BEING INDIAN, BEING MK: AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES OF INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN UMKHONTO WE SIZWE MEMBERS

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS IN POLITICAL STUDIES

Of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: DR SALLY MATTHEWS

By

Varsha Lalla

February 2011

DEDICATED TO

My mother Dr Rashiela Ramchandra and my late grandmother
Soorijdayi Ramchandra

ABSTRACT

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) was a military organization dominated by black Africans. Although it is not generally associated with Indian South Africans, who form a minority in the country, there were Indian MK members. This thesis explores the way in which Indian MK members reconciled aspects of their ethnic identity with their membership of MK. It explores the experiences of two generations of members: those born between 1929 and 1944 and those born between 1960 and 1969. In particular it looks at whether they experienced tensions between their ethnic and political identities. It explores what set these Indian South Africans apart from the rest of the Indian South African community that did not join MK. It also looks at what significant differences there were between different generations of Indian MK members. The research results show that the first generation MK members believe that their MK activities were ‚the highest form of passive resistance". An explanation for this way of referring to their activities could be that this was a way of reconciling tensions between their ethnic and political identities. The first generation was also very critical of the Indian SA community. This could be because they still feel part of this community despite having a strong political consciousness that is different from most of the community. It was found that some of the features that set Indian MK members apart from other Indian South Africans were that they were not raised in very religious households and occupied a fairly low rather than ‚middle man" economic position. In addition, members of the first generation of MK members were raised in comparatively multi-racial areas. Both generations made the decision to join MK because of Indian role models. There were some marked differences between the two generations of MK veterans. Most notably, the younger did not see their activities as in line with passive resistance and they also displayed more ambivalence about their ethnic identities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CP	Communist Party
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NIYC	Natal Indian Youth Congress
NP	National Party
NRI	Non-Resident Indian
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PIO	People of Indian Origin
Renamo (MNR)	Mozambican National Resistance
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAIC	South African Indian Council
SAIO	South African Indian Organization
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SANPAD	South African Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development
SAP	South African Police
SAWVP	South African War Veterans Project
TIC	Transvaal Indian Congress

TIYC	Transvaal Indian Youth Congress
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations
ZAPU	Zimbabwean African People's Union
ZIPRA	Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There are complexities in every racial situation. Never are such matters neat and simple. They can't be. For they reach deep into history, memory, beliefs, values -- or into the hollow place where values should be.

Lillian Smith (Smith cited in Mazel, 2010)

Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) is largely remembered and documented as a black African organization (see for example, McKinley, 1997 and Lodge, 1985), while Indian resistance to apartheid is generally associated with the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses (NIC and TIC) which were informed by the philosophy of passive resistance. For the most part this is a true reflection as most MK members were indeed black Africans. However, a significant number of Indians did leave the ranks of ethnic organizations like the Indian Congress to join other, more diverse organizations. Some even felt strongly enough to become MK soldiers. This thesis sets to explore the experiences of Indian MK members and in particular looks at how they reconciled aspects of their ethnic identity with their commitment to MK.

Umkhonto we Sizwe was a group that did not just require a belief in a multi-racial ideal, but also complete dedication as MK members were often placed in dangerous situations. Many MK members were subjected to torture, imprisonment or exile for their political affiliations and activities. Indian members of MK came from a cultural background in which passive resistance was emphasised and from a community that often acted as a buffer between the privileged white community and the oppressed African community. Although the Indian community was not as privileged as the white community, they were in a safer, middle position when compared to the African community. On first consideration, it can be difficult to fathom the dedication of Indian MK members to the group, making the experiences of Indian MK members a topic of interest.

CONTEXT

Existing literature on Indian South Africans tends to focus on three main themes: the political history of the Natal Indian Congress with the emphasis on Gandhi and non-violent resistance (See Bhana. 1997, Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2004 Palmer 1956 and 1957, Pather 1999, Singh 1946, Power 1969); the history and conditions of the Indian South African community, including indenture history (See Aiyar 1925, Davies. 1963, Freund 1995, Maasdorp and Ellison 1975, Mukherji 1959, Pachai 1971, Palmer 1956 and 1957, Singh and Vawda 1988, Woods 1954, Desai and Vahed 2007, Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2002, Hey 1961); and a smaller field of study on the social identity of the community (Govinden 2008, Desai and Vahed 2010, Ebr.-Vally 2001, Vahed 2002). Although these fields of study are all important and contribute to vital areas of South African academia, there is an existing need for more literature on the experiences and identity of Indians who were members of organizations other than the Natal/Transvaal Indian Congress. This includes Indians who were part of such organizations as the Communist Party, the labour movement, Umkhonto we Sizwe, the United Democratic Front, Black Consciousness Movement and even the Pan African Congress. Writings that have been done on Indians in these organizations have tended to be biographies or autobiographies rather than broader academic overviews of Indian participation in these organizations (see Babenia 1995, Naidoo 1982 and O‟Malley 2007).

The current, growing interest in Indian South African history and in Indian South Africans‟ contribution to the struggle against apartheid is partly the result of the „150 years of Indians in South Africa‟ commemorations that took place in 2010. However, Badsha and Soske (2010) warn that the celebration of the history of Indian South Africans risks homogenizing a story that is divided in many ways (Badsha and Soske, 2010). According to Badsha and Soske, the committees organising „150 Years‟ celebrations tended to either adopt a strategy

of highlighting the heroic narratives of Indian contribution, or, in contrast, focused on non-racial unity (Badsha and Soske, 2010 also see Frederikse, J. 1990). As the Indian South African community looks back on its history, it is worth examining some of the less typical contributions made by Indian South Africans to the struggle against apartheid.

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

The overarching goal of this thesis is to explore the identities and experiences of Indian MK members. Ethnic identity is especially pertinent when discussing the Indian South African community. Although there are stratifications within the community, Indians make up a minority group within South African society and this has often resulted in a shared ethnic identity. According to Vahed (2002: 77), there is a fear within the community of losing one"s ethnic identity. This fear, according to Maharaj (2008: 25), has sometimes led to the isolation of the community which tends to be stereotyped as restrictive and rigid. The political culture of Indian organizations such as the NIC/TIC was rooted in the philosophy of *satyagraha* (a form of passive resistance which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two). On the face of it, joining an armed struggle would have gone against the principles of *satyagraha.* This thesis will look at whether this created tensions between the ethnic and political identities of Indian MK members.

In particular, I also wish to answer the following questions: did Indian MK members experience tensions between their ethnic identity and their political identity? In particular, did they feel that in order to belong to MK, they had to distance themselves from the Indian community? What set these Indian South Africans apart from the rest of the Indian South African community? Why did they join MK while most Indian South African resistance was organized through the NIC and TIC? As will be discussed later in the thesis, the community has played the role of the economic middleman (Nagel, 1994: 157). The middleman is not as

economically well off as society"s elites but is financially more secure than the mass population (Bonacich, 1973: 584). In the case of South Africa, the Indian community filled the gap between the white population and the African majority. This has resulted in a twofold effect: during times of an economic crisis, the Indian community has been seen as the economic villain, for example during the 1949 Durban race riots (this is discussed in detail in Chapter Two). The second effect was that the community was caught between its fear of the African majority and the minority government. This contributed to its feeling of vulnerability and, as a result, Maharaj argues that they tended to retreat into their cultural cocoons (Maharaj, 2008: 6). This sense of vulnerability and „otherness" was exacerbated by the apartheid state which emphasised ethnic differences in order to keep a sense of division amongst different race groups (Govinden, 2008: 26). Given these tensions, the motivation of Indian South Africans who joined MK is of interest.

A further goal of the thesis is to explore the differences between the experiences of various Indian MK members. For example, were their significant differences between early recruits and those who joined later?

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

As discussed above, academic studies on Indians who were involved in organizations outside of the Indian Congresses are few. Focusing on one area of Indian political participation and identity can strengthen the view that Indians are a monolithic ethnic group (Ramsamy, 2007: 478) and does not foster an understanding or recognition of shared histories and struggles (see Seedat and Saleh, 2009). Although there is emerging literature on Indian participation and identity in other organizations (see for example Desai and Vahed, 2010 and Seedat and Saleh, 2009), it is still a very small and growing field of study that needs more development.

While the „150 Years" project has created greater awareness of Indian contribution to the struggle, the project has also opened up a number of debates. Individuals from various communities are raising a number of important questions. For examples, Badsha and Soske (2010) ask whether commemorating an „Indian South African past" may homogenize and simplify a story that is already divided along the lines of caste, religion, class and language. Who is authorized to speak for the „Indian South African community" and what role do members of other races play in organizing these celebrations? Whether one agrees or disagrees with Badsha and Soske"s concerns, it is submitted that another risk to celebrating Indian contribution can lead to a historical romanticisation without looking at the historical, sociological and political aspects critically or academically.

Studies on the complexities of the anti-apartheid movement are needed in order to provide a nuanced and complex picture of resistance to apartheid. According to Badsha and Soske (2010) more critical studies of Indian history would help „build social and political unity" (Badsha and Soske, 2010). This may create an environment that would encourage open discussion on racial issues that plague the community.

Taking concerns such as these on board, this thesis aims to look at an area of Indian South African experience that has not been extensively explored academically. Studies of this nature are especially important during the current celebrations of Indian South African heritage where there is a danger that intricate issues will be neglected in order to romanticize history. This will do little to alleviate and deal with Afro/Indian ethnic tensions and the sense of vulnerability that still plagues the community today (Badsha and Soske, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

This thesis forms part of a larger South African-Netherlands Partnership for Alternative Development (SANPAD) project entitled the South African War Veterans Project. The

project aims to explore the impact military experience has had on both anti-apartheid and apartheid military groups. The experiences and stories of the interviewees will be archived in the South African War Veterans (SAWV) website (which can be found on http://ftp.sawarvetsproject.co.za). There will be limited access to the transcripts on the website and express permission from the SAWV project will be needed in order to view the material.

Interviews were the main research tool used in order to garner information for my particular research project. Interviews were conducted in KwaZulu Natal and in Gauteng. Interviewees were found through the snowball sampling method as described by Faugier and Sargeant (1997: 792). The first interviewee was found in KwaZulu Natal through the acquisition of a contact number from a family friend. Through this interviewee, I was able to acquire the contact details of another MK member. In the process of contacting interviewees, I got in touch with the Kathrada Foundation and this organisation assisted me in finding further interviewees, especially in Johannesburg. The Kathrada Foundation is currently based in Lenasia which is a predominately Indian area in the Gauteng province. The Foundation"s main purpose is to set up a non-racial centre dedicated to the memories of people who were part of the anti-apartheid movement.

My method of finding interviewees had both strengths and weaknesses. Snowballing is an informal way of locating members of certain population groups, which may be particularly helpful where the focus of the study deals with sensitive issues (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997: 792). However, there are weaknesses with this form of sampling. According to Faugier and Sargeant, most snowball samples will be biased towards the inclusion of individuals who travel within the same circles. The researcher is often bound by the „subjective choices of the originally selected respondents" (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997: 794). Nevertheless, according

to Van Meter, snowball sampling provides a means of studying social groups that are not easily accessible by established means of sociological research (Van Meter, 1990: 31). It provides a means of identifying hard-to-reach, „hidden" populations (Van Meter, 1990: 31 and Faugier and Sargeant, 1997: 790). Because of the underground nature of MK, interviewees were found to be suspicious and secretive until it was established that I had been referred to them by other, known MK members, suggesting that the snowball sampling method was the most appropriate one here.

The assistance of the Kathrada Foundation was generally helpful. I found that participants contacted with the assistance of the Foundation were much more willing to talk about their experiences than other interviewees. This, I believe, is because the Kathrada Foundation enjoys considerable legitimacy amongst participants. Ahmed Kathrada is a highly respected figure in the community, especially amongst anti-apartheid activists. As a result, I as the interviewer seemed to gain legitimacy in their eyes. I found participants willing to talk and interviews would often end up running much longer than the one hour allocated to them. The disadvantage with working with the Kathrada Foundation was that many of the participants had been interviewed before. As a result, their interviews sometimes came across as a bit rehearsed rather than spontaneous. The Kathrada Foundation had already interviewed the older generation of activists for the book *Men of Dynamite: Pen Portraits of MK Pioneers* (Seedat and Saleh, 2009).

In most cases, only the interviewee and I were present at the interview. However, in some cases, interviews were conducted at residential homes and family members came in and out of the room. This did not seem to concern the participants who often invited family members into the room to bring refreshments. One interview was conducted with another MK veteran in the room. The reason for this being that both participants wished to be interviewed

together as they had been a part of the same unit. However, only one interview was documented that day as one interview exceeded the time allocation; hence the second member was interviewed privately at a later date. An eighteen- year-old female exchange student from France was present at two interviews. She was brought to Johannesburg by the Kathrada Foundation for work experience. With the express permission of the participants, she sat in and assisted with note taking and photographing. Photographs were taken for the SANPAD archive.

In total, thirteen interviews were conducted with Indian former MK members: three in Durban, one in Pietermaritzburg and twelve in Johannesburg. Three additional interviewees who were not members of Umkhonto we Sizwe were also interviewed. They were members of the Natal Indian Congress, Transvaal Indian Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement. They were interviewed in order to compare and contrast their sense of their own identities with those of the Umkhonto we Sizwe members. Conversations were also conducted with two other former Indian MK members who did not wish to be formally interviewed and recorded but were willing to have a more informal, unrecorded discussion. Ten of the MK interviews were conducted with individuals born between 1929 and 1944 and three with interviewees were born between 1960 and 1969. The additional two unrecorded interviews were both conducted with individuals born between 1960 and 1969. In general participants were eager to talk to me about their experiences, but several of the younger interviewees seemed more reluctant and apprehensive than the older interviewees. This may be because except for their statements to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, they had not been interviewed about their MK experiences before. The differences between the two generations will be discussed in detail later in the thesis.

One of the weaknesses of this research is that only two women were interviewed: one from the older generation and one from the younger. Another problem that arose is the question of how exactly one defines an MK member? Many people have claimed to have been a member of MK although they did not belong on any official list or unit. Some people who conducted sabotage have also claimed to have been a part of MK even if they did not have the orders or permission from any MK commanders. It has been my experience that some of the people who claim to be a member of MK were in fact never a part of the official organization; however, they may have conducted acts of sabotage in the name of the liberation struggle. For the purpose of the research, interviewees had to have been a part of a legitimate and verified MK unit. MK members included both information gatherers and sabotage units. Both were considered a part of MK for the purposes of this thesis.

The research conducted for this thesis focused mostly on interviews. I met the participants in settings that they felt comfortable in. Various venues were chosen (homes, cafés, work offices and at the Kathrada Foundation premises). When interviewed at home, observations about photographs, ornaments and books were taken into consideration as well in order to understand the complexities of their identities more fully. For example, one participant had displayed a bust of Gandhi next to his MK medals.

Considerations when Conducting Interviews

Although there are different styles of conducting interviews (such as the informal, friendly approach or the more formal, controlled way of questioning), there are a few important qualities that are all interviews should contain: respect for the participants, an interest in what they have to say, sympathy in the appropriate places, and a flexibility to respond to any unexpected directions that the interview may take (Thompson, 1988: 196 and Lieblich, 1996: 173).

Although interviews are conducted in order to obtain information, it is vital for the researcher to have some form of background information before the interview. The more one knows of the historical background the more one is able elicit important information from the interviewee. This can also help the researcher to learn certain terms and words which can help gain the trust and respect of the participant (Webb, 1926: 361).

The preparation of questions before the interview can be a more difficult task than one may anticipate. Interviews should be semi-structured but should allow for a free-flowing conversation. The free flowing interview is used in order to record how the participant looks back on his/her life as a whole. The way that they order the story, the words that they choose, what they emphasize and what they omit are all important points of analysis (Thompson, 1988: 199). However, an interview which is completely free of questions cannot exist. Thompson (1988: 200-202) outlines a few basic principles in phrasing questions for interviews: questions should always be simple, straightforward and in familiar language. The researcher should also avoid questions that are complex in nature. This will often give the researcher an incomplete answer and will not assist in putting the participant at ease. The researcher should try and be confident throughout the interview. This is especially relevant when asking delicate personal questions. Questions should be open ended and non-leading. A leading question must especially be avoided because it can represent the researcher's own views. An exception to this is when a participant has very strong views on an issue. Here it might be valuable for the researcher to show some sympathy to his/her viewpoint in order to gain the trust of the participant.

The type of equipment can also prove to be a difficult task. Most researchers make use of recorders when they conduct interviews. However, recorders do come with problems: some less advanced recorders still make use of tapes which can run out of time and interrupt the

interview, it may also not capture the more quietly spoken parts of the interview and so forth. Despite this, recorders are the easiest and perhaps least interruptive tool that a researcher can use to in order to create a detailed transcript later on in order to analyse the participant"s interview (Samuel, 1998: 390).   However, this may arouse suspicion in some participants (Thompson, 1988: 204).

A digital tape recorder was used in all the interviews and all interviewees signed a consent form, a copy of which can be found in Appendix A. All participants gave their permission to be recorded although a few of them seemed a little reluctant about being taped. It was mainly people who were in high government positions who seemed concerned about the tape recorder. One participant explained to me that there had been a case in the past in which an academic published interview information that was thought to be off the record.   The wariness of government officials was thus perhaps an understandable concern.

In the case of my own interview research, the interviews that took place tended to be informal and sympathetic. Each participant required a different type of response from me. Some who had come to terms with their past enjoyed reminiscing about their lives. If this was the case then the interview would be more informal and casual. If the participant still found talking about their past a difficult task, then I would have to take a much more empathetic listener role.

Questions were prepared for the interviews (see Appendix B) but these questions were only used as a starting point. I deviated quite a lot from the original questions and modified them for each interviewee. Sometimes I abandoned the questions altogether and just allowed the questions to flow. Interruptions of their speeches took place mostly to ask them to clarify or elaborate on a point that they made. The quotes used in the thesis have been altered slightly in order to correct the grammar and remove repetitions.

Limitations of Interviews:

Although interviewing has great potential for various disciplines, its chief drawback and difficulty is the lack of accepted principles on how to interpret the data. Ochberg (1996: 98) and Knudsen (1990: 123) display concern over the „truthfulness" of the interpretation of the interviews. However, Chase (1996: 55) argues that the purpose of interviewing is not to impose definitive interpretations on the interviewees" stories or even to challenge the meaning that participants put on their stories. The goal is to understand the cultural processes and social meanings that are unconsciously a part of the participants" stories. Despite Chase"s definition of the goal of interviewing, invariably the interview becomes not just a lived experience of the narrator but also a creation of the researcher. Price quotes Fine who warns academics who attempt to capture and analyse the lives of people that they should not assume to speak on behalf of their subjects:

> No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself…only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way…I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer (Fine cited in Price, 1996: 213).

This quote draws attention to some of the main questions (as well as criticisms) of narrative interviews: whose story is it anyway? Which interpretations are the most authentic? What criteria do we judge this by (Andrews, 2008: 92)? These are the kinds of questions that I as the researcher have to take into consideration when I try to interpret the construction of the interviewees" identities.

Interviews involve dealing with people and their lives at a very personal level. The use of individuals" stories places participants in a much more vulnerable and exposed position than other forms of qualitative studies. This places a great responsibility on the shoulders of

researchers. The ethical standards that need to be adhered to can be briefly encapsulated as follows: protect the participants from harm, protect their confidentiality and ensure that they provide informed consent before they participate in the research (Chase, 1996: 45).

Participant vulnerability brings home the risks of conducting such research. Interview analysis is not just a re-telling of the stories that the interviewees provide. It also involves extensive analysis. For many participants the experience of reading their lives through the researcher"s eyes can be disconcerting (Chase, 1996: 50). People are labelled, their memories dissected and analysed without much concern for the effects that this research may have on the participant. The researcher may provoke what Josselson (1996: 65) refers to as mirror transference: the participant starts to regard the researcher as a carrier of a core part of themselves. Therefore, the failure of the researcher to report in the analysis something which the participant feels is of great importance may be wounding. A piece of information that is left out by the analyst may make the participant feel let down because „after so much time, labour, and intense inner resistance" this painful memory has finally been brought to the light of day and yet dismissed (Josselson, 1996: 65).

Lieblich (1996) highlights a concern relating particularly to participants who suffered from a traumatic event. Although telling one"s story is often a form of catharsis, it can also be dangerous to unearth memories of traumatic events that have long been repressed in the participant"s memory. Not all interviewers are trained in the school of psychology. So what does a researcher do when painful memories are brought to the surface? Lieblich uses her research participants as an example of such situation. Through interviewing holocaust victims in Beit Hashita, Lieblich found herself dealing with informants who still had not dealt with their painful memories. She tried solving her dilemma by using sympathy and providing

the participants with a sincere listener. However, in this small community she found her role was more of an „emotional catalyst" than anything else (Lieblich, 1996: 177).

In conducting this particular research I did find that most of the participants were open and friendly. Many of the older MK veterans had told their story on numerous occasions and enjoyed reminiscing. However, the younger participants found telling their stories difficult and painful. This was especially daunting for me as I have no experience dealing with this kind of trauma. Through my connection with the SANPAD project, I had been briefed a little on this and I would have been able to refer the participants to counselling services if it was deemed necessary. However, none of the participants needed to be referred to a psychologist.

A feature of this project is that all interviews will be archived with the express permission of the participants. This provides a means of making sure that none of the participants feel as though they were left out or as though some section of their narrative was omitted. The thesis itself will not mention the names of the participants in order to keep their confidentiality, but their names will be mentioned on the online archive, to which very limited access is allowed. Participants are aware of this and have the right to remove themselves from the archive.

Interviewers have to have the right skills in order to obtain information from the participants. They have to have the ability to establish a rapport and gain the trust of the people who are entrusting them with their life stories. A researcher"s personal characteristics may either benefit him/her or leave him/her at a disadvantage. Characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity will unwittingly play a part in the manner in which the participant will treat the researcher (Benney, et al. 2003: 35). For example, men and women may talk more conservatively in each other"s company when compared to a group of people of the same sex (Benney, et al. 2003: 35). Even if a researcher has undergone interview training, s/he is still a person of an observable age and sex (Benney, et al. 2003: 36).

I am a young, Indian woman and my personal characteristics had their advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages included the fact that because I am a young woman, and some participants may have left out certain bits of information to either make themselves look better or to protect me from hearing about some horrendous events. I should stress, however, that I do not know whether or not they did indeed leave out information, so I can merely speculate about the extent to which my age proved to be a disadvantage. The advantages do seem to outweigh the disadvantages. Because I am also from the Indian community, many of the participants may have felt more comfortable than they may have been with someone from a completely different culture. Many also seemed happy that a young student was taking an interest in this particular section of South African history and used the interview as an opportunity to discuss other people who had done heroic deeds and had been forgotten. I am also very soft spoken and reserved by nature and I do believe that participants felt more at ease having sympathetic female ear to listen to their stories.

TERMINOLOGY

The term „African" will be used to refer to people of black African ancestry while „black" will be used to refer to people of Indian, African and Coloured descent. „Black" will be used in this context because the Black Consciousness movement used this term in order to refer to all three racial groups. The only time the terms will be used differently is when quoting a reference or an interviewee. The Indian community living in South Africa will be referred to as „Indian South Africans". This term has been chosen in favour of the term „South African Indian" because the minority status is most often provided first when discussing other ethnic/minority groups (for example, Irish Americans, white South Africans).

The term „ethnic identity" was chosen over the term „racial identity". The reason for this is because racial identity is usually portrayed as involuntary and imposed by the state and others.

Ethnic identity is often understood as more fluid and optional. Although Indians" racial classification under apartheid affected their ethnic identity, their identities were often complex. The term „ethnic" is used to reflect this complexity and the fluidity of the identities.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapters Two and Three provide the necessary background needed to explore the research objectives described above, which are addressed in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Two provides a general background of both Indian South African political history as well as an overview of MK. Chapter Three examines ethnic identity and how it pertains specifically to Indian South Africans. Chapter Four provides an outline of themes which emerged from the interviews. This will be followed by Chapter Five which provides an analysis of the interviews.

CHAPTER TWO:
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In order to explore the identity of Indian MK members, it is necessary to provide some historical context both about Indian South Africans and about MK. While this Chapter does not provide an exhaustive historical account, it briefly sets out the historical context necessary to understand the chapters to follow. The Chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will discuss the history of the Indian South African Community in order to provide a backdrop to the events that shaped the mindset of the community from which the interviewees emerged. The second part of this Chapter will provide a brief history of the struggle against apartheid, with a particular focus on the emergence and development of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). While the main purpose of this latter part of the Chapter is to give a brief history of the organization, effort has been made to highlight the history of Indian participation in MK given the focus of this research project.

