted in search of better education; others lived in an overcrowded informal settlement that lacked running water and toilets. Although they had less money than many of their other peers, they all shared one thing in common—their dedication to their studies and their futures.

On this occasion we had been speaking for over an hour and a half about their educational experiences, and history class in particular. Toward the end of our meeting the students discussed a few points that they viewed as central to their education. "Teachers want us to know what you are up against when you finish grade 12," Jehova began. "So what they wanted us… to know about things that are happening in our country and they give us- how can I say this? Basnika imibono." They give us ideas, I offered. "Yes, basinka imibono to understand how to live when we are up against a problem."

Makhulu continued to share his ideas on why this group was studying history and why all students in South Africa should study history. He explained, "History is too important if you are South African because it shows us things that were happening before and that are continuing to happen. And we study history to stop them, like to stop fighting. Like now history helps us to know that umuntu umuntu ngomunye umuntu."

         *   *   *

This last phrase spoken by Makhulu is translated as, "A person is a person through other people." This expression is often used to describe the meaning of ubuntu, although these young men never stated the word. This group of students was articulating a key point in this dissertation—that young people rework their lessons in school into messages of how they ought to live in the future. These moral messages circulate throughout and are produced in schools through morning assembly performances, literature selection, and pedagogical practices. They are used by youth to understand social unity and fragmentation, and they are claimed by youth who seek to pursue their aspirations. In demonstrating how youth use moral understandings of social belonging to act upon the world, this research builds upon anthropological theories of youth and the future and offers educators, policymakers, and scholars insights into how schooling shapes the next generation of citizens.

References Cited

Abrahams, Caryn
    2016   Twenty Years of Social Cohesion and Nation-Building in South Africa. Journal of
    Southern African Studies 42(1):95-107.
Adewumi, Toyin Mary, and Mike Adendorff
    2014   Learners' Perceptions of the Life Orientation Curriculum in Fort Beaufort District
    Eastern Cape in South Africa. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 5(7):460-467.
Agha, Asif
    2015   Chronotopic Formulations and Kinship Behaviors in Social History
    Anthropological Quarterly 88(2):401-416.
Alexakos, Konstantinos, Jayson Jones, and Victor Rodriguez
    2011   Fictive Kinship as it Mediates Learning, Resiliency, Perseverance, and Social
    Learning of Inner-city High School Students of Color in a College Physics Class.
    Cultural Studies of Science Education 6(4):847-870.
Allen, Karen
    2015   Huge Student Protest Rocks South Africa. BBC, October 24, 2015.
Anderson, Benedict R. O'G
    1983   Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.
    New York: Verso.
Appadurai, Arjun
    1996   Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. New Delhi: Oxford
    University Press.
Apple, Michael W.
    1982   Education and Power. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Ashforth, Adam
    2005   Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa. Chicago: University of
    Chicago Press.
Balfour, Robert, Claudia Mitchell, and Relebohile Moletsane
    2011   Understanding Rurality in Troubling Contexts: Prospects and Challenges. *In*
    School-university Partnerships for Educational Change in Rural South Africa: Particular
    Challenges and Practical Cases. F. Islam, ed. Pp. 23-40. Lewinston: Edwin Mellen Press.
Ball, Arnetha F.
    2006   Multicultural Strategies for Education and Social Change: Carriers of the Torch in
    the United States and South Africa. New York: Teachers College Press.
Bantwini, Bongani D.
    2010   How Teachers Perceive the New Curriculum Reform: Lessons from a School
    District in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. International Journal of Educational
    Development 30(1):83-90.
Beldo, Les
    2014   The Unconditional 'Ought': A Theoretical Model for the Anthropology of
    Morality. Anthropological Theory 14(3):263-279.
Benei, Veronique
    2008   Schooling Passions: Nation, History, and Language in Contemporary Western
    India. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
Bhana, Deevia , and Sithembile Judith Mcambi

2013   When Schoolgirls Become Mothers: Reflections from a Selected Group of Teenage Girls in Durban. Perspectives in Education 31(1):11-19.

Bourdieu, Pierre
2014   Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean Claude Passeron
1977   Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture. London: Sage

Brisinski, Von, and Marek Spitczok
2003   Rethinking Community Theatre Performing Arts Communities in Post-Apartheid South Africa. South African Theatre Journal 17:114-128.

Brown, Michael K., et al.
2003   Whitewashing Race: The Myth of a Color-blind Society. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Butler, Judith
1990   Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. London: Routledge.
—
1993   Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex". New York: Routledge.

