Beyond black and white: black solidarity in post-apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

Almost 20 years after the white Nationalist government was voted out, some black South Africans believe that black solidarity is still necessary in South Africa. These people argue that since post-apartheid South Africa is still marred with racial injustice, it makes sense for blacks to advocate for black solidarity. Although it is true that black solidarity played an important role in the struggle against apartheid, in this thesis I argue that the struggle against current forms of racial injustice does not necessarily require black solidarity. This is not to deny the prevailing racialized oppression in the post-apartheid era, nor to deny the importance of black solidarity in the past; rather the point I am making is that the current form of racial oppression is somewhat different from the one before 1994. Hence I argue in this thesis that the current form of racial oppression requires us to do certain things differently. Doing things differently means improving upon the strategies of the past. For this to happen, I argue that every human being who believes in and is committed to racial justice ought to be included in the struggle for justice. Change, after all, is brought about when committed human beings work together for liberation and justice.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

"Every time a [human being] has contributed to the victory of the dignity of the spirit, every time a [human being] has said no to an attempt to subjugate his [or her] fellows, I have felt solidarity with his [or her] act."

Frantz Fanon (1967: 226)

Throughout history black people, like any other oppressed social group in the world, have often resisted, in various ways, the forces that oppress them. One of the ways in which they have resisted the perceived oppressors is by organizing themselves on the basis of their blackness. Organizing in this manner has come to be known as race based solidarity. The rationale for this organizing strategy was often said to be based on the idea that blacks, as an oppressed group, are the only people who can truly liberate themselves from the perceived forces of oppression. Race based solidarity was also seen as a way of emphasizing the agency of black people in a world that treated them as sub-human beings who lacked the abilities or capabilities of human beings. Hence, it was, in a way, often seen as a defiant act against the belief that black people need white people to think, lead and liberate them from oppression. Organizing this way, then, was a way of showing that black people were fully capable of liberating themselves with or without the involvement of what some might see as outside forces.

Although black solidarity has certainly been a key strategy used by black people in confronting racial oppression in the past, this research project is mainly concerned with the contemporary era. The goal of this research project is to discuss whether or not black solidarity is the best way for black people to oppose the racialized oppression that they are currently facing. In particular, the project undertaken here explores whether there is a need for black solidarity in post-apartheid South Africa. The idea behind this project arose partly from the fact that the debate around whether or not black solidarity is the best way of tackling the persisting racialized inequalities in South Africa still continues. People continue to discuss this issue despite the fact that it has been 19 years since the white apartheid government was voted out of power. People across the political spectrum are wondering

whether race based solidarity is the best way to go or not. Some of these people, as it will be shown in this thesis, think that black solidarity is still necessary in post-apartheid South Africa. In 2006, for instance, the Native Club, which was initially meant for black people only, came into existence. In 2008, the Forum of Black Journalists was re-launched. Apart from these two mainstream organizations, there have also been less well known groups such as Blackwash and the September National Imbizo which are only for black people. The setting up of these organizations has often caused national debates about the necessity of race-based solidarity. Some people support these organizations' stance of excluding white people from being members. The supporters often argue that since black people, despite living in a supposedly democratic country, are still oppressed, the exclusion of white people from black organizations is justified. Other people, again as it will be shown in this thesis, however, think that it is not necessary to exclude white people from supposedly black organizations. They argue that since we are no longer living under apartheid it is no longer necessary to have black-only organizations. In this thesis I will show that the debates often do not only focus on black organizations but also more generally on the role of white activists in issues that are seen to be of concern to black people. Some black solidarity advocates, for instance, argue that white people have no positive role in the anti-racist struggle, hence they should not involve themselves in supposedly black people's struggles. White people are told not to be part of such struggles because it is said that their involvement does not help, rather it perpetuates the power dynamics that the anti-racist activists are supposedly fighting. Those who oppose black solidarity, on the other hand, believe that white people have a role, just like everyone else, to play in the fight against any form of injustice, including the fight against racial inequalities. Some of the people who do not favour black solidarity are not oblivious to the fact that racism, and other forms of domination, are sometimes perpetuated within the struggles for justice. They believe that when such forms of dominations occur in spaces that are meant to be liberatory the activists within those spaces ought to deal with them. Evidently the debate about whether or not black solidarity is required in the post-apartheid is an important one, hence the reason why it is the subject matter of this research project.

Research goals

Drawing on and engaging with literature on race, racism, and black solidarity in post-segregationist societies, this research project has the following goal: To answer whether black solidarity is the best way to fight racialized inequalities in post-apartheid South Africa. In order to achieve this goal it will be necessary to provide a historical overview of black solidarity initiatives in South Africa. It will also be necessary for the thesis to provide an overview of literature on persisting racial inequalities and white privilege, including literature from other contexts. However, while the provision of such overviews is also an objective of the thesis, the focus of the thesis is on exploring the question of the necessity of black solidarity in contemporary South Africa.

A word on terminology

It is important to explain the racial terminology used in this project. In South Africa, people were historically divided into four major racial groups, namely: African, Coloured, Indian, and White. In this thesis, though, Africans, Coloureds and Indians will all fall under the term black. I refer to them as black mainly because movements such as the Black Consciousness Movement (discussed in Chapter 2) spoke of black people to refer to all these social groups. The idea was to unite them since they were all, to various degrees, oppressed by a government that privileged white people. I also refer to these groups as black because, as Adam Habib (2008: xii) reminds us, the country's legislation defines black "as being inclusive of African, coloured, and Indian people".

A note on the structure of the thesis

This Chapter introduces the thesis. In Chapter 2 I will provide more details about the kind of black solidarity that has historically been advocated by some people in South Africa. Chapter 2, in essence, provides a historical overview of black solidarity formations in South Africa. In it I demonstrate that the idea of black solidarity is not a new phenomenon in South Africa and that various forms of black solidarity have emerged at different times. I start the third Chapter by demonstrating that despite the end of apartheid in 1994, inequalities in South Africa are still very much racialized. I argue that racialized inequalities in the post-1994 era operate somewhat differently than they did during the rule of the National Party. These persisting racial inequalities, I argue in Chapter 4, have led some people to believe that black solidarity initiatives are still necessary in the post-1994 era. Hence, Chapter 4 reviews the arguments of

the people who are advocating for black solidarity in the post-apartheid era. In Chapter 5 I discuss the pitfalls of black solidarity and argue that the new forms of racialized inequalities require anti-racist activists to take Frantz Fanon's (2004: 255) advice seriously and envision "new concepts" in order to resist institutionalized white supremacy. I conclude this Chapter by suggesting some of these new concepts which can assist in the fight against racialized inequalities. Chapter 6, which is the concluding Chapter, sums up the key argument of the thesis, which is that black solidarity is not necessarily the best form of fighting against the continuing racialized inequalities.

Chapter 2
One for the old school

"What more could I say? I wouldn't be here today if the old school didn't pave the way"

2 Pac (1995)

The idea of black solidarity in South Africa is not particularly new. In the past some black activists argued that since it is black people who are oppressed by white supremacy, black people, as an oppressed group, needed to form alliances and unity along racial lines in order to oppose the system that oppressed them. One can argue that black solidarity, in South Africa as well as around the world, is, in a way, seen by some as a liberation philosophy for oppressed blacks. It is seen as a liberation philosophy because the black people who advocate racial solidarity do so as they believe that this approach can liberate them from the injustices with which they are confronted. Historically, the calls for black solidarity have been heard when oppressed, yet courageous, blacks begin to rise above the feelings of hopelessness and the fear of the dominant group (Marable 1985). This usually begins "at the historical moment when groups of such individuals find a common strategy, social vehicle or mode of resistance that contradicts the dominant coercive apparatuses" (Marable 1985: 11-12).

Although this thesis is mainly concerned with the present, that is I am mainly interested in finding out whether there is still a need for black solidarity in the post-apartheid South Africa, it is necessary to contextualize the discussion about black solidarity by providing a fairly brief historical overview of black solidarity in South Africa. The point of providing a historical overview is to show that black people, as an oppressed group in South Africa, have, at times, fought together as blacks. Furthermore, the historical overview also serves to provide the reasons that black activists provided for advocating for black solidarity. Since black solidarity has a long and rich history in South Africa, this Chapter will only mention a few key movements that advocated for black solidarity during the terrible years of apartheid. Before we travel through history, however, it seems essential to begin by explaining the concept of race based solidarity, and black solidarity in particular, in more detail.

Black solidarity: the idea

"Oh, you know, the ideological thing."

Ayi Kwei Armah (1988: 89)

To understand black solidarity, one first needs to know what is meant by solidarity. According to some scholars solidarity is mainly about caring and being concerned about other people's well-being (see Blum 2007, Featherstone 2012, Hooker 2009, Scholz 2008). Solidarity, according to Sally Scholz (2008:17), "is used variously to mark the cohesion of a group, the obligation of civic membership, the bond that unites the human family, shared experience, expressions of sympathy, or struggles for liberation. As a moral concept, solidarity has been interpreted as a virtue, a duty, a feeling, a relation, and a conscious choice". Scholz (2008) argues that the level of commitment within the group often differs from member to member. In such groups you are likely to find some people who are less committed than others, she argues.

Lawrence Blum (2007) likens solidarity to a community. In his view both solidarity and community involve a group of people. However, he notes, they are not one and the same thing. This is partly due to the fact that a solidarity group tends to be more politically oriented than a community. It is political in the sense that it "responds to adversity or at least perceived adversity, while community does not necessarily involve adversity, [hence] solidarity is a kind of pulling together of a group in the face of perceived adversity, generally but not necessarily human-created adversity", writes Blum (2007: 53). In other words, a community does not necessary have to be confronted by adversity in order to be considered a community. However, a community can become solidaristic when it is faced with adversity (Blum 2007). Thus, solidarity, according to Blum (2007), is typified by adversity that a social group is trying to overcome.

According to Juliet Hooker (2009), solidarity is based on trust and unity between people. She argues that it is a "crucial democratic competence for those who wish to live together as political equals" (Hooker 2009: 24). Hooker argues that people have a tendency of racializing solidarity. Racialized solidarity, she notes, is about being more concerned about the well-being of a particular social group, with very little if any for other groups. In essence, this is what black solidarity is about. That is, it is about blacks being more concerned about other

blacks. But black solidarity is not just about that. For instance, in his book, Tommie Shelby (2005: 20) defines black solidarity as the "involuntary readiness of most blacks to act individually and collectively to protect black people from harm and injustice". Shelby (2005) further discusses several variations of black solidarity. He notes that most forms of black solidarity are based on racial separatism, black self-determination, group (as in black people) self-reliance, pride in one's blackness (historically and culturally) and some kind of a collective identity. The people who favour such forms of black solidarity often encourage other blacks to close ranks – that is exclude people who are not black from their organizations and programs. They also support the call for black people's control and ownership of certain institutions such as businesses, schools, health centers, law-enforcement and so forth. Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton (1992), in their book *Black power: the politics of liberation*, which was first published in 1967, argue that it is sensible for oppressed groups, black people in their case, to be able to meet without the members of the privileged group. They believe that the members of an oppressed group need to come together as the oppressed to discuss their experience and "define their interests and goals" amongst themselves (Ture & Hamilton 1992: 80). It is from coming together that they will be able to achieve their goals. In their view an oppressed group is unlikely to reach its goals unless it is "tightly organized" (Ture & Hamilton 1992: 80). They argue that a well organized group runs less risk of being "absorbed or swallowed up" by a dominant group (Ture & Hamilton 1992: 80). Black solidarity activists usually believe that blacks should not criticize each other in public spaces, rather they should do so in private, in their own spaces. The idea of not criticizing each other in public is based on the view that blacks should have one voice that speaks for all of them. It is hoped that having a single voice will, somehow, help black people to unite and become a single unit (Shelby 2005). Black solidarity advocates, according to Shelby (2005), also tend to believe that affluent and better-off blacks who stay in white dominated areas should move to black disadvantaged black communities. It is believed that the migration of these blacks to these disadvantaged areas will help bring the resources that are needed to uplift the communities.