A HISTORY OF INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS

From 1860 to 1911 it is estimated that over 152 000 Indian immigrants arrived in the British colony of Natal in South Africa with men making up 62% of the total, women 25% and children 13% (Freund, 1995:3). They arrived under the indentured system, which many refer to as a form of slavery with a different name (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 10). It can be difficult to understand why a colony with an enormous African population would opt to import indentured labourers from India. Drawing on Bhana and Brain (1990), Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2000) states that Indians were brought to Natal because the Colonial state could not get the Zulu population to work as exploited labourers. It was not that they were unaccustomed to agricultural labour; rather it was that the Zulu population still owned and

controlled most of the land in KwaZulu-Natal and therefore they did not need to work for the Colonial state (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 13). Indentured labourers had to enter into five year contracts whence, at the end of their term, they could choose to enter into a second five year contract in order to qualify for a free trip back to India, or they could remain in Natal (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 88). The majority elected to stay in Natal and become hawkers, shopkeepers, waiters or gardeners. From 1860 to 1936, agriculture remained the largest source of Indian employment (Lemon, 1990: 133). A smaller minority chose to travel to the diamond fields in the Transvaal (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 88). Gradually, a large number of labourers left the agricultural sector and a new class of rural shopkeepers (*dukawallahs)* was formed (Padayachee, and Hart, 2000: 23).

There was also a smaller, wealthier population of non-indentured Indians who made up the merchant class (Kuper, 1960: 45). They came to Natal as traders from about 1872 and were referred to as „passenger Indians‟ because they paid their own way to the country (Padayachee, 1999: 393). Although the majority of working class Indians lived in Natal, there were many from a commercial occupational background that left to live in other parts of the country (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 13).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi developed the principle of *satyagraha.* He arrived in South Africa as a lawyer in 1893 and quickly became sensitised to the anti-Indian discrimination that was being meted out to the community by an increasing number of discriminatory laws (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 28). This led him to establish the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in 1894 and later the Transvaal British Indian Association (later known as the Transvaal Indian Congress or TIC) in 1903 (Seedat and Saleh, 2009:29).

Initially, the main activity of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Congresses was to fight restrictive legislation through writing petitions and letters. However, by 1906 there was

enough discontent amongst the merchant Indians to launch an all out civil disobedience campaign. This campaign was shaped by the philosophical ideas of *satyagraha* (often loosely translated as passive resistance) that Gandhi began to develop. This philosophy can be more directly translated as „truth force". The idea behind the campaign was that the „enemy should always be given the opportunity to see the error of his or her way" (Bhana, 1997: 25). Accordingly, in the struggle against the enemy one should always maintain the highest moral level, one should never lower oneself to violence and should always ensure that the adversary is protected from deceit and underhanded tactics (Bhana, 1997: 25, also see Sharp, 1973: 84).

On the 31st of May 1910, South Africa became a Union. This meant that the four colonies united and the country became a unitary state (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 181). By this period, Indians numbered around 150 000, 89% of whom lived in Natal (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 88). The community had already been subjected to discrimination within the four colonies. The new Union of South Africa created a number of new restrictions including a judgement that nullified Indian marriages and the prohibition of further Indian immigration in 1913, with the exception of wives and children of people who were already in the country (Oakes, 1989: 279 and Saunders and Southey, 2001: 88). It also maintained the much hated three pound tax on ex indentured workers. In 1913, a *satyagraha* campaign under Gandhi was launched in order to oppose these discriminatory laws. Gandhi achieved mass support from the poor and middle class Indian community. Although it is true that the 1913 strike did become violent with protestors being attacked and violently resisting attack, the concept of *satyagraha* which guided the campaign emphasised non-violence (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 29). For several decades after the Union was formed, the Indian community was regarded as temporary residents in South Africa (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 88).

Gandhi-inspired political mobilisation carried on well into the 20th century. For example many Indian South Africans engaged in a passive resistance campaign in 1946 when the Draft Bill for the Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act (known as the „Pegging Act") was passed. This Act prevented Indians from owning or acquiring property in areas that were reserved for white people for a three year period. When the Pegging Act expired in 1946 it was replaced with a similar Act known as the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act (also known as the „Ghetto Act")(Pachai, 1979: 49).

During this period the leaders of the NIC and TIC came under severe criticism. A growing militant segment of the NIC and TIC accused the old leadership of being conservative, with narrow interests that were more favoured towards the business class. While the old leaders had experience and prestige on their side, the young new leaders (led by Dr. G.M. Naicker and Dr. Y.M. Dadoo) were more determined and militant, although this militancy was still in line with non-violent resistance (Pachai, 1979: 49). The growing disillusionment with the old leadership also stemmed from their cooperation with the Indian and South African governments on an Assisted Emigration Scheme in 1932. The aim of this scheme was to look at possibilities of relocating Indian South Africans to other colonies. This caused a strong division amongst Indian South Africans and resulted in the Colonial Born and Indian Settler's Association being formed. The new, youthful third-generation of South African born Indians were claiming their rights as not only Indians but also as South Africans (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 31). In the mid-1940s, the NIC and TIC were taken over by the new young leaders, Dadoo and Naicker, who launched a new *satyagraha* campaign in 1946 in protest to the Ghetto Act. This was the largest Indian passive resistance campaign in South African history and as a result the Ghetto Act could not be effectively enforced (Reddy, E.S., 1997).

On 26th May 1948, the National Party (NP) under Dr. D.F. Malan, in alliance with the Afrikaner Party, came into power (Ross, 2000: 114). It would remain in power for the next forty-six years. According to Ross, the election was won under the NP"s slogan of „apartheid", meaning „separateness" (Ross, 2000: 115). When it came to apartheid implementation, the NP did not come into power with a fully operational programme of action. However, from the start it was clear that it would entail „the recognition and separation of specific groups of people"(Ross, 2000: 116).

After the NP victory, the position of the Indian community became more perilous. The Sauer Report, which had provided the framework policy of the apartheid manifesto during the election, stated that the Indian population should be regarded as „an immigrant community" (Oakes, 1989: 384). The limited representation that Indians had in parliament and the Natal Provincial Council (which had been granted to them under the Indian Representation Act of 1946) was immediately scrapped. The Group Areas Act, which restructured the pattern of residential settlement and trading areas according to ethnicity and race, created one of the greatest difficulties for the community (Oakes, 1989: 384). Racial and ethnic divisions were exacerbated by the Group Areas Act in 1950 which resulted in „differentiation of spheres of life based on race and culture"(Govinden, 2008: 36). Minority groups such as the Indian and coloured communities were used as economic, material and political buffers between the white community and the African community (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 191). However, some sectors within the Indian community suffered disproportionately from the Group Areas Act. For example, many traders in the small towns of Natal and Transvaal lost their livelihood when they were removed from the midst of the majority of their customers to live in the Indian group areas (Lemon, 1990: 134).

It was during this period in 1948 that the cleavage within the NIC and TIC became permanent. The moderates of the NIC and TIC formed the South African Indian Organisation (SAIO) leaving the radical new leaders in charge of the NIC and TIC (Pachai, 1979: 49). The South African government recognized the SAIO and were of the opinion that they were more representative of Indian opinion (however, the more likely scenario is that they saw the SAIO as less of a threat). In contrast Naicker and Dadoo, the new leaders of the NIC and TIC, had their passports impounded and were accused of being „communist agitators" (Pachai, 1979: 49).

According to Maharaj and Desai Indians were seemingly fast becoming a significant force in the economy (Maharaj, 2008: 26 and Desai, 1996:88). However, according to Hart, although the community strived towards self-improvement through education and commerce, economic improvement disproportionately affected Indian commerce and the professional labour market (Hart, 2000: 689). Nevertheless, in the 1960s, the National Party boasted that Indians were a great success story for apartheid. Although the majority of Indians did not fall into this economic bracket they became a highly visible minority (Hart, 2000: 689). Many people within the Indian community felt caught between their fear of the African masses and their dislike of the minority government. Some analysts (see Maharaj, 2008 and Desai, 1996) describe Indian South Africans as playing the role of middlemen minorities and argue that this contributed to racial discrimination by the indigenous majority against Indians (Maharaj, 2008: 26). Middleman minorities occupy an intermediate economic position and can be seen as a threat to a group that is in a lower economic position (Desai, 1996: 88).

In 1949 riots broke out in Durban when Indian homes, shops and persons were attacked by Africans (Hunt and Walker, 1979: 181). Bonacich argues that this conflict occurred because of the conflict of interest between „buyer and seller, renter and landlord, client and

professional" (Bonacich, 1973: 589). The increase in prices of property, food and supplies were blamed on the middleman Indian community. The escalating inflation of commodity prices was often out of their control, but as middlemen, Indian traders became scape-goats (Bonacich, 1973: 589). Although a proportionally large percentage of South African Indians are working class, these working class Indians are often grouped together with middle and high income earners (Desai, 1996: 92). Soske quotes Woods to this effect: "To the casual onlooker the obvious wealth of some Indian traders with well established premises and first class fittings and stock is apt to give the wrong idea. The other side of the picture, however, shows many small back street traders whose turnover is probably low" (quoted in Soske, 2009: 31). Although statistics show that Indians were advantaged relative to other black South Africans, their status was not as high as some people believed it to be. The causes of the riots were also partly due to the understandable frustrations that existed because Indians enjoyed certain "privileges" that were not shared by Africans - such as the freedom from pass laws.

The 1950s brought with it mass action campaigns including the initiation of the Defiance Campaign in 1952. It is often reckoned that the Defiance Campaign was extraordinary in two ways: the first related to the fact that the liberation organizations involved in the Campaign mobilised as a wide a spectrum of opinions as possible against the NP and its apartheid laws. Walter Sisulu stated that the Defiance Campaign had "the effect of making the people confident and fearless, prepared to defy laws, to be prepared to go to jail and meet any situation. The Campaign brought about a situation in which people were not arrested just by chance, but by plan" (quoted in Suttner, 2008: 22). In other words, it was an event that mobilised people and made people defiant. The second was that it was one of the first times in South African history that African, Indian, white and coloured organizations worked together in order to achieve a common goal. A wide spectrum of people across all racial lines

worked together in a campaign of extreme non-violent resistance. Tactics included civil disobedience, boycotts and strikes. These campaigns sought to challenge the legitimacy of apartheid (Seedat, and Saleh, 2009: 34). Rocky Williams states that the „Defiance Campaign was significant in that it provided a compelling example of how the principles of non-racialism could be applied in practice" (Williams, 2006: 8). These same organizations (the Coloured People"s Organisation, the ANC, the NIC and TIC) were to form the „Congress Alliance" in 1954 and in 1955 worked together to form the Freedom Charter (Williams, 2006: 8). However, the idea that the Congress Alliance was non-racial is open to attack in that although these organizations worked closely together, membership of these individual organizations still remained racially exclusive. According to Van der Westhuizen (2007, 73) the Defiance Campaign also brought to light that the NP government would not listen to petitions and protests. Such movements were not seen as a manifestation of civil rights but rather criminal activity. Although the Defiance Campaign was marked with euphoria, it also made members of the Congress alliance more aware that a new, more drastic step would have to be taken soon in order to achieve equality for all race groups (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 73).

In 1961, the NP finally declared the Indian community a permanent part of the South African population (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 89). In 1964, a nominated National Indian Council was established (which later became the South African Indian Council in 1968). At the end of the 1970s, provision was made for 40 of its 45 members to be elected (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 89). However, in 1981 strong opposition to the council resulted in only 6% of the registered voters turning out (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 89).

For the Indian community, the government"s post-war economic strategy saw a burst of economic growth in the 1960s and early 1970s (Padayachee, 1999: 394). Although the white

community were the major beneficiaries, the Indian community was able to use its relatively better skills (such as English language proficiency and somewhat better education) to good effect. According to Padayachee, Indian unemployment nearly disappeared in the 1960s and early 1970s. Although the majority of Indians were still working and lower-middle class, there were a growing number of Indian doctors, lawyers, academics, accountants and engineers (Padayachee, 1999: 321).

The NIC had become inactive as a result of political harassment, but was revived in 1972 when it was revived by Mewa Ramgobin (Padayachee, 1999: 394). Mewa Ramgobin was born in 1932 in Natal. He was highly influenced by Gandhi and became one of the key players in the South African Indian political struggle. In the 1970s Ramgobin began work on reviving the NIC and he became the President of the organisation (ULWAZI, 2010). The NIC"s leadership consisted of a new, young cadre of students who took control of the organization"s strategic activities from the mid-1970s. They led to the nation-wide student and community protests in 1980 which played an important role in the United Democratic Movement. In 1984 the Tri-cameral Parliament was introduced. This provided limited political representation for the coloured and Indian communities. Africans were still excluded from parliament. The NIC provided the backbone of the anti-tricameral movement. The NIC"s relationship with the ANC under a new generation of leaders is explored below.

The NIC played a role in supporting its senior alliance partner, the ANC, after the unbanning of the liberation movements. However, its exclusively Indian membership had become a hotly debated issue in the 1980s and 1990s. Many Indian South Africans had turned away from ethnic-based politics and had risen to leadership positions in non-racial liberation organizations and trade union movements (Padayachee, 1999: 394). Its principle objective after the unbanning was to win support from the Indian community for the ANC during the

1994 election. This intention can largely seen to be a failure because the ANC overall only received about 30 – 35% of the total Indian vote in 1994 (Padayachee, 1999: 394). Since 1994 the NIC has been disbanded and the only ethnic based Indian political organization that now remains is the conservative Indian-dominated Minority Front.

The demise of apartheid has forced Indian South Africans to rethink their place in the country (Ebr.-Vally, 2001: 179). According to Ebr.-Vally (2001: 179), the loss of the comfort of living within one‟s own perimeters has presented a threat to old communal values. In a study conducted by Singh (2005), he states that the post-apartheid Indian South African community feels a sense of helplessness because of their ethnic minority status (Singh, 2005: 165).

HISTORY OF UMKHONTO WE SIZWE (MK)

Umkhonto we Sizwe (meaning „Speak of the Nation‟) grew out of the African National Congress (ANC) which had first been established in 1912 when it was called the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The primary goal of the SANNC when it was first established was to oppose the racially exclusive franchise (Odeni, 1994: 6). Its early tactics were moderate and included petitioning the white minority government of the day. In 1923 the organisation was renamed the African National Congress, but it remained a moderate movement up until the 1940s. At this time, it was reinvigorated with the rise of a new generation who were influenced by the ideologies of African nationalism (Worden, 1998: 10). African nationalism is an ideology which aims to give black Africans „a sense of common identity as a means of obtaining political independence‟ (Worden, 1998: 11). The new ANC called for more active opposition and it was especially influenced by the members of the newly formed ANC Youth League (such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Anton Lembede). In response to the implementation of apartheid policies, the ANC joined forces with the TIC, NIC and South African Communist Party (Worden, 1998: 10).

The ANC began to come into increasing conflict with the apartheid government, but it was the events surrounding the Pan-African Congress's (PAC) anti-pass campaign in 1960 which provided the catalyst that the government needed to finally ban the ANC and PAC. The much hated pass laws were designed to restrict movement of African people in the urban „white" areas. The PAC opened its first nationwide campaign with this large anti-pass campaign where all Africans were urged to refuse to carry their passes and to voluntarily allow themselves to be arrested (Desai, 2010: 356). On the opening day of the campaign, police fired guns into a crowd of demonstrators outside the police station in Sharpeville. Although the exact number of casualties is not known, it's estimated that 69 people were killed and over 186 injured (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 36). The government reacted to this by enacting the Unlawful Organisations Act, under which organisations such as the ANC and PAC were declared illegal. In conjunction with this, hundreds of political leaders were arrested. Under these radically changed circumstances, the ANC was forced to operate underground. After the Sharpeville shootings, a State of Emergency was called and the ANC was banned and some of its leadership went into exile. From the 1960s, under the presidency of Oliver Tambo, the ANC had its headquarters in Lusaka, Dar-es-Salaam and London (Worden, 1998: 11). Although it was the symbol of opposition outside of South Africa, it was difficult to maintain a high profile in the country while it was banned. It took the tragedy of the Soweto uprising (this will also be discussed in greater detail later in the Chapter) to increase its support again (Worden, 1998: 11). This was because the ANC was able to benefit from the number of youths who left the country and were recruited into its ranks.

The Formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe

> The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or
> fight. That time has come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice

> but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.....
>
> MK Manifesto, 16 December 1961 (Johns, 1973:271)

At a secret meeting of the ANC's national executive in June 1961, Nelson Mandela presented a memorandum arguing that the time had come to turn to armed struggle. The executive agreed that „although the ANC would not abandon the policy of non-violence, it would not discipline those of its members who decided to do so" (Oakes, 1989: 410). With the tacit approval of its mother organization, Mandela and other members of the ANC and the South African Communist Party met at Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia to set up their operational headquarters and began to establish its regional networks and so Umkhonto we Sizwe, or MK, was born (Oakes, 1989: 410). Initially, the proposed activity was only to take the form of economic sabotage (Worden, 1999: 157). MK's manifesto stated that the liberation movement had always pursued a policy of non-violence, but that because non-violent protest had so often been responded to by the state with violence and repression, resistance need no longer only be non-violent (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 39). The manifesto stated that MK „supports the national liberation movement, and our members, jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement" (cited in Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 38). According to Seedat and Saleh, the manifesto was unambiguous in pointing out that MK operated under the guidance of the ANC (the „liberation movement") in order to distinguish itself from purely militaristic organisations (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 39).

The first attacks began on the 15th and 16th of December 1961 in Durban, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. It was hoped that these bombings would convince the government to change its policies before the stage was reached for civil war (Oakes, 1989: 410). For the next eighteen months, an estimated two hundred sabotage attacks took place.

Indian South African, the NIC/TIC and MK

It is very difficult to establish how many Indian South Africans were members of MK. People did not know everyone within the network as it was important to keep such information to a minimum and no official database exists with such information. The need for clandestine operations meant that cadres would only know MK members within their immediate circles. Often even known cadres would use *noms de guerres* in order to hide their identities and ethnic identities. However, while it is difficult to determine exactly how many Indians were MK members, it is clear that a small, but significant number of Indian South Africans played a role in MK.

The turn to armed violence on the part of the ANC was a concern to the Indian Congresses. Although they had a strong alliance with the ANC, they also prided themselves on their long historical stand on non-violent resistance. Ismail Meer, a leading figure in the South African Indian Congress, describes the standpoint and the debate between the ANC, TIC and NIC on the matter:

> Around August/September 1961, the national executive of the banned ANC met secretly on a farm in Groutville, Natal, under the chairmanship of Chief Albert Luthuli, On the same night the Indian Congresses met in Tongaat. We were preparing for the issue to be discussed at the joint executives of the Congresses to be held the next evening…. Finally, we agreed that we would go to the joint meeting with the ANC, as we felt that there was still the possibility of using non-violent methods of struggle, but that we would not stand in the way of the ANC if it decided otherwise (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 37).

Although the Indian Congresses did have a strong standpoint against violence, there may have been an underlying understanding that a turn to violence may be necessary, even if they did see the formation of an ANC military wing as premature at that period in time. According to an interviewed NIC leader who was interviewed for the purposes of this project, the Indian Congresses also had to accept many of their own members joining the armed

struggle. Although their standpoint was still officially one of non-violence, they did not stop members from joining MK.

The Post-Rivonia Years: The „Tranquil‟ 1960s and the Morogoro Conference

MK was to receive two major blows early in its launch. The entire leadership of the organization was arrested in 1963 at its headquarters at the Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia. All of these prominent members (including Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mahlaba and Walter Sisulu) were given life sentences at the subsequent trial (Motumi, 1994: 84). Hundreds of incriminating documents were found at Rivonia, including Operation Mayibuye, an MK proposal for guerrilla war (Oakes, 1989: 412). In the same year a nineteen operatives were charged under the sabotage act in the Pietermaritzburg Sabotage Trial. Most of the accused were sentenced to long terms on Robben Island (South African Democracy Education Trust, 2004: 113).With the government bringing down its iron fist more than ever, the weakened guerrilla army had to establish itself as an externally based army. Unfortunately, this proved to be a more difficult task than anticipated. Neighbouring countries such as Rhodesia, Mozambique, Bechaunaland and Angola were still run by colonial administrators and were hostile to the presence of MK cadres (Motumi, 1994: 85). Nearby states like Swaziland and Lesotho were too economically reliant on South Africa to provide any help to any of the liberation movements (Lodge, 1983: 295). Moreover some countries that were willing to provide help to the anti-apartheid movements showed considerable scepticism of MK because of its multi-racial nature. MK membership from the outset was open to all races whereas the mother organization (the ANC) had kept its membership limited to Africans. In Ghana, Nkrumah‟s followers showed more sympathy towards the PAC because of its pan-African ideology (Johns, 1973: 273). MK and ANC representatives found themselves facing the cold shoulder in other countries where its rival the PAC was seen as the real

representative of the South African liberation struggle. The ANC did however manage to form an alliance with Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and conducted joint operations against the Rhodesian army (Lodge, 1983: 297). The concept behind this union was that without any other options, MK needed to enter South Africa via Rhodesia's Matebeleland (Motumi, 1994: 85). This mission was a major failure for this particular MK unit, also known as the Luthuli Detachment. ZIPRA (Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army was the armed wing of ZAPU) and MK ended up in battle with the Rhodesian army and the South African Defence Force in Wankie and Sipolilo. This battle raged between 1967 until late 1968. Although MK and ZIPRA put up considerable resistance, they suffered many casualties (Motumi, 1994: 85).

By 1968 MK was in deep trouble. With the loss of the Wankie Campaign, their only hope of establishing a strong network in South Africa seemed to be lost. It became near impossible to establish a permanent presence in the country, which made the formulation of strategies unrealistic. Because it was unable to launch any military or political actions from the inside, the ANC had to rely on building international sympathy (Louw, 2004: 123). Within MK camps boredom, frustration and lethargy became common place. These conditions often resulted in ,producing mutiny, factionalism, escapist delusions, or apathy in exile groups" (Louw, 2004:123).

To make matters worse, internal support for the ANC and MK was not increasing very much. During this period there was a lull in political activity. To understand the ,tranquillity" of the 1960s it is important to understand that this was a period which saw the banning of the major liberation movements and it also saw the government flex its power like never before. A whole generation of leaders were arrested or banned. The police were given power to arrest and detain anyone that they saw as potential threats. The radical press was silenced through

government intimidation and threats and police recruited informers to spy on political activity and also to infiltrate the ranks of MK (Lodge, 1983: 321). The government was feared enough for a while to keep the masses down.

It is also argued by some that the concept of the homelands system was popular among many middle class African people (Louw, 2004: 123). The concept of separate development could prove to be beneficial to them in the long run. The understanding was that these new areas would need qualified men and women to take up new positions. At this time, the vast majority of ANC support had come from the urban African population. The ANC had hardly any support from the rural population and as a result was in terrible danger of becoming a politically insignificant entity. The ANC"s position was made more difficult by the NP government"s divide and rule strategies that undermined ANC support in the rural areas. Without much support, the idea of an internal armed struggle was becoming more and more unlikely (Louw, 2004: 123).

The ANC"s popularity within the urban African setting was also challenged by the Black Consciousness movement that was led by the charismatic Steve Biko. The idea behind Black Consciousness was that apartheid had done more than just create a system of oppression and poverty. It had led to African people feeling a sense of inferiority and self hatred (Fatton, 1986: 4). According to Fatton „their colour had become a symbol of sin, their history an episode of savage barbarism, and their culture a badge of backwardness and ignorance" (Fatton, 1986:4-5). The Black consciousness movement addressed this issue and argued that before apartheid could be overthrown or before any significant development to African development could be met, African people had to be liberated from their own minds and their own feelings of inferiority (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 7). This movement and attitude was especially popular amongst students.

In 1969 the Morogoro Conference was called to discuss solutions to the crisis that the ANC leadership faced. New policies that emphasised the need for an armed overthrow of the state were re-established. The rural areas were to be the main base for an internal armed movement. Ngculu refers to the Morogoro Conference as the watershed moment in the history of the ANC and MK (Ngculu, 2003: 243). He states that „the emphasis on the need for internal reconstruction of the ANC and the building of the underground that emerged from the conference proved to be a good strategy‟ (Ngculu, 2003: 243). However, while it is true that the Morogoro Conference allowed for the ANC to become multi-racial, it was only to a limited extent. Only ANC structures below the National Executive Council level were opened to membership by non-Africans. It was only in the Kabwe Conference in 1985 that the National Executive Council and the general membership was opened up to all races.