Calhoun, Craig
1997   Nationalism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Calland, Richard
2015   Student Protest Signals a Sea Change for SA. Mail & Guardian Online, November 5, 2015.

Cappy, Christina
2016   Shifting the Future? Teachers as Agents of Social Change in South African Secondary Schools. Education as Change 20(3):243-264.
—
unpublished   Re-conceptualizing Subjectivity and Mobility in Anthropological Studies of Education. Pp. 1-33.

Carter, Prudence L.
2012   Stubborn Roots: Race, Culture, and Inequality in U.S. and South African Schools. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cassaniti, Julia L., and Jacob R. Hickman
2014   New Directions in the Anthropology of Morality. Anthropological Theory 14(3):251-262.

Cheney, Kristen E.
2007   Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coe, Cati
2005   Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cole, Elizabeth A., and Karen Murphy
2010   History Education Reform, Transnational Justice, and the Transformation of Identities. In Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transnational Justice in Divided Societies. A. Paige, ed. Pp. 334-367. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cole, Jennifer, and Deborah Lynn Durham

2008   Figuring the future : globalization and the temporalities of children and youth. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press.

Collinson, Mark
2008   Children and Migration in South Africa: A Case Study from a Rural, Northeastern District. Pp. 1-30: A scientific report for the Princeton University/ Rockefeller Foundation Initiative in Children and Migration.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff
1991   Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Comaroff, John, and Jean Comaroff
2001   On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa. Social Identities 7(2):267-283.

Cook, Daniella Ann, and Tiffany Williams
2015   Expanding Intersectionality: Fictive Kinship Networks as Supports for the Educational Aspirations of Black Women. Western Journal of Black Studies 39(2):157-166.

Cross, Michael
1986   A Historical Review of Education in South Africa: Towards an Assessment. Comparative Education 22(3):185-200.

Dasoo, Nazreen, and Elizabeth Henning
2012   South African Teachers Initiation into Values Education: Following the Script. Education as Change Education as Change 16(1):129-142.

Davids, Nuran, and Yusef Waghid
2016   #FeesMustFall: History of South African Student Protests Reflects Inequality's Grip. Mail and Guardian, October 10, 2016.

Dawson, Marcelle C.
2007   Identity Formation among Learners at a South African High School: Assessing the Interaction between Context and Identity. Race, Ethnicity and Education 10(4):457-472.

Department of Basic Education, South Africa
2011a Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12: Dramatic Arts, Vol. 2016.

—
2011b Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12: English, Vol. 2016.

—
2011c Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12: History.

—
2011d Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12: Life Orientation, Vol. 2016.

—
2011e Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades 10-12: Music, Vol. 2016.

—
2014   South African School Act (84/1996): Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding, Vol. 2016.

Department of Education, South Africa

1995   White Paper on Education and Training. Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

Department of Education, South Africa.
2001   Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy.

Dewey, John
1909   Moral Principles in Education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Dolby, Nadine
2001   Constructing Race: Youth, Identity, and Popular Culture in South Africa. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dominguez, Silvia, and Celeste Watkins
2003   Creating Networks for Survival and Mobility: Social Capital Among African-American and Latin-American Low-Income Mothers. Social Problems 50(1):111-135.

Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, and Rob Sieborger
2006   Teachers as Memory Makers: Testimony in the Making of a New History in South Africa. International Journal of Educational Development 26(4):394-403.

Du Preez, J. M.
1983   Africana Afrikaner: Meestersimbole in Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolhand-Boeke. Alberton: Librarius Felicitas.

Durham, Deborah
2000   Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2. Anthropological Quarterly 73(3):113-120.

—
2004   Disappearing Youth: Youth as a Social Shifter in Botswana. American Ethnologist 31(4):589-605.

Durkheim, Emile
1973   Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education. New York: Free Press.

Engelbrecht, Alta
2006   Textbooks in South Africa from Apartheid to Post-Apartheid: Ideological Change Revealed by Racial Stereotyping. *In* Promoting School Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks and Curricula E. Roberts-Schweitzer, Vincent Greaney and Kreszentia Duer, ed. Pp. 71-80. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Institute.

Erlmann, Veit
1996   Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Eze, Michael Onyebuchi
2010   Intellectual History in Contemporary South Africa. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Faubion, James D.
2001   The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Feldman, Gregory
2005   Essential Crises: A Performative Approach to Migrants, Minorities, and the European Nation-State. Anthropological Quarterly 78(1):213-246.