What is clear from the discussion above is that black solidarity, in its simplest form, is black unity against white oppression. It is the idea that black people need to fight the struggle against racialized oppression primarily by themselves and that they do not necessarily need solidarity from other social groups. That is, blacks need their own exclusive organizations to fight against racialized inequalities. Furthermore, black solidarity is understood as the idea

that since blacks have common interests, they are compelled to be united in their efforts for a better world (Sniderman and Piazza 2002). This is how black solidarity is understood in this thesis. Although the discussion above is mainly based on an American context, in its simplest form it is not very different from the way in which black solidarity has been understood in South Africa by both past and present activists. Being based in South Africa, as it will be seen in this Chapter as well as in Chapter 4, does not necessarily mean that these activists were (and are) not influenced by activists from other countries. In fact, the politics of resistance in South Africa, like in most places in this world, has been connected to international struggles for freedom, equality, and dignity.

The early years

> *"[white activists] were still in fact struggling hard to perpetuate the status quo of Baasskap and white supremacy..."*
> -Potlako Kitchener Leballo *(1968)*

In South Africa, as is the case in most parts of the world, the call for race-based solidarity amongst blacks as a way of opposing the oppressive white power structure has, currently as well as in the past, often been associated with various modes of black nationalism (see Gerhart 1979, Shelby 2005, Mbembe 2007). The "militant years" of black nationalism in South Africa, at least according to one historian, were the 1950s (Williams 1970: 373). This militancy, however, did not just come out of nowhere, but began way before the 1950s, most particularly in the 1940s. While some black nationalists in the past welcomed the participation of white people in the fight against white supremacy, in the 1940s this notion began, not for the first time, to be seriously questioned in some quarters (Fatton 1986). The involvement of white people in the struggle was questioned not because black nationalists were necessarily anti-white, but because some people noticed that some white activists tended to relegate black people "to secondary roles" in the struggle (Fatton 1986: 3). They put them in secondary roles in the sense that some whites wanted to be the intellectual leaders of the struggle. That is, they felt that they knew and understood the situation better than the oppressed blacks. Hence, some black activists, who did not want to be patronized by whites, wanted to exclude white people from what they perceived as black formations (Gerhart 1979). Some of these activists were members of the African National Congress's Youth League (ANCYL). In their view, black solidarity would advance the struggle for the liberation of black people in a number of ways, such as helping blacks to be self assertive,

and helping them to be proud of their blackness (Gerhart 1979). These goals, they believed, could not be achieved unless black formations broke ties with those they felt threatened their independence as black people. They did not want white people to talk or think for them, since they, rightfully, believed that they were fully capable of articulating themselves (Fatton 1986). Amongst these nationalists was Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, who, along with a group of other black nationalists, later broke away from the African National Congress (ANC) to form the Pan African Congress (PAC). In his view, there was no way in which black and white people could successfully cooperate with each other unless their relationship was based on trust and mutual respect between the two groups (Fatton 1986). African nationalists, such as Sobukwe as well as others like Anton Muziwakhe Lembede of the ANCYL, stressed the need for unity and love amongst blacks (Gerhart 1979). Lembede, Sobukwe and numerous others also believed that black solidarity would help address the supposed inferiority complex that was imposed on blacks by white people. According to Gail Gerhart (1979: 75), "in the view of Lembede … and a majority of other early Youth Leaguers, interracial cooperation was a stage which could not be reached until Africans had achieved a far higher degree of cohesion and self confidence". Some people within the ANC, however, thought that the exclusion of white people from the resistance movement was problematic, hence they pushed the ANC to adopt an interracial approach.

The issue of multiracialism was so contentious that some ANC members, such as Potlako Leballo, who criticized the ANC for wholeheartedly welcoming the interracial approach, were expelled from the movement for dissent (Gerhart 1979). Some of the people within the ANC who disagreed with the involvement of white people in the movement ended up breaking away to form the PAC in 1959. At its inaugural conference the PAC's first president, Mangaliso Sobukwe explained the newly formed movement's stand on multiracialism. He stated that "our past experience has been that minority groups declare themselves sympathetic to our struggle … But when they come to our movement they do not accept the program we have formulated ourselves. They present us with programs which protect their sectional interests. If I am building a house, if there is a friend who wants to help me I expect him to bring building materials with him to come and help me. I do not like him coming with already drawn up plans which will affect my original scheme" (cited in Gerhart 1979: 151).

Another movement that advocated for black solidarity was the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) which was, at one stage, also sceptical of working with white liberals. Gwendolen Carter (1963: 153) writes that the NEUM, which was established in 1943, "embodied not only the first clear-cut repudiation of any notion of white trusteeship but also a declaration of full equality between non-whites and whites". The NEUM, which was largely made up of African and coloured intellectuals, was a leftist organization that discouraged white people from occupying any leadership positions in their movement (Gerhart 1979). They also believed that a true alliance cannot exist between blacks and whites unless the former "found their feet politically before making any alliances" (Gerhart 1979: 11).

Following the banning of liberation movements such as the ANC and the PAC in 1960, black students took up the baton from the outlawed organizations. Inspired by the earlier calls for black solidarity, some black students decided not to be part of the white dominated National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) (Motlhabi 1984). In fact the Student Representative Council (SRC) of the University of Fort Hare dissociated itself from NUSAS as far back as 1952 (Badat 1999). The split from NUSAS was due to the belief that NUSAS was mainly concerned with white liberal interests, as opposed to issues that were largely affecting black students (Motlhabi 1984). These sentiments grew amongst black students and, as a result, black student groups were established in the early 1960s. The most known of these were the African Students Association (ASA) and the African Students Union of South Africa (ASUSA). Both organizations were connected to the banned congress movements. ASA, formed in 1961, had links with the ANC, while ASUSA, formed in 1962, was associated with the PAC (Motlhabi 1984). The banning of the ANC and the PAC, however, meant that these organizations could not be very active, at least not for long, as the authorities were clamping down on groups that were thought to be associated with the outlawed liberation movements, and as a result they had a very short lifespan (Karis and Gerhart 1997). Their short period of existence meant that political activities amongst black students were "left largely to the efforts of NUSAS" (Motlhabi 1984: 108). Although a number of black students did join NUSAS, some still "saw NUSAS as too moderate, despite the inclination of its leaders to take public positions well to the left of mainstream white opinion" (Karis and Gerhart 1997: 66). They also believed that NUSAS did not truly reflect the needs of black students, since "the dominant viewpoint and leadership were still disproportionately white" (Motlhabi 1984: 109). Blacks felt marginalized within NUSAS, hence in 1968, a group of

black students, who at first numbered less than 50 in total, came together to discuss the situation of black students in white led organizations (Motlhabi 1984). These students agreed that blacks, if they were serious about self-determination and freedom, needed to create their own political space.

They thus broke away from NUSAS to form the South African Student Organisation (SASO), which was exclusively for black students. Though SASO was officially launched in 1968, its seeds, as can be seen above, were sown a year back. For instance, the students who were instrumental in its formation proposed such a move in 1967, during a NUSAS conference that was held in Grahamstown (Motlhabi 1984). This was after they felt betrayed by white NUSAS students who were, at least rhetorically, their comrades. The black students were not pleased by the fact that "black students were housed separately in a church, away from the conference site" while their white counterparts were housed on the "conference site" (Motlhabi 1984: 108). The black students took this to mean that the solidarity that NUSAS was talking about was not genuine. Despite being unhappy with the proceedings of the 1967 conferences, they nonetheless decided to attend another NUSAS conference in 1968 (Motlhabi 1984). In that same year they attended another white centric student organization conference, hosted by the University Christian Movement (UCM). Although UCM's membership was, at one stage, numerically dominated by black students, the "dominant viewpoint and leadership were still disproportionally white" (Motlhabi 1984: 109).

Many black students felt more and more frustrated by this dominance of privileged and often arrogant white people within these organizations (Fatton 1986, Badat 1999). Hence, some black students eventually decided to break away and form an organization that they felt was going to address the issues that were affecting black students. These students broke away because they were tired of being marginalized within white dominated organizations (Badat 1999). They also thought that the liberation that NUSAS and UCM were talking about was not the same liberation that black students had in mind. For instance, some black students felt that the liberation that NUSAS seemed to be talking about was one where blacks had to do the listening and follow the instructions from the supposedly sensible and great white students (Biko 2004). It is for these reasons that SASO was formed in 1968. Some people, however, including progressive minded people, initially thought that SASO was doing exactly what the government wanted, which is to endorse segregation (Badat 1999).

The BC movement enters the stage

"Those days are all gone now but one thing's still true"

Queen (2009)

The establishment of SASO marked the beginning of a new liberation movement in South African politics, which later became known as the Black Consciousness (BC) movement (Gibson 2008, Magaziner 2010). The BC movement's philosophy was about restoring black peoples' humanity and dignity in a white supremacist society. According to Motlhabi (1984: 120), "the immediate political goal of the BC movement as such was psychological liberation through the popularization of Black Consciousness. This would lead, it was hoped, to solidarity amongst Black people, thus paving the way for their mobilization towards their socio-political emancipation". It should be noted that its activists argued that the movements' call for black solidarity was not about essentialising blackness, or claiming that blackness was superior to whiteness (see Biko 2004, Gerhart 2008, Mbembe 2007). Its advocates believed that black solidarity would lead to liberation. Hence the reason why Biko (2004: 96) argued that BC was "a quest for true humanity".

Advocates of BC believed that true humanity could only be achieved if black people fought together for their freedom. They argued that since black South Africans were the main victims of apartheid, they needed to be in charge of the struggle for liberation (Gerhart 1979, Biko 2004, Magaziner 2010). The BC movement was against the notion that the oppressed needed to be under the tutelage of the privileged in order to attain their freedom (Biko 2004, Gerhart 2008). Its decision to call for black solidarity was a result of black people's experience in working with white-led movements and white individuals. For instance, Biko (2004) writes that in the past, whites wanted to have an overwhelming control of the black movements. They wanted to do this by playing an intellectual role, so as to influence the decisions taken by the movement. Consequently they ended up believing that they knew the needs and interests of the blacks more than the blacks themselves (Biko 2004). He writes that these whites not only told blacks how to react to oppression, but that they also told blacks that they (white liberals) had the solution to the injustice in South Africa (Biko 2004). The solution they proposed entailed black movements forming alliances with white liberals who were going to guide the wretched blacks to the promised land of freedom. But before this could happen, blacks had to get their act together, and accept whites as their superiors. He

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further points out that such arrogance perpetuates the same problematic power dynamics that the privileged people are supposedly fighting against (Biko 2004).