Louw argues that the ANC might have been a little too naïve on its stance on military activity (Louw, 2004: 123). South Africa was geographically ill-suited for guerrilla warfare and it is surprising that the ANC did not recognise this fact at the conference. This is made even more surprising by the fact that the main supporter of the ANC was its urban constituency and not the rural people, thus making it difficult to see how the ANC could be confident that people in the rural areas would pick up arms to help support the ANC or MK an organization that they did not even support. One important development at this conference was that for the first time in its history, the ANC became a multi-racial organization. However, although ANC membership was opened to white, Indians and coloureds, it was reaffirmed that the ANC would remain primarily concerned with African nationalist issues and members of other racial groups would not be allowed to dominate the organization (Louw, 2004: 124). In the 1970s the ANC‟s popularity increased. The hopes and aspirations of the ANC and MK were raised between 1975 and 1976 when early MK commanders (Joe Gqabi, Indres Naidoo, Ismael Ebrahim and Andrew Masondo) who had been imprisoned on Robben Island were

released. However, one can still argue that increased support for the ANC and MK was not so much of the result of the ANC or MK activity but rather the result of a defining moment in South African history: the Soweto uprising.

The Soweto Uprising and its impact on MK

In the 1970s South African Prime Minister, B.J. Vorster and the NP government faced rising anger among the African population. In 1973 over 200 000 African labourers took to the streets in Durban, East London and Witwatersrand. The government failed to take into account the changing political atmosphere that was affected by the economic recession, the anger among the black labour force as well as the new political assertiveness among the African youth and students that was influenced in part by the Black Consciousness Movement (Lodge, 1983: 328). The final spark that caused the fire and contributed to the sudden revival of the ANC and MK happened on June 16 1976 when police opened fire in Soweto on a group of over 10 000 students who were protesting against important subjects being taught in Afrikaans. This occurrence shocked not only South Africans but also the international community. The world became more sympathetic to the plight of black South Africans and sanctions were introduced. After the events of 1976 a massive number of youths left South Africa to join the ranks of MK. This phenomenon in MK history is referred to as „The June 16th Detachment" (Lodge, 1983: 326). To understand this sudden upsurge one has to appreciate the emotions associated with the concept that African children were suddenly in the midst of a conflict that was subjecting them to state violence over and over again. In a democracy it is often the state that protects children when their parents cannot. In this case it was the state that was the enemy. A few thousand youth/teenagers left the country to join the liberation movement.

In the next six years after the Soweto uprising, the ANC once again re-emerged as the political group with the greatest support (although it again faced competition in the form of the Inkatha Freedom Party). MK benefited from this increase in political activity. Although MK had already started to infiltrate back into South Africa before the 1976 uprisings, it was able to hit back with greater force than ever before. In the 1980s, violence began to be seen by mainly within the liberation movements as a legitimate means towards liberation. There was growing militancy and unity amongst the black community that narrowed the gap between different generations, classes and races (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 29). The 1980s also saw the formation of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) which was a student organization created in 1979. The 1980s was a period of student unrests, protests and riots. School boycotts saw a growing militancy amongst the youth and served as a political catalyst for many students in the 1980s (SAHO, 2010).

The primary attacks in the late 1970s occurred in the townships and the main targets for sabotage included buildings such as railway links, administrative buildings and police stations. The main concern for MK seemed to be with infiltrating back into South Africa (Lodge, 1983: 340). In the 1980s the guerrilla attacks became much more dangerous and deadly. In 1981 the „Indian Affairs" building was blasted in order to show disdain for the South African Indian Council Elections which were taking place the next day. In 1983 19 SADF and SAP personnel were killed when MK exploded bombs outside of the South African Air Force Head Quarters and the South African Defence Force Head Quarters (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 180). The hostility between the government and the anti-apartheid movement grew even larger when the NP retaliated by executing anti-apartheid activists, many of whom were not in fact affiliated to the MK.1985 became known as the „Year of the Cadre" because the number of attacks grew larger and more visible. MK was also becoming a tactically more violent organization. Targets were now situated in business

and industrial areas and attacks took place during working hours (Lodge, 1983: 340). Between 1977 and 1989 over 1 500 MK attacks took place in South Africa (Saunders and Southey, 2001: 180).

Before 1984 the ANC"s strategy was to use its military wing to gain popularity through „Armed Propaganda". The concept of armed propaganda „was to demonstrate that the enemy was not invincible and that the people"s organisation, the ANC, had not been vanquished" (Ngculu, 2009: 177). In 1984 circumstances changed for the ANC and MK. State President PW Botha entered into agreements with some neighbouring states, the condition being that they had to deny assistance to the ANC and MK. South Africa removed their public support of Renamo (the Mozambican National Resistance) who were fighting against the Mozambique government in order to force the country to prohibit MK soldiers from using its borders to enter South Africa (Motumi, 1995: 98). It later transpired that Swaziland had also entered into similar agreements with South Africa a few years earlier. MK cadres in Swaziland and Mozambique faced arrest, deportation, abductions and at times even became the targets of hit squad activities (Motumi, 1995: 99). MK presence only became strong again because cadres were able to infiltrate back into the country via Botswana as well as Zimbabwe. Despite pressure, Botswana did not enter into a security agreement with the South African government.

With the „Armed Propaganda" campaign succeeding in re-establishing ANC popularity and ideology in South Africa, the next step needed to be taken (especially because of government activity to close off all their contacts in Africa). In 1984, the ANC met at Kabwe to discuss the next move for MK. Two main decisions were reached that changed the aim and form of MK. Firstly, the guerrilla movements became much more violent. Previously MK had tried to avoid civilian casualties to the best of its abilities. At the conference, it was decided that

MK soldiers could not spend as much time and effort as they had in the past trying to avoid civilian deaths. This is not to say that civilians became a strategic target; however, there were fewer restraints on MK to make sure that they were not hurt or killed. The second decision was that the MK‟s guerrilla operations would be extended to people who were not official MK members. Consequently, weapons were distributed mostly amongst township youths who wished to use force against apartheid. This concept was termed the „people‟s war‟ (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 181). The idea behind this was that it provided an outlet for the violent anger that was created by the Vaal uprising in 1984. The Vaal Uprising was one of the major turning points in South African history. This protest was organized by the UDF and the Vaal Township residents against rent increases. This resulted in a violent clash with the police and led to rent boycotts across the country. While MK had not created this anger or the movement, it was able to manoeuvre the emotional upsurge into support. The emphasis was switched from sophisticated operations directed at targets which would provide the maximum propaganda of MK‟s power, to smaller, more numerous attacks on government officials and politicians that resided in the township areas (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 182).

Post 1990: Road to Democracy

On the 2nd of February 1990, President De Klerk lifted the bans on the ANC, PAC as well as the South African Communist Party and started to disband apartheid. He also promised to release Nelson Mandela from prison which he duly did on February 11 (BBC News, 2010). With negotiations with the apartheid government finally showing promise, the ANC and MK suspended armed action for the first time in twenty-nine years. After long and difficult negations, South Africa had its first democratic elections in April 1994. The ANC won with a 62% majority while its main opposition the NP won 20% of the vote (Le Roux, 2005: 238).

During the transition phase, negotiations were dominated by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). A sub-committee known as the Joint Military Coordinating Committee was established in order to draft a new policy on a new Ministry of Defence. They were also given the task of working on the issue of integration in the defence force (Le Roux, 2005: 240). In 1993, the new South African National Defence Force was created with members being made up of the MK, the PAC, the Inkatha Freedom Party, as well as the former SADF.

Although MK made up the second largest majority of SANDF recruits (the majority coming from the old South African Defence force), Jacklyn Cock (1994) provides a very disturbing picture of the position that ex-MK soldiers found themselves in after liberation. Referring to the soldiers as „The Forgotten People‟ Cock found that the vast majority of MK soldiers surveyed were unemployed. Although unemployment was (and still is) a large problem in South Africa, soldiers from MK (or any of the liberation army‟s for that matter) tend to be a vulnerable group. Not only do they lack marketable skills, they also tend to find it difficult to integrate into civilian life (Cock, 1994: 3). A factor that also could have played a part in the lack of marketability of the soldiers is the fact that when the majority of them joined MK they were still very young. For example, as previously mentioned, the June 16th Detachment in 1976 consisted mostly of young people who fled the country after the Soweto uprising. As a result of this their educations were disrupted in order to join their respective liberation armies. They adhered to the slogan „liberation before education.‟

Health problems were also a factor that plagued many ex-combatants. Some such problems included insomnia, asthma, hypertension, and migraines. A large number were also prone to alcohol abuse and depression. It is likely that many of them are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (Cock, 1994: 3). The Trauma Centre in Cape Town made an analysis of the

main problems exiles experienced on return. They ranged from lack of accommodation, destitution upon their return from exile, lack or loss of essential documents needed for employment or schooling, psychiatric and health problems, dispersion of families, and an inability of the older generation soldiers to find financial assistance within their families (Ngculu, 2009: 205 – 206).

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

While the ANC‟s membership was still exclusively reserved for African people, MK opened its ranks to people of all races. What was unique about this was that MK was one of the first organizations at the time to open its membership to white, Indian, African and coloured people alike. The first was the South African Communist Party which included Dr. Dadoo (who was also the leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress) as one of its leaders. The non-racial membership of MK is especially relevant because it was contrary to racially exclusive laws such as the Group Areas Act of 1950 which separated people of different racial groups into segregated, racially specified areas. As a result, even though MK was non-racial, operations had to be conducted by units that were organized along racial lines (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 41). For example, between 1961 and 1964, a group of mostly young Indian men (referred to as „Dynamite Coolies‟ by the South African Police Force) operated as MK saboteurs in the Indian suburbs of Johannesburg (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 37). This was also true in KwaZulu Natal where Indian areas would have MK units consisting of only Indian members. Part of the reason for all-Indian membership was that the cell members did not want to raise suspicion through mixed membership which would have attracted the attention of the security forces. MK was well established in Indian demarcated areas. Most members of these units were made up of members from the NIC/TIC. Early recruits were also from the trades unions movement.

It is impossible to provide an exhaustive account in this Chapter of every aspect of Indian South African history and of the MK, but it is important to highlight the community's historical background and key political turning points as this provides an insight into aspects that would have shaped the interviewees' ethnic and political identities.

CHAPTER THREE
THE MAKING OF INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITY

In order to be able to explore the way in which Indian MK members negotiated their identities, it is not only necessary to understand the history of Indian South Africans and of the MK, but it is also necessary to reflect on identity in general, and Indian South African identity in particular. This will be the focus of this Chapter, which prepares the ground for the discussion of the particular experiences of Indian MK members which follows in Chapters Four and Five. Throughout the colonial and apartheid periods, Indian South Africans have usually been treated as a homogenous group. Different labels have been used over the years to categorize the community: coolies, Arabs, *girmityas*, and Calcutta men to name but a few. While it was only in 1961 that Indian South Africans were officially recognised by the apartheid government as a permanent part of the South African population (Saunders and Southey, 2001:89), for decades before this colonial-born Indians had been referring to themselves as Indian South Africans. Throughout the history of Indian South Africans, there have been differences in the ways in which Indian South Africans identified themselves. For example, while some Indian South Africans stress their Indian identity, the 1970s saw many Indian students associating themselves with the Black Consciousness Movement and declaring themselves to be black (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 10). Today in the 21st century there has been a rising concern about what it means to be „Indian‟ in South Africa. Govinden (2008:42) argues that at present in South Africa we are seeing the emergence of a „new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses difference and which depends, in part, on the cultural construction of new ethnic identities‟. According to Dhupelia-Mesthrie, there‟s a growing desire on the part of Indian South Africans to find a South African part of their identity (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 10). In 1999 on Lotus FM (a KwaZulu Natal radio

station with a majority Indian listener base), presenter Devi Sankree asked listeners to dissect the terms „Indian" and „South African". She then asked people to call and define which term was more important for them. Out of the 26 callers, 18 saw themselves simply as South Africans, 7 saw themselves as Indian South Africans while 1 saw himself as an Indian (Dhupelia-Mesthrie, 2000: 9). Only a minority of callers wanted the term „Indian" labelled to their identity. Although this cannot be taken as an accurate survey of Indian representation, it does provide a glimpse of the identity conflicts that many Indian South Africans are faced with.

This Chapter provides a discussion of identity, and ethnic identity in particular, with a focus on South African Indians. Although this is a complicated task which runs the risk of oversimplifying a diverse community, it is important in order to understand the culture and background that influences many of the interviewees. This will provide background about Indian identity in order to help us understand the context in which Indian MK operatives lived. This background is needed especially for those who lack knowledge of Indian identity in SA. Although it might seem unnecessary to provide such a lengthy analysis on South African Indian identity, it has to be emphasised that this study is an exploration of the ethnic identities of the interviewees. In order to understand their individual stories, we have to look at the background of the community from which they emerged. South Africans were forced into categorizing themselves by their ethnic and racial backgrounds. Therefore, the interviewees would have been shaped in one or the other by their ethnic background. In order to understand them we need to understand the culture from which they emerged.

This Chapter has been divided into three sections. The first provides a general, broad look at the issues of identity. Here emphasis will be placed on ethnic identity because this tends to be a significant influence in communities where an ethnic group forms a minority. The

second section will focus on the concept of Indian diasporas. While there is no „one size fits all" pattern to the experiences of different Indian diasporas around the world, it is possible to identify a few commonalities that many of these groups share. The next section will look exclusively at Indian South African identity and the way in which the community, although united, is also stratified. It will also take a look at the vulnerable political and economic position that the community holds in South Africa and how this influenced their tight-knit identity.

IDENTITY

<u>What is identity? What is collective identity?</u>

In simple terms, the concept of identity is the way in which we locate ourselves in the social world (Simon and Klandermans 2004: 451). Each individual"s identity is based on multiple factors such as race, age, gender, culture, ethnicity, country and language (Isin and Wood, 1999: 3). Perhaps one of the most concise definitions of identity is the one provided by Mathews who describes identity as „the ongoing sense the self has of who it is, as conditioned through its ongoing interactions with others" (Mathews, 2000: 18 – 19).

Identity formation is a complex and always shifting process with identity always being formed in relation to others. Preston (1997:54), for example, states that identity is the outcome of complex social processes and does not arise spontaneously but is learned over time. For Preston, identity is not a private construct but is rather socially made and should be thought of as „a shifting balance between what is privately remembered and what is currently publicly demanded. Identity is thus always shifting. It is never fixed" (1997: 54). This understanding of identity is shared by Jenkins who states that identity is both singular and plural and is an ever changing, never final matter (Jenkins, 2004: 37). Connolly points out that identity is established through a set of differences that have become recognized socially.

Identity, for Connolly, requires difference in order to be: difference is converted into otherness in order to secure self-certainty (Connolly, 1991: xiv).

Social identity is collective in the sense that the person shares a source of his/her identity with a group. Social identity (us/we) is in contrast to individual identity (I/me) in that it is more inclusive and shared with a group of other people (Simon and Klandermans, 2004: 450). According to Jenkins, personal identity differentiates the unique individual from other people while social identity is the „internalisation of, often stereotypical, collective identifications‟ (Jenkins, 2004: 89). According to De Vos, social identity relates to a special sense of loyalty to a particular collective/social group.

People may have many overlapping, multiple and even conflicting identities. Some identities may be more salient than others depending on an individual‟s unique personality or life history (Simon and Klandermans, 2004: 451 and Jenkins, 2004: 89). Societies are divided into a number of social divisions which can create a clash with other identities (for example, issues around one‟s minority identity can overlap or clash with citizen identity which calls for loyalty to the state) (De Vos, 2000: 241).

The concept of a „social identity‟ is an intricate notion the complexity of which is often not appreciated. There are the more obvious factors such as ethnicity, culture, nationality and religion that help shape ones concept of oneself. However, different individuals being just that – individuals- may define themselves differently from the „norm‟ of social identities. According to Martin, „identities‟ are a complex and present a „‟cross-road‟‟ where multiple identifications meet, producing at the same time, or in succession, multiple attachments‟ (Martin, 1999: 188).

Dangers can arise from identifying too much with a single social identity. During apartheid, enormous emphasis was placed on racial identity. Even if a person was not emotionally tied

to his/her race, s/he was still completely dominated by his/her racial identity - everything from where one was allowed to live or go to school was determined by race. A person could not escape this classification (Parakh, 2008: 25). As will be discussed later in the Chapter, the social identity of the Indian South African community was largely shaped by this racial strategy.

Cultural identity

Culture is the way in which „we make meaning, and with which we make the world meaningful to ourselves, and ourselves meaningful to the world‟ (Cohen, 1993: 196). According to Mathews, cultural identity can be defined as an individual‟s sense of cultural belonging to a given society. It is the way in which people conceive of who they are culturally (Mathews, 2000: 17). For Preston, cultural identity is the way in which individuals relate to the community they are a part of and how individuals construe the way in which their community relates to the wider world (Preston, 1997: 56). Group members feel that they are set apart from others through a set of cultural characteristics that creates a feeling of commonality (Kenny, 2004: 3). This cultural identity is tied together with a sense of a shared „memory‟. The recollections of a shared past which are passed on through rituals, heritage and commemoration shapes cultural memory. Over time a group becomes unified through the creation of a collective story (Eyerman, 2004: 161). Cultural identity can be divided into a number of aspects (a few examples are ethnicity, nationality, religion and history). For the purposes of this Chapter, ethnicity and how it pertains to diasporic and Indian South African identity will be given special attention.

Ethnic Identity

There are many ways to approach a discussion on ethnic identity. The most popular way of viewing this concept has rested on conceptualizing ethnicity as an identity that arises from

sharing a certain culture and value system (Song, 2003: 10 and Bekker, 1993: 11). It also arises from sharing common networks and communal interests (Bekker, 1993: 11). Nagel refers to ethnic identity as a form of dynamic property that is constantly evolving through „individual identity and group organization" (Nagel, 1994: 152). It has been referred to as a set of assumptions (whether conscious or not) about one"s identity, derived from membership of a particular ancestral group. These assumptions affect social behaviour and relationships and shape one"s moral belief system (Buijs, 1992: 1). According to Pieterse, one should not think of ethnicity as a generalized concept. It is more accurate to imagine it as a „continuum, varying widely in terms of salience, intensity and meaning" (Pieterse, 1997: 366).

Ethnic identity can operate at two levels. The first, which Bekker refers to as ethnic community identity, places emphasis on the cultural and historical aspects of a group. There are six dimensions to this level: „a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity" (Bekker, 1993: 12). These dimensions link the history and the future of the group because it provides each generation with a foundation (Martin, 1999: 189). The way in which culture and history have shaped Indian South African identity will be looked at in great detail in this Chapter. However, according to Bekker, to rely on this perspective alone in South Africa is highly dangerous because it conjures up outdated ideological ideas about ethnic differences (such as the reasons that were used to justify apartheid). In a plural society, such as South Africa, ethnic identity needs to be considered along with other, non-ethnic forms of identity (such as those related to class and education) (Bekker, 1993: 13).

This is where a study of the second level, also known as individual ethnic identity, comes into play. This level is interested in the individual and is concerned with issues such as socialisation, education, and with the individual"s psychological makeup (Bekker, 1993: 12).

The construction of ethnic identity is the result of ethnic groups shaping and reshaping their culture as well as by external factors played out by a larger society (Nagel, 1994: 152). It fits in with the growing realization amongst anthropologists that cultures and ethnic identities are not closed and immobile. An ethnic identity is not something that groups have to inherit from generation to generation and strive to preserve. As time goes by, ethnic identities change and evolve under different conditions (Martin, 1999: 190 and Song, 2003: 17). The socio-economic, political and cultural issues of an ethnic group change with the passing of time. The boundaries of ethnic minority identity are always changing in the light of the present circumstances. This reconstitution of identity occurs even when seemingly historical and cultural foundations are present (Vermeersch, 2003: 886). This will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six when the ethnic identity of two generations of Indian South African MK soldiers will be explored and contrasted.

While ethnic identity is influenced by external factors, it is also partially optional (Song, 2003: 16; Nagel, 1994: 156 and Pieterse, 1997: 380). However, the idea that ethnic identity is a personal choice can run „the risk of emphasizing agency as the expense of structure‟ (Nagel, 1994: 156). To a certain degree, like gender, religion and class, ethnicity is something one can choose to place in the foreground or keep in the background, but it is not simply a form of cultural capital that can be changed at one‟s will (Pieterse, 1997: 380). The extent to which ethnicity can be freely constructed by an individual is narrowed by a number of official and unofficial external factors (Nagel, 1994:156-158). Examples of official factors are affirmative action programmes or segregation where society was structured around race and ethnicity (Nagel, 1994: 156). This will be discussed in Chapter Six when we look at the way in which interviewees protected themselves as members of all Indian MK groups. Although they fought for a non-racial society, they were still forced to work under the structure and restrictions of apartheid. An example of an unofficial external factor is the day-to-day racism

that many middle-class black Americans still experience in public and private interactions with non-black people (Nagel, 1994: 156).

Phinney (1990:501) explores whether individuals can „choose between two conflicting identities or can establish a bicultural ethnic identity". According to Phinney, ethnic identity studies have primarily focused on the way in which a minority ethnic group relates to a dominant or host society (Phinney, 1990: 501). There are two models that guide the way in which this question is addressed: the first assumes that the strengthening of one identity will result in the weakening of the other. Therefore, it is not possible for those who are highly involved in mainstream society to be equally likely to emphasise their ethnic identity. The alternate assumption argues that the relationship between a dominant culture and an ethnic identity are separate and independent from each other. According to this model, having a strong link to one"s ethnic identity does not necessarily mean that one has a weak relationship with the dominant culture (Phinney, 1990: 501-502).

Chapter Five will be analysing the participants" ethnic and political identities. Did the interviewees experience tensions between their identity as Indian South Africans and their participation in the mainly black African MK or were they able to successfully reconcile these identities? But before we can explore the interviews, we have to take a closer look at the particular ethnic identity in question. The next section of this Chapter will take a broad look at diasporic Indian identity followed by a section focussing on Indian South African identity.

DIASPORIC INDIAN IDENTITY

The concept of „diaspora" has been subject to various interpretations. The term is sometimes used to describe nearly any population group which has been „deterritorialized" through migration from one land to another (Raghuram and Sahoo, 2008: 2, see also Clifford, 1994:

304). For others diaspora is defined by the „contradictory emotions, the ambivalences in the diasporic‟s notions of belonging, their identification with and against territorial social and cultural formations‟ (Raghuram and Sahoo, 2008: 2). Usually the term „diaspora‟ refers to a minority community that has a cultural memory as well as a sense of longing for a „homeland‟ (Clifford, 1994: 304). Stuart Hall refers to diasporas as communities „in translation‟. Their identities are formed by an obligation to „come to terms with the new cultures they inhabit, without simply assimilating to them and losing their identities completely‟ (Hall, 2000: 118– 119). Although they may have the traces of a particular culture, they are irrevocably the product of interlocking cultures, countries and histories (Hall, 2000: 119). As Nagel points out, people who may be perceived today as immigrants will tomorrow be perceived as an ethnic community (Nagel, 1994: 157). Within current academic discourse, the term „diaspora‟ has been categorized into three variants: as a social form, as a type of consciousness and as a mode of cultural production (Vertovec, 1999: 2). Although all have different meanings, Vertovec (1999), whose specific focus is on South Asian diasporic communities, suggests that all three can be utilized to explain Indian diasporic movements.

1. *Social Form:* This refers to the social relationships that have been created through a shared history and geography. This is based on a maintained social identity that has been created through the belief in an „ethnic myth‟ of a shared origin, geography and/or history. It is also created from a history of voluntary or forced migration to another country as well as an inability to be fully accepted in the „new‟ country (Vertovec, 1999: 3 – 4). It also refers to political tensions that result from a divided loyalty between „host‟countries and „homelands‟. Members of diasporas may also see their ancestral country as a place of eventual return (Clifford, 1994: 305). Finally, social form is also categorised by the triadic relationship that diasporas have between the territorial states that the groups reside in, the „motherland‟ countries that they or

their ancestors came from as well as the self-identified ethnic groups that have come from the same „motherland" that are globally dispersed (Vervovec, 1999: 4 – 5).

2. *Type of Consciousness:* Diasporic consciousness can be marked by its paradoxical nature. It can be both negative (for example, a sense of being discriminated against in a „host" country) or positive (for example, a feeling that one is part of a historical culture such as the „Indian civilization") (Vertovec, 1999: 8). It also refers to a dual consciousness of having different identities or attachments – for example, of being both South African and Indian (Vertovec, 1999: 8).

3. *Cultural Production:* This refers to the way in which diasporaic groups change, negotiate, renew and reconstitute their identities and styles (Hall, 1990: 235 – 236). Discussions on cultural production usually focuses on globalization and the way in which diasporas creolize, alternate and negotiate their cultures to fit in with their surroundings (Vertovec, 1999 :19).