Ferguson, James

1985   The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property and Livestock in Rural Lesotho. Man 20(4):647-674.

—

1999   Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt. Berkeley: University of California Press.

—

2013   Declarations of Dependence: Labour, Personhood, and Welfare in Southern Africa. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 19:223-242.

Ferreira, C., and S. Schulze
2014   Teachers' Experience of the Implementation of Values in Education in Schools: "Mind the Gap". South African Journal of Education 34:1-13.

Fiske, Edward, and Helen Ladd
2004   Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-apartheid South Africa. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press.

Fleetwood, Tamlynn
2012   Post-apartheid Education and Building 'Unity in Diversity': Voices of South African Youth, Department of Geography, Durham University.

Francis, Dennis A., and Renè DePalma
2014   Teacher Perspectives on Abstinence and Safe Sex Education in South Africa. Sex Education 14(1):81-94.

Fredericks, Ilse
2016   Call to Make History Compulsory Subject. *In* Independent Online.

Freire, Paulo
1997 [1970]   Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Frye, M.
2012   Bright Futures in Malawi's New Dawn: Educational Aspirations as Assertions of Identity. American Journal of Sociology 117(6):1565-1624.

Gade, Christian B. N.
2012   What is Ubuntu? Different Interpretations among South Africans of African Descent. South African Journal of Philosophy 31(3):484-503.

Geertz, Clifford
1973   The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. New York: Basic Books.

Ghosh, Ratna, and Mohamed Ayaz Naseem
2010   Construction of the 'Other' in History Textbooks in India and Pakistan. *In* Interculturalism, society and education. G. Pampanini, F. Adly, and D.B. Napier, eds. Pp. 37-44. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Graeber, David
2014   On the Moral Grounds of Economic Relations: A Maussian Approach. Journal of Classical Sociology 14(1):65-77.

Greaney, Vincent
2006   Textbooks, Respect for Diversity, and Social Cohesion. *In* Promoting Social Cohesion through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks and Curricula. E.R.-S.i.c. with and V.G.a.K. Duer, eds. Pp. 47-69. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Gunner, Elizabeth

    2006   Zulu Choral Music--Performing Identities in a New State. Research in African Literatures 37(2):83-97.

Gunner, Liz
    2014   Soft Masculinities, Isicathamiya and Radio. Journal of Southern African Studies 40(2):343-360.

Guyer, Jane I., and Samuel M. Eno Belinga
    1995   Wealth in People as Wealth in Knowledge: Accumulation and Composition in Equatorial Africa. The Journal of African History 36(1):91-120.

Hammett, Daniel, and Lynn Staeheli
    2013   Transition and the Education of the New South African Citizen. Comparative Education Review 57(2):309-331.

Hammett, Daniel, and Lynn A. Staeheli
    2011   Respect and Responsibility: Teaching Citizenship in South African High Schools. International Journal of Educational Development 31(3):269-276.

Harkness, Nicholas
    2015   Basic Kinship Terms: Christian Relations, Chronotopic Formulations, and a Korean Confrontation of Language Anthropological Quarterly. 88(2):305-336.

Heintz, Monica, ed.   2009a The Anthropology of Moralities. New York: Berghahn Books.

—
    2009b Introduction: Why There Should Be an Anthropology of Moralities. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 1-19. New York: Berghahn Books.

Heyneman, Stephen P.
    2003   Education, Social Cohesion, and the Future Role of International Organizations. Peabody Journal of Education 78(3):25-38.

Hickel, Jason
    2014   Xenophobia in South Africa: Order, Chaos, and the Moral Economy of Witchcraft. Cultural Anthropology 29(1):103-127.

Hickman, Jacob R.
    2014   Ancestral Personhood and Moral Justification. Anthropological Theory 14(3):317-335.

History Education Group
    1993   History Matters: Debates About a New History Curriculum for South Africa. Cape Town: Heinemann-Centaur Publishers.

Hues, Henning
    2011   "Mandela, the Terrorist": Intended and Hidden History Curriculum in South Africa. Journal of Educational Media 3(2):74-95.

Hunt, Frances
    2011   Schooling Citizens: Policy in Practice in South Africa. Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education 41(1):43-58.

Hunter, Mark
    2015   The Intimate Politics of the Education Market: High-Stakes Schooling and the Making of Kinship in Umlazi Township, South Africa. Journal of Southern African Studies Journal of Southern African Studies 41(6):1279-1300.