Contrary to what the white liberals wanted, the BC activists believed that the oppressed blacks needed to be directly and fully involved in the struggle against domination (Biko 2004, Halisi 1991, Buthelezi 1991). The BC activists decided to exclude white people from the movement because they thought that freedom for black people can only be achieved when black people take the lead in the struggle against oppression that they were under (Biko 2004). And, more importantly, the BC movement was exclusively black because it did not want privileged white liberals to impose their white supremacist views and values on black people (Biko 2004). Referring to these liberals, Biko warned that as long as white liberals dictate the tempo of black movements, the oppressed blacks would not be able to play a significant role in changing the society (Gerhart 2008). And even if blacks somehow managed to change the society under the guidance of white liberals, Biko (2004, Gerhart 2008) believed that such a society would still reflect white supremacist values and interests. Hence he argued that the struggle should be led by the oppressed and not by the white privileged liberals (Gerhart 2008). Magaziner (2010: 39) adds that the BC adherents believed that white supremacy "needed to be countered with black solidarity". Furthermore, to pose a serious challenge to the power structure, BC activists thought that they needed to redefine the meaning of blackness (Gibson 2008, Moodley 1991). They had to give it a new meaning because blackness was seen as being inferior to whiteness. Hence they gave it a meaning that emphasized "a new sense of unity and liberation of the oppressed", writes Gibson (2008: 135). He adds that although the BC movement advocated for black solidarity they were not against the notion of integration per se, rather they opposed the idea that blacks had to assimilate into whiteness in order to be seen as equal to whites (Gibson 2008). The call for black solidarity was seen as one of the ways of achieving what Biko (2004: 96) called "true humanity". Although the BC movement advocated for black solidarity, it was not against white people, rather it emphasized that it was against white arrogance. Furthermore white supremacist values were detested not merely because they were associated with white people, but because they dehumanized and humiliated black people (Fatton 1986).

The BC movement differed from previous movements that called for black solidarity in a number of ways (Gerhart 1979). Foremost amongst these was the reading material that was available to its activists. It can be argued that due to the texts that they were reading, their

analysis was more insightful and more sophisticated than the previous organizations (Gerhart 1979). The BC activists read texts that, among other things, discussed the experience of blacks during the civil rights struggle in the U.S. They read the works of people such as Malcolm X, James Cone, Kwame Ture & Charles Hamilton. Through the American literature, the BC activists also came across the insightful work of Frantz Fanon (Gibson 2011). Gerhart (1979) writes that Fanon's ideas became central to the BC movement. Gibson (2011: 43), however, argues that although influenced by Africana philosophy, the BC movement was "grounded in the South African experience". This means that it was also influenced by the conversations and experiences that black South Africans were having (Gibson 2011, also see Mangcu 2012). Similarly to Fanon, BC activists realized that liberatory ideas and practices can only be formulated by having discussions with the downtrodden people, the people who are at the receiving end of the oppressive system (Gibson 2011).

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I provide a historical overview of black solidarity initiatives in South Africa. While a fully comprehensive historical overview of black solidarity movements is beyond the scope of this project, the brief background of a selected number of key movements, like the ANCYL, PAC and others gives one a sense of how black solidarity emerged in South Africa. Furthermore, the overview shows that a number of black activists, in the past, supported the idea of black solidarity. This historical overview also shows exactly how black solidarity has been understood and put into use by black activists in South Africa.

As was mentioned above, though, the main focus of this project is not about the history of black solidarity in South Africa. Rather I am interested in exploring whether black solidarity is the best way of dealing with the racialized oppression of black people in the post-apartheid era. The situation today is different from what it was during the apartheid era in a number of significant ways. Unlike in the past, for instance, the current government is predominantly black. Black people today have rights, including the right to vote, that they did not have during the white minority rule. And on top of that, South Africa can now boast about having black millionaires and a growing black middle class (Marais 2001, Terreblanche 2002). So, in order to find out whether there is still a necessity of black solidarity in contemporary South

Africa, the following Chapter will examine some of the changes that have occurred in South Africa since the demise of the apartheid system.

Chapter 3
White supremacy in the age of non-racialism

"I was never going to be anybody's nigger again. But, I was now to discover that the world has more than one way of keeping you a nigger, has evolved more than one way of skinning the cat; if the hand slips here, it tightens there, and now I was offered, gracefully indeed: membership in the club." James Baldwin (1972: 36)

Some of the people who advocated for black solidarity during the apartheid era made it clear that race based solidarity would not be necessary in a "normal society" (Biko 2004: 13). The PAC's first president Sobukwe (1970), for instance, was of the view that under normal circumstances there would be no social groups that are grouped as blacks and whites since people living in Africa would simply be all considered Africans (also see Gerhart 1979). Some activists within the Black Consciousness movement also supported this view. Biko (2004, Gerhart 2008), for instance, argued that the oppressive social system that they lived under during apartheid compelled black activists, as an oppressed group at the time, to advocate for black solidarity as one of the means of liberating themselves from oppression. In a "normal society", however, Biko (2004: 13) stated that he would "reject" race based solidarity. He further argued that black solidarity, as advocated by the Black Consciousness movement, would be pretty much "irrelevant in a colourless and non-exploitative society" (Biko 2004: 96). At the time black solidarity was relevant because they lived under tyranny in what Biko (2004: 96) called "an anomalous society". Hence it seemed "logical" to call for blacks at the time to be united and in solidarity with each other because they were clearly exploited and oppressed as blacks (Biko 2004: 27). As stated in previous Chapters, the question that this project seeks to answer though is whether black people still need to organize along racial lines in order to improve their livelihood in the post-apartheid era. In other words, is it plausible for black people to advocate for black solidarity in today's society?

As can be seen above, the likes of Biko said that black solidarity as a political tool for racial justice could eventually become trivial and unnecessary in South Africa. The problem though, is that they did not clearly state what kind of society will necessitate the end of race based solidarity amongst blacks. All they spoke about was a "normal society". When talking about a normal society all sorts of questions come to one's mind, though. For instance, did

the normal society that they had in mind mean the kind of society that we are currently in, that is one which is governed by a black government as opposed to a white one? If not, what kind of society were they talking about then? Did they perhaps mean a truly libertarian society whereby there is no government, no authorities, and no leaders, as envisioned by some anarchists (see Berkman 2003)? Would some of them perhaps consider today's black rulers as an elite that has "betray[ed] the cause of the millions of the illiterate and semi-literate African peasants and toilers" (A. P Mda 1949, cited in Gerhart 1979: 130)? We know that some of them, like Biko (2004: 158, also see Gerhart 2008) for example, supported the idea of creating a "just and egalitarian society" and as a result some people may believe that they would oppose the country's current capitalist system. In fact, Biko clearly rejected the notion that creating a handful of affluent blacks was going to solve the problems that the majority of blacks were going through (Gerhart 2008). And one of Biko's comrades, Nyameko Barney Pityana (1972: 189), talked about the need for "a complete overhaul of the system". Unfortunately, none of them spent a lot of time detailing exactly what an alternative society would be like. They did not spend enough time explaining the details of an alternative society partly because some of these activists were reluctant to propose a "blueprint for a future South Africa" (Pityana 1972: 189). In an interview with Gail Gerhart (2008: 34), which took place in 1972, Biko explained that the Black Consciousness movement did not discuss the "post-revolutionary society" because they believed that such a discussion would likely divide the movement. What is crystal clear though is the fact that they opposed the social system that they lived in and, sadly, some of them passed away before they ever saw anything approaching a "normal society". Consequently, we know what they were fighting against, but, putting catchphrases aside, we are not really sure of the kind of society that they were fighting for. So, this makes it difficult to know whether some of them would think that black solidarity is, in Biko's (2004: 96) words, "irrelevant" or not in the contemporary era. To be fair, those BC activists who are still living today, such as Barney Pityana and Mamphela Ramphele, clearly still believe that the current society is an "anomalous" one. However, though critical of the status quo, people such as Pityana, and certainly Ramphele are no longer advocating for black solidarity.

While one interesting question is whether or not activists like Biko would support continuing black solidarity in today's South Africa, this project is not about whether specific activists such as Biko and Sobukwe would still advocate for black solidarity in the contemporary era. This project, rather, tackles the more general question of whether the idea of black solidarity

is, in a way, still justifiable in today's society, regardless of whether key activists of the past would support it. In other words, I am interested in finding out whether black solidarity is the best means of fighting against the current forms of racialized inequalities. This, of course, means that I have to first examine the changes (or lack of them) that took place since the African National Congress took over as the government of the country in 1994. The elections of that year have come to signify what has often been called the fall of the apartheid regime (Van der Westhuizen 2008). The racist white regime was replaced by a supposedly democratic and predominantly black one. The discriminatory laws of the past that dehumanized black South Africans, such as the pass law, were replaced by new ones that were said to be democratic. Race was no longer going to be used as a tool to discriminate, exploit, and or dehumanize people, the new government said (Mangcu 2003). Furthermore, the ANC government tried to "redress past injustices" by introducing policies such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment of 2003 (Durrheim, Mtose and Brown 2011: 1). These policies, among others, led to a significant increase of the black middle and upper classes (Nattrass and Seekings 1997, Nattrass and Seekings 2001, Marais 2001; Terreblanche 2002).

Unlike in the past, there are currently no laws that prevent blacks, or at least affluent blacks, from staying in what used to be white designated areas. More black people nowadays are eligible to attend institutions of higher learning that were formally mainly for white people. Indeed, 1994 brought wonderful changes to the country, as many opportunities that were not there before opened up for black people. What interests me though is whether these changes mean that racialized inequalities are no longer prevalent in the post-1994 era. In the pages below, I argue that despite all the changes that occurred in, and after 1994, South Africa's "racialized social system" (Bonilla-Silva 1997: 467) has not been dismantled. I argue that instead of eliminating this system, 1994 gave birth to a somewhat new, that is a modernized form, of an unjust racialized social system. The failure to dismantle this system, unfortunately, means that the country's racial inequalities are still with us. And this, the following Chapter will show, has led some people to believe that the solution to these persisting racial inequalities is black solidarity.

Post-apartheid South Africa: a tale of two nations in one country

"… it was the epoch of belief, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us." Charles Dickens (1985: 35)

Four years after the apartheid government was voted out of power by the citizens of the country, Thabo Mbeki (1998), at the time Deputy President of the country, told parliament that South Africa, despite having a non-racial government, was still racially divided. Access to resources and opportunities, said Mbeki (1998), was still largely shaped by one's race. He boldly declared that our post-apartheid society was tragically divided into "two nations, the one black, the other white" (Mbeki 1998: 71). The white nation, he argued, is privileged, has lots of resources and "has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure" (Mbeki 1998: 71). The black nation, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly poor and battles to make ends meet on daily basis. It is made up of people who are seriously disadvantaged and live "under conditions of grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure" (Mbeki 1998: 72).

Recently Jacob Zuma (2012), the country's current President, described South Africa in similar terms, emphasizing the fact that anti-black racism and white privilege are still huge problems in the post-apartheid era. Speaking in 2012, he noted that 18 years after the beginning of democracy in South Africa, there have not been any serious changes in the economy of the country in terms of power relations. The reason for this, he explained, was because the ANC, when it came into power in 1994, "had to be cautious about restructuring the economy, in order to maintain economic stability and confidence at the time" (Zuma 2012). Put simply, the ANC did not change the economic power structure mainly because it thought it needed to please the so-called captains of industry. And as a result "the economic power relations of the apartheid era have remained intact. The ownership of the economy is still primarily in the hands of white males as it has always been" (Zuma 2012).