Research and definitions on diasporic communities usually refer to the Jewish community (See Clifford, 1994: 304 and Vertovec, 1999: 3). However, Clifford (1994) points out the danger in trying to find a „one size fits all" definition of diasporic communities. Many diasporic communities, including some Jewish diasporic communities, do not fit in with certain definitions referred to above. For example, not every group feels a strong attachment and desire to return to an ancestral land (Clifford, 1994: 305). Many groups have either left their motherland because of terrible conditions or have lived in the host country for so long that they no longer associate themselves as being a part of any other country. For example, Gold (1984) points out that some diasporic communities no longer perceive of themselves as immigrants; they no longer regard their country of residence as a host country, but rather as a homeland (Gold, 1984: 5). Although they may acknowledge a distant mother land, they see

themselves as nationals of the country in which they now live (Gold, 1984: 5). This is relevant to Indian South Africans who have been established in South Africa since the 1860s.

As mentioned previously, it is impossible to provide a „one size fits all" description of all Indian diasporic communities. Although Indian diasporic communities can be found in many parts of the world (with a population of more than 20 million in 110 countries), their experiences differ (Raghuram and Sahoo, 2008: 4). For example, the experience of a Mauritian Indian would be different from the experience of a British Indian as the majority Mauritian population is Indian while in Britain the Indian population is a minority. Similarly, the experience of the Indian community in Uganda could be seen as being more traumatic than many other diasporic Indian communities because of their forced expulsion from the country in 1972 by President Idi Amin.

India has a complex relationship with its diaspora. The Indian diaspora is divided and distinguished by the Indian government. Some members of the diaspora are classified as „People of Indian Origin" (PIOs), who are those diasporic Indians who have relinquished citizenship rights in India; while others are designated „non-resident Indians" (NRIs) - these are Indian citizens who are (temporarily) living in other countries. India has often looked to the diaspora to help with the economic development of the country through attractive financial concessions and investment packages (Raghuram and Sahoo, 2008: 4). PIOs are also called on to invest in India through the use of a language of belonging and the idea of cultural continuity (although this nostalgia typically does not stem from an existing India but rather the legend of an epic historical mother land [Gold, 1984: 2 – 5 and Raghuram, and Sahoo, 2008: 4]). In the 1970s and 1980s India faced an increasing turbulent economic climate. Since it was forced to liberalize its economy in 1991, India has increasingly seen

PIOs and NRIs „as a potential source of foreign direct investment and technology transfer"
(Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 763).

Diasporic/ethnic communities around the world are often able to provide their host countries
with needed labour, fill market niches or are able to specialize in certain markets as
„middlemen"(Nagel, 1994: 157). This often results in competition with native-born labourers
and can result in what Blalock refers to as the „middleman" threat (Blalock, 1967: 80). Unlike
most ethnic minorities, middleman minorities occupy an intermediate economic position
rather than a low economic position (Desai, 1996: 88). One of the main characteristics of the
middleman is the vulnerable position he/she holds in society as it is easy for the middleman
to be classified as an „economic" exploiter. During a time of economic crisis, hostility
against a more prosperous economic minority is often inevitable (Maharaj, 2008: 26; Desai,
1996: 89). According to Maharaj, most diasporaic Indians have primarily been placed within
the middleman minority bracket (Maharaj, 2008: 26). According to Bonacich middleman
minorities act as a buffer between elites and the mass population. They not only fill the gap
between the elites and masses but also deal with the masses directly. As a result, they often
bear become the targets of xenophobic attacks (Bonacich, 1973: 584). An example of the
middleman threat can be found in Uganda in 1972 when President Idi Amin referred to the
Ugandan Indian community as „bloodsuckers" and accused them of „milking the economy of
its wealth" (BBC News 2010). This resulted in the mass removal of the Indian community
from the country.

This provides a brief overview of diasporic Indian identity in general terms. As previously
stated, it would be impossible to categorize the experience of all Indian diasporas into one
homogenous entity. The following section will narrow and focus attention onto the identity of
Indian South Africans.

INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITY

Indians make up a minority group in South Africa and this minority status has often resulted in a shared identity. This has been strengthened over the years through factors such as isolation, apartheid, a sense of a common, nostalgic history and as a result of reaction to a strong sense of anti-Indian sentiment in the country.

According to Ebr-Vally, emigration initially brought three major losses in the lives of the indentured labourers (Ebr. Vally, 2001: 135). The first was the loss of the community elders who did not travel to South Africa. The vast majority of labourers were young men under 30 (Maharaj, 2008: 25). Within the Indian social structure, the authority rested in the hands of the eldest male. Without the older generations as well as the fact that families were often separated once they arrived in the country, the structure of the extended family was nearly destroyed. For a long time, labourers had to live in shacks and huts that offered no privacy. This was especially unusual and difficult for a society that was accustomed to establishing households for extended family units (Maharaj, 2008: 25). The second loss was the end of the sub-caste. The caste system was a method in which Indian people identified themselves within the cosmic and physical world. The place to which they belonged in the caste system determined their relations with other sub-castes. In South Africa this concept had to be radically downscaled because of the limited number of Indian people in the country as well as their isolation from family structures in India. The third was the loss of highest Hindu caste: the Brahmin. The Brahmin (or priest) is the pillar of the caste system and holds the whole structure in place. He is seen as the purest, cleanest, and most virtuous of human beings. Without him, the caste system in South Africa was not able to stand as strongly (Ebr.- Vally, 2001: 135 - 137). Economically and socially there was no reason for many Brahmins to come to South Africa (being on the top of the caste hierarchy). However, for a while caste

restrictions amongst Hindus still remained. Marriages only took place amongst people of the same caste and this meant that brides often had to be brought all the way from India. Although caste consciousness has declined over the years, O‟Malley argues that there is still a small remnant of the restrictions „among upwardly mobile Hindus with indentured backgrounds‟ (O‟Malley, 2007: 41).

The themes and experiences mentioned above were common among the Indian indentured experience in countries such as South Africa, Mauritius, West Indies, Fiji and Malaysia. Although the Indian diaspora is heterogeneous, Indian immigrants in these countries started to form links amongst themselves in order to feel a sense of belonging and group solidarity (Maharaj, 2008: 25). According to Maharaj, although diaporic Indians came from different backgrounds, they did have some common features that helped unite the groups: this included defined family roles that were based on patriarchy, the importance of the extended family, the importance of the family unit instead of the individual, as well the dominant influence of culture and religion (Maharaj, 2008: 25). According to Vahed, establishing forms of religion and culture in Durban played an important role in establishing a „pan-Indian “Indianness” within a white and African colonial society‟ (Vahed, 2002: 77). Religion and traditional practices subsumed most of the community‟s sense of Indian identity (O‟Malley, 2007: 40 – 41). There was a fear of losing one‟s cultural identity in a foreign land and as a result Brij Maharaj believes that the Indian South African diaspora tended to become very religious, conservative and closed off (Maharaj, 2008: 26). However, former political activist Mac Maharaj states in his biography that despite the Indian community (and in particular the Indian community in Newcastle where he grew up) being tight-knit, it was also divided. He states that „the Hindus banded together; the Muslims banded together; the Tamils banded together. There was a commonality but there was also separateness‟ (quoted in O‟Malley, 2007:53).

Despite the Indian South African community being tight knit, one thus has to be careful of over-simplifying the idea that there can be one, straight forward Indian identity. Within such a group there are still divisions and contradictions in the assumed „community." According to Vahed, the Indian South African community has often been treated as a homogenous entity (Vahed, 2002: 78). This is because they have legislatively been described as such and also because they have often described themselves as „one community" (Padayachee, 1999: 393; Vahed, 2002: 78). However, it is important to look not only at the general identity of Indian South Africans, but also at stratifications within this community. Stratifications can be based on class, religion, language, province, caste and the urban spatial segmentation of the community. Various markers can be used to understand a few of the various stratifications (Badsha and Soske, 2010). Firstly, as was mentioned previously, not all Indians who came to South Africa were indentured labourers. A second wave of „free Indians" or traders started making their way to the country in the 1870s. These economic differences (and the often misconstrued idea that free Indians represent a higher caste) resulted in many prejudices that still have their ramifications today (Ebr.-Vally 2001: 123 – 140). Class stratifications were also increased by the onset of the development of a „new elite" by 1910 (Landy et al., 2004: 207). This was made up of the offspring of indentured labourers who, through education, had advanced up the occupational hierarchy to occupy jobs such as teachers and shop keepers (Landy et al., 2004: 207). Regional differentiation continued to be visible amongst north and south Indians. Some Indians from the north saw themselves as superior because of south Indians" darker skin and indentured background. Similarly, some south Indians saw themselves as being from a purer race of ancestors (Landy et al., 2004: 207). However, the two largest identity markers are religious and linguistic differences. The two largest Indian religious communities in South Africa are Hindus and Muslims (although other religions such as Christianity are represented in the community). Within these parameters, caste affiliation,

language, religious identity and village identification play a major role in further defining difference within the Indian community as a whole (Ebr.-Vally 2001: 143). Although various differences within the community will be mentioned, it must be noted this is a very short and limited explanation of the stratifications that exist within the community.

The Hindu community, which made up about 90% of the indentured labourers, (Vahed, 2002: 78) was divided along linguistic lines. The Indian South African community includes Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu and Hindi speaking Hindus from various parts of India. The Gujarati community mostly came to South Africa as free traders. They were therefore free to keep within their caste structures and transport themselves with members from their villages. During the sea voyages indentured Hindus, Telegus and Tamils had to give up many of their restrictions to their caste positions (for example, sharing food with members of other castes). This resulted in many of these linguistic/religious sects being seen as „polluted" (Ebr.- Vally, 2001: 144 – 145).

Today"s Indian South African Muslim community is also made up of descendants from indentured labourers from Hyderabad and Madras as well as trader Indians from Pakistan (previously the north-west part of India) and the Gujarat region of India. Like their Hindu counterparts, Muslims from the Gujarat region were divided by language, territory and religion (some being followers of Shia and others followers of Sunni sects of Islam) (Ebr.-Vally, 2001: 152). Although there are very clear divisions amongst the Muslim community they are often represented and seen as a more homogenous community than the Hindu group. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that Islam is often practised in one language (Arabic) and that according to Muslim faith social standing should make no difference amongst members of the religion (Ebr.- Vally, 2001: 152).

The relationship between Indian South Africans and India is a complex one. Although South Africa has a significant Indian population, Landy et al. (2004: 204) question whether the Indian South African community can even be considered part of a diaspora because of the significant amount of time that has elapsed since the first immigrants arrived in the country in 1860. Indian South Africans have had a difficult and complex relationship with India. This was brought on in part by India's early perceptions of their overseas diasporas. According to Dickinson and Bailey, „populations founded by indentured workers during British rule were generally not part of the vision of a newly independent India" (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 762). Indian South Africans were encouraged to establish roots in their new homes and not with India. During apartheid, India imposed sanctions on South Africa and it was expected that the Indian community should identify themselves with the African/Coloured population in the struggle against minority rule (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 768). In a letter from the Indian Prime Minister Ramaswami Reddiar to the Indian South African community in 1947 he asks that they „forge common bonds of unity among yourselves as well as with our African brethren and set a glorious example to the world" (quoted from the original letter from the collection of Kreesen and Michaela Naicker). Between 1946 and 1990, travel and economic relations were prohibited between India and South Africa, although Indian South Africans were allowed to visit India (Landy, et al. 2003: 210). According to Dickinson and Bailey, the imposition of sanctions against apartheid South Africa isolated the Indian community further (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 768). Despite this, according to Reddy, „India's role was crucial in international action against apartheid until the early 1960s and remained important, though not central, until the defeat of apartheid" (Reddy, 1995).

Since 1994, India's relationship with South Africa has been influenced by India's economic crisis in the early 1990s. Against this context, India liberalized its economy in 1991 and looked toward its diaspora as an alternative to loans and other kinds of foreign investment

(Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 763). However, this relationship has largely been shaped by the Indian government‟s differentiated treatment of its diaspora. As already stated, People of Indian Origin (PIOs) are those who have relinquished citizenship rights in India and non-resident Indians (NRIs), those that are Indian citizens but are (temporarily) living in other countries (Raghuram and Sahoo, 2008: 4). In 2003 India created the Dual Citizenship Bill (amended in 2005 to include more diaspora from more countries). This Bill makes provisions for PIOs from mostly Western countries to have dual citizenship in India (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 760). Dual citizenship is only extended to countries where the diaspora are descended from the post-independence generation. It is not available to South Africans who are mostly descendants of indentured labourers who arrived in South Africa during the colonial period (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 764). According to Dickinson and Bailey, Indian South Africans are „pre-independence emigrants‟ and „are seen as temporally distant, belonging to the "old" India of British subjugation‟ and are consequently "outsiders"(Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 770).

For a long period of time, Indian South Africans have been isolated from India. The economic and travel prohibitions, which lasted for 54 years, created a distance from India. Even post-apartheid, many Indian South Africans have no diasporic connection outside of South Africa (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007: 764). Although many passenger Indians had the economic and educational ability to keep contact with family members in India, many Indians from indentured background have no diasporic network with India (Landy, et al. 2003: 204-205). Despite this, post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed a growing number of Indian South Africans visiting India every year. There are a growing number of travel agents in former Indian areas that specialize exclusively in trips to India. The economic trade relationship between India and South Africa has intensified post-apartheid (Dumett, 2006) and as a result Indian South Africans have been encouraged to accentuate their connections

with India (Badsha and Soske, 2010). This was intensified in 2010 by strands in the 150 years committees who shifted the focus to celebratory narratives about India and its historical relationship to South Africa (Badsha and Soske, 2010).

With a history of racial tensions, it is perhaps not surprising that the Indian community felt a sense of vulnerability at the thought of a majority African government. Apartheid‟s social engineering and spatial dislocation resulted in ‚differentiation of spheres of life based on race and culture‟ (Govinden, 2008: 36). The economic position of minority groups resulted in feelings of insecurity during the democratic transition (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 191). This feeling of vulnerability was exacerbated during the first two democratic elections when the importance of the Indian vote took on a life of its own. In KwaZulu Natal the Indian community makes up 13 percent of the electorate. As a result of this (and the division of the African vote between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the ANC) the Indian vote is often the subject of much speculation (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 190). Although it is impossible to isolate a group vote across national or provincial lines, the election results in majority Indian populated area in Chatsworth in 1994 showed a strong support of the NP. The NP walked away with 64% of the national votes while the ANC received 25% of the votes (Padayachee, 1999: 394). Padayachee surmises that although voting patterns may have been more in favour of the ANC in middle class Indian suburbs, the ANC would have received overall only 30—-35% of the Indian vote (Padayachee, 1999: 394). According to Habib and Naidu, elections have ‚reinforced the post-1994 political imagery in which the coloured and Indian communities are seen as distinct blocs whose members vote in clearly defined patterns‟ (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 190). A dominant explanation for the voting patterns amongst South Africans is that the citizenry are seen to vote along the lines of racial and ethnic loyalties and not along the lines of interests. Whether this is true or not, the Indian community is seen ‚to vote for non-African parties because of a racial group loyalty that translates into either a

greater cultural affinity with other minority groups, or a fear that an African government would discriminate against them" (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 191). Another argument, proposed by Padayachee and Hart (2000), states that the Indian commercial and business class has been able to thrive since the arrival of democracy in 1994 (hence a higher voting pattern for the ANC amongst the wealthier part of the population). However, a large lower class of Indian workers have felt particularly vulnerable because their jobs in manufacturing industries have been undermined by tariff reductions and the ANC"s neo-liberal macro-economic policies. There is also a fear that affirmative action will favour the African community (Padayachee and Hart, 2000: 689). This, according to Padayachee and Hart, is part of the reason that „Natal"s lower class Indians have voted against the ANC twice in the 1990s" (Padayachee and Hart, 2000: 690). Elections since 1999 have shown a shift in Indian voting patterns, however, the above perception has remained (Ramsamy, 2007: 468). Although Habib and Naidu point out that this assumption that the Indian and coloured communities are one homogenous electoral voting unit is wholly incorrect, the negative attention that these voting patterns received did nothing to alleviate the insecurities that were felt by many in the community (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 191).

CONCLUSION: CONFLICTING IDENTITIES

This chapter highlights the role that ethnicity plays in the identities of Indian South Africans. However, while minority group members often politicise their ethnic or cultural identity, the MK soldiers I have interviewed did not. They did not organise politically to advance the interests of the minority group to which they belonged (as did many other Indian South Africans), but rather chose to take part in a political movement concerned with the liberation of the black majority and in particular with Africans. Thus it could be argued that for these MK members their ethnic identity was not a very important feature of their overall sense of

self. However, the interest of this thesis is to find out whether and how being an Indian did impact upon their involvement in MK and how Indian MK members negotiated their identity as Indians (a minority ethnic group) with their participation in a movement that sought principally to advance the interests of Africans. Did they perhaps consider themselves to be black first and Indian second? Or perhaps they saw themselves as South African first and Indian second (or maybe not Indian at all)? If not, how did they identify and why? The next Chapter begins to examine these concerns.

CHAPTER FOUR

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS AND INTERVIEW RESPONSES

This Chapter provides background details of the interviewees as well as a discussion of the responses of the interviewees to the interview questions. In order to provide a fuller picture of the experiences of Indian MK members, a fairly lengthy biographical section is included.

In order to provide a fairly concise overview of the interview material, I have organised it along a few predominant themes which highlight the way in which the interviewees formed and negotiated their identities. Firstly, family, community and economic position were chosen as a theme because of the influence all three factors have on the creation of an ethnic identity in a community that forms a diasporic minority (See Vahed 2002; Kurien 1999 and Maharaj 2008). A second theme examined is that of religion and culture. Thirdly, the participants‟ political affiliations and the development of their political consciousness are explored in order to provide insight into the ideologies that influenced them. A fourth theme focuses directly on their experiences of being Indian and being members of MK. This will be followed by an exploration of their military experience in order to provide a wider view of their MK experience. Finally, I discuss some of the participants‟ views on contemporary politics in order to establish whether or not the participants‟ current belief system contrasts with the beliefs which informed their earlier political activities.

Two generations emerged from the interviews: those born between 1929 and 1944 and those born between 1960 and 1969. Ten people born between 1929 and 1944 were interviewed while three were interviewed who were born between 1960 and 1969. Two additional, non-recorded interviews were conducted with people born between 1960 and 1969. These individuals did not wish to be recorded but their views have also been considered in the

discussion of the younger generation, although their biographical details are not included below.

There are a number of reasons that could explain the generational gap. As discussed in Chapter Two, the arrest of MK‟s top leadership in 1963 set the tone for the period leading up to 1976. State repression increased from the 1960s until the 1980s. According to Rashid Seedat, editor of *Men of Dynamite*, people who were recruited into MK after the first waves of arrests were ‚politicised individuals who were not necessarily long-standing activists because many known activists were under surveillance, banned or fled into exile‟ (Seedat, 2010). Lodge states that between 1963 and 1976, there were a number of conditions that prevented significant black political resistance. Firstly, within South Africa, the government had succeeded in destroying the ANC‟s network by arresting thousands of suspected members (Lodge, 1983: 295). Secondly, South Africa does not have the required terrain for the establishment of successful guerrilla insurgencies (Lodge, 1983: 295). Thirdly, the government had established an extensive set of police informers that inhibited political activity and demoralized resistance fighters. These conditions isolated resistance leaders and created an environment of political repression (see Chapter Two) (Lodge, 1983: 296). These conditions resulted in less MK activity and membership during this period.

This lull of political activity lasted until 1976 when a large number of potential recruits left the country to join MK (see Chapter Two). For Louw (2004: 86) the Soweto uprising was not the only reason that political activity was revived during this period. According to him, another reason why this period was an excellent time for the fermenting of anger against the apartheid state was that there were a greater number of schools and universities for African, coloured and Indian students which produced the ‚radicalized intelligentsia who led the 1980s struggle‟ and also provided sites for angry young people to mobilize their activities (Louw, 2004: 86). Anti-apartheid sentiment was also growing internationally and provided valuable

encouragement for resistance (Louw, 2004: 86). A greater percentage of Indian youths had also become politically more active through the school boycotts in the 1980s and the revival of the NIC. All of the above reasons help explain why there seem to be two clear generations in the respondents I interviewed.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE INTERVIEWEES

An introduction of the interviewees will be provided here in order to provide the readers with background information of the individuals that this Chapter will be discussing. These short biographies also help provide a better idea of the motivations and backgrounds of those Indian South Africans who joined MK and of their experiences within MK. Pseudonyms have been used and some minor biographical details have been changed in order to provide greater anonymity.

<u>First Generation</u>

Nandin was born and raised in Johannesburg. He trained to be carpenter but because of apartheid‟s policy of job reservation, he spent most of his life in the catering industry. Nandin believes that it was inevitable that he would have entered into politics. From an early age, two of his politically active friends would talk about politics and provide him with political reading material. Nandin joined the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and was soon elected onto the executive. In 1963 he was approached by a friend who informed him that MK had been observing him and wanted him to become an operative. Nandin readily agreed and he soon became the head of his MK unit. Nandin was taught by a senior MK commander how to make pipe bombs. His unit was in charge of identifying potential targets and then seeking permission to bomb them. Targets included a signal box in a train station and a post office. As he was the unit leader, Nandin had to place the explosives. In 1965, Nandin was ordered to disband his unit when it became apparent that he was in danger of arrest. Nandin went into

hiding in Botswana and returned to South Africa towards the end of 1965. By this time, most of his MK comrades were in jail or exile. He became active in community organizations in Lenasia and was a prominent member of the ANC. He currently lives in Lenasia and is still an influential community leader.

Sarwar is the oldest interviewee. He was an influential mentor for many of the other interviewees from the older generation. He was born in a small rural town just outside of Johannesburg. He says that his upbringing helped him come to recognise that all human beings are equal. He left home at the tender age of eight years old in order to attend school in Johannesburg. It was here that he started his political career when he joined the Young Communist League at the age of twelve. He also became a member of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and participated in 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign as well as the Defiance Campaign. As the relationship between the ANC and the Indian Congresses grew stronger, he came to work closely with Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. He soon dropped out of school in order to dedicate himself more fully in the struggle. By the time MK was formed, he had already been a part of the struggle for twenty years. He was one of MK"s earliest recruits and served on the regional command that identified targets and carried out modest sabotage. However, Sarwar soon realized that his aptitude lay in political work and not in MK. He terminated his membership and dedicated himself to activities such as canvassing support for the ANC and MK. He states that despite his resignation, he did not regret the decision to move to armed struggle. In 1963, three MK soldiers were arrested. Sarwar was instructed by the SACP to go underground in Rivonia. However, Sarwar was arrested in the 1960s and charged with sabotage and sentenced to life imprisonment. Sarwar spent more than two decades in jail, much of it on Robben Island. After his release from prison, Sarwar went on to become a prominent member of the ANC. He remains politically involved.

Ekta is the youngest member of the first generation. She was born in KwaZulu Natal and raised in Durban. Her father was an active member of the NIC and the Coloured People's Congress. Her political consciousness was raised at a young age when her father was listed by the South African Police. This meant that his movements were severely restricted from one town/province to another. Her father died when she was thirteen and her mother struggled to send her to Britain to continue her education. Ekta was able to complete her A levels, but could did not manage to attend university before returning to South Africa. Britain opened her eyes as she witnessed people of different races living and working together and being openly critical of their government's decisions. When she returned to SA she received a scholarship and tried to complete a degree through correspondence. During this period she joined the Student Representative Council as well as the NIC. Her political activism was not supported by her family and community because it was seen to be unfitting for an Indian woman. She was contacted by an underground friend who asked her to help supply maps and documents to an underground ANC member in South Africa. Ekta continued leaving documents, money and letters at addresses given to her by contacts for the next two years. She was eventually told that she needed to leave the country and flee to Swaziland because one of the couriers she had been working with was a police collaborator. In Swaziland she worked with the UN refugee centre as well as the political wing of MK. She found it difficult to be a woman in the MK/ANC underground as she never moved up the ranks. According to Ekta, women's role in dealing with education, children, medical issues, intelligence and organizing funerals within MK/ANC prevented them from being promoted within the MK/ANC. In the late 1980s, Ekta's health started to suffer and she was sent to Holland for treatment. She was sent back to South Africa in 1990 after twelve years of exile. She is currently retired and living in a small flat in KwaZulu Natal.

Aatish was born in Fordsburg, Johannesburg to working class parents connected to the tailoring industry. He left school in 1949 after having failed his matriculation exams and worked for about a year and a half as a wholesale woollen merchant. When he met Sarwar he was inspired by his commitment and dedication for liberation. Aatish was inspired to become active in the Congress Movement and the TIC by Sarwar who he sees as his political mentor. In 1960 he became a member of the South African Communist Party and was recruited into one of its sabotage units. This unit was later disbanded and merged with MK. He carried out various acts of sabotage in the Indian areas of Vrededorp, Fordsburg and Johannesburg Central. He became the platoon commander of his unit and in 1963 was appointed onto the Second National High Command of MK. Aatish was arrested in 1963 and, after release, again in 1964. On both occasions he was heavily tortured. After his release from detention in 1964, he was charged again immediately and sentenced to ten years in prison. He spent much of this time on Robben Island where he completed in matric exams and a BA degree. He was released in the early 1980s and became active in the UDM and the TIC. He was awarded MK"s triple-medal award for long service. He is currently retired.