Hyden, Goran
    2006   Introduction and Overview to the Special Issue on Africa's Moral and Affective Economy. African Studies Quarterly 9(1-2):1-8.

Jansen, Jonathan D.

    2001   Explaining Non-Change in Education Reform After Apartheid: Political Symbolism and the Problem of Policy Implementation. *In* Implementing Education Policies: The South African Experience. J.D. Jansen and Y. Sayed, eds. Pp. 250-270. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Jeske, Christine

    2016   This is Not Working: South African Unemployment and Competing Narratives of a Good Life, Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Kajee, Leila

    2011   Multimodal Representations of Identity in the English-as-an-Additional-Language Classroom in South Africa. Language, Culture and Curriculum 24(3):241-252.

Kallaway, Peter

    2010   Civic Education in the Context of South Africa's History and Political Struggle. Southern African Review of Education 16(1):15-37.

—

    2012   History in Senior Secondary School CAPS 2012 and Beyond: A Comment. Yesterday & Today (7):23-62.

Kaplan, Sam

    2006   The Pedagogical State: Education and the Politics of National Culture in post-1980 Turkey. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kendall, Nancy

    2007   Education for All Meets Political Democratization: Free Primary Education and the Neoliberalization of the Malawian School and State. Comparative Education Review 51(3):281-305.

Khosravi, Shahram

    2008   Young and Defiant in Tehran. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Koh, Aaron

    2006   Working against globalisation: the role of the media and national education in Singapore. Globalisation, Societies and Education 4(3):357-370.

Koonce, Kelly

    2011   Social Cohesion as the Goal: Can Social Cohesion Be Directly Pursued? Peabody Journal of Education 86(2):144-154.

Ladwig, Patrice

    2009   Narrative Ethics: The Excess of Giving and Moral Ambiguity in the Lao Vessantara-Jataka. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 136-160. New York: Berghahn Books.

Lambek, Michael

    2000   The anthropology of religion and the quarrel between poetry and philosophy. Current anthropology 41(3):309-320.

—, ed. 2010a Ordinary Ethics: Anthropology, Language, and Action. New York: Fordham University Press.

—

    2010b Toward an Ethics of the Act. *In* Ordinary Ethics Anthropology, Language, and Action. M. Lambek, ed. Pp. 39-63. New York: Fordham University Press.

Lavi, Liron

2013   Making Time for National Identity: Theoretical Concept and Empirical Glance on the Temporal Performance of National Identity. Nations and Nationalism 19(4):696-714.

Lazar, Sian
2010   Schooling and Critical Citizenship: Pedagogies of Political Agency in El Alto, Bolivia. Anthropology and Education Quarterly 41(2):181-205.

Levinson, Bradley A. U.
2005   Citizenship, Identity, Democracy: Engaging the Political in the Anthropology of Education. Anthropology & Education Quarterly 36(4):329-340.

Lewis, Suzanne Grant , and Shireen Motala
2004   Educational De/centralization and the Quest for Equity, Democracy and Quality. *In* Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa. L. Chisholm, ed. Pp. 125-142. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Lukose, Ritty
2005   Consuming Globalization: Youth and Gender in Kerala, India. Journal of Social History 38(4):915-935.

Mains, Daniel
2012   Hope is Cut: Youth, Enemployment, and the Future in Urban Ethiopia. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Makinana, Andisiwe
2014   Motshekga Looks to History to Fix SA's Pride. *In* Mail & Guardian.

Masquelier, Adeline Marie
2013   Teatime: Boredom and the Temporalities of Young Men in Niger. afr Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute 83(3):385-402.

Mauss, Marcel
1970 [1924]   The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McKinney, Carolyn
2007   'If I Speak English, Does It Make Me Less Black Anyway?' 'Race' and English in South African Desegregated Schools. English Academy Review 24(2):6-24.

McKinney, Carolyn, and Crain Soudien
2007   Language, Identity and English Education in South Africa. Abingdon: Routledge.

McLaren, Peter
1986   Schooling as a Ritual Performance: Towards a Political Economy of Educational Symbols and Gestures. London: Routledge.

Mead, Margaret
1928   Coming of Age in Samoa. New York: William Morrow and Company.

Mertz, Elizabeth
2007   Semiotic Anthropology. Annual Review of Anthropology 36:337-353.

Mirembe, Robina, and Lynn Davies
2001   Is Schooling a Risk? Gender, Power Relations, and School Culture in Uganda. Gender & Education 13(4):401-416.