What Mbeki and Zuma were admitting was that though the situation of black people, or at least some of them, is not exactly the same as it was during the rule of the National Party; material wealth and other forms of power and privilege are still overwhelmingly distributed

along racial lines. Blacks are still at the bottom of the social structure (Klandermans, Roefs & Olivier 2001; Roberts 2005). The majority of black people continue to live and die in impoverished areas with very little opportunities and resources to get ahead in life. Many continue to burn and die in shack fires. Indeed the situation of most black South Africans is not very different from that described by the revolutionary Frantz Fanon (2001) in his seminal work, *The wretched of the earth*, which was first published in 1961. Writing about the living conditions of the oppressed, he notes that "[t]hey are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire" (Fanon 2001: 30). Walking through the South African townships, such as Khayelitsha, Philippi, Mannenberg, Delft, or indeed most townships in South Africa, one can clearly see that Fanon's description of the oppressed is, unfortunately, still true for most black South Africans.

While a large number of blacks are impoverished and live in appalling conditions, the economy of the country is dominated by a tiny minority, which, as President Zuma (2012) pointed out, is overwhelmingly made up of white people. According to the recent Census, white people make up not more than 10% of the country's population (Statistics South Africa 2011). Yet, less than 10% of the top 100 listed companies at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are directly owned by blacks, reports the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR 2011). In addition, numerous reports show that the most powerful jobs in the country are still dominated by white people (Matsha 2011; DoL 2012; Moleke 2006; SAIRR 2011). For instance, the Department of Labour's study, the *12th Commission for employment equity annual report,* found that white people make up 65.4% of the top level managerial jobs in the country (DoL 2012). On top of that, 59% of the country's senior managerial jobs are occupied by white people, and most particularly while males (DoL 2012).

A recent report by the South African Institute for Race Relations found that whites continue to make vastly more money and possess more assets than blacks (SAIRR 2012; Benjamin 2013). Reporting on the findings of the countrywide 2011 Census, a *Mail & Guardian* reporter writes that "white households, as units, earned six times more than their black counterparts – which have more individuals per household" (De Wet 2012). The report

further notes that, at the current economic development, it will take many decades for an average black family to equal the earnings of an average white family (De Wet 2012). The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, according to media reports, recently argued that it is easier for white graduates to find jobs than it is for black graduates (SAPA 2012).While presenting the annual employment equity report findings, Ntoaki Mamashela, Department of Labour's director of employment equity, told journalists that what is "[m]ore worrisome to the commission is that whites also dominate all opportunities in terms of recruitments, promotions and skills development initiatives that employers are embarking on" (Kgosana 2012).

White people not only dominate the economy of the country, but also other important spheres of life as well, such as media and institutions of higher learning. For instance, the South African media is still largely controlled by white people (see Duncan 2013). Even the institutions of higher learning are dominated by whites. In 2007, for example, black people made up only 39% of research and instruction staff in South African universities (DoE 2008). In addition, 60% of the executive and managerial staff in these institutions were white (DoE 2008). Blacks, on the other hand, tend to be hired for the lower "administration and service jobs" while whites continue to "dominate the academic and professional personnel categories" (Study South Africa 1999: 17). Perhaps it is no wonder that blacks, both staff and students, are often discriminated against, humiliated, disrespected, and harassed in institutions of higher learning (see DoE 2008; Potgieter 2002; Raditlhalo 2007). It goes without saying then that white male academics have a lot of say in what gets published and what does not get published in peer reviewed academic journals.

Non-racial racism

"New people, new style, old dance."

Ayi Kwei Armah (1988: 157)

While the statistics above clearly show that the country's "racialized social system" (Bonilla-Silva 1997: 467) has, to a large extent, remained intact, it is worth keeping in mind that the means used to keep black people destitute and marginalized have slightly changed. As noted above, there are no longer statutory laws that clearly support the dehumanization and oppression of blacks, yet the majority of black people still remain marginalized in a country

where they make up over 90% of the population and where the government is, for the most part, black (Statistics South Africa 2011). So, how does one make sense of the persisting racialized inequalities if the country is supposedly democratic? One way of understanding this tragedy is, as the American based sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2001: 12) counsels, by "study[ing] the practices, institutions and ideology that help sustain white privilege". The hiring of white people in powerful positions and the discrimination of black people in certain institutions are some of these practices. Bonilla-Silva (1997, 2001) argues that in racialized social systems white supremacy operates beyond the individual level in that it is institutionalized to the point that institutions, such as banks, media houses and institutions of higher learning are part of the system that ensures that certain social groups are privileged while other are not. His reference to ideology points to the ideas that are used to justify the reasons such institutions operate the way they do, such as the widespread belief that black people are intellectually inferior to white people. White supremacy, then, refers to a system that uses institutions and ideology to oppress black people.

A very helpful definition of white supremacy is provided by the Afro-American philosopher, Charles Mills (1997: 186, also see his 2003) who defines it as a "multidimensional system of domination" by one group of people over others. It is multidimensional in the sense that it encompasses all aspects of life, i.e. politics, economics, culture and so forth (Mills 1997, also see Tatum 2005, hooks 1989). Bonilla-Silva (2001) counsels that white supremacy is not, and has never been, a static phenomenon but that it continuously changes with time. For instance, white supremacy of the 1960s is different from that of the 18th century and the form it takes today is not exactly the form it took in the 1980s. However, its core principles of white dominance and black subjugation remain the same (Bonilla-Silva 2001).

bell hooks (2003) agrees with the above viewpoint and stresses that white supremacy is not just about hooded Klansmen who want to physically hurt all the black people that they come across. She reminds us that white supremacy is not as overt as it once was; today, she writes, it is much more subtle (hooks 2003). And for it to reign, it does not necessarily need white authorities, as blacks are also capable of subscribing to white supremacy. Not only are blacks the victims of white supremacy, but they are also quite capable of being part of the structure that oppresses the majority of blacks, writes hooks (2003). In a white supremacist society, our understanding of the world, as well as "who we accept as authorities" is shaped by white supremacy (hooks 2003: 31). Unlike the term racism, which is often misused and

misunderstood, white supremacy, contends hooks (2003: 28), "describes the system of race-based biases we live within because this term, more than racism, is inclusive of everyone. It encompasses black people / people of color who have a racist mindset, even though they may organize their thinking and act differently from racist whites". In other words white supremacy not only describes anti-black racism by whites, but also incorporates some black people's foolish subscription to the notion that white people or white values are inherently better than black ones. The way some people think, including their understanding of culture is by and large shaped by white supremacy (hooks 2003, hooks 1995, hooks 1989, Churchill 1996). This is due to the fact that white supremacy is so deeply entrenched in so many societies. Its entrenchment can be noticed in what we learn at school and the way in which knowledge is passed onto us, argues hooks (2003, also see Churchill 1996). As a result, black people are also capable of being white supremacists. That is, they are capable of believing that white people are indeed more intelligent, more beautiful and generally better than black people. In a white supremacist society everything, including our understanding and definition of beauty, is seen in relation to whiteness (hooks 2003). The lighter skinned one is the more beautiful and sexually attractive one is portrayed to be. In black communities that have not yet decolonized their minds, black people who happen not to be light in complexion are often verbally abused and deemed not to be pretty (Yancy 2008). In his first book, *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon (1967) convincingly argues that a white supremacist society makes it its business to measure everything that black people do in relation to white people. He notes that the standards of the society are those that fit well with whiteness. After all, whiteness not only sets the standards, it is *the* standard. "For", he writes, "not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (Fanon 1967: 110). It is for these reasons then that everything and everyone that does not meet the set standard is often criminalized, and seen as "an anomaly of nature, the essence of vulgarity and immorality" (Yancy 2008: xvi).

While the above authors' viewpoints of white supremacy are largely based on the post-segregationist United States of America (USA) context, their analysis is not only relevant to us, but is strikingly similar to our situation in South Africa. Durrheim and Mtose (2006: 161), for instance, write that white supremacists' standards in post-apartheid South Africa "continue to be the frame or standard against which blacks" are measured. Durrheim and Mtose (2006, see also Steyn 2001) argue that the idea that values and norms that are usually associated with whites are superior to those that are often associated with blacks is still

dominant in South Africa. Echoing Yancy (2008), a study by Durrheim and Mtose (2006: 161) found that blacks who have not assimilated into the dominant white culture were often viewed as "messy, criminal … uneducated, and unable to express themselves properly (in English)". The message being put across is that black people are considered dumb, unattractive and indecent unless they somehow prove themselves to be devout disciples of the white supremacist system. Zimitri Erasmus (2005: 9) is also of the view that white supremacy in post-segregation societies continues to operate but "in more complex forms". Unlike in the past, there is no law that prevents black people from attaining wealth, yet the exclusion of black people from economic power and other opportunities in life is still very much racialised in South Africa, writes Erasmus (2005). Furthermore, while blacks are no longer barred from entering white dominated spaces (e.g. institutions of higher learning), they are now expected to "assimilate into the existing dominant" white culture (Erasmus 2005: 15). Assimilation in a white supremacist country, warns Yancy (2008: 36), is often "a process of uprooting any markers" that are associated with blackness.

Sally Matthews (2011, 2012) agrees that racial injustice is still persistent in the post-apartheid South Africa despite the formal abolishment of segregation in the early 1990s. She argues that merely changing the laws that overtly legitimized the dehumanization and degradation of black people does not necessarily mean that racial injustice is the thing of the past (Matthews 2012, also see Vice 2010). Unlike in the past though, where racial oppression was quite explicit, today there are "new forms of racial injustice" (Matthews 2012: 175). These new forms of racism often operate in "subtle ways" that ensure that white privilege persists despite the notion that the post 1994 era is a non-racial one (Matthews 2011: 33). She argues that when talking about the privileges that whites get from the current system means "we refer not only to concrete benefits, but also to … more subtle ways in which white people are affirmed and black people denigrated both in South Africa and in many other places" (Matthews 2011: 33). For instance, writes Matthews (2011), while blacks are no longer barred from entering certain areas and or spaces (i.e. predominantly white areas and shops), they (blacks) are often closely watched and followed upon entering because, as Yancy (2008) correctly argues, blackness is associated with criminality. This criminality that is apparently inherent in most, if not all black people, often leads security guards and shop owners to watch blacks – making them feel very uncomfortable in the process – until they leave. Furthermore, in a white supremacist society it is taken as a given that white people have the necessary qualifications for their respective professions, hence they are hardly ever questioned, argues

Matthews (2011). And the mistakes they make are hardly, if ever, attributed to their being white, she further notes.

One of the reasons why white peoples' mistakes are easily forgiven and hardly ever attributed to the entire group of white people is partly due to the fact that, as Gillian Schutte (2012) correctly argues, the "normalization of 'white as right' is still force-fed to the South African public through the social machinery in the form of the print and electronic media, advertising and white-boy satire". For whiteness to be normalized, blackness has to be seen and depicted as, crazy, criminal, disease-ridden, "abnormal, substandard, dirty, [and] corrupt" (Schutte 2012). Eric Miyeni (2006), for instance, describes how he was treated like a deranged felon in one of the country's major banks, ABSA, after he confronted a white man who skipped a queue. Instead of telling the white man to stand in the queue like everybody else the bank personnel felt it was imperative to remind the black guy, Miyeni, that white people, especially males, are more important than most South Africans and as a result they are permitted to skip the line. Sadly, ABSA is not the only major bank that is known for treating black people badly. The First National Bank (FNB), for instance, saw it fit to make more money by overcharging black people, *Noseweek*, an investigative monthly South African publication, recently reported (2012). The magazine reported that FNB "has actually set up its systems to steal – consistently – more from its black bond clients than it dares steal from its white bond clients" (2012). Furthermore, the magazine noted that FNB's black customers "have been deliberately targeted with illegally inflated interest rates that are substantially higher than the rates the bank charged its white bond clients" (2012). So, though the country is said to be a non-racial one, a somewhat different kind of white supremacy is still prevalent in South Africa. Oppression is still very much racialized. The discrimination of black people is very much institutionalized despite the fact that there are no statutory laws that advocate for the discrimination of black people.