Hamiz was born and raised in Pietermaritzburg. He was raised by his grandmother until he started school. At an early age he witnessed his father"s arrest for crossing the border into Natal without a permit. As he got older he started attending political meetings with his older brother. He became more involved in politics with the development of the Defiance Campaign. Soon after this he joined the Natal Indian Youth Congress. In 1954 he was elected chair of the NIC Greyille branch. In 1960 he was approached to join MK, he accepted this offer as he believed that all avenues of non-violent protest had been closed to the liberation movement. He was detained in 1963 with ten other MK suspects and convicted on three counts of sabotage. He was sentenced to fifteen years on Robben Island. It was here that he completed a BCom degree. He was released in 1981 but under strict conditions

(for example, he could not attend social or political gatherings and his freedom of movement was severely curtailed). In the early 1980s he was instructed by the ANC to leave the country and travel to Lusaka. He carried on underground activities within Lusaka and Swaziland until 1986 when he was abducted, tortured and brought back to South Africa. He was then charged with high treason and sentenced to fifteen years in jail. However, he was released in 1991. He currently holds a high level government job.

Subodh was born and raised in Durban, KwaZulu Natal. He came from a working class background and his family were politically inactive. Because there were so few schools in the area he was raised, he had to attend primary school at a late age. He graduated from primary school at the age of eighteen. His father and older brother had by then passed away and his family did not have the money to send him to high school. He was initially driven to the struggle by the unfairness of the Group Areas Act and the eviction of people from their homes. This led him to join the Natal Indian Youth Congress. In 1962 he was approached to join MK. Although he joined because he believed in the cause, he also admits that he was attracted to MK because he felt that it would be an exciting adventure. He was recruited into a four person cell in Durban. His unit was involved in four sabotage operations before he was arrested in August 1963 and sentenced to ten years imprisonment on Robben Island. At the time of his arrest he was twenty-three years old. He was released in 1974 and placed under house arrest. He escaped the country in December 1976 and crossed into Swaziland. He spent the next ten years in exile living and training in countries such as Angola and Germany. He was trained as an MK underground commander. He then moved to Holland where he spent the next four years as an ANC representative. He returned in 1991 and worked in the Police Intelligence department until he retired.

Waqar was born in Vrededorp in Johannesburg but was raised in Fietas which is also in the Transvaal. Although Fietas was a predominantly Indian area, Waqar says that Indian

residents lived harmoniously with other disadvantaged racial groups in the area. Waqar was exposed to racial discrimination at an early age. For example he speaks about having to avoid certain areas because of the danger of being beaten by a group of white thugs and says he could only walk on one side of the road on his way to school because of the other side was considered „white." These experiences played an important role in the development of Waqar"s political convictions. At the age of eighteen, he joined the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress (TIYC) and through this organization"s activities, he became friends with members of the African National Congress Youth League. It was through them that he learnt more fully of the deprivation that African people faced on a daily basis. In 1961, Waqar was asked to join MK. In 1962, he led his own unit which were involved in a number of sabotage activities (including attacks on pylons and railways). Waqar was arrested and tortured for his activities in 1962. He escaped prison in 1963 and escaped to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Here he carried on working for the ANC as a fund raiser. He remained in Dar es Salaam for eight years until he moved to London with his wife. He had to undergo medical treatment for epilepsy which he suffered as a result of the shock treatments he had undergone when he was tortured. He remained in London with his wife for twenty years until they returned to South Africa in 1991. He is currently living in a wealthy suburb in Johannesburg and works for the Provincial Legislature.

Fahim was born in a small town outside of Johannesburg where his father ran an import-export business. Because there were no high schools for Indians (or Africans and coloureds) in his town, he was forced to move to Johannesburg to complete his education. Fahim"s political involvement was sparked by international and national politics during this period such as the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign, India"s march to independence and the Indonesian struggle for freedom. Fahim was recruited into the TIYC and was in a short space of time was elected into the TIYC executive committee and then as chairman. Due to his

political activities, Fahim was expelled from school before he could complete his matric exams. Fahim served full time on the Secretariat of the National Action Council of the Congress of the People until he was arrested in 1956 on charges of high treason. After five years on trial he was acquitted. However, in 1963 he was detained under the 90-day detention law. He escaped from the police station along with three other comrades. He then left the country and headed for Dar es Salaam. He joined MK in 1964 and was sent for a year to the Soviet Union for military training. He then underwent intelligence training in Moscow for six months. During his twenty eight years in exile Fahim was deployed to Dar es Salaam, Bombay, Egypt and New Delhi as an ANC representative. Although an MK member, Fahim was never actively involved in sabotage. Fahim returned South Africa in 1990 and has since held a number of high profile jobs in government.

Sashwat lived in a number of different households in Fordsburg as a child. His father died when he was very young and he left school at primary school level in order to earn an income for his family. At the age of twelve, he was directed to the Communist Party headquarters. He was told that if he distributed leaflets he would be given food. This was start of his political career. He soon joined the Young Communist League in 1943 and became very influenced by the speeches of leading communists such as Joe Slovo and Dr Dadoo. He also developed a love of Marxist classics. In 1948 he was recruited into the TIC and the Congress of the People and was highly involved in both organizations. In 1960 he was recruited into the underground South African Communist Party and in 1961 became a member of an underground SACP sabotage unit. His unit‟s first act of sabotage was severing telephone lines in a predominantly Afrikaans area. Later this same year the unit disbanded and became a part of MK. Their first act of sabotage as an MK unit included bombing three targets in Johannesburg. As a result of these bombing the Special Branch of police raided his house and arrested him when they found permanganate powder and potassium in his home. When

he was released after paying a fine, MK suspended him for six months for his negligence. He was, however, recruited back after three months and was asked to form his own unit. Things changed when an Indian man arrived at his house one evening claiming that he wanted to supply the unit with weapons and explosives. Although Sashwat was suspicious, his superiors told him that procuring more weapons was important and so he accepted them. However, his suspicions were well founded and when his unit planted a bomb at a railway station using explosives provided by this man they found themselves surrounded by the police. It was later established that the stranger was a police informer and had supplied the unit with fake explosives. Sashwat and his unit were taken into custody and brutally tortured. Sashwat describes having his head repeatedly banged against a concrete wall and being beaten with rifles. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment, most of which was served on Robben Island. When he was released he was placed under house arrest. Later, he was able to find work as a sales representative. He is currently retired and living in Lenasia.

Deenadayaal‟s family emigrated from India to SA before he was born and he was raised in Fordsburg in Johannesburg. He was very interested in politics from an early age as his father was active in the Indian National Congress, which fought against British rule in India. His father would tell him stories about how they used to make petrol bombs with empty coconut shells. Deenadayaal joined the TIYC when he was a teenager and soon was elected to the executive of the TIYC. After completing high school he spent a year in London studying engineering. When he returned to South Africa, he immersed himself in political work. He was detained for several months in 1960 after the state of emergency was declared. During this period he was kept confined to a small cell in solitary confinement. In 1962 he was approached to become a member of MK. He was trained in basic explosives and had to help scout for potential targets. He was arrested a few months after he joined MK when he was caught planting explosives. He spent 10 years on Robben Island for his political activity.

After his release he was put under house arrest in Fordsburg for five years. He currently lives in Lenasia.

Second Generation

Rifaʿah was born and raised in Lenasia, Johannesburg. His family was not political and he was not raised in a financially wealthy household. His political consciousness developed with the school boycotts. After witnessing and participating in the boycotts he joined the Lenasia Youth League. The Lenasia Youth League consisted of politically active matriculants and university students who would tutor younger students in school subjects while speaking to them about politics. Soon after this he joined the UDF. His political consciousness was also raised by talking and debating with his school friends. In matric he was approached by a friend to join MK. Rifaʿah readily agreed to this and was sent to Botswana to train for a week. His training included debates, reading, classes and rudimentary weapon training. He later went to Angola to undergo hard core military training for four months. His unit alone conducted between fifty to sixty acts of sabotage. Bombs were planted in the early hours of the morning to try and ensure that no people were injured. However, unlike the older generation, specific people were sometimes targeted. After two members of his unit were killed in a bomb, Rifaʿah spent ten months training in the Soviet Union. He returned in 1991 and is currently living in a wealthy area in Johannesburg and is the chief director in a large company.

Nimerah was raised in a small, rural town in KwaZulu Natal. She says that growing up in this area helped her become aware of the inequalities suffered by the African majority. She was raised in a family of activists and had two older siblings who influenced her political upbringing. Her first foray into activism was in 1980 when she participated in the school boycotts. At the age of twelve, Nimerah was arrested for her participation in the school

boycotts. She attended a very conservative Indian school where the teachers and pupils were not very sympathetic to her politics. However, she was still politically active during the weekends when she helped her siblings with their political work. In university she became involved in student politics. In 1986, with a group of politically active students, Nimerah formed an MK unit. Their unit was not involved in combat work but instead formed an intelligence structure. They deciphered documentation that had been acquired from the Security Branch and also documented activities of the Security Branch. MK and the ANC also had helpers within the police who would send them various documents with information such as meeting details and the nature of certain operations. Nimerah's unit also had to decipher the coded information in these documents. The unit was disbanded in 1993/1994. Nimerah moved to Johannesburg where she currently lives in a wealthy suburb and has her own business.

Ranveer was born in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal. His parents were not political but his multi-racial ideologies were shaped under their religious upbringing. He was taught that under God all people were equal. He was also highly influenced at school and often used community sports matches to discuss politics with his friends. Although there were no school boycotts when he was in high school, he participated in them once he entered university. He would wear his old school uniform and enter the school to try and influence students to participate in the boycotts. He was a youth and community activist during this time and was actively involved in the NIC, UDF and Civic Youth Organization. Ranveer and his friends were approached to form an MK cell and trained in the bush in a rural area. Ranveer became the commander of his unit and between 1983 and 1986 they were involved in an undisclosed number of sabotage activities in Durban. During this period of history, Durban was known as „bomb city." When a State of Emergency was declared in 1986, Ranveer escaped to Swaziland. He was sent to Lusaka for medical treatment as his knee had

collapsed during an operation. He was soon sent to Cuba to undergo more medical treatment and also to be trained in counter-intelligence, military combat, photography surveillance and communication. He returned to Angola where he stayed in MK"s Pango military camp until he was sent back to South Africa. He was arrested in South Africa in 1988 were he was placed in solitary confinement and tortured. He was released in 1990 and has since worked for NGOs.

THEMES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Family, community and economic position

According to Maharaj (2008: 25 – 26), the extended family unit is a very strong influence for diasporic Indian communities across the world. The family unit is seen to be greater than the individual. This importance is extended towards the community as well which is very tight-knit (Maharaj, 2008: 26, Padayachee, 1999: 393 and Vahed, 2002: 78). It is thus important to consider the role that the family and community played in the lives of Indian MK members. This is order to establish what role (if any) did the family and community have on politicising the individuals. The economic position of the interviewees will also be looked at here because, according to Maharaj (2008: 26), the Indian South African community felt vulnerable in their middleman position. This contributed to the isolated nature of the community which was exacerbated by the divide and rule strategy of apartheid.

The purpose of this section is thus to explore the relationship the interviewees had with their families and community. Did they stand out in any way from the norm? Did their families occupy a middle man economic position?

First Generation

There was no real similarity between the political affiliations of the families of the interviewees. They grew up in families with different levels of political consciousness. Many of them did not speak much of their parents or siblings. However, Deenadayaal‟s father played a major influence in his political upbringing. Deenadayaal‟s father played a role in the liberation struggle in India and, as mentioned above, used to talk about how they used to make petrol bombs during the struggle. Ekta also stated that her father‟s political affiliation to the Natal Indian Congress was initially the „source of my inspiration‟. Her political ideologies developed from watching „the kind of trials‟ that the government and legal system „put my father through‟. Fahim also speaks about his father‟s influence on him: „My father was a very ardent supporter of Gandhijii...so that had some influence on me. He was politically conscious. He wasn‟t politically active but he was politically conscious‟. When interviewees did mention the influence of family most of them tended to focus more on their fathers rather than their mothers.

Most of the interviewees seemed more politically influenced by friends, acquaintances, or local political heroes rather than by family. For many of the Johannesburg interviewees, Ahmed Kathrada was a close family friend and mentor. As a result of living in such close quarters of him, he was a mentor they could relate to when compared to leaders who lived further away or who were in higher levels of position. Many of them became politically involved through him or through people who were influenced by him. Aatish states that after Ahmed Kathrada was arrested in 1956 he started to ask himself „to what extent am I involved? Here is a friend of mine whom I know. He is involved in politics. He is a committed and dedicated youth leader whom I looked up to but I am doing nothing‟. Many of them also looked up to the senior Indian MK members (especially their commanders).

Dr Yusuf Dadoo and Dr Monty Naicker were also considered as inspirations. There were different reasons given for this but most of the explanations revolved around the leaders‟ humility, the fact that they were educated role models and that their radical political ideas came at a time when Indian South African politics had stagnated. Sarwar states that after Gandhi left the country „Indian politics in South Africa went down‟. According to him, Indian political activities mostly revolved around „petitions, deputations, begging‟ and the NIC/TIC „were promoting the interests of the business community‟. He goes on to add that this activity „carried on until the appearance of these two doctors – Dr Naicker in Natal – and they started within the Congress movement, these minority organizations advocating, first of all, unity for all the oppressed people‟. Sashwat states that „basically most of the poorer Indian community were non-political really and they understood very little about politics‟. He believes that this political lethargy changed „after my father died and the younger generation started, that was the second generation, they took a little more interest in politics‟. He goes on to say that as a result of the return of Dadoo and Naicker from London the idea „of instituting Gandhi‟s policies and principles came into effect again, that many believed basically that we should once again start the party of *Satyagraha* or passive resistance‟.

The common thread that all of them seemed to have was that they were all raised in relatively multi-racial areas. The interviewees who came from Gauteng were raised mainly in areas such as Fordsburg or Vredensdorp. Although these were majority Indian areas, there were a number of African and poorer white people who lived in such areas as this was before the Group Areas Act came into existence. The Natal interviewees also indicated that they grew up with multi-racial friends. One interviewee grew up in the multi-racial area of Effingharn‟s Hill in Natal while another stated that he had grown up not seeing race as an issue. One Johannesburg interviewee was raised in Fietas which had a majority of Indian residents as well as a number of coloured, African, Chinese and Malay families. Many of them mention

that their parents or immediate family did not harbour racist tendencies and these sentiments were passed down to their children.

Although the vast majority of interviewees grew up in similar areas, some grew up with less wealth than others. With the exception of Deenadayaal and Ekta, the interviewees did not attend university before their involvement in MK. Their fathers (and sometimes mothers) had very humble jobs ranging from waiters, washerwomen, tailors, caterers and even labourers. For the two who did go overseas to study, their parents had to save their money very carefully in order to help them financially. None of them grew up in a wealthy household. Sashwat stated that growing up with ‚a family like mine, which was poverty stricken‟ increased his frustration with the political situation. This sentiment is also shared by Nandin who couldn‟t „continue going to school‟ because of ‚the financial situation at home‟. Even after he qualified as a carpenter he could not find work because possible employers told him ‚they won‟t allow us to employ you. You are an Indian‟. Situations like this made him increasingly bitter against discriminatory laws.

Second Generation

Two of the younger interviewees grew up in the urban Chatsworth and Lenasia areas where they say residents tended to be politically vocal and volatile. While the two male interviewees indicated that family influence was not a huge part of their political consciousness, the female interviewee‟s family had a large influence on her political development. Nimerah grew up in a small town which was fairly conservative; however, she was set apart by her politically active family. She states that

> I grew up in a family of activists so … both my brothers… I have two brothers who are much older than me. [Name removed] who is 14 years older than me and [name removed] who is 10 years older than me, both of whom were politically active from a very young age so I guess it was almost inevitable that I would become active politically.

Teachers and older students influenced the men but not the woman who had had her political education through her parents and siblings. Ranveer provides an example of the influence teachers had on the mindset of the students:

> In Std 7 then, we had a teacher by the name of [name removed], he is late now. Amazing character and I think he influenced many people but me particularly because what he did in one of the literature lessons, he played Martin Luther King… and we used to chat about it for the rest of the year because he played it quite early in the year. That was, I think, the turning point… well, some people might have … but, for me in particular; so I think that‟s when I made a decision that is what I was going to do.

For all of the interviewees, the Group Areas Act resulted in the interviewees having to be restricted to Indian areas (Chatsworth and Lenasia). The third interviewee grew up in a rural area but went to school in a very small town in KwaZulu Natal. She attended a very conservative Indian school. However, all three of them speak about having interactions with other races. The interviewees spoke about how school sport was a way of meeting with people from other schools of different races and Nimerah spoke about growing up in an agricultural sector where she could see the conditions under which African workers lived.

Four of the interviewees (the three interviewees mentioned above plus one of the non-recorded participants) were involved in the School Boycotts in 1980 which raised their political awareness. School was a large political influence for the male participants. This is probably also directly linked to the urban location of their schools. Nimerah states that „I was in Standard 4, I think, when the 1980 school boycotts happened and I guess that was for me my first kind of foray into activism‟. Rifa‟ah also states that his political activism „was ignited in 1980 when the school boycotts took place‟ because „you got a sense of what the older kids, the matriculants, were talking about and those that were actually leading the boycott, that in a way I think sparked the kind of interest in politics‟.

It was more difficult to place these interviewees into a financial bracket (although Rifaʿah stated that he did not grow up in a wealthy household). Their experiences seemed to be shaped by similar events: the school boycotts, the violence in the country, the political climate of revolution.

<u>Religion and Culture</u>

According to Vahed, religion and culture play an important role for Indian South Africans because they help to establish a „pan-Indian "Indianness"" (Vahed, 2002: 77). Religion is a very important part of most of the community‟s sense of Indian identity (O‟Malley, 2007: 40 – 41). To understand the role of ethnic identity on the interviewees, it‟s important to look at how important religion and culture were for them in their daily lives growing up. Did religion and culture influence their political outlook or was it, in fact, the lack of a strong religious or cultural affiliation that allowed them to follow the path they took?

First Generation

Here there were different reactions from different participants. Some of them did not consider religion an important factor in their lives at all. None were anti-religion but six of them said that religion played very little role in their political development. However, none of them spoke about religion much until I asked them about it. Only one interviewee (Nandin) was very religious but he has only become so recently. Nandin explained the links between his political and religious convictions by comparing the ideologies of Karl Marx and Lenin with spiritual teachings: „The one is giving a viewpoint from a spiritual aspect and the other is giving a viewpoint from a material aspect but both are converging on the same message of the brotherhood of man‟. However, speaking of his past political activism, Nandin says that „You were a member of the party. You are supposed to be an atheist‟. He does not explain what he means by the word „party‟ but it can be presumed that he is speaking of either the

Communist Party or MK or the ANC, seen as many members of the Transvaal Indian Congress would not have been seen to be against religion. Apart from his house, none of the homes seemed to have many religious artefacts on display.

Although Gandhi will be discussed later in this Chapter, it is interesting to note that the older generation mentioned the influence of Gandhi as a cultural influence. Hamiz stated that for him culture influenced him in the sense that „you grew up in the Gandhian tradition and even your religious thinking against oppression and justice etc [is shaped by him] and you attended meetings and religious school and you came to believe the idea of not accepting things as they are". However, Hamiz also states that religion and culture did not have a „dominating role". For the most part, the ambiguous nature of religious influence on the interviewees can be summed up by Sarwar „In the sense that all religions I suppose teach you certain basics. To respect your elders, that all people are the same". Interviewees did not seem to see a contradiction between their activities and religion. Although they dedicated their lives to the struggle against apartheid, each individual had multilayered, complex personalities that at times may seem to contradict one another. For example, the reverence that they older generation showed for Gandhi may seem to be in contradiction to their MK activities.

Second Generation

Two of the interviewees grew up in Muslim households while the third grew up with a Christian background. Unlike the older generation, two of the interviewees mention religious teachings as a strong influence on their political activities. Ranveer stated that:

> Growing up, my parents never had any political views at all. Neither had my siblings. They had very strong religious views. I come from a Christian family and the belief was to treat everybody equally. So that was my political education. That is the genesis of it.

Rifaʿah also mentions that he grew up in a religious household where „both my parents were fairly observing Muslims". The three interviewees felt that their parents allowed them to what Rifaʿah refers to as the „freedom and liberty" to choose their political allegiances.

Political Affiliations and Development of Political Consciousness

In Chapter Three the question was raised whether the strengthening of the interviewees' political consciousness resulted in the weakening of their ethnic identity. Ethnic identity studies have primarily focused on this assumption (Phinney, 1990: 501). However, Phinney argues that the strengthening of one identity (in this case MK identity) does not necessarily result in the weakening of the other (Phinney, 1990: 501-502). This section will be looking at the political affiliation and the development of the political consciousness of the participants.

First Generation

All of the people interviewed had been members of either the Natal or Transvaal Indian Congress before joining MK. This is interesting because the Indian Congresses were known for their affiliation to Gandhi and passive resistance (see Chapter Five) and so it may seem on first consideration that membership in both the NIC/TIC and MK would be unlikely. However, the participants explain that their involvement in the Indian Congresses' activities led to their higher political consciousness which later led them to join MK. Many of them joined at a fairly young age and were members of either the NIC or the TIC Youth Leagues. Ekta mentions that „I couldn't join the African National Congress because we were all separated and we only found expression within our own ethnic divisions. So, the Natal Indian Congress was the stomping ground that I was brought up on".

Many of the interviewees were also part of the Communist Party while they were members of the NIC/TIC and were thus exposed to the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin.

They had an avid interest in international affairs at the time. A few interviewees like Sashwat and Fahim mention their interest in Hitler and the Soviet Union. Fahim mentions that correlations were made between Hitler‟s ideology and the manner in which Africans, Indians and coloured people were treated in South Africa. Sashwat mentions that when the Soviet Union joined the second world war Dr Dadoo (who was a communist as well as leader of the Transvaal Indian Congress) „changed the policy now, to say that we should now support the war because the war is now a People‟s War, because the Soviet Union was known as "The People‟s Regime" and he called on people to support the war‟.

The personalities of the leaders at the time influenced them. Although the interviewees had different mentors and were followers of different leaders, many of them mentioned the regard that they had for the new „educated‟ leaders of the NIC/TIC. As Sarwar stated earlier, since Gandhi left the country in 1914, Indian politics had taken a much narrower, elitist outlook. According to him, in 1945 and 1946 the time was ripe for the educated and forward looking Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker to come in. Many felt that a renewed spirit was brought to the NIC and TIC by these young leaders (who worked closely with the ANC).

As previously mentioned, most of the interviewees were members of the NIC/TIC and Communist Party while a few were also part of other organizations (such as trade unions). Yet most of them seem to affiliate themselves with the ANC more than any other organization. This is interesting because technically none of them were ANC members at the time that they first joined MK as the ANC only opened its doors to other races in 1969. It is thus a little puzzling that they see themselves more as ANC rather than MK although this could be because MK is now disbanded. While many are critical of the ANC as today‟s ruling party, some did use romantic terms to describe its liberation history. For example Fahim says: „If you take Nkosi Sikeli; you know, it hasn‟t got that power of revolution‟, going on to say „This was "God must bless Africa", you see, so the ANC was a non-violent

peaceful movement of resistance against oppression and injustice". Here Fahim is stating that the ANC was a non-military organization that wished to use peaceful means to bring about change. In other words, he is stressing that it was not in the ANC"s nature to be violent but that the ANC had no option than to embrace violence.

It is noteworthy that all of the interviewees mentioned Gandhi in some way or another in their interviews. All of them were respectful of him and what he stood for but there were different levels of respect in each case. For example, some of them referred to him just as "Gandhi" while others referred to him with the more respectful term "Gandhiji". While not all interviewees were interviewed at home, some were and so I was able to notice that two of the interviewees had a photo or statue of Gandhi in their houses (one of which was next to an MK medal while the other was next to a poster of Che Guevara). The fact that many of them mentioned him does indicate that his political presence was felt. Many of the older generation, even when they embraced the armed struggle, grew up in the context of the independence struggle in India. This played a role in shaping their reverence for Gandhi. This respect is also interesting because the independence movement in India also witnessed violent clashes between protestors and police. However, although the road to Indian independence did witness violent resistance, it is still seen as an example of a successful *satyagraha* campaign (Read and Fisher, 1999: 398). In addition, Gandhi was a South African leader who interacted on a daily basis with their parents and community. Revered leaders such as Dadoo, Goolam Pahad, and Moulvi Cachalia had a deep respect for him. Of the older interviewees, only Ekta openly criticised Gandhi and his followers by stating that "a lot of the people say *satyagraha*, *satyagraha*. I think it"s just an excuse to side step the military question". All the others showed respect for Gandhi and the Gandhian tradition.