Morrell, Robert, Deevia Bhana, and Tamara Shefer
2012   Books and Babies: Pregnancy and Young Parents in Schools. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Morrell, Robert, et al.

    2009   Towards Gender Equality: South African Schools during The HIV and AIDS Epidemic. Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Motala, Shireen
    2008   The Impact of Finance Equity Reforms in Post-Apartheid Schooling. *In* Educational Change in South Africa: Reflections on Local Realities, Practices, and Reforms. E. Weber, ed. Pp. 301-318. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Naidoo, Jordan P.
    2005   Educational Decentralization and School Governance in South Africa: From Policy to Practice. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.

Nash, June C.
    1979   We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ngwane, Zolani
    2001   'Real Men Reawaken their Fathers' Homesteads, the Educated Leave them in Ruins': The Politics of Domestic Reproduction in Post-Apartheid Rural South Africa. Journal of Religion in Africa 31(4):402-426.

Nicolson, Greg
    2016   Student Protests: Only the Start of Greater Pain. Daily Maverick, September 28, 2016.

Ntho-Ntho, Albertina Maitumeleng, and Jan Nieuwenhuis
    2015   Religion in Education Policy in South Africa: A Challenge of Change.

Nuttall, Sarah
    2008   Youth Cultures of Consumption in Johannesburg. *In* Youth Moves: Identities and Education in Global pPrspective. N. Dolby and F. Rizvi, eds. Pp. 151-177. New York: Routledge.

Pattenden, Oliver
    2017   Schooling in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Hopes, Struggles, and Contested Responsibilities. *In* Anthropological Perspectives on Student Futures: Youth and the Politics of Possibility. A. Stambach and K. Hall, eds. Pp. 85-102. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Pillay, Jace
    2012   Keystone Life Orientation (LO) Teachers: Implications for Educational, Social, and Cultural Contexts. South African Journal of Education 32:167-177.

Prinsloo, Erna
    2007   Implementation of Life Orientation Programmes in the New Curriculum in South African Schools: Perceptions of Principals and Life Orientation Teachers. South African Journal of Education 27(1):155-170.

Rasanyagam, Johan
    2009   Morality, Self and Power: The Idea of the Mahalia in Uzbekistan. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 102-117. New York: Berghahn Book.

Reed-Danahay, Deborah
    1996   Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robbins, Joel
    2009   Morality, Value and Radical Cultural Change. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 62-80. New York: Berghahn Books.

—
  2013 On Kinship and Comparsion, Intersubjectivity and Mutuality of Being. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory 3(2):309–316.

Sahlins, Marshall
  2013 What Kinship Is-- and Is Not: Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

SAHRC, and UNICEF
  2014 Poverty Traps and Social Exclusion among Children in South Africa. SAHRC.

Sayed, Yusuf, and Shireen Motala
  2012 Equity and 'No Fee' Schools in South Africa: Challenges and Prospects. Social Policy & Administration 46(6):672-687.

Sayed, Yusuf, and Mario Novelli
  2016 The Role of Teachers in Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion: Synthesis Report on Findings from Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda. Research Consortium Education and Peacebuilding.

Sayed, Yusuf, and Crain Soudien
  2005 Decentralisation and the Construction of Inclusion Education Policy in South Africa. Compare 35(2):115-125.

Scott, James
  1976 The Moral Economy of the Peasant. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Seekings, Jeremy
  2011 Poverty and Inequality in South Africa: 1994-2007. *In* After Apartheid: Reinventing South Africa. I. Shapiro and K. Tebeau, eds. Pp. 21-51. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Seekings, Jeremy, and Nicoli Nattrass
  2005 Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shaw, Thomas A.
  1994 The Semiotic Mediation of Identity. Ethos 22(1):83-119.

Shefer, Tamara, and Catriona Macleod
  2015 Life Orientation Sexuality Education in South Africa: Gendered Norms, Justice and Transformation. Perspectives in Education 33(2):1-10.

Shipton, Parker MacDonald
  1989 Bitter Money: Cultural Economy and Some African Meanings of Forbidden Commodities. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

Shisana, O., et al.
  2014 South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey, 2012. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Shweder, Richard A., and Usha Menon
  2014 Old Questions for fhe New Anthropology of Morality: A Commentary. Anthropological Theory 14(3):356-370.

Sieborger, Rob
  2011 Dealing with a Reign of Virtue: The Post-Apartheid South African School History Curriculum. *In* History Wars and the Classroom: Global Perspectives. T. Taylor and R. Guyver, eds. Pp. 143-158. Charolette, N.C.: Information Age Publishers.