Conclusion

In a way, this Chapter began where the last one ended. That is, it began by discussing the political ideas of some of the activists who advocated for black solidarity during the apartheid era. I argue that these activists believed that there would be a time, perhaps in the future, when race based solidarity will be a thing of the past. The Chapter then went on to argue that the post-1994 South Africa is still a white supremacist society that privileges mostly white

people. It is a white supremacist country because whites continue to systematically benefit from the current system while most blacks are systematically excluded. White people continue to benefit because they set the standards: their language, looks, behaviour, ideas, etc., are glorified and portrayed as better than the rest. It also became clear, I hope, that white supremacy and white privilege operate in slightly different and more subtle ways than they did in the past. Although white supremacy operates differently than it did during the rule of the National Party, its main purpose of marginalizing, dehumanizing and oppressing those who do not meet the required standards (which are often disguised as universal standards) has not changed. Hence, blacks continue to be brutalized by both the old and new forms of white supremacy.

Chapter 4
Black solidarity in the age of non-racialism

*"From my point of view it's good BC has been written out of the struggle. Because if it was written in then we're part of the problem [*sic*]. Now we're still part of the solution."* Strini Moodley (Klein et al. 2008: 274)

The previous Chapter showed that white supremacy can operate in subtle ways. What also came out of the previous Chapter is that in white supremacist cultures people are not regarded as fully human unless they somehow match the standards that are often associated with whiteness (Fanon 1967). People are not beautiful or intelligent unless they are light in complexion or speak a certain language with a certain accent. Fanon (1967) writes that black people often come into the world thinking, believing and expecting to be treated like human beings, only to find that the world treats and sees blacks as non-human, as objects. This is partly why there has not been a single person who does not have straight or straightened hair or is light in complexion has won the very problematic Miss South Africa beauty pageant. This also explains why two decades after the demise of the apartheid regime there is still not a single university that teaches in any of the South African indigenous black languages. In order to get a degree blacks have to read, write and speak the languages that most white South Africans use as their mother tongue. In their study Green *et al* (2007: 401) argue that the "use of English as the main official language of academia, business, and politics further strengthens the reproduction of whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. It offers unfair privileges to mostly white people who have access to this language to monopolise the production of ideas about society".

Black Solidarity in post-apartheid South Africa

"These, then, can call only on their history to save them…"
James Baldwin (1972: 49)

It is partly for the reasons described above and in the previous Chapter that some people in the post-1994 South Africa think that the solution to continuing white supremacy is black solidarity. These people think that the only way to overcome this problem is by advocating for black solidarity. The former president of Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)

Mosibudi Mangena (2002), for instance, believes oppressed people, blacks in our case, first need to organize themselves into a single unit that will challenge the oppressive power structure. He argues that as "a rule, struggles are waged by the oppressed, by those who are at the wrong end of an unequal equation" (Mangena 2002). This, in his view, is the reason why workers, and not the bosses, are usually the ones who are fighting for workers' rights or the reason why women typically lead the struggle against patriarchy, he adds. This is why blacks in South Africa were the "fulcrum and the thrust" of the resistance against apartheid (Mangena 2002). Obviously this does not mean that white people, or at least some white people, were not involved in the struggle against segregation. But the point he is making is that blacks, for the most part, were the main actors in the resistance against apartheid. This then, he argues, means that blacks, in the post-apartheid South Africa, are the people who are responsible for changing the oppressive situation that they are in. Recognizing the diversity within the black community, he argues that any black solidarity campaign that seeks to change the livelihood of black people "must transcend class, language and region" (Mangena 2002). In his view, it is important to transcend these differences because not doing so "might have disastrous consequences for this young democracy" (Mangena 2002).

Mabogo More (2009) supports the view that the oppressed need to lead their own movements. Referring to South Africa, he writes that black solidarity "has been one of the favourite responses and rallying call for social justice and liberation for most blacks" (More 2009: 21). The history of this country, he argues, is full of examples of how blacks have responded to oppression. As seen in previous Chapters, blacks in the past have often argued that racial solidarity and unity amongst blacks is one of the ways of overcoming the awful situation that black people were in. According to More (2009: 21), the kind of unity and solidarity that these activists had in mind was "liberatory black solidarity". He further notes that "[t]his historical response still commands considerable attraction for some black people. In South Africa, for example, black identity and solidarity have recently been expressed and demonstrated by the recent formation of a number of highly controversial groups epitomized by the Native Club" (More 2009: 21). Other black-only or black dominated formations, apart from the Native Club, include the Forum of Black Journalists, Blackwash, and September National Imbizo, among others. Writing about the Native Club, More (2009: 21) writes that "black South African intellectuals felt marginalized not only from the national discourse but also, and more importantly, from the production of knowledge". As seen above, these blacks felt marginalized mainly because the mainstream intellectual sphere is dominated by white

people. Hence, contends More (2009), black intellectuals thought that this could be solved by forming an organization that serves the needs and interests of black intellectuals. Furthermore, these intellectuals believed that setting up such an organization would encourage "the empowerment of blacks through self organization and the creation of safe spaces where blacks could share and analyse their experience, voice their grievances and anger, and develop new and better institutional practices" (More 2009: 21). More (2009: 35) supports the establishment of such formations because he firmly believes that black "solidarity is a necessary condition for emancipation from racism".

Disputing the charge that formations like the Native Club, and the Forum of Black Journalists in particular, are racist, Andile Mngxitama (2009) joins Mangena (2002) and More (2009) in supporting black solidarity. He argues that there is nothing racist about these blacks only organizations in post-1994 South Africa. In fact, he contends, these organizations are formed as a response to white racism, hence they should be promoted rather than discouraged. Anyone, black or white, who does not support black solidarity in a society where blacks are being oppressed as is the case in South Africa, is, in actual fact, in support of white supremacy, he argues. He writes that "[t]hose blacks who, because of a misguided commitment to non-racialism refuse to work for black-only causes against black oppression have made their political choices, we understand them. And for whites who want to help out, we have nothing to offer" (Mngxitama 2009: 5). He contends that advocating for black solidarity is still plausible in the post-apartheid era because post-1994 South Africa is still, by and large, a white supremacist country that continues to oppress black people for no other reason than the colour of their skin. He argues that "1994 came and went, but the structures of white power were not dislodged. In fact, 1994 provided legitimacy to white supremacy in our country" (Mngxitama 2009: 20). The "unspeakable" pain and suffering that black people experienced before the ANC took over in 1994 is still there, writes Mngxitama (2009: 7). Hence, in his view, black solidarity is necessary in order to free black people from white dominance. He notes that his version of black solidarity is not about oppressing or being against white people in general, rather its only aim is to liberate blacks. Black people, he states, "have never and have no intentions of dominating anyone. We are the dominated" (Mngxitama 2009: 8).

Other commentators have defended the idea of black solidarity in their criticisms of white people who they perceive to be interfering in issues that negatively affect black people (see

Mngxitama 2011, Nkopo and Mngxitama 2013, wa Azania 2013, Shadu 2013). This is evident, for instance, in the responses to the *Mail & Guardian*'s publication of white anti-racist activist Gillian Schutte's (2013) open letter *Dear white people.* This letter encouraged other white people to acknowledge their privilege and contribute to anti-racist struggles. In response a number of black commentators argued that Schutte has no right to talk about racism since she is white. People such as Nkopo and Mngxitama (2013: 38) advise black people not to be fooled by the likes of Schutte because if blacks support white people's attempts at anti-racism this would actually mean that blacks, once again, are "rescuing whiteness" by endorsing white people and making them look like heroes. They argue that white people who seem to be concerned about racism are not sincere or that they are driven by nothing but guilt, hence their involvement in black struggles is only about making themselves feel better. According to Nkopo and Mngxitama (2013: 38), it is evident that the white "anti-racist industry" lacks sincerity because most of its members only ask other whites not to "rub" their privileged status in the country in "black people's faces after black people have been nice enough to let whites stay and prosper on land stolen from them". Actually, they argue, the "industry" is itself quite paternalistic towards black people since it gives blacks "a false sense of justice" while putting white people in a commanding role in black issues (Nkopo and Mngxitama 2013: 38). The involvement of white people in anti-racist struggles, in their view, is an oxymoron since the white people who are apparently fighting against racial injustice end up reaping the benefits of being anti-racists (Nkopo and Mngxitama 2013, also see Walsh 2008, Hook 2011, Bohmke 2010a). They write that the industry "has immediate benefits for the 'anti-racists' who accuse other whites of racism – miraculously, by this act she or he transcends racism and its benefits, and becomes the national spokesperson on race matters and a fêted darling for the media" (Nkopo and Mngxitama 2013: 38). Influenced by the Black Consciousness movement, they argue that "The only solution [is] the expulsion of whites from black affairs" and they assert that it is black people who can end white supremacy and not "the whims of all sorts of white paternalism" (Nkopo and Mngxitama 2013: 38, also see Mngxitama 2011).

Partaking in the same debate, Malaika wa Azania (2013) also stresses the necessity of black solidarity in the post-apartheid era. She argues that white and black anti-racists have to work separately because when they work together, whites end up being in the driving seat, hence dominating the movement. To avoid the dominance of white people in black movements, it then becomes imperative for whites to work on their own while blacks also work on their

own, she writes. Moreover, she argues that when whites get involved in black struggles, they usually get paid for their activist work while most blacks do not get financial remuneration. As a result, she discourages whites from writing, and speaking for and about the situation of black people. Echoing Nkopo and Mngxitama (2013), she argues that white people's involvement and participation in black issues is not sincere, because at the end of the day whites go back to their cosy lifestyle. The role of whites, in her opinion, is to organize in their own communities and use their resources to debunk the "white supremacist philosophies within their own white community" (wa Azania 2013: 23). She believes that "…if black people are to become their own liberators, they must necessarily exclude white people from black affairs. They must embrace black consciousness as a philosophy to free themselves from the chains that bind them" (wa Azania 2013: 23).