Second Generation

All three interviewees felt most strongly affiliated with the ANC and MK, although they were also members of other movements (such as the United Democratic Front, Indian Congresses and the Civic and Youth Organization). Unlike the older generation, they were able to join the ANC at a young age as by this time ANC membership was allowed for people of all race groups. However, because the organization was banned, it was a lot more difficult to become involved. Rifa'ah states that „all we knew is that we wanted to leave the country and join the ANC but we never knew how the ANC operated. I mean, the ANC was banned". He later also mentions that this was especially so „in the Indian communities, it was even more of a difficulty in the sense that the ANC at that point.... Its own structures hadn't really reached deep enough into the Indian communities like it did in Soweto and some of the African townships".

The interviewees' political consciousness was raised by the violence that characterised apartheid opposition (and state response) in the country at the time. Political literature did not shape their philosophies or their ideas when they first became politically involved. Rather, they had a feeling of moral obligation and, as Nimerah mentions, „a complete certainty in my mind that what existed was completely wrong and that we had to change it". Ranveer and Rifa'ah mention that they only had a chance to read political literature in hiding or once they left the country. Nimerah states that activists were not created through reading political literature because „you were quite derisive of people who were consumed by reading all the stuff and rarely *doing* anything. They were "armchair" activists if anything".

The economic situation that many South Africans faced was also an influential factor on their actions. Ranveer points out that „the conditions were deplorable" because „every R10 that was spent on a white child then, there was 50c spent on a black child and about R1 each, if as

much as that, on a so-called Indian". Social conditions were a very strong factor that propelled him to become an activist.

All three interviewees described how fearing for their lives was a constant factor in during their MK involvement. For the earlier generations, people disappearing or being executed would still have resulted in some sort of publicity. However, the second generation of interviewees saw their friends being killed all around them. Execution and „disappearances" were common ways to deal with MK cadres in the 1980s. The political landscape was a large influence on the interviewees:

> we were all young, very young – 13, 14, 15 years ... there was a lot of political education that took place as well and we would spend most of the time, when we were not toyi-toying and singing struggle songs, we were actually talking about real politics, talking about homeland systems, talking about apartheid, talking about class struggle.

Although the interviewees would have been very young when 1976 occurred, they were influenced by the events of 1976 because of hearing about these events and because of the resulting political atmosphere. The country that they were raised in was volatile and violent. Nimerah was highly influenced by the political activities of her much older brothers while Rifa'ah and Ranveer were influenced by the political activities of those around them. One interviewee mentions that during the protests against the tri-cameral elections in 1984 he witnessed extreme violence in Lenasia „where protestors were basically beaten, sjamboked, tear-gased, shot with rubber bullets. There were cars that were turned over and set alight. There were police dogs running after people". Witnessing state violence against the community made them feel that they had to fight fire with fire as passive resistance would not be enough.

Except for Rifa'ah who mentions that his MK unit was named after Gandhi (discussed later in this Chapter), neither of the other two interviewees discussed Gandhi as a political

influence. This is in strong contrast to the older generation who made frequent references to him. However, one of the non-recorded interviewees stated that many MK members were ordinary men and women who would have preferred following Gandhian teachings but out of necessity were not able to do so because the apartheid state had not listened to non-violent protests in the past. The younger activists were also distanced from Gandhi politically because more time had passed since Gandhi‟s involvement in Indian South African politics.

Being Indian, being MK

This section explores the way in which the interviewees reconciled aspects of their cultural identity with their commitment to MK. Given that the tradition of non-violence and *satyagraha* seems to have influenced the participants, it is of interest to explore how Indian MK members felt about their decision to join the armed struggle. Although it is true that non-violence was a strategy for all racial groups until 1960 rather than just for Indians, the interviewees did seem to experience some tension between their Gandhi-inspired commitment to passive resistance and their decision to join MK and this tension is likely to have been different to the tension that black African MK members felt about reconciling their own possible earlier commitment to passive resistance with their decision to join the armed struggle. This section looks at why they turned to armed struggle and how they experienced being Indian in MK.

First Generation

According to many (if not all) of the participants, joining MK was out of necessity. They all felt that other avenues had been closed to them. Although Sarwar and Subodh indicated that they joined MK because they were young and adventurous, they also shared the above sentiment. For them, joining MK was a tactic and not a principle. This strategic approach contrasts with Gandhi‟s concept of *satyagraha*. For Gandhi and his followers *satyagraha*

was a principle that should be adhered to at any cost. To turn to violence would be an act of cowardice. Sarwar mentions that when he travelled to India he was asked why he switched to armed resistance. He states that the move to armed resistance was „never on principle – the form of struggle. Ours was a method – a tactic. In India it wasn't so". Here Sarwar is arguing that in India, the *satyagraha* struggle for independence was largely based on the principle of non-violence. The movement in South Africa to take up arms was not based on a moral principle, it was a tactical decision. However, it was legitimatized by moral reasoning such as the „just war" theory. There were also moral constraints on limiting the degree of violence against non-combatants.

None of the interviewees indicated that there was an internal cultural, ethnic, religious or moral struggle that they had to endure before they joined MK. They do not clearly state that they felt tension between their identity as Indian South Africans (and their resultant exposure to the ideals of non-violence in line with the Gandhian *satyagraha* tradition) and their decision to join MK. However, they also all have a strong desire to emphasise that MK did not take lives. This was a point that the vast majority of interviewees felt the need to illustrate very clearly. One interviewee told a story in which his commander scolded their unit for not looking more closely into a failed bombing operation of a post office. Although they waited until the post office was closed, they did not realize that there was a caretaker who lived in the post office after hours. He quotes his commander as having said „You see, you didn't do your reconnaissance work properly. How did you not notice that the caretaker was living upstairs? If you blew that place up you would endanger the caretaker and his family". This is an indication of how strongly interviewees felt about illustrating this point. While there are certainly a number of different reasons why the interviewees felt it was important to stress that they did not take lives, it is possible that they felt an unacknowledged

cultural tie to the concept of non-violence and that this is why they are so keen to emphasise that MK, at least during their time of involvement, avoided taking lives.

An example of this emphasis on non-violence is Hamiz‟s belief that MK activities were part of, rather than contrary to, non-violent struggles. He says that he „accepted the fact that sabotage was a very high form of non-violent struggle in the sense that you do not target human lives‟. Nandin states that „at no given time was the instruction out that we must endanger any life. MK did not do that.‟ Subodh also mentions that „we made sure, all precautionary measures, no human life is lost, or anybody injured or wounded. Because in a sense it is the highest form of non-violence ... sabotage‟. Deenadayaal believed that „it‟s the highest form of non-violence when you damage government institutions, as long as you don‟t take lives‟. The term „highest form of non-violence‟ is interesting because half of the first generation interviewees used this exact phrase. *Men of Dynamite* editor Rashid Seedat also came across this term, and the similar term „highest form of passive resistance‟ while conducting interviewees with first generation Indian MK soldiers. Attempts to find the origin of the phrase has not proven to be successful. This trend was also picked up by Desai and Vahed (2010: 380) who argue that many of the reasons Indian MK veterans embraced the armed struggle was because the turn to violence would not injure anyone and would be „an extension of non-violent resistance‟.

The strong emphasis that the interviewees placed on the idea that MK activity was part of non-violent rather than violent resistance displays the importance of this aspect to them. The interviewees also strongly emphasized that, for them, there was no difference between passive resistance and their MK activities. It is possible that one way in which Indian MK members brought together their identities as Indian South Africans and their identities as MK members was through describing MK activities as being a form of passive resistance. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Even though the interviewees were fighting for a non-racial society, the apartheid structure forced them to acknowledge their ethnic differences. Many mentioned the way that prison warders would distinguish between Indian, white, coloured and African political prisoners. This is also demonstrated in Indres Naidoo‟s biography *Island in Chains* where he states that African prisoners were given a cloth cap and a pair of sandals while the rest of them were given a felt cap and pair of shoes (Naidoo, 2003: 56). He also mentions that Indians and Coloureds were placed on a „D‟ diet that included a little bit extra food than the „F‟ diet that was reserved for Africans (Naidoo, 2003: 70). An issue that re-occurs in many of the interviews and is also brought up in Naidoo‟s biography is the way in which Indian prisoners were told „You‟ve got a long history of civilization, you wore silk long before the white man, and here you are jumping from tree to tree with these barbarians, what‟s wrong with you, man?‟ (Naidoo, 2003: 29). Fahim states that he was told that „You are above the African. These are bloody kaffirs, man, you know, you are ... look at you‟. Deenadayaal had a similar experience with senior warders when they would call him into their offices and state „you are so educated, how can you associate with these baboons‟ and „you know you are so much more advanced, when we were running around in the bush, you people were wearing silks and gold and diamonds already, so you are so much more highly intellectual and more advanced than all these people, so how can you associate with that lowest grade?‟ The interviewees stated that they had to ignore these jibes as they knew them to be untrue.

The interviewees all acknowledge that the Indian community suffered under apartheid but they have a strong desire to emphasise that the African community suffered the most. They have a large amount of sympathy for the African community. One interviewee stressed that liberation would have occurred whether Indians were involved or not:

> They mustn‟t think that because they took part in the Movement therefore they were, to some extent responsible, for bringing about the liberation. It was basically an African fight by virtue of the fact that the majority of the population were Africans.

The interviewees did, however, display pride in Indian contribution to the struggle. Nandin states that „guidance and a lot of theoretical work came from Indian sources but, undoubtedly, the Indian comrades [came] from an intellectual point of view or from the point of view of being an ordinary person giving out leaflets or writing a slogan on the wall". Many of them mention their sadness that Indian contribution to the struggle is being neglected in popular memory. Despite their non-racial outlook on life, none of them stated that Indian/white/coloured contribution should not be recorded in more detail. Although they see all people as equal, they do see themselves as Indian as well as South African and none of them described themselves as „black" or „African". They refer to the African community by different names and terms of reference such as „our black brothers and sisters". They were happy to be described as „Indian", although all of them seem to see themselves as South African first and Indian second and none of them mentioned any desire for revisiting a connection with India.

Second Generation

The younger generation tended to try to explain their ethnic identities more than the older generation. The relationship between their ethnic, national and political identities seemed to be more complex than the older generation. They were more reluctant than the older generation to describe themselves as Indian. For example, one respondent said he is a „South African of Indian descent. I am a charo but not an Indian. Do you understand?" Another interviewee stated that „we see ourselves as African South African" and „I don"t see myself as an Indian that has any other roots besides roots in Africa".

Their generation had to work more closely with other races and the distinction between African and Indian is less evident. This is reflected by the fact that none of them used terms

like „our black comrades" or „black brothers and sisters" – an MK soldier was an MK soldier. Although separated by the Group Areas Act, they made fewer distinctions between African, coloured and Indian MK/liberation veterans.

While these younger respondents were reluctant to emphasise their Indian identity, two of the MK units of which they were members were called the Ahmed Kathrada Unit and the Gandhi Unit. Rifa"ah states that he knew that this sounded like a contradiction (a military movement named after a leader who espoused passive resistance) but the unit saw it as an acknowledgement of Gandhi"s contribution as well as to say that there „wasn"t necessarily a conflict between his passive-resistance and the kind of resistance that we were carrying out, simply because there was no real other option". However, the interviewees also mentioned that they were less bound by the first generation MK system which refused to take lives. They were reluctant to talk about some of the more violent activities they had been part of as these were clearly painful memories. One interviewee stated that a large difference between the older generation of MK soldiers and the younger was that the first generation was „more averse to placing people in risk than the younger generation was. I think the younger generation was at a point where it felt that, you know, that things had to be done and you had to do it".

Military Experience

This section will explore how the interviewees felt about having been soldiers and about their actual military experience. It will look at how they"ve reflected on this and how they feel about having been soldiers.

First Generation

The first generation of MK recruits did not reflect much in their interviews about how they felt about being soldiers. It is submitted that this may be because they themselves did not see themselves as such. Aatish explains that when the first generation of MK soldiers was formed the SACP and MK were only thinking in terms of „sabotage [because armed struggle] was basically still in its elementary stages". Although Waqar believes that their activities were important he describes blowing up pylons, post offices and government institutions as „various little things" that was „nothing major". This does not mean that the interviewees saw their activities as unimportant. They all saw their sabotage activities as „successful" in the sense that it changed the nature of the liberation struggle which, up until then, had been limited to non-violent resistance. When interviewees discussed their military experience they mostly focused on scouting sabotage targets, bomb preparation and the sabotage experience. The first generation interviewees went into great detail about the mishaps, difficulties, trials and errors that went into making pipe bombs. Nandin explains that „we had no training whatsoever. We just had to do with what we had and read up on works about guerrilla warfare". He goes on to explain that „the only thing we had that we could work with was a pipe and the pipe [bomb] is very, very unsafe". The interviewees also discuss how they learnt to make explosives in their garages and homes. They discussed their sabotage activities in great detail. Sashwat describes a simple sabotage operation where „we blew up the post office, it was done within 15 – 20 minutes, and then [the unit] dropped me off. It actually only took about 10 minutes because I was back at work in about 10 minutes". Aatish also discusses events where a bomb does not go off at the appointed time. He describes how he „sweated" when he returned to the scene and tried to defuse the bomb before it either went off or before the local authorities found it. Sabotage events such as this are what dominated the first generations memories of their military experience.

Second Generation

The second generation used more militaristic language to describe their experiences as an MK soldiers. Ranveer stated that „I was active before I even went outside for training, I was already a soldier". He goes on to describe his irritation with being ranked with lowest soldiers while he was training outside South Africa because „I was a Commander". Like the first generation, Ranveer and Rifa"ah also had „fairly basic rudimentary military training" before they went into exile and they had to learn „to make petrol bombs". However, in the 1980s, the militancy of MK had increased dramatically. Rifa"ah points out that his „unit carried out over 50 or 60 acts of sabotage" and that „it was quite amazing" that none of the attacks „resulted in injury or loss of blood" because of the nature of the targets which were „police stations and government buildings". Here we see that although they did try to avoid harming civilians, there was more militaristic willingness to accept that there might be casualties.

They also lived in a constant fear of death. Nimerah remembers that she lived in a „chilling kind of scariness". She remembers leaving certain safe house locations and she „was convinced that there were people there" and she would „pull out a firearm" but „you know that it"s not going to provide you with much protection if something were to happen". Ranveer also felt this fear: „being a normal community activist the police will pick you up, they might beat you and they will release you. Being a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe is different. You have crossed the line, you know. You are now in the arms struggle so you need to be treated differently" because „tomorrow we could go to Robben Island, we could be shot".

Unlike Nimerah, both Ranveer and Rifa"ah were involved in sabotage activities before they went into countries such as Cuba, the Soviet Union and Angola for training. Ranveer also witnessed open fighting while in Angola. He remembers „people were fighting – a real fight – with the rebels and we were guarding the northern front". When he reached Zambia,

Rifa"ah was given the option to study overseas. Instead Rifa"ah chose to „receive training, go back and infiltrate myself back into the country and carry on operating". For all three participants „this was a real war"

Contemporary Politics

This theme was explored in order to understand the belief system that the participants hold today. This section will explore whether any of their current political beliefs and opinions contrast with their earlier statements or actions that they undertook in the past. I was also interested to see whether or not their relationship to their ethnic identity has changed post-1994.

First Generation

These interviewees voiced a distinct concern that the role of ethnic/racial groups other than black Africans in the liberation struggle has „slipped away and been forgotten". Sarwar mentions that „people get surprised even now that in every aspect of the struggle Indians, coloureds, whites were part in prison, under torture, assassinations, everything. They were there, but a large number of young people in particular don"t know".

Although the interviewees do acknowledge their affiliation to the ANC, there is a strong feeling of disillusionment with the current situation. Eight of the interviewees showed deep dissatisfaction that the contributions of minority groups in the fight against apartheid have been neglected. There is also a strong irritation with contemporary political leaders such as ANCYL leader Julius Malema.

When speaking about Afro/Indian tensions in South Africa, all interviewees who spoke about it tended to place much more blame on the Indian community. The Indian community was heavily blamed for being racist and arrogant. When relations between races were brought up,

most interviews focused heavily on African and Indian relations with very little placed on relations with the white and coloured communities, regardless of whether they were speaking about apartheid or post-apartheid South Africa. Comments such as „the Indians have a terrible attitude towards blacks‟ and „the contact between the Indian and the African has been virtually that of master and slave‟ as well as „when you come from Natal you always speak about the 1949 riots. What did the Africans do to the Indians. But the Indians won‟t talk about their own relationship (with the Africans) but, to some extent, they were responsible‟.

Second Generation

Like the older interviewees, all of the younger interviewees expressed a wish for Indian veteran stories to be told. This seemed to have less to do with a wish to promote people of their own ethnic background or with pride in being Indian, but rather as a result of the feeling that when you are in a minority, struggle veterans can be forgotten. They want their friends who died - some of whom died in horrific circumstances - not to be forgotten. They also have a strong wish for the older generation to be remembered because as Rifa‟ah explains they „were always role models‟ because „these were ordinary people with no real historical family connections to the struggle. These were simple people, through their own experiences, decided that something had to happen and they were involved in major stuff‟. Nimerah states that there has been a lack of „recognition of the involvement of Indian people in the struggle and at all levels, not necessarily underground structures or MK‟.

In general, the younger generation seems to have a more distant relationship with the broader Indian community. While they did mention how conservative the Indian community is, they were not as critical as the older generation. Their concern with racial tension tends to be a less emotional and more analytical:

> Only in Johannesburg because of the upward social mobility, it‟s more mixed except for people who go to universities now but, generally, in the real world Durban is still very segregated of choice, of design. Apartheid was really engineered by the Town Planners.

Their fight against apartheid also seemed to stem from a frustration with the socio-economic conditions in poorer areas with less of a strong emphasis on race.

The second generation also tend to speak about their experiences and the end of apartheid in much less romantic terms. Nimerah describes the country in the 1980s as being „on fire‟ and Ranveer describes Durban at this time as „bomb city‟. Their volatile experiences made them more battle weary and militaristic. Rifa‟ah had lost two members of his unit before the ANC was unbanned. He describes the emotions that he felt up on hearing the news:

> When the ANC was unbanned and I had just come back from training and the Soviet comrade that was with me said "Hey! Your organisation has been unbanned" and I just couldn‟t believe it because it didn‟t make any sense. Six weeks ago [name removed] and [name removed] were killed carrying out an act of sabotage. How could the ANC go from a banned organisation to a free one within the space of six weeks, but that‟s what happened. For a long time I couldn‟t reconcile because for me it just wasn‟t…I think the unbanning for me in a way stole something from [name removed] and [name removed], you know?

He felt that the ban being lifted so soon after his friends died for the cause took something away from their sacrifice.

There is a stronger sense of loss with this generation. As one put it simply „you sit back and think: I didn‟t have a childhood. I compromised on everything‟. However, none of the interviewees believed that their sacrifices were in vain and they displayed a strong pride in South Africa, its achievements and its citizens. Although critical of the ANC they also displayed a pride in the Congress tradition of doing things „not for fame or glory. You did it because you believe in it‟.

CONCLUSION

Although there are some similarities, there are also marked differences between the identities of the first and second generation of interviewees. The following Chapter will analyse the interviewee"s responses in order to answer this thesis"s research questions. The following Chapter will explore the way in which Indian MK members experienced being Indian in this military organization and in particular looks at how they reconciled aspects of their cultural identity with their commitment to MK.

CHAPTER FIVE
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter uses the material described in the previous chapter in order to respond to the research questions outlined at the beginning of the thesis. I explore the way in which Indian South African MK members" identity was formed, looking in particular at whether and how they negotiated their MK membership with their ethnic identities.

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, identity is the way in which we locate ourselves in the world (Simon and Klandermans, 2004: 451). Collective identity refers to the way in which a person shares a part of his/her identity with a group (Simon and Klandermans, 2004: 450). According to De Vos, people can have a number of collective identities which may clash with each other (De Vos, 2000: 241). Both minority ethnic identity and national or political identity are forms of collective identity. One of the issues that this analysis will explore is whether the interviewees" overlapping identities did, in fact, conflict.

Ethnic identity arises from sharing a certain culture and value system with a group of people (Song, 2003:10 and Bekker, 1993:11). Ethnic identity is salient at varying levels amongst different individuals, communities and countries. The question that then arises is why an assumption has been made in this thesis that ethnic identity must have played a role amongst the interviewees. As discussed in Chapter Four, all of the interviewees came from a community which forms part of a minority in a multi-racial and multi-cultural country. They also came from a community that was in an intermediate position both economically and politically. However, what makes ethnic identity particularly important here was the unique political situation in South Africa under apartheid. According to Preston, all forms of identity are outcomes of social processes (Preston, 1997: 34). The whole social and political system

during apartheid was established in order to isolate, differentiate and separate race groups. We see this amongst the interviewees who discuss the way in which prison warders would distinguish between Indian, white, coloured and African prisoners. Although many of them were imprisoned for similar crimes, their prison diet, clothes and shoes were all determined according to where they stood on the racial hierarchy. The way in which South African society was structured was intended to create an illusion that Indians were better than the African majority (although not as high up as the white minority). We see evidence of this in the interviewees" stories about how they were told by the prison warders that they were „above the African" because they were „more highly intellectual and more advanced" than „these baboons". The way in which MK cells were formed also shows the way in which soldiers had to work within the racial system in order to carry out sabotage attacks. All interviewees were fighting for a non-racial society and yet they all belonged to MK units that had only Indian members. This was wholly for practical reasons: a multi-racial unit would attract more attention from security forces. Nevertheless, it is still ironic that they had to work within the system in order to work to overthrow it.

The system of apartheid relied on the divide and rule measure to maintain power. Ethnic community identity which places emphasis on a group"s shared collective name, common myth of descent, shared history and shared culture was used by the government to justify apartheid. In addition to this, the Indian South African community is a diasporic minority group in a multi-racial and multi-cultural country. For much of their South African history, they have been considered „outsiders." They were only considered permanent members of South Africa ninety nine years after their arrival into the country (Saunders and Southley, 2001: 89). Their intermediate economic position also places them is a vulnerable position. The question that then arises is were there any particular identity traits that encouraged these Indian South Africans to join MK? How were they able to negotiate their political identity

with their ethnic identity in a society that placed such a large emphasis on racial differences? How were they able to see past their vulnerable minority position in order to join MK? While the previous chapter has already touched upon the answers to some of these questions, this chapter will address my research questions (as outlined in Chapter One) in a more explicit and thorough manner.

RESPONDING TO MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching goal of this thesis was to explore the identities and experiences of Indian MK members. In particular, I sought to answer the following questions:

Did they experience tensions between their ethnic identity and their political identity? Did they feel that in order to belong to MK, they had to distance themselves from the Indian community? What set these Indian South Africans apart from the rest of the Indian South African community? Why did they join MK while most Indian South African resistance was organized through the NIC and TIC? What significant differences were there between different generations of Indian MK members?

<u>Did the participants experience tensions between their ethnic identity and their political identity?</u>

It was found that older MK members felt that their MK activities were „the highest form of passive resistance". As touched upon briefly in the previous chapter, this belief could be a way of reconciling tensions between their ethnic and political identities. Older members were also found to be very critical of the Indian South African community. This could be because they still feel part of this community despite having a political consciousness that is different from most of the community. The younger members were found to be ambivalent about being Indian. Various explanations as to why this may be will be explored here. It was

also found that in both generations, participants were concerned that the Indian contributions to the struggle against apartheid may be forgotten. This section will also explore the fact that the decision to join MK was made because of Indian role models.

The idea that MK activities were the „highest form of passive resistance" was an idea that constantly cropped up in the older generation interviews. The principle of passive resistance in the creation of Indian South African identity should not be under-estimated. Even after he left South Africa in 1914 Mohandas Gandhi"s legacy went on to influence the conduct and identities of Indian South Africans for generations to come. His approach to non-violent political mobilisation influenced struggles well into the 20th century. During the late 1940s and 1950s Dadoo and Naicker organized a number of Gandhian campaigns. These civil disobedience campaigns were aimed at laws which curtailed Indian property rights, legislated separate facilities and mandated passes for some citizens (Karis and Carter, 1977: 21).