Smith, Kelley Alison, and Abigail Harrison
  2013 Teachers' Attitudes towards Adolescent Sexuality and Life Skills Education in Rural South Africa. Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning 13(1):68-81.

Smith, Rogers M.
    2003   Stories of Peoplehood: The Politics and Morals of Political Membership.
    Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sommers, Marc
    2012   Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood. Athens: University of
    Georgia Press.
Sorensen, Birgitte R.
    2008   The Politics of Citizenship and Difference in Sri Lankan Schools. Anthropology
    and Education Quarterly 39(4):423-443.
Soudien, Crain
    2007   Youth Identity in Contemporary South Africa: Race, Culture and Schooling.
    Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books.
—

    2010   The Reconstitution of Privilege: Integration in Former White Schools in South
    Africa. Journal of Social Issues 66(2):352-366.
—

    2012   Realising the Dream: Unlearning the Logic of Race in the South African School.
    Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
South African Institute of Race Relations
    2011   'Model C' is the Model to Emulate, Vol. 2016.
Stambach, Amy
    2000   Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro: Schooling, Community, and Gender in East
    Africa. New York: Routledge.
—

    2017   Student Futures and the Politics of Possibility: An Introduction. *In*
    Anthropological Perspectives on Student Futures: Youth and the Politics of Possibility.
    A. Stambach and K. Hall, eds. Pp. 1-16. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
Swartz, Sharlene
    2009   The Moral Ecology of South Africa's Township Youth. New York: Palgrave
    Macmillan.
Swartz, Sharlene, James Hamilton Harding, and Ariane De Lannoy
    2012   "Ikasi Style" and the Quiet Violence of Dreams: A Critique of Youth Belonging
    in Post-Apartheid South Africa. Comparative Education 48(1):27-40.
Tabane, Ramodungoane, and Salome Human-Vogel
    2010   Sense of Belonging and Social Cohesion in a Desegregated Former House of
    Delegates School. South African Journal of Education 30:491-504.
Taussig, Michael
    1977   The Genesis of Capitalism amongst a South American Peasantry: Devil's Labor
    and the Baptism of Money. compstudsocihist Comparative Studies in Society and History
    19(2):130-155.
Taylor, Nick
    2006   School Reform and Skills Development. *In* Money and Morality. S. Brown, ed.
    Pp. 65-73. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.
Teeger, Chana
    2015   Ruptures in the Rainbow Nation: How Desegregated South African Schools Deal
    with Interpersonal and Structural Racism. Sociology of Education 88(3):226-243.

Theron, Linda
	2008	The Batsha-Life Orientation Study: An Appraisal by Grade 9 Learners Living in Townships. Education as Change 12(1):45-65.
Theron, Linda, and Christine Dalzell
	2006	The Specific Life Orientation Needs of Grade 9 Learners in the Vaal Triangle Region. South African Journal of Education 26(3):397-412.
Thompson, E. P.
	1971	The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century. Past & Present (50):76-136.
Van der Merwe, Hettie
	2011	Migration Patterns in Rural Schools in South Africa: Moving Away from Poor Quality Education. Education as Change 15(1):107-120.
Vandeyar, Saloshna, and Jonathan D. Jansen
	2008	Diversity High: Class, Color, Culture, and Character in a South African High School. Lanham: University Press of America.
Weber, Everard
	2002	Shifting to the Right: The Evolution of Equity in the South African Government's Developmental and Education Policies, 1990-1999. Comparative Education Review 46(3):261-290.
Weiss, Brad
	2009	Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops: Global Fantasy in Urban Tanzania. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Widlok, Thomas
	2009	Norm and Spontaneity: Elicitation with Moral Dilemma Scenarios. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 20-45. New York: Berghahn Books.
Willis, Paul E.
	1981 [1977]	Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs. New York: Columbia University Press.
World Bank
	2016a	GINI Index, Vol. 2016.
—
	2016b	World Development Indicators 2014, Vol. 2016. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
Woronov, Terry Ellen
	2007	Performing the Nation: China's Children as Little Red Pioneers. Anthropological Quarterly 80(3):647-672.
Zigon, Jarrett
	2009	Life History and Personal Experience: The Moral Conceptions of a Muscovite Man. *In* The Anthropology of Moralities. M. Heintz, ed. Pp. 81-101. New York: Berghahn Books.