In his contribution to this debate, Jackie Shadu (2013) also expresses the view that white anti-racists should stay away from "black affairs" because, he argues, they are not only "crowding" but are also "collapsing the black struggle". He also rejects the involvement of white people in black organizations because, he argues, at the end of the day white people still benefit from white privilege. Hence, he asserts, it is better if whites just do their own thing on the sidelines and leave black people alone all by themselves. Whites need to create their own spaces where they can discuss the manner of dealing with their arrogance and contempt towards black people. Black people, in the meanwhile, need to explore ways of overcoming their "self-hatred" (Shadu 2013). In a move that seems to explain the very problematic concept of black "self-hatred", Shadu (2013) notes that black peoples' response to white anti-racists is often "a combination of being star-struck, drunk, mad, high, possessed etc. All these states of body and mind at the same [time]. This is the prevailing white effect on black bodies / minds". He argues that black people who welcome antiracist whites are "fundamental[ly] damage[d] in the minds" (Shadu 2013). In his view the welcoming of white antiracists in black struggles reflects black people's laziness to speak against white supremacy (Shadu 2013). The laziness is partly the result of being scared to speak out against white supremacy, he argues. Hence black people happily welcome anyone who seems to be doing things for them and as a result fall for the trap of being dependent on whites as their saviours (Shadu 2013). "The second phenomenon governing the pathetic behavior of black people is misguided admiration of whiteness", he writes (Shadu 2013). Shadu (2013) further argues that "[w]hiteness is now a self-sustaining practice entrenched in the psyche of black people. Everybody who possesses white flesh is thus instantly admired, loved, looked up to

as an ipso facto embodiment of truth, beauty, intelligent and progress. And if that possessor of the white flesh displays pity and solidarity for the never-ending horrors visited upon black bodies by white supremacy, he / she becomes an instant hero in the black community. We blacks fear whiteness, we are not prepared to confront it". This "fear" apparently leads blacks to expect whites to fight for them, he says. According to Shadu (2013), it is time for blacks to cease looking up to white people as "messiahs" who are going to fight for and save black people from the evils of the world.

A common theme that is apparent from all these writers and/or activists is the idea that the oppressed need to fight and lead their own struggles with very little, if any, involvement of the dominant group. This theme, as seen in previous Chapters, is closely linked with the Black Consciousness tradition which was influenced by, among others, the Black Power movement. The advocates of the Black Power movement believed that black people need to be in control of their movements. Ture and Hamilton (1992: 44), who popularized the concept of Black Power, argue that black solidarity is essentially "a call for black people in the country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society".

A different kind of black solidarity

"Haven't you heard it's a battle of words"

Pink Floyd (1984)

In his book Tommie Shelby (2005), argues that he rejects the kind of black solidarity that has been usually associated with the Black Power movement. However, he contends that he is in favour of what he calls pragmatic black solidarity. This kind of black solidarity, however, is somewhat similar to the one that was discussed above, in that its supporters still see the necessity of having exclusive black organizations. Blacks only organizations, according to Shelby (2005), are necessary in order to restrict the interference of other social groups, especially domineering groups, in black affairs. Furthermore, he thinks that such organizations might inspire black youth and make them believe and realize that blacks are

also capable of doing things for themselves and succeeding without being led by white people.

Shelby (2005: 137), however, differs from many other advocates of black solidarity in that he is of the view that the work of blacks-only organizations needs to "be supplemented with greater black participation in multiracial associations that are sympathetic to black political interests". Hence his pragmatic black solidarity is not totally against working with other anti-racist social groups. In his view, having black solidarity formations does not necessarily rule out the possibility of working with other non-black groups who are opposed to racial injustice. Nor does his support for interracial cooperation necessarily mean that he does not see the need for black solidarity. Thus, in his view, black solidarity and interracial solidarity are not necessarily opposed to each other. In fact, he believes black and interracial solidarity can work together. This process, he argues, can work by having multiracial solidarity at a broader level and maintaining black solidarity at a micro-scale level (Shelby 2005). So, why have black solidarity if you can have interracial solidarity, one might ask? Shelby provides several reasons for the need for the continuing need for black solidarity. Firstly, he thinks that "[a]lthough a joint commitment to fighting racial injustice in all its forms can help create interracial solidarity, it is often the shared experience of *specific* forms of racial injustice that creates the strongest motivation to act and the most enduring bonds among victims of racism. This additional motivation is needed to overcome the moral complacency and conservative resistance that inhibit political reform in the racial arena, a political momentum that cannot be achieved by mere abstract calls for greater racial justice" (Shelby 2005: 241). Secondly, black solidarity is still necessary because blacks can no longer merely accept the alliance of non-blacks as simply as before because they (blacks) have been let down a number of times by people who claimed to be on their side. For instance, anti-racist whites sometimes bring their paternalistic attitude with them to the anti-racist movements, and end up treating black people as children who need the guidance of white people to get ahead in life. This, he notes, creates a huge problem for blacks. Hence, it is best to have a black solidarity space, so that blacks have something to fall back on, just in case the multiracial approach does not work out. In the end black solidarity, he hopes, can still be "a great source of strength and hope, and a highly effective means for mobilizing population to work for social justice" (Shelby 2005: 242).

Conclusion

The fact that South Africa's racialized social system is still intact, as seen in the previous Chapter, has led some people to argue that the only way to overcome this problem is by advocating for black solidarity. The black solidarity that some of these contemporary activists are advocating for is hugely influenced by the Black Consciousness philosophy. In fact, some of these activists are saying that the current problems can be solved only by the kind of black solidarity that the Black Consciousness movement advocated for. In other words, they are arguing that racial injustice can only be dealt with when black people, who are seriously disadvantaged by this injustice, refuse to cooperate with white people, who are seen as the main beneficiaries of this unjust system. Not working with white people, the argument goes, will allow blacks to determine their own goals without any interference from white people. Shelby (2005), an Afro-American philosopher, thinks that a way forward, at least in the American context, is through a new kind of black solidarity that he thinks is pragmatic for the 21st century. The pragmatic black solidarity that he has in mind is one that, in a way, allows blacks and whites to work together. The cooperation between the two social groups, however, does not mean that there is no space for black solidarity, he argues (Shelby 2005). What he is arguing for is a society whereby black solidarity will not rule out the possibility of working with other anti-racist social groups. Hence, he argues that black solidarity and multiracial solidarity are not mutually exclusive.

The next Chapter will explore whether the recognition that racial justice is yet to be achieved in South Africa need necessarily result in support for black solidarity. Contrary to the above advocates of black solidarity, I will argue that it is possible and preferable to reject black solidarity, including Shelby's vague pragmatic black solidarity, while remaining committed to ending racial injustice. Rejecting black solidarity, as it will become clear in the following Chapter, does not necessarily mean that one is against racial justice as some black solidarity advocates would want us to believe. Hence the following Chapter will suggest better ways of fighting white supremacy in all its forms.

Chapter 5
The Final Cut: Beyond black and white

"Everything now, we must assume, is in our hands; we have no right to assume otherwise. If we – and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks, who must, like lovers, insist on, or create, the consciousness of the others -- do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that we are, to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country, and change the history of the world."

- James Baldwin (1963: 89)

As noted at the end of the previous Chapter, one of the purposes of this Chapter is to argue that black solidarity, in all its forms, is not the best means of fighting against racial injustice in contemporary South Africa. Rather than advocating for black solidarity, I will argue that our fight for racial justice is not only a fight for black people, as some would want us to believe, but a fight for all those who are seriously committed to human dignity, equality and to the end of racial injustice in our society. In other words, what I am arguing for in this Chapter is that anti-racist activists need, like Fanon (1967: 232) once said, to recognize and indeed take seriously "the open door of every consciousness". That is, we need to recognize that everyone, black or white, can be a serious and committed anti-racist activist. Being committed to justice does not mean that these activists, both black and white, are going to get it right all the time. Mistakes, of course, will be made. I argue that these mistakes should not discourage us from working with each other. However, before I argue for a more plausible and better way of fighting for racial justice, I think it is necessary to begin by discussing what I think are the deep flaws of black solidarity.

Will the real blacks please stand up?

May I have your attention please?
Will the real Slim Shady please stand up?
I repeat, will the real Slim Shady please stand up?
We're gonna have a problem here...

-Eminem (2000)

As seen in the previous Chapter, some black solidarity activists argue that the fight for racial justice is a struggle only for black people and nobody else. These activists often encourage other blacks to "close ranks" – that is exclude people who are not black from their organizations and programs (Ture and Hamilton 1992: 44). Apparently the inclusion of people who are not black makes the anti-racist struggle less genuine; indeed, some seem to regard it as perpetuation of white supremacy (Mngxitama 2011, Mngxitama and Nkopo 2013, Shadu 2013, wa Azania 2013).

In contrast to activists who still see the necessity of black people closing ranks and excluding white people, and in agreement with, writers such as the late African-American historian Manning Marable (1995), I believe that reducing our struggle for racial justice to a black peoples' only affair is seriously problematic. To begin with, organizing this way gives people the false impression that all white people are in support of the racist power structure that privileges them. Secondly, this kind of attitude implies that black people are a homogenous social group who have the same interests and no significant differences. Marable (1995) argues that race based solidarity obscures the many differences amongst black people, ranging from class, culture, language, sex, gender and so forth. Moreover, he adds, some of the people who are staunch advocates of black solidarity are people who, one way or the other, are relatively privileged. When these relatively privileged blacks talk about the importance of building unity amongst black people it is as if all blacks have the same interests, writes Marable (1995 also see Gilroy 2004, Reed 1979, Reed 1999, Shelby 2005, West 2001). They often create the impression that there is some form of "allegiance between those blacks who are elevated into powerful positions of authority in the capitalist state and the millions of [blacks] clinging to the margins of economic and social existence" (Marable 1995: 189). Adolph Reed Jr. (1979) cautions that this impression is often created by using what he calls "banal symbols", such as speaking a language or dialect that is usually associated with black people, that are meant to legitimize one's commitment to the black struggle. The symbols are often meant to demonstrate that the elite blacks are authentic black people who ought to be supported by all blacks, because they supposedly represent the interests of the entire black community (Reed Jr. 1999, 1979). Hence, when the elite blacks face anti-black discrimination they expect each and every black person to be in solidarity with them. Also warning against black solidarity, Cornel West (2001: 24) writes that the black elite have no qualms about "claim[ing] racial authenticity" in order to get support from the black citizenry. West (2001) warns that the black elite are fond of rallying black people's

support for their own individualistic benefits. He makes an example of Clarence Thomas who, throughout his life, "championed individual achievement and race-free standards", but when it appeared as if he would not be appointed as a judge in the Supreme Court, he had no reservations about using black solidarity speak in order to garner support (West 2001: 27).

Writing about South Africa, Gavin Davis (2003) reminds us that blacks who are in powerful positions have also used the language of race-based solidarity for their own benefits. He writes that political parties, in South Africa, often use "racial rhetoric" to win votes (Davis 2003: 4). Political parties whose policies, on paper at least, are based on non-racialism have no qualms about resorting to black solidarity speak when necessary. Prior to the 1999 national elections, for instance, "the ANC was able to appeal to coloured voters through stressing African and coloured solidarity in the face of entrenched white privilege. While appeals of this sort have a material dimension, they have a far stronger racial flavour since appeals to materialism can be achieved without resorting to race-speak" contends Davis (2003: 5). While the ANC is, supposedly, a non-racial political party, it often uses the language of black solidarity when the need arises. In some cases, according to Davis (2003), political parties such as the ANC do not explicitly advocate for black solidarity, but they portray themselves as the only parties that are willing and capable of addressing issues that affect black people. Other parties are depicted as not taking black people's needs seriously enough. Opposition parties are often characterized by the ANC as pushing some kind of a neo-apartheid agenda. The people are often told that these parties want to reintroduce apartheid into the country. Black-solidarity speak, according to Davis (2003), can also be used to exempt the black authorities from any blame. For instance, while attempting to explain the shameful housing crisis in South Africa, the ANC's Winnie Madikizela Mandela, in 1999, told the *Sowetan* readers that "[t]he problem is that the whites stole our money and that is why we are not able to build you roads and houses as quickly as you need them" (cited in Davis 2003: 7-9).