The memory of *satyagraha* campaigns and the larger than life figure of Gandhi has often been invoked by segments of the Indian population as a reminder of the role that they played in the anti-apartheid struggle. According to Cohen, this can be termed „Gandhi-ism" – the projection of Gandhi as a larger than life icon to represent the identity of a cultural community (Cohen, 1993: 202).

The Gandhian tradition clearly forms an important part of Indian South African identity. Both the NIC and TIC were founded on the ideology of *satyagraha.* Although Gandhi left South Africa in 1914, passive resistance was used well into the 20th century and influenced NIC/TIC campaigns for years to come. In 1958, a mere two years before MK was formed, NIC leader Dr Naicker stated that „our Congress policy is based on that great philosophy of non-violence" and „we stand for peace and for the solution of all international problems by non-violent means" (Reddy, 1991: 129). Govender also states that in 1961 the NIC and TIC"s

tendency to „stress pacifism ran into conflict with the rising militancy, including support for the armed struggle" as this „contradicted the philosophy of NIC activists" (Govender, 2010: 94). The question that arises is whether Indian MK members experienced a tension between being Indian (and thus steeped in the Gandhian tradition) and being a member of MK? This is an especially pertinent question because every interviewee from the first generation was also a member of either the NIC or the TIC. However, it must be reemphasised that the tension between non-violence and armed struggle was not unique to Indians. This tension also existed between those who thought violence was necessary (Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu) and those who insisted upon the non-violent route (Albert Luthuli and Moses Kotane).

On the face of it, all the interviewees seemed to have eschewed passive resistance for a more violent form of struggle. From this one could deduce that Gandhi and passive resistance may not have had a large cultural influence on the lives of the resistors. However, some of the earliest Indian MK veterans would have been involved in the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign as well as the Defiance Campaign in 1952 (which was a multi-racial passive resistance campaign that involved the ANC, NIC, TIC and the Coloured People's Organization). Therefore, their first mass scale political experiences would have been in line with *satyagraha* teachings. Although the NIC and TIC had seen a dynamic shift with a more mass-orientated leadership that was dedicated to inter-racial co-operation, the Indian Congresses still espoused passive resistance. Dr Naicker, the leader of the NIC was an ardent Gandhian supporter and believed fully in the power of non-violent resistance. Although by 1946 more militant forms of passive resistance were being used (with mass protests rather than talks with the government), the idea of passive resistance was still a large part of the Indian Congress culture. As one participant stated, Dadoo and Naicker's leadership brought back the idea „of instituting Gandhi's policies and principles [and that] many believed that we should once again start the policies of *satyagraha* or passive resistance".

The first generation of Indian MK members certainly seemed to have been influenced by the culture of passive resistance, but they seem to have been able to reconcile their attachment to *satyagraha* principles with their choice to join MK. Except for one, none of the older generation of interviewees seemed to see a contradiction between early MK activities and passive resistance. In fact, they felt and strongly emphasized that their activities were in line with passive resistance. Terms describing their activities as the „highest form of passive resistance" and as „an extension of non-violent resistance" shows that there may have been a negotiation between adherence to Gandhian principles and their adoption of violence as a tactic. Although it sounds like a contradiction to adhere to non-violence and to be part of MK, the turn to armed struggle during the 1960s initially involved only the sabotage of infrastructure. Indeed, at this time, MK specifically eschewed attacks on any target that would involve the loss of life. Terms such as „highest form of passive resistance" suggest a link to the Gandhian philosophy of passive resistance. It is submitted that a strong reason why the older interviewees felt the need to emphasize this point was because of their connection to the Indian Congresses. The NIC and TIC were the first organizations that the older interviewees were a part of. They admired the NIC and TIC leaders and their political activities started under its care.

As touched upon in Chapter Four, it must be cautioned, however, that this link to passive resistance may have little to do with being Indian. It could be a broader feature of MK because the ANC also has a history of non-violence. In the 1950s, Chief Albert Luthuli became the president of the ANC. He was a devout Christian and believed strongly in the power of non-violent resistance (Seedat and Saleh, 2009: 34). The actions of the ANC had also, up until the formation of MK, been in the form of non-violent resistance. Mass campaigns such as the Defiance Campaign were in line with passive resistance. As a result, African MK members may have felt the same way about the turn to violence as their Indian

comrades. However, the first generation interviewees saw Gandhi and the *satyagraha* campaigns as the source of their passive resistance tradition and it is likely that their insistence that their MK activities were in line with or an extension of non-violent resistance was at least partly the result of their need to reconcile their ties to the Gandhian passive resistance tradition with their choice to become MK members.

Although the older generation did take a drastic step when they joined the armed struggle, one can see that there was a negotiation of their cultural identity with their MK membership. One could also argue that the need to emphasise that they did not take lives could stem from their concern that others assume that because MK was an armed movement, they must have killed civilians. The concern of being misunderstood could also be part of the explanation of why the „non-violence" of sabotage is emphasized. Statements such as „I grew up in the Gandhian tradition" suggest a feeling of a cultural tie with *satyagraha*.

Older members were very critical of the Indian South African community. According to Rensmann (2004), belonging to a particular group may evoke emotional responses when that group"s negative history is confronted. This may result in feelings of group-based guilt even if an individual has not personally taken part in the negative actions of the group as a whole (Rensmann, 2004: 170). This may explain some of the older interviewees" extreme annoyance with conservative sections of the Indian community. These interviewees placed much more blame for Afro/Indian tensions on the Indian community rather than on the African community. While the interviewees raised legitimate concerns, the obvious irritation that the interviewees felt for the Indian community"s role in Afro/Indian tensions at first struck me as surprising. Why did they express such sentiments against members of their own community? On reflection, I suggest their anger stems partly from their sense of belonging to

this community and being ashamed and angry at the community's reputation for being closed-off and even racist.

There is a possibility that these feelings have increased since 1994. As discussed in Chapter Four, the Indian community has received negative attention since the 1994 and 1999 elections where, according to Habib and Naidu, they were seen to vote for non-African parties because of a cultural affinity with other minority groups (Habib and Naidu, 1999: 191). Despite the fact that the community may have voted along „bread-and-butter" issues, Indians were seen to not vote for the ANC because of racism and historic tensions. According to Baines (2006:56), there is still the perception that racism is widespread in the Indian community. The post-apartheid era has also seen a greater stratification in the community with some „reclaiming their Indian cultural heritage while others have disavowed it; some have turned their gaze to the sub-continent whereas others consider Africa their home" (Baines, 2006: 56). Ebr.-Valley highlights these tensions when she writes that „the memory of India has, in fact, become a point of tension and uneasiness within the community" (Ebr.-Vally, 2001: 170). She goes on to emphasis her point about stratifications in the community by looking at the way in which the media and the political environment in South Africa encourage „"Indians" to convey their Indianness or their religiosity" (Ebr.-Vally, 2001: 182). This is, according to Ebr.-Vally, done in an effort to encourage cultural diversity in a democratic society (Ebr.- Vally, 2001: 182). These stratifications can even be seen today with the „150 years of Indians in South Africa" celebrations. As previously mentioned in Chapter Four, according to Badsha and Soske, the 150 years committees have either adopted a strategy of highlighting heroic Indian narratives or have tried to adopt a tradition of non-racial unity (Badsha and Soske, 2010). It would not be correct to make the assumption that the interviewees would disagree with either strategies; however the irritation that many of the older interviewees feel with conservative members may have been intensified by these increasing divisions within the community.

It is proposed that the reason why some of the participants in the older generation showed concern about Indian conservativeness could be because they have more of an attachment to their ethnic identity. Although they were not bound by the Group Areas Act and were raised in comparatively multi-racial areas, they still seem to accept their ethnic identity more easily than the younger generation. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that unlike the younger generation, they did not deliberate at length on their ethnic and national identities. For them these dual identities seemed to be devoid of significant tensions. Their acceptance of this part of their identity may be what makes it more difficult for them to accept undesirable aspects of their community. This raises the question that was raised earlier in this Chapter about whether individuals can „choose between two conflicting identities or can establish a bicultural ethnic identity" (Phinney, 1990: 301). According to Phinney, either one identity will weaken as the other strengthens or the relationship between two identities must remain independent from one another (Phinney, 1990: 501 - 502). In the case of the older generation, it is proposed that their ethnic identity did not necessarily „weaken" because of their liberation identity. Nonetheless their progressive political ideals did affect their outlook on the Indian South African community. For example, although half of them still live in former Indian areas and they all displayed pride in Indian contribution to the struggle, they disapproved and condemned what they see as un-progressive aspects of the community. The fact that the perceived negative aspects of the community evoked strong emotions in the older participants indicates that they do identify with their ethnic identity (see Rensmann, 2004: 170). An example of this identification can be found in the fact that even though the older generation espoused non-racialism, they still used terms such as „our black comrades" and „our black brothers and sisters" – they evidently did not regard themselves as black, although they considered black African MK members as „comrades" or „brothers and sisters". They

acknowledged that all people are equal, but they also felt comfortable acknowledging that they were from the Indian community.

The younger members were more ambivalent about being Indian. Although they do acknowledge their cultural identity and also show strong pride in the Indian contribution to the struggle, they have less desire to discuss issues pertaining to racial tension or Indian conservativeness. More emphasis was placed on the country's social problems such as financial inequalities or educational concerns. Growing up under the height of apartheid and living after the implementation of the Group Areas Act, it can strike one as surprising that ethnic issues were not a large concern for the younger generation. This could be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, because they have a more complex relationship with their ethnic identities than the older generation they may feel less bound by feelings of guilt or anger towards the unpleasant aspects of the Indian community while still feeling some connection to the community.

Secondly, in their current situation the younger generation seem to be less bound by minority ethnic issues. All these participants are living in affluent suburban areas in Johannesburg. It is likely that they interact with people of various race groups everyday and they are not as bound to everyday racial tensions that may be on display in less affluent formerly demarcated Indian areas.

A third factor could be that the younger generation did not have to cross the hurdle of multi-racial unity in the fight against apartheid. None of them had to live through and witness the 1949 riots. They also were not alive when the Indian Congresses formed an alliance with the ANC for the first time. For them non-racialism was a more entrenched concept. As a result they may feel less antagonistic towards Indian conservatism because their identity allows them more freedom to associate themselves outside of their cultural community.

A fourth reason why the younger generation seemed to have weaker ties to the Indian community and less of a sense of being Indian could be that they had to work and live under extreme violence, resulting in there being fewer opportunities to reflect on their Indian identity and a stronger sense of a bond between themselves and other non-Indian MK members. Their lives in exile meant that people of all races had to work together and endure the same hardships. Except for three of them, the older generation"s activities were limited to sabotage activity, whereas the lives of the second generation of MK soldiers were more violent. They underwent exile, intense military training and MK operations that could easily have resulted in death (Ngculu, 2009: 18). In his historical account about the lives of exiled MK soldiers in the 1980s, Ngculu writes "death was a constant companion in our lives. If it was not an accident involving explosives, it was a firearm accident or an attack of malaria" (Ngculu, 2009: 129). People of both genders and all races had to learn to live in the same camps and deal with the same situations. Although there are accounts and incidents of infighting and tension within the camps (see Suttner, 2008 and Lodge, 1983) Ekta states that "when we were interacting with each other we all looked after each other because we didn"t know whether we were going to be dead the next day". Although Ekta does not fall into the younger generation bracket, she, unlike the majority of the older interviewees, was not imprisoned and later spent many years in exile as an MK soldier. The use of military language to describe themselves such as "we were fighting a war" and "I was a soldier" suggests that to those who spent years in exile an MK cadre was first and foremost a soldier. This is supported by Ngculu"s account when he states that "Umkhonto we Sizwe camps were distilling tanks, producing soldiers of a special type" and "we were guerrillas" (Ngculu, 2009: 128). This is likely one of the reasons why the younger generation saw less of a distinction between African and Indian comrades/soldiers. The younger generation did not have to convince the masses that the Indian and African communities should work together in order

to achieve liberation – they lived and worked alongside people of other races as part of their MK exile experience. Their liberation identity was largely shaped by fear, exile and repression. This is not to undermine the experiences of the older generation. It is well known that activists in the older generation spent years in exile with non-Indians. They also interacted with each other through youth clubs and social gatherings. Different activists from both generations would have had different experiences. Fear and repression was faced by both generations. However, these were the observations made with the current pool of participants.

Finally, because apartheid used tactics such as the Group Areas Act to separate and divide people, popular anti-apartheid movements and philosophies during this period rebelled against these measures by insisting that oppressed groups were united against a common enemy. As a result of this rebellion the younger generation of MK members may have had quite a rigid identity formation. This was not a period of history that encouraged the contemplation of one‟s identity. This is evident in anti-apartheid activist Jay Naidoo‟s autobiography in which he states:

> In my youth, I was not really interested in exploring the faraway origins of my family –
> I was too involved in claiming, through struggle, my identity as a black South African.
> The apartheid government, in its insane desire to separate people on the basis of race,
> relocated millions of people into a patchwork quilt of ethnic districts that emphasised
> division and sought to use cultures as a divide-and-rule tactic. As political activists we
> resisted this and insisted that we had little in common with our Indian ancestry and that
> we were part of the black oppressed in South Africa (Naidoo, 2010: 13)

Although Naidoo is slightly older than the younger interviewees, it seems that this way of approaching identity was shared by these respondents. Their response to the apartheid state, which based its policies along the lines of ethnic and racial differences, was to see themselves as black and not Indian. Even though these participants were not members of the Black Consciousness Movement, it is quite possible that they were to some extent influenced by

this movement and thus considered themselves as black rather than as Indian. This created a sense of unity amongst the repressed but also acted as a form of rebellion against government‟s policies. The idea behind Black Consciousness was that apartheid had done more than just create a system of unfairness and poverty. It had led to black people feeling a sense of inferiority and self hatred. Black consciousness addressed this issue and believed that before apartheid could be overthrown or before any significant development to black development could be met, black people had to be liberated from their own minds and their own feelings of inferiority. This movement and attitude was especially popular amongst students. In 1968 a group of Indian and African students formed the South African Students‟ Organization (SASO) with Steve Biko as its president. Like Africanism (and the doctrine of the PAC), BCM did not believe that white people had a role in the liberation struggle. However, they did extend the definition of „black‟ to Indians and coloureds (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 7).

Interviewee claims such as „I am a South African of Indian descent,‟ and „I am a charo but not an Indian‟ and „we see ourselves as African - South African‟ shows us that this ethnic negotiation is still a large part of their current identities. We see with the younger generation that there was a sense that in order to belong to MK, they had to distance themselves from their ethnic identity. This was mostly in a rebellious response to apartheid‟s policies; however, even after the end of apartheid their identities are still complex.

The older members were very critical of the Indian South African community. This was in contrast to the younger generation interviewees who seemed less concerned with the issue of Indian conservativeness. There was a difference in the way the generations saw themselves.

Although all interviewees, both younger and older, still hold steadfast to their non-racial belief system there is a fear that the roles played by minority groups in the struggle will be

forgotten. The fear seems to stem from three concerns. Firstly, they were concerned that the Indian South African community is drifting away from what they see as their „South African identity" and retreating into the Indian community because they lack knowledge about the role played by Indian South Africans in the country"s liberation. Secondly, they are concerned that Indian South Africans who sacrificed their lives for the cause will not be acknowledged or remembered. The third concern stems from a fear that young, radical ANC leaders do not appreciate and acknowledge the role played by the Indian community. Most of the interviewees from both generations expressed concerns such as these. Here one can see the political and ethnic identities of both generations overlapping. Their concern lies with the need to acknowledge the political role played by their friends, relatives and comrades who sacrificed themselves for a cause. This anxiety is directly linked to their ethnic minority identity (their fear that the role of the ethnic group that they belong to will be unacknowledged). It is interesting to note that although the younger generation showed a great deal of tension with their ethnic identities, they are also concerned that Indian contribution to the struggle will be forgotten.

It is worth noting that the participants all made the decision to join MK because of Indian role models. The Indian South African community forms part of diasporic minority. When the Indian diasporic community was first introduced in the country, links were formed amongst themselves in order to feel a sense of belonging (Maharaj, 2008: 25). The diasporic community was able to come together because of certain similar traits: the importance of family, the importance of religion and the importance of patriarchy (Maharaj, 2008: 25). According to Maharaj, this often resulted in the community gaining a reputation for being closed-off and conservative (Maharaj, 2008: 26). If the Indian South African community was indeed, as stated by Maharaj (2008:26) „religious, rigid, conservative, orthodox, close and restrictive", how did the interviewees develop the kinds of political consciousness needed to

join MK? Friends, acquaintances, or local political heroes/mentors within the Indian community influenced their political thoughts and ideas. For the younger generation, schools provided a breeding ground for political education and debates. During apartheid, schools were all divided into racial categories (separated for white, African, coloured and Indian students). Under apartheid it would have been difficult for the interviewees (especially the younger generation under the Group Areas Act) to find inspiration or political voice outside of the community. The point here is not to argue that the Indian community was or was not for the most part closed or conservative, but rather to state that the political influence of activists within the Indian South African community was important in shaping ideology and thus to emphasise that there was much diversity within the Indian South African community and there were always voices critical of apartheid.

What set these Indian South Africans apart from the rest of the Indian South African community?

This section will look at what set the participants apart from the rest of the community. Why did they join MK while most Indian South African resistance was organized through the NIC and TIC? This section will look at the fact that the majority of participants were not brought up in very religious households. They were also in a low economic position and did not fall under the middle man bracket. Most of them were raised in multi-racial areas and got to see the suffering of black Africans under apartheid. They also seemed to be independent from strict family regulations.

Many of the participants did not grow up in very religious households. Vahed (2002), O'Malley (2007) and Kurien (1999) each write about the importance of religion in Indian communities. According to Kurien (1999:653), religion becomes more pertinent when the community forms an ethnic minority. Religion is used as a way in which to establish a

community and create an „Indian consciousness‟. O‟Malley (2007:40-41) concurs with Kurien, saying that in South Africa, the Indian community uses religion to create a sense of tradition and ethnic identity (O‟Malley, 2007: 40 - 41). Maharaj argues that the fear of losing one‟s religious and cultural identity resulted in many in the community becoming conservative, orthodox and very religious (Maharaj, 2008: 26).

With religion playing such a large part in Indian South African identity, it seems interesting that none of the older interviewees discussed religion as being a very influential factor on their political ideology. Although six of them mentioned certain religious ideas as influential, only three of them discussed being brought up in an orthodox, conservative household. However, all of them seemed to have the freedom in their upbringing to decide how important a role religion was allowed to play in their lives.

Their lack of a strong religious affiliation could also be at least partly the result of their participation in the Communist Party. The concept of communism is often associated with atheism. The SACP, however, did not seem to shape many of the interviewees ideas on religion. From an early age many of them were fully engaged in political groups, talks and debates. Political ideology is likely to have been a much larger influence on their identities than religion, although this is not to say that their religious upbringing did not influence to the development of their convictions. According to O‟Malley, „religion and traditional practices subsumed most of the community‟s sense of Indian identity‟ (O‟Malley, 2007: 40 - 41). However, for the participants, religion does not seem to be a large part of their personal identity. It may then be that Indian MK members were generally less religious than most Indian South Africans.

The majority of participants fell under a low economic position rather than a middle man economic position. The Indian South African community has mostly occupied an

intermediate economic position rather than a low economic position. By 1936 76% of Natal Indians had left the rural agricultural landscape to work in the urban areas (Landy et al., 2003: 208). As mentioned in Chapter Four, this middleman position often exacerbated the division between the Indian minority and African majority (Govinden, 2008: 35). This fear of being sandwiched between a rich minority and poorer majority brought the community closer together (see Maharaj, 2008 and Desai, 1996). The 1949 riots in Durban which saw Indian homes, shops and persons attacked by Africans did not help to alleviate feelings of vulnerability within the community. This section is will examine how the interviewees were able to see beyond this vulnerable economic position in order to stand in solidarity with other black South Africans.

All of the older generation would have been very young when the 1949 riots occurred (between five to twenty years of age), but they would have been affected by the divide that was exacerbated by the event. However, although all the older interviewees (with one exception) grew up in urban areas, they did not fall into the middleman bracket. Many of their parents held humble jobs and did not fall into the *dukawallah* (shopkeeper) class. Of course, at this point in history most Indian South Africans were not a part of the *dukawallah* class, but it is nevertheless noteworthy that the interviewees were not particularly wealthy. In addition, many of them were already members of the Natal and Transvaal Indian Youth Leagues at the time. During this period the NIC and TIC worked in solidarity with the ANC to try and keep the community calm. The Indian Congresses and the ANC did not condone the riots and called for unity during this period. Having a „higher" political consciousness would have enabled the first generation interviewees to see beyond the Afro/Indian tensions and understand the socio-economic issues behind them.

 The older generation did not fall into the middle class trader bracket and growing up they were subjected to economic hardships. Growing up in poorer households in multi-racial areas could have encouraged the sympathy the first generation felt for Africans who were living in abject poverty. The Group Areas Act was not in place when the first generation was growing up so many of the interviewees expressed sadness in seeing at close hand the even poorer conditions that African people were subjected to. Not feeling as threatened economically when compared to Indian traders and shopkeepers may have encouraged the older participants to feel a sense of economic frustration for all poverty stricken racial groups. Their political awareness would have been further raised by their affiliations to the Indian Congresses and in many cases to the Communist Party. Seeing people living in abject poverty during a period where many young, energetic, educated middle-class Indian leaders were telling them not to look the other way would have encouraged them to identify with the African underclass. This is not to argue that only individuals from the working class would have been the Indian activists. Ahmed Kathrada, Goolam Pahad, Yusuf Dadoo, Monty Naicker and Yusuf Cachalia were all leaders of the older generation and they all came from trader backgrounds. However, the majority of participants from this study were from working class backgrounds.

In both generations all of the interviewees were either members of the SACP, were influenced by Indian leaders who had communist affiliations or had friends who were members of the SACP. This would have raised their political awareness about economic and social discrepancies within their society. Although the younger generation interviewees seem to have been financially more stable growing up, they had a high political consciousness that was raised through their participation in school boycotts and through witnessing and hearing about the violence in the country. The younger generation all had older friends, teachers or family who encouraged them to be politically active. They were encouraged to participate in

activities such as the school boycotts during the formative years of the adolescence. Although all interviewees were part of the „Indian community" they had a heightened sense of economic and political consciousness. There was also a greater general political awareness in the country at this time. For them non-racial co-operation would have been a more firmly entrenched concept in the liberation struggle. By the 1980s multi-racial political liberation movements were the norm rather than the exception. Although the younger generation were more restricted in terms of where they could reside, liberation movements and activities would have encouraged and espoused freedom for all.

Maharaj claims that the Indian South African community is characterised by the close nature of family ties (2008: 25). It is then fairly surprising that family members were not highly influential on the political upbringing of most of the participants. MK members were also not allowed to tell their family members about their involvement or activities. Four of the participants even mentioned that family members only learnt about their sabotage activities once they were arrested. This level of independence from a confining family structure could be a feature that set the participants apart from most Indian South Africans.

<u>What significant differences were there between different generations of Indian MK members?</u>

As mentioned earlier, the younger generation did not share the older members" sentiments that their MK activities were „the highest form of passive resistance". They also were less critical of the Indian South African community when compared to the older generation. There was also a contrast between the MK identities of the two generations: while the younger generation saw themselves as soldiers, the older generation did not. Some of these differences have already been discussed in detail above in relation to other issues, but I will touch on them again briefly here to provide an overview of the key differences between the two generations.

The older generation saw their MK activities as an extension of non-violent resistance. In contrast, the younger interviewees only mentioned passive resistance in order to emphasize that it would no longer work because, as one interviewee put it, they were „at a point where it was felt that things had to be done and you had to do it‟. In 1969 the ANC opened its membership to people of all races (see Chapter Two). As a result, during the 1980s, the younger generation would have been allowed to be official members of multi-racial organizations like the ANC and UDF. Their identities would also have been strongly influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement that had become popular in the 1970s (see Chapter Two). Accordingly, they may have also developed a stronger link to non-Indian organisations than did the older generation. This is displayed strongly by the younger generation interviewees who seem more ambivalent towards their ethnic identities than the older generation interviewees. It also has to be remembered that non-violent campaigns that had met with state violence (such as the Soweto uprising in 1976) still loomed heavily in the minds of the younger generation. According to Lodge and Nasson (1991:29), there was a greater acceptance of violence as a means towards liberation in the 1980s. This period also so a greater unity amongst liberation fighters across racial and ethnic lines (Lodge and Nasson, 1991: 29). Although the move to armed resistance was a dilemma across all racial groupings, the younger generation saw passive resistance and Gandhism as part of their cultural background but, unlike the older generation, seemed to have less of a need to reconcile their upbringing in the Indian community with their activities. This would make sense as they grew up in a much more volatile historical period.