South African race theorist Zimitri Erasmus (2005) warns that the idea that all black people should be united is often tied up with expectations that black people must behave in certain ways just because they are black. It is as if there is only one black culture that all black people subscribe to, she writes. Black solidarity advocates tend to create the impression that all black people enjoy the same music, same books and speak the same language in a supposedly black accent (also see Shelby 2005). Black solidarity advocates, Erasmus (2005)

warns, often expect blacks to support anything and everything that is supposedly black. It is, according to Erasmus (2005: 26), not unusual "for black intellectuals, analysts, and state officials repeatedly to respond to non-hegemonic political views and choices among black people by either discounting their blackness … or by using race as a defense against criticism". Those blacks who do not support narrow black solidarity are often depicted as self-hating blacks, sellouts, and ignorant fools who have been duped by the white power structure, she argues. Anyone who disagrees with these people is seen as being Eurocentric, that is not black enough. For instance, commentators such as Andile Mngxitama and Sandile Memela have a tendency of labeling their black critics as coconuts, askaris and self-hating blacks (see Memela 2008, Memela 2009, Mngxitama 2011).

Social movements who have any affiliation or contact with white people are often seen, by both black commentators (across the entire political spectrum) and the state, as being used by whites (see Pithouse 2012, UPM 2013, Zikode 2005). Radical movements such as the Abahlali baseMjondolo and the Unemployed People's Movement are often accused of being puppets of white people (Pithouse 2012, UPM 2013, Sosibo 2013, Zikode 2005). Just recently, the Secretary General of the governing party, Gwede Mantashe, said the unrest in Marikana was caused by Swedes and Irish people who want to destabilize the black government (Sidimba & Bailey 2013, Sosibo 2013). The idea that is being propagated here is that the impoverished blacks have no capacity to think for themselves, hence cannot demand human dignity without being influenced by whites (Pithouse 2012, 2013a, Sosibo 2013, UPM 2013, Zikode 2005). These powerful blacks, in a way, are also refusing to recognize the agency and indeed the humanity of the impoverished black people when they claim that there is some sort of a "third force", that is white people, behind each and every protest or social movement that is questioning black authority. So, it is not only white people who do not recognize the agency of blacks, since it is clear that blacks, across the entire political spectrum, are also capable of doing the same thing. And as shown in the previous Chapter blacks who do not seem to be staunch supporters of black solidarity are sometimes even represented as if they are suffering from serious psychological problems (see Shadu 2013, also see Bohmke, 2009, 2010b). The only good, that is authentic, blacks, according to the likes of Mngxitama and Shadu then, are the ones who support black solidarity initiatives. Hence rather than pushing for a more liberatory agenda, many black solidarity advocates have a tendency of wanting to coerce black people to behave in certain ways or hold certain views.

What also makes black solidarity a far-fetched dream in the post-apartheid South Africa is the fact that black people do not occupy the same position in the post-apartheid social structure. Apart from maybe having the same interest in terms of wanting to end racism, black people have wide and varied interests. One can safely argue that Patrice Motsepe's interests are different from, say, the majority of people who live in Khayelitsha. For instance, most people who stay in places such as Khayelitsha have to continuously fight for their dignity, wages, housing, electricity, water and other basic needs; the likes of Motsepe, on the other hand, are treated with dignity, never have to stress about their wages, and seem to spend part of their time wondering how to spend their millions while getting more millions. The interests of the middle class and new university graduates differ markedly from both the poor and the rich blacks, for they appear to be eager to be part of the ruling class. Furthermore, numerous studies have shown that the gap between impoverished blacks, middle-class, and the elite blacks continues to grow (Nattrass & Seekings 2001, Klandermans et al 2001, Rumney 2005, Roberts 2005). Nigel Gibson (2011: 117-118) argues that people like Motsepe run their companies more or less like other business people, in that when it comes to making money "[t]here is no race solidarity: Black capitalists are just as exploitative as White; in fact BEE companies have been among the worst labour law violators" in the country.

Blacks as exploiters

> *"They know things don't work, but they're happy to sit on top of the mess*
>
> *all the same."*
>
> (Ayi Kwei Armah 1969: 84)

What also makes matters more complicated is the fact that the South African government is predominantly black. The same government has been responsible for infringing the rights of the impoverished black population (AbM 2013a, Gibson 2011, 2012, Zikode 2005). People continue to be forcefully and illegally removed from their homes (AbM 2013a, Zikode 2005). In fact, one can argue that the post-apartheid government has much in common with the post-colonial rule that Fanon (2001) warns us about in *The wretched of the earth* (also see Gibson 2011, 2012). In his book Fanon (2001) cautions that the face of oppression is not always white, but that the people who get elected into power mainly due to their liberation credentials are also capable of oppressing the people that they claim to be representing.

Instead of ending oppression and truly liberating the nation, the post-colonial leaders, he writes, pick up the "old traditions of" the former rulers and continue to exploit those below them (Fanon 2001: 98). Upon discovering "the iniquitous fact that exploitation can wear a black face" the people, shocked, "raise the cry of 'Treason!'" (Fanon 2001: 116). The shock, according to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1993), comes from the fact that people expected the black faces that replaced the white rulers to bring about true freedom because of their blackness. Most of the people who had these expectations failed to properly "understand the true dimensions of" oppression, he notes (wa Thiong'o 1993: 62). They failed to do so because they simply assumed that the difference between the oppressor and the oppressed was merely the skin colour (wa Thiong'o 1993).

Perhaps this simplification ought not to surprise us since the colonial system was based on a Manichean system of black and white, argues wa Thiong'o (1993, also see Fanon 1967, 2001). It was a system where whites were privileged, owned and controlled resources, while blacks were forever exploited and marginalized (wa Thiong'o 1993). Even the rhetoric against it was colour coded, that is black versus white. Wa Thiong'o (1993) argues that the struggle against colonialism was simply reduced to a fight against white rule and not against oppression per se. Consequently, when the post-colonial leaders took over, they quickly changed the national flags and anthems, but there were very few significant changes that ensured that the majority of the people were truly liberated. The new flags, it turned out, marked the end of the "old style" of oppression, but not the end of oppression in all its forms (wa Thiong'o 1993: 64). Rather than the whites being the only ones who were in the forefront of the oppressive machine, the "new style" required black leaders to take the baton from their predecessors, writes wa Thiong'o (1993: 64). The end of apartheid in 1994 then also signified the end of the old style of doings things. It was, in a way, easy to introduce this new style because the "whole social structure" of oppression was not "changed from the bottom up" (Fanon 2001: 27). Fanon (2001) argues that without changing the whole social structure, there can be no true liberation. Thus, the failure to change the structure means that the ANC merely replaced the NP. This change, obviously, did not lead to the full liberation of the "wretched of the earth" (Fanon 2001). The change, in reality, means that the face that is responsible for the many racialised evictions, electricity and water cut-offs in the post-1994 era is no longer white, but is a black one. The face that continues to dismally fail to build decent housing for mainly poor black people is a black one. The face that killed Andries Tatane (shot twice, in the chest, by the police during a protest in Ficksburg in 2011),

Thembinkosi Qumbelo (housing activist assassinated in Cato Crest, Durban in 2013), Nkululeko Gwala (another housing activist assassinated in Cato Crest in 2013), Nqobile Nzuza (a 17 year old girl shot twice by police, one bullet in the back of her head, and another through her back, while protesting in Cato Manor, Durban, in 2013) and many other people who are fighting for their dignity is a black one (see AbM 2013b, AbM 2013c, AbM 2013d, Kings 2013, Nene 2013, Pithouse 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, van Onselen 2013). The face that massacred 34 human beings, while protesting for a wage increase, in Marikana on the 16th of August 2012 was a black one (see Sacks 2012, Marinovich 2012). The face that demolished partially built houses in Lenasia in 2012 is a black one.

The fact that a black face is responsible for many of these atrocities, of course, does not mean that race is no longer a factor. As seen in previous Chapters, race continues to play a big role in South Africa. After all, it is mostly black people whose dignity is being denied by the powerful (i.e. the State, business, media, NGOs and commentators) sectors of our society. As hooks (2003) reminds us, black people are also capable of being white supremacists. This is why a predominantly black government with a predominantly black police force is capable of murdering 34 human beings. It is also the reason why black activists who are challenging the state are being killed by the police while protesting. White people can shoot at the cops all they like, but they do not get killed. For instance, on 15 March 2013, the *Daily Dispatch* reported that a white farmer was arrested after he shot at cops (Phandle 2013). Andries Tatane, on the other hand, had no weapon, yet he was assaulted and shot twice in the chest! The point that I am emphasizing here and that I discussed at length in Chapter 3 is that race still plays a significant role in people's lives, even though the government is, to a large extent, a black one. However, the fact that some black people play a key role in the oppression of black people in the post-apartheid South Africa calls into question the claim by some black solidarity advocates that black people have the same interests and can and should fight as one.

New beginnings

It then makes sense for thinkers like Paul Gilroy (2001) to argue that our struggle against racial injustice in a post-segregationist society requires us to think differently about white supremacy. He contends that the old approaches need "to be updated" (Gilroy 2001: 28). If we are serious about ending the "racial nightmare", to borrow a phrase from James Baldwin (1963: 89), and eager to revive that old spirit of rebelling against injustice, we need to talk about race and racism in a new way. To some people who abhor racial injustice the best way to move beyond the old approaches of fighting for racial justice is by ending the use of terms such as black and white (for instance see Alexander 2006a, 2006b, Jansen 2007). These people often argue that since these social categories have resulted in so much suffering, we no longer need them (Alexander 2006a, 2006b, Jansen 2007). It is true that these identities are socially and politically constructed, and yes they have and continue to be used to oppress people in the world, but the problem, as Michael Albert (2006) argues, lies not with the fact that one is identified as either black or not, but rather with the system that oppresses and exploits people because of their historical and /or preferred social identity. The problem is that the current system functions in a way in which certain social groups are depicted as inferior to other and hence put at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Albert 2006). The solution then is not to do away with our social identities but rather to eliminate the system that exploits certain social groups. By system, I mean not just the racist institutions, but also the socially perverse racist ideologies (Albert 2006). The point being made here is that we do not need to homogenize our societies by ceasing to talk about or recognize racial differences, but rather we should create diverse and libertarian spaces whereby no particular social group(s) will be marginalized, oppressed and exploited while others are privileged (Albert 2006). After all, as Albert (2006: 45) correctly argues, "[c]ultural homogenization, whether racist, fundamentalist, or leftist, ignores how cultural differences give people a sense of who they are and where they come from". What is needed is a society that not only respects each and every social group, but one that also ensures that people within a society are all treated equally, fairly and that the resources, whether socially or materially, are distributed equally. For this to happen, we do not need to "obliterate [our] differences" (Albert 2006: 46).

Supporting the above viewpoint, West (2001: 28) argues that we should rather support a "framework [that] encourages a coalition strategy that solicits genuine solidarity with those deeply committed to anti-racist struggle". This, to me, means that old approaches like black solidarity need to be replaced by better methods of fighting racism. One better way of fighting for racial justice then is to push for what bell hooks (1995: 263) calls a "beloved community" – a phrase she borrows from Martin Luther King Jr. In this beloved community, according to hooks (1995), both black and white people work together to see the end of racial injustice in our society. She thinks that it is short sighted to believe that only black people can fight for racial justice. The notion that all whites are evil and inherently racist or that they cannot genuinely participate in anti-racist activism is an injustice to the white people who have (and continue) to dedicate their lives to the fight against racism. In fact, the idea of discouraging unity and bonding between anti-racist blacks and whites plays right into the hands of the very system that black solidarity activists claim to be fighting against, she warns (hooks 1995). It plays into the hands of the system because instead of creating unity amongst ourselves as activists we remain divided even though we are committed to the same goal of eliminating the racialized social system. hooks (1992, 1995) admits that it is true that some white people who claim to be anti-racist still view blacks through the white supremacist lens, and have a tendency of being paternalistic towards black people. She, however, warns that this should not discourage black people who are committed to racial justice from seeking unity with white people who are committed to racial justice. "We must not allow the actions of white folks who blindly endorse racism to determine the direction of our resistance", writes hooks (1995: 269). This argument makes sense because it is not like every black person who is committed to anti-racism is not paternalistic towards other black people. To be clear: I am not saying paternalism should be tolerated, rather I am saying that the fact that someone has committed to opposing racial injustice does not mean that this person, whether black or white, is not going to make mistakes. Of course, mistakes will be made, but the most important thing is to learn from those mistakes. One does not necessarily need to be black in order to be an anti-racist activist. To be an anti-racist activist is to be committed to the struggle for racial justice. It means that one recognizes that the current system oppresses people based, among others crucial factors, on their skin colour. It is oppressive in the sense that blacks, more often than not, are expected and coerced into submissive positions. They are forced to fulfill certain roles in a white supremacist society (as seen in Chapter 3) and they do not get the same treatment, privileges and respect as white people.

Furthermore it is also important to be mindful of the fact that racism is not the only issue that we are facing. It is imperative to know that the oppression of black people is linked to other forms of oppression, like the abuse and discrimination of women, homo/ bi/ transsexuals, poor and working class people and so forth. Such an understanding enriches our knowledge about domination and oppression. As hooks (1989: 22) convincingly argues, our fight must be to "eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression…". I believe that what hooks (1989) says about feminism applies to anti-racism as well. For instance, she argues that in order to be effective in challenging and changing the sexist structure the feminist movements should include male feminists as their comrades in the struggle to end male domination in our society. In other words women and men need to work together to eradicate the structures that benefit one group at the expense of a certain group. Working together, according to hooks (1989: 25), affirms our love for each other and our commitment to social change and more importantly it enables us to "learn the true meaning of solidarity". The same sentiments are applicable to a movement that is interested in eliminating racial oppression.

In the same spirit, Patricia Hill Collins (1989) argues that to mount a serious challenge against the oppressive power structure, in any case, requires activists and social movements, from diverse backgrounds, to build alliances and work together. She argues that long lasting alliances are built by focusing on our shared goals. This means that we, as serious activists, have to move away from what she calls "dichotomous thinking" (Hill Collins 1989: 5). Such thinking is based on the belief that the distinction between the oppressor and the oppressed is clear cut (i.e. one is either oppressed or an oppressor). And more often than not, dichotomous thinking, as seen above, sees oppression in terms of black versus white, as if the ideal solution to oppression is by replacing one with the other (e.g. white with black). Furthermore, dichotomous thinking, according to Hill Collins (1989: 1), conceals the fact that even the somewhat oppressed groups are perfectly capable of "uphold[ing] someone else's subordination". The treatment of black women in some anti-racist movements comes to mind. For instance, the Black Consciousness movement, though committed to anti-racism, is said to have been very patriarchal (Ramphele 1991, Gqola 2001). Mamphela Ramphele (1991: 215), a former member of the BC movement, has criticized it for ignoring "gender as a political issue". More often than not, contends Ramphele (1991: 216), females, within the BC

movement, "were important as wives, mothers, girlfriends, sisters, in fighting a common struggle against a common enemy – namely white racism. Scant regard was given to their position as individuals in their own right". As a result, there were some men within the resistance movement who sought to intimidate and bully women activists (Ramphele 1991). To fight against this sexism women were forced to behave more or less like their male counterparts (Ramphele 1991, Gqola 2001, Alexander & Mngxitama 2008). The assertive women, according to Ramphele (1991: 220), ended up being "treated as, and accepted the role of, honorary men". When women within SASO wanted a women's wing, called Women's Student Organization (WSO), they were discouraged by their male counterparts. According to Deborah Matshoba (Alexander & Mngxitama 2008), also a former SASO member, they were told that they cannot hold dual membership. In short, they were informed that they can either be with SASO or with WSO (Alexander & Mngxitama 2008, Magaziner 2010).

Hill Collins (1989: 1) argues, "upholding someone else's subordination" can occur unconsciously without the perpetrator even being fully aware of it, because most people do not have a clear understanding of the way in which power dynamics operate. To understand oppression, according to Hill Collins (1989), we need to look at it from a structural point of view. This, in her view, means that our understanding ought to include all the "distinctive yet interlocking structures of oppression" (Hill Collins 1989: 2). Hence it is our duty as serious activists to examine oppression "within the more fundamental relationship of domination and subordination" (Hill Collins 1989: 2). Thus the fight for racial injustice should not just be about ending racism, but should also be about ending all the injustices that are interlocked with racism. This means that we, like Martin Luther King Jr. advised us in one of his powerful speeches, need to recognize that "[a]ll these problems are tied together" (Zinn and Arnove 2009: 419). Thus, our fight should be about getting rid of all the "interlocking structures of oppression" (Hill Collins 1989: 2). And this is best done when we are all working together as human beings who are committed to justice, equality and dignity.

Conclusion

This Chapter started by pointing out the pitfalls of black solidarity in post-segregationist societies. In it, I argued that black solidarity is often used as a tool to suppress blacks who are challenging the elite blacks. I argued that black solidarity is used by powerful blacks to

"strengthen their material situation and their growing power" (Fanon 2001: 115). After pointing out that black people are capable of being exploitative and cruel just like white people, I argued that our struggle for racial justice, then, should be based on one's commitment and not their race. Furthermore, I argued that the fight against racialized oppression is clearly linked to other forms of oppressions such as gender and class, hence our fight should, in essence, be against domination of one group of people over another. In the end, I argued that the link between different, yet interconnected, forms of oppression means that we cannot really and honestly talk about racial oppression without mentioning other forms of oppression. Essentially, in this Chapter, I was in more ways than one arguing that the problems we are faced with are not necessarily about white people versus black people, but that these problems are far more complex than some black solidarity activists are making them out to be.

Chapter 6

By way of concluding: in search of a beloved community

"… for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts…"
Fanon (2001: 255)

So, in the end the "real leap", as Fanon (1967: 229) puts it, towards a society that is not based on an unjust "racialized social system", to use Bonilla-Silva's (1997: 467) phrase, is when everyone, both black and white, who is against such a system works together to eliminate it from our society. Black people might be the main people who are suffering from this system, but this, in no way, means that the struggle against racialized oppression is only for black people. This struggle is for everyone who is committed to equality and justice. It is for everyone who is against "the butchery of what is most human in [human beings]: freedom" (Fanon 1967: 222). If we accept that all human beings are capable of reasoning and that blacks, as well as whites are capable of thinking, then I do not see why blacks and whites who are committed to the end of oppression cannot work together. At the end of the day the fact that we are all human beings means that we should be able to work together, with or without our differences. Yes, it is true that there are often problems when whites and blacks work together in such struggles, but then again we need to keep in mind that it is not like some of these problems disappear when whites are not involved. We need to be mindful of the fact that being black is no guarantee that one is not paternalistic towards other human beings. Hence, the notion that only whites are paternalistic and or dogmatic towards blacks is simply false. So, instead of propagating the idea that only blacks can be anti-racist activists, I think we should be talking more about working together as human beings. Such an approach, to me at least, means that black and white activists, or any other activists for that matter, can work together, despite their differences, to see the end of a racialized social system. Although, I do not believe that differences between human beings should be obliterated, I agree that at times both groups, might have to "turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible" (Fanon 1967: 231). By authentic communication Fanon (1967) means that for solidarity to

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exist amongst people, they have to see and respect each other as human beings who are capable just like any other human beings in this world. That is, that they are capable of thinking and capable of being committed to the struggle for "the ideal conditions of existence for a human world" (Fanon 1967: 231). Ideal conditions, in reality, are those conditions whereby people, all human beings, will not be discriminated against, assaulted and / or abused in any way due to their identity and or appearance. It is the kind of society that Biko (2004: 96) probably had in mind when he was talking about "true humanity". It is one where we "go forward all the time, night and day, in the company of [human beings], in the company of all [human beings]" (Fanon 2001: 254). This, to me, is possible only through working together as activists, black or white.

Sure, one can argue that black solidarity played an important role in the past, hence we cannot reject it just like that. I agree that black solidarity, in the past, was instrumental in the struggle for racial justice. That is why we admire movements such as Black Consciousness, PAC and others. However, admiring the achievements of these movements and the activists who were involved in them does not mean that we should follow their each and every footstep. The Black Consciousness, with all its strong and weak points, of Ramphele, Pityana, Moodley, and Biko is gone and will never exist again. We will never have another Robert Sobukwe. What I am arguing for in this thesis is that we should refuse to be "prisoner[s] of history" (Fanon 1967: 229). In other words, I am simply saying that we are living in a different time, a time where some black people, just as some whites, are part of the bigger problem. I am simply pointing out that we are living in a time where the anti-apartheid movements who were dehumanized, had some of their members assassinated for fighting for their dignity, and were accused of being controlled by foreign elements, are doing exactly the same thing to people and social movements who are refusing to "accept the present as definitive" (Fanon 1967: 226). We are living in a time where prominent and affluent black activists, across the political spectrum, are accusing poor people's movements that are fighting for their dignity as human beings of being controlled and used by privileged whites. We are living in a time where formally educated black people, again across the political spectrum, believe that poor black people with no formal education are not capable of thinking and reasoning for themselves. We are living in a time where black solidarity is used to enrich a few blacks, while the majority is forever being subjugated. Times, as Bob Dylan (1967) says in one of his songs, "are a changing" for real. This, to me, is the reason why we need to "invent and must make discoveries" (Fanon 2001: 251) that will "advance" all human beings

who believe in freedom. This is enough reason to think "everything … anew" (Fanon 2001: 79). Enough reason for us to finally go beyond the Manichean viewpoint. Enough reason for us to talk more and more about interracial solidarity, genuine solidarity. At the end of the day, it is through working together, as blacks and whites and most importantly as human beings that we will finally be able to give to the world "the greatest gift possible", that of equality, freedom, dignity and, perhaps most importantly "a more human face" (Biko 2004: 108).

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popular music in post-apartheid. South Africa. CHRISTOPHER BALLANTINE. solidarity, a new racial typecasting and slurs aimed at whites in general. 'White' popular music. has responded to these reversals in a variety of ways – including direct criticism, sharp satire years beyond South Africa's first democratic elections, a new graffito appeared on a. wall in central Johannesburg. It read: 'Re-release Mandela – the disco version'. Every black South African was designated as a citizen as one of the Bantustans, a system that supposedly gave them full political rights, but effectively removed them from the nation's political body. In one of the most devastating aspects of apartheid, the government forcibly removed black South Africans from rural areas designated as "white" to the homelands and sold their land at low prices to white farmers. Resistance to apartheid within South Africa took many forms over the years, from non-violent demonstrations, protests and strikes to political action and eventually to armed resistance. Together with the South Indian National Congress, the ANC organized a mass meeting in 1952, during which attendees burned their pass books.