The younger generation seemed to see themselves as soldiers of the liberation movement while the older generation did not. Many of the first generation of interviewees joined sabotage units of the South African Communist Party and then MK after it was launched in 1961 (Saleh and Seedat, 2009: 19). Although their participation cost them dearly in terms of

banning, family life, arrest, torture, exile and imprisonment, the interviewees did not seem to see themselves as soldiers of the liberation movement. Their language indicates that they saw themselves as revolutionaries, political activists or „MK cadres". The younger generation used words such as „soldier" more readily although they also saw themselves as cadres and political revolutionaries. It is submitted that there could be two reasons for this difference in military identity. Firstly, the first generation"s activities were limited to sabotage with the avoidance of loss of life being an absolute priority. The difference in military identity could more easily be explained in the fact that in the 1980s, there was an increase in the armed struggle. MK infiltration into South Africa increased because MK had more resources and sophistication (SAHO, 2010). The 1980s also witnessed incidents like the bomb explosions in front of the South African Air Force Headquarters and the South African Defence Force Military Intelligence Headquarters in 1985 which killed 19 people and injured over 200 personnel (SAHO, 2010). This is an example of how MK"s activities in 1980s became more violent and intense. The state also came down harder on MK with cadres being executed or going missing. As Nimerah and Ranveer said, Durban became known as „bomb city". For the second generation, this was a real, violent and dangerous war. The first generation experienced different (although perhaps equally difficult) circumstances. Many of them were arrested soon after they joined MK to participate in the progression of the arms struggle. Although interviewees such as Hamiz, and Waqar did go into exile after they were released from jail they did not openly participate in combat. It was only Subodh who became an MK High Commander once he went into exile. This may account for the more militaristic identity that emerges from the second generation.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis has focused on the ethnic and political identities of two generations of MK veterans. Those who formed the first group of soldiers in the 1960s and those that formed the final group in the 1980s. The sample size for the younger generation was small so it would be helpful to conduct further research within this generation in particular.

Further research about the experiences of those who fell in between these two generations would help confirm or contest some of the findings described above. A comparison of identity formation across all generations would provide a more thorough analysis of how ethnic identities were negotiated and shaped during different periods of liberation history. Research on other minority MK members (white, coloured) could also help fill out our understanding of MK experience.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter used the material discussed in Chapter Four in order address the research questions that were outlined at the beginning of the thesis. It explored the way in which MK members from the Indian South African community formed their identity, focusing in particular at how they negotiated their identities as MK members with their ethnic identity.

The first research question was whether the participants experienced tensions between their ethnic identity and their political identity? It was found that the older members felt that their MK activities were „the highest form of passive resistance" and that this could be a way of reconciling tensions between their ethnic and political identities. Older members were also found to very critical of the Indian South African community. This could be because they still feel part of this community despite having a political consciousness that"s different from most of the community. This theory is supported Rensmann (2004: 170) who argues that

belonging to a group may evoke a strong emotional response when that group"s negative features are confronted. The critical response of the older participants to the Indian South African community"s perceived negative qualities displays the fact that they do identify with their ethnic group. The younger generation tended to more ambivalent about being Indian. Various explanations for this were discussed earlier in this Chapter. Despite their ambivalence, the younger generation did share the older generation"s concern that Indian contribution to the struggle may be forgotten. The participants were also all encouraged to join MK because of the influence of Indian role models.

The second question asked what set these particular individuals apart from the rest of the Indian South African community that didn"t join MK? It was found that the majority of participants were not raised in very religious households. From a very young age the interviewees were politically active and this seemed to play a large role in the way that their identities/ideas were formed. For those who were religious, the particular religious teachings with which they identified (such as brotherhood of man, equality) were compatible with their political convictions. Although the younger generation were financially a bit more stable, the older generation all came from fairly low economic households. They did not fall comfortably into the middle man economic bracket. Most of the participants were raised in comparatively multiracial areas and got to see the suffering of black Africans under apartheid.

The final question dealt with the generational differences between the two groups. A large contrast was in the way in which the younger generation saw their MK activities. While the older generation saw it as a form of passive resistance, the younger generation did not. The younger generation tended to emphasis their national identity and seemed to feel more ambivalent about their ethnic identity. Finally, it was established that in contrast to the

younger generation, the older generation did not see themselves as soldiers. The younger generation described themselves and their activities in more militaristic terms.

It is hoped that this study as well as the archive on the SAWVP website will provide a means of telling the stories of a group of freedom fighters whose contributions may otherwise be forgotten. The study can help to increase understanding of the role played by Indian MK members in the struggle against apartheid and help reduce the sense among some that their experiences are being forgotten. An understanding of their particular experiences helps provide more detail about the variety of different ways in which different South Africans contributed to the struggle against apartheid.

REFERENCES

BOOKS AND JOURNALS

Aiyar, P.S., 1925, *The Indian People in South Africa.* Durban: The African Chronicle Printing Works.

Andrews, M., 2007, *Shaping History: Narratives of Political Change.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Andrews, M., 2008, Never the Last Word: Revisiting Data. In Andrews, T. And Squire, C. (eds.), *Doing Narrative Research.* London: Sage.

Babenia, N., 1995, *Memoirs of a Saboteur.* Cape Town: Mayibuye Books.

Baines, G., 2006, Racist Hate Speech in South Africa‟s Fragile Democracy: The Case of Ngema‟s ‚AmaNdiya.‟ In Drewett, M and Cloonan, M. (eds.), *Popular Music Censorship in Africa.* England: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Bekker, S., 1993, *Ethnicity in Focus: The South African Case*. Durban: The Natal Witness Printing and Publishing.

Benney, M., et al, 2003, Age and Sex in the Interview. In Fielding, N. (ed.), *Interviewing Volume IV,* London: SAGE Publications.

Bhana, S and Brain, J., 1990, *Setting Down Roots: Indian Migrants in South Africa,1860 – 1911* .Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Bhana, S., 1997, *Gandhi's Legacy: The Natal Indian Congress 1894 -1994*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Blalock, H.M., 1967, *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations.* New York: J. Wiley.

Bonacich, E., 1973, A Theory of Middleman Minority, *American Sociological Review,* 38 (5): 583 – 594.

Buijs, G., 1992, The Influence of Migration on Ethnic Identity: An Historical Analysis of the disappearance of Caste among Indian South Africans. In Aitchison, J (ed), *Papers presented at the Conference on Ethnicity, Society and Conflict in Natal.* (no page numbers or volume information present in book).

Clifford, J., 1994, Diasporas, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9 (3): 302 – 338.

Cock. J., 1994, *The Forgotten People: The Need for a Soldiers' Charter.* IDASA: South Africa.

Connolly, W.E., 1991, *Identity/Difference. Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox.* London/Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cosler, L., 1992, *Maurice Halbwachs on Collective Memory.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Davies, R.J., 1963, The Growth of the Durban Metropolitan Area, *South African Geographical Journal,* 44: 15 – 43.

Desai, A., 1996, *Arise Ye Coolies: Apartheid and the Indian 1960 – 1995.* Johannesburg: Impact Africa Publishing CC.

Desai, A and Vahed, G., 2007, *Inside Indenture: A South African Story, 1860 – 1914.* Durban: Institute of Black Research.

Desai, A and Vahed, G., 2010, *Monty Naicker: Between Reason and Treason.* Durban: Shuter and Shooter"s Publishers.

De Vos, G., 2000, Social Authority and Minority Status: Problems of Internalization and Alienation among Japanese and Koreans in Diverse Cultural Settings. In Renshon, A.S. and Duckitt, J. (eds.), *Political Psychology: Cultural and Crosscultural Foundations.* London: Macmillan Press.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie, U., 2000, *From Cane Fields to Freedom: A Chronicle of Indian South African Life.* Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Dhupelia-Mesthrie, U., 2004, *Gandhi's Prisoner? The Life of Gandhi's Son MANILAL.* Cape Town: Kwela Books.

Dickinson, J and Bailey, A.J., 2007, (Re)membering Diaspora: Uneven Geographies of Indian Dual Citizenship, *Political Geography,* 26: 757 – 774.

Ebr.- Vally, R., 2001, *Kala Pani: Caste and Colour in South Africa.* Colarado: International Academic Publishers.

Ellis. S., 1991, The ANC in Exile, *African Affairs,* 90: 439 – 447.

Eyerman, R., 2004, The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory, *Sage Publications,* 47 (2): 159 – 169.

Fatton. R., 1986, *Black Consciousness in South Africa.* New York: University of New York Press.

Faugier, J and Sargeant, M., 1997, Sampling Hard to Reach Populations, *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 26: 790 – 797.

Frederikse, J., 1990, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa*. Braamfontein: Raven Press.

Freund, B., 1995, *Insiders and Outsiders: The Indian Working Class of Durban, 1910 -1990.* Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Gold, G., 1984, *Minorities and Mother Country Imagery.* Canada: ISER Publications.

Govender, B.G. and Naidoo, P.T., 2010, *The Settler: Tribulations. Trials. Triumph.* Durban: The Barlow Govender Foundation.

Govinden, D., 2008, *Sister Outsiders: The Representation of Identity and Difference in Selected Writings by South African Indian Women.* Pretoria: University of South Africa Press.

Habib, A and Naidu, S., 1999, Election "99: was there a „coloured" and „Indian" vote?, *Politikon*, 26 (2): 189 – 199.

Hall, S., 1990, Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In Rutherford, J (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hall, S., 2000, The Question of Cultural Identity. In Nash, K (ed.), *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology.* Massachusetts USA: Blackwell Publishers.

Hart, K., 2000, Indian Business in South Africa after Apartheid: New and Old Trajectories. *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History.* Durban: University of KwaZulu Natal.

Hey, P.D., 1961, *The Rise of the Natal Indian Elite.* Pietermaritzburg: The Natal Witness Press.

Hunt, C and Walker, L., 1979, *Ethnic Dynamics: Patterns of Intergroup Relations in Various Societies (second edition).* Florida: Learning Publications.

Isin, E and Wood, P., 1999, *Citizenship and Identity.* London: Sage.

Jenkins, R., 2004, *Social identity: Second Edition.* New York: Routledge.

Johns, S., 1973, Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare – A South African Case Study, *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* 11 (2): 267 – 303.

Josselson, R and Lieblich, A (eds) 1995, *Interpreting Experience: The Narrative Study of Lives Volume 3.* London: Sage Publications.

Josselson, R., 1996, On Writing Other People‟s Lives: Self-Analytical Reflections of a Narrative Researcher. In Josselson, R. And Lieblich, A. (eds.), *Ethics and Process in The Narrative Study of Lives Volume 4,* London: Sage Publications.

Karis, T and Carter, G (eds.), 1977, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa 1882 – 1964 Volume 4.* California: Hoover Press.

Kathrada, A., 2004, *Memoirs.* Cape Town: Zebra Press.

Kenny, M., 2004, *The Politics of Identity.* United Kingdom: Polity Press.

Knudsen, J., 1990, Prisoners of International Politics: Vietnamese Refugees Coping with

Transit Life, *The Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science,* 18 (1): 153 – 165.

Kuper, H., 1960, *Indian People in Natal.* Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.

Kurien, P., 1999, Gendered Ethnicity: Creating a Hindu Indian Identity in the United States, *American Behaviourist Scientist,* 42 (4): 648 - 670.

Landy, F. et al., 2004, Are people of Indian Origin (PIO) „Indian‟? A case study of South Africa, *Geoforum,* 35: 203 – 215.

Leggassick, M., 2002, *Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa.* Sweden: Elanders Digitaltryck.

Lemon, A., 1999, The Political Position of Indians in South Africa. In Clarke, C et al, (eds.), *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Le Roux, L., 2005, The Post-Apartheid South African Military: Transforming with the Nation. In Rupiya. M, (ed), *Evolutions and Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Lieblich, A., 1996, Some Unforeseen Outcomes of Conducting Narrative Research With People of One‟s Own Culture. In Josselson, R. (ed.), *Ethics and Process in The Narrative Study of Lives Volume 4,* London: Sage Publications.

Lodge, T., 1983, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Lodge, T. and Nasson, B., 1991, *All, Here, And Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s.* Cape Town: David Philip.

Louw, E., 2004, *The Rise, Fall, and the Legacy of Apartheid.* London: Praeger: London.

Maasdorp, G and Ellison, P.A., 1975, Beyond Cato Manor. In Maasdorp, G and Humphreys, A.S.B. (eds.), *From Shantytown to Township: An Economic Study of African Poverty and Rehousing in a South African City.* Cape Town: Juta and Company.

Maharaj, B., 2008, Introduction. In Raghuram, P et al. (eds.), *Tracing An Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations.* London: Sage Publications.

Martin, D., 1999, Identity, Culture, Pride and Conflict. In Bekker, S and Prinsloo, R (eds.), *Identity? Theory, Politics, History Volume 1.* Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.

Mathews, G., 2000, *Global Culture/ Individual Identity: Searching for Home in the Cultural Supermarket.* London: Routledge.

McKinley, D.T., 1997, *The ANC and the liberation struggle: a critical political biography.* London: Pluto Press.

Motumi, T., 1995, The Spear of the nation – The Recent History of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK). In Cilliers, J and Reichardt, M (eds.), *About Turn.* South Africa: Institute for Defence Policy.

Mukherji, S.B., 1959, *Indian Minority in South Africa.* New Delhi: People‟s Publishing House.

Nagel, J., 1994, Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture, *Social Problems,* 41 (1): 152 – 176.

Naidoo, I., 1982, *Island in Chains: Ten Years on Robben Island.* Cape Town: Penguin: Cape Town.

Naidoo, J., 1989, Was Gandhi‟s South African Struggle inspired by Race, Class or Nation? In Naidoo, J (ed.), *Tracking Down Historical Myths: Eight South African Cases.* Johannesburg: Donker Publisher.

Naidoo, J., 2010, *Fighting for Justice.* Johannesburg: Picador Africa.

Ngculu, J., 2003, The Role of Umkhonto We Sizwe in the creation of a democratic civil-military relations traditions. In Williams. R et al (eds.), *Ourselves to Know.* South Africa: Institute for Security Studies.

Ngculu, J., 2009, *The Honour To Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto Soldier.* Claremont: David Philip Publishers.

Oakes, D (ed)., 1989, *Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story.* Cape Town: The Reader‟s Digest Association South Africa.

Ochberg, R., 1996, Interpreting Life Stories. In Josselson, R and Lieblich, A. (eds.), *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives Volume 4,*London: Sage Publications.

Odeni, A., 1994, The Roots of the ANC. In Liebenberg, I et al (eds.), *The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa.* Pretoria: Kagiso-Haum.

O‟Malley, P., 2007, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa.* New York: Penguin Books.

Pachai, B., 1971, *The International Aspects of the South African Indian Question 1860 – 1971.* Cape Town: Struik.

Padayachee, V., 1999, Struggle, Collaboration and Democracy: The "Indian Community" in South Africa, 1860 – 1999, *Economic and Political Weekly,* 34 (7): 393 – 395.

Padayachee, V and Hart, K., 2000, Indian Business in South Africa after Apartheid: New and Old Trajectories, *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History,* 42: 683 - 712.

Palmer, M., 1956, *The Indian as a South African.* Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Palmer, M., 1957, *The history of the Indians in Natal.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Parakh, B., 2008, *A New Politics of Identity.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Phinney, J.S., 1990, Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research, *American Psychological Association,* 108 (3): 499 – 514.

Pieterse, J. N., 1997, Deconstructing/Reconstructing Ethnicity, *Nations and Nationalism,* 3 (3): 365 – 395.

Power, P., 1969, Gandhi in South Africa, *Journal of Modern African Studies,* 7 (3): 441 – 455.

Preston, P.W., 1997, *Political/Cultural Identity: Citizens and Nations in a Global Era.* London: Sage Publications.

Price, J., 1996, Snakes in the Swamp: Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research. In Josselson, R and Lieblich, A. (eds.), *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives Volume 4.* London: Sage Publications.

Raghuram, P and Sahoo, A., 2008, Thinking „Indian Diaspora‟ for our Times. In Raghuram, P. (eds.), *Tracing An Indian Diaspora: Contexts, Memories, Representations.*London: Sage Publications.

Ramsamy, E., 2007, Between Non-Racialism and Multiculturalism: Indian Identity and Nation Building in South Africa, *Economische en Sociale Geografie,* 98 (4): 468 – 481.

Read, A and Fisher, D., 1999, *The Proudest Day: India's Long Road to Independence.* New York: WW Norton and Company.

Reddy, E.S., 1991, *Monty Speaks: Speeches of G.M. (Monty) Naicker1945 – 1963.* Durban: Madiba Publishers.

Reissman, C., 2001, Analysis of Personal Narratives. In Gubrium, J.F. and Holstein, J.A. (eds.), *Handbook of Interviewing.* London: Sage Publications.

Rensmann, L., 2004, Collective Guilt, National Identity and Political Processes in Contemporary Germany. In Nyla. R and Branscombe B.D. (eds.), *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Ross, R., 2000, *A Concise History of South Africa.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University.

Samuel, R., 1998, Perils of the Transcript. In Perks, R. And Thomson, A. (eds.), *The Oral History Reader.* London: Routledge.

Saunders, C and Southley, N., 2001, *A Dictionary of South African History 2ⁿᵈ Edition.* Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip Publishers.

Seedat, R and Saleh, R (eds.), 2009, *Men of Dynamite: Pen Portraits of MK Pioneers.* Johannesburg: Shereno Printers: Johannesburg.

Sharp, G., 1973, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action.* Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher.

Simon, B and Klandermans, B., 2004, Politicized Social identity: A Social Psychological Analysis. In Jost, J.T. and Sidanius, J. (eds.), *Political Psychology*, Great Britain: Psychology Press.

Singh, G., 1946, *The Asiatic Land Tenure Act and Indian Representation Act of South Africa: A Brief Survey of its Background, Terms and Implications.* Durban: Council for Human Rights.

Singh, R. And Vawda, S., 1988, What's in a name? Some Reflections on the Natal Indian Congress, *Transformation,* 6: 1- 21.

Singh, A., 2005, *Indians in Post-Apartheid South Africa.* New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

Song, M., 2003, *Choosing Ethnic Identity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Soske, J., 2009, *Wash Me Black Again': African Nationalism, the Indian Diaspora, and Kwa-Zulu Natal, 1944-1960.* PHD.

South African Education Trust., 2004, *Road To Democracy in South Africa 1960 – 1970,* Cape Town: Zebra.

Spencer, M and Markstrom-Adams, C., 1990, Identity Processes among Racial and Ethnic Minority Children in America, *Child Development,* 61(2): 290 – 310.

Suttner. R., 2008, *ANC Underground in South Africa.* South Africa: Jacana.

Vahed, G., 2002, Constructions of Community and Identity among Indians in Colonial Natal, 1860 – 1910: The Role of the Muharram Festival, *The Journal of African History ,* 43 (1): 77 – 93.

Van der Westhuizen. C., 2007, *White Power and the Rise and Fall of the National Party.* Cape Town: Zebra Press.

Van Meter, K.M., 1990, Methodological and Design Issues: Techniques for Assessing the Representatives of Snowball Sample. In Lambert, E.Y. (ed.), *The Collection and Interpretation of Data from Hidden Populations*. NIDA Research Monograph 98.

Vermeersch, P., 2003, Ethnic Minority Identity and Movement Politics: The case of Roma and in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 26 (5): 879 – 901.

Vertovec, S., 1999, Three meanings of „diaspora‟, exemplified among South Asian religions, *Diaspora,* 7 (2): 277 – 299.

Williams. R., 2006, *South African Guerrilla Armies.* South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, ISS Monograph Series.

Woods, C.A., 1954, *The Indian Community of Natal. Their Economic Position.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Worden, N., 1998, *A Concise Dictionary of South African History.* Cape Town: Francolin Publishers.

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

African National Congress, *History of Umkhonto we Sizwe* http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/mk-history.html, Date of access: 20 August 2010.

Badsha and Soske., 2010, The History of a Subcontinent in South Africa, http://www.timeslive.co.za/opinion/article407568/The-hisory-of-a-subcontinent-in-South-Africa?, Date of access: 18 April 2010.

Badsha and Soske., 2010, 150 Anniversary; Anxieties of Commemoration – Toward National Dialogue,http://historymatters.co.za/150-anniversary-anxieties-of-commemoration-%E2%80%93-towards-a-national-dialogue/, Date of access: 7 November 2010.

BBC News On This Day, 1990 De Klerk dismantles apartheid in South Africa, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/2/newsid_2524000/2524997.stm, Date of access: 5 May 2009.

BBC News On This Day, 1972: Asians given 90 days to leave Uganda, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid_2492000/2492333.stm, Date of Access 30 April 2010.

Dummett, M., 2006, South Africa embraces „cousin‟ India,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5346626.stm Date of access: 21 December 2010.

ULWAZI, Mewa Ramgobin., http://wiki.ulwazi.org/index.php5?title=Mewa_Ramgobin_-_Memories_from_Inanda,_Durban. Date of Access 16 July 2011.

Mazel, E., 2010, A Selection of Quotes from „And Don‟t Call me a Racist!‟ http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/ella/yellowbook/selquote.htm, Date of access: 11 January 2011.

Pather, R., 1999, The Story of P.R. Pather, Grand Old Man of Indian Politics in South Africa, BA honours thesis, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/thesis/pather-riashee/pather-index.htm, Date of access: 10 September 2009.

Proudly Indian, http://www.proudlyindian.co.za/?q=node/1166 , Date of Access: 10 September 2009.

Reddy, E.S., 1995, India in South African History http://www.anc.org.za/un/reddy/indiasa.html, Date of access: 30 April 2010.

Reddy, E.S., 1997, Indian Passive Resistance in South Africa, 1946 – 1948, http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/congress/passive.html. 1997, Date of access: 19 July 2009.

South African History Online, United Democratic Front - History http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governence-projects/organisations/udf/history.htm, Date of access: 9 June 2009.

South African History Online, The Youth Struggle, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governence-projects/june16/struggle.htm, Date accessed: 10 July 2010.

South African History Online, History of Indians in South Africa, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/artsmediaculture/culture%20&%20heritage/indian-history/timeline_1970.htm, Date accessed: 15 November 2010.

South African History Online, The Liberation Struggle 1984 – 1990, http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governence-projects/liberation-struggle/2_1984_1990.htm, Date accessed: 24 December 2010.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Letter from Prime Minister Ramaswami Reddiar to the South African Indian Community, April 1947. From the personal collection of Kreesen and Michaela Naicker. Durban.

E-MAILS

Seedat, R.. shadesseedat@gmail.com. Two Generations. 27th July 2010.

APPENDIX A

<div style="border:1px solid black">

RHODES UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

AGREEMENT

BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

</div>

I (participant's name) _____ agree to participate in the research project of Varsha Lalla, on the collective identity of Indian South African *Umkhonto we sizwe* members.

- The researcher is interested the relationship between the influence of culture and collective identity on Indian South African MK members.

- This thesis aims to shed light on the experiences of people in the Indian community who were members of MK.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree at Rhodes University. The researcher can be contacted at contact details are 0835655151. The supervisor's (Dr. Sally Matthews) can be contacted at s.matthews@ru.ac.za

2. The researcher is interested in the relationship between the influence of culture and collective identity on Indian South African MK members.

3.   The research proposal of this project has been approved by the Humanities Higher Degrees Committee at Rhodes University and has ethical clearance by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee.

4.   My participation will involve my responding to an interview (and if required, a follow up interview). I reserve the right not to allow the researcher to use her tape recorder if I feel uncomfortable with it.

5.   I will be asked to answer questions of a personal nature but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.

6.   I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.

7.   I am free to withdraw from the study at any time - however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.

8.   The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but I may request that the report (MA) omits my name so that I will not be identified by the general reader. I may also request that my name be omitted from the transcript on the South African War Veteran's website.

9.   A transcript of my interview will be archived on the South African War Veteran's website, and may be used for further research, dependent on permission of the researcher. I reserve the right to request that my interview not be archived.

Signed on (Date): _____

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

Witness: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Can you tell me your name?

- When were you born?

- Where were you living at the time before you joined MK?

- Growing up what were your family's thoughts and feelings about South African politics?

- What was the political atmosphere like in school? What were the political affiliations of students?

- How did you understand the political atmosphere within South Africa growing up?

- What were your own personal beliefs and understandings?

- Why did you join MK?

- Do you recall your first days in service?

- Tell me about your training experience(s).

- Do you remember your instructors?

- What exactly was your role in MK?

- What was it like for you being a person of Indian descent in MK?

- What did your family feel about you being in MK?

- How did you stay in touch with your family?

- What did you go on to do as a career after the 1994?

- Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?

- What was it like for you returning to your community after your work as a soldier was completed (in some cases after imprisonment)?

- How did your service and experiences affect your life?

- Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?