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A Decolonial Interpretation of Indigeneity, Citizenship and Identity of the !Xun and Khwe San Youth of South Africa

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Abstract

San communities in Southern Africa have been historically regarded as gerontocratic spaces where young people lack agency. The traditional chiefs, elders and older opinion leaders who are thought to be repositories and custodians of knowledge, have thus been the focus of researchers and research works. However, in recent times, young people have re-positioned themselves at the forefront of modern acculturation processes taking place in these communities.

In response to the lack of empirically engaging contemporary indigenous youth research in South Africa, this thesis explores three interrelated concepts of indigeneity, identity and citizenship within the context of a transitioning and hyper-modernising !Xun and Khwe San youth of Platfontein, South Africa, aged between 18 and 24. The study, a product of five years (2013–2017) of intermittent ethnographic fieldwork in Platfontein, adopted participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to examine how youth negotiate the complexity and contradictions of being imagined as "Indigenous", "immigrants" and "citizens" in late-modern, post-apartheid South Africa. Subculture theory – the Cultural Studies paradigm – was used to make sense of the distinct and socially dynamic practices amongst the San youth.

Located within a sub-field known as urban indigeneity, the study reveals how increasing access to digital and new media technology allows youth in Platfontein to develop new strategies of agency and glide through previously assumed boundaries: in terms of collective identities, and in the areas of indigeneity (culture) and citizenship (collective socio-political integration). However, amid the youth-led cultural upheaval and changes taking place in the township of Platfontein, this study identifies a pattern and develops a model that explains how new culture and phenomena permeate the modernising township. The thesis opens a new window for academic and public apprehension of the Indigenous youth landscape in South Africa while contributing to the ongoing discourse on decolonisation (in social research) and the nation-building debate in contemporary South Africa.

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Acronyms

AIDS	–	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	–	African National Congress
CCCS	–	Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
CCMS	–	Centre for Communication, Media and Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal
CEAD	–	Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines, a disciplinary association registered in New Zealand
CIQM	–	Critical Indigenous Qualitative Methods
CKGR	–	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CPA	–	Communal Property Association
DIY	–	Do It Yourself
HIV	–	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICTs	–	Information and Communications Technology
IPACC	–	Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRF	–	National Research Foundation
RDP	–	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SABC	–	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAARF	–	South African Advertising Research Foundation
SADF	–	South African Defence Force
SAHRC	–	South African Human Rights Commission
SASI	–	South African San Institute
SASSA	–	South African Social Security Agency
SWAPO	–	South West African People's Organisation
TRC	–	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNPFII	–	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
WIMSA	–	Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa

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A note on pronunciation

The descriptions below are to assist in the pronunciation of vernacular terms used in the thesis:

The "!" is a cerebral click. "An alveopalatal or palatal stop, produced by pulling the tip of the tongue sharply away from the front hard palate. When made with lips rounded, it sounds rather like a cork popping from a wine bottle".

The "≠" is an alveolar click. "An alveolar stop, produced by pulling the blade of the tongue sharply away from the alveolar ridge, immediately behind the teeth".

The "//" is a lateral affricate. "Produced by placing the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth … and releasing air on one side of the mouth between the side of the tongue and the cheek. More simply, the clicking sound film cowboys use … to make their horses go".

Adapted from Alan Barnard (1992: xix).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Urban indigeneity and the evolving meanings of youth-related concepts

Indigenous peoples and communities worldwide[1] have struggled to maintain cultural and territorial autonomy in the face of complex and prevailing globalised discourses of economic disadvantage, international aggression, international development, and transnational corporate activity. These pervasive impacts of globalisation and urbanity which have culminated in the gentrification of indigenous and tribal spaces, makes identification of indigenous cultural symbolic systems very problematic. Efforts to understand the nature of indigenous identity amidst the complex, multiple, fluid and contradictory identities of the late-modern era have led to the emergence and popularity of the discourse and sub-field known as "urban indigeneity" (Ravindran, 2015; Gagne & Trepied, 2016).

Urban indigeneity is primarily concerned with re-accessing the new ways and forms in which indigeneity and related concepts are (re)conceptualised and expressed in the phase of rapid cultural change and social transformation of late modernity (Peters & Anderson, 2013). One of the earliest urban indigeneity scholars, Maximilian Forte (2010: 2) contends that scholars must begin to examine and acknowledge "new ways of being and becoming 'Indigenous' in the twenty-first century". Urban indigeneity followed a significant shift from the long-standing ruralist/authentic paradigm and approach, which assumed that "real" Indigenous[2] people are not found in urban spaces but in remote areas and rural tribal lands. Rather than delegitimise urban indigeneity as "inauthentic", scholars within urban indigeneity studies acknowledge the

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[1] It is estimated that there are over 370 million Indigenous peoples and 5,000 different Indigenous cultures in the world today. They however constitute a numerical minority in many parts (Altamirano-Jimenez 2013: 1).

[2] I have thus used the uppercase "I" wherever the term "Indigenous" is used to refer directly to Indigenous persons and groups. Kathy English (2017) the public editor of a Canada-based online newspaper, *The Toronto Star*, writes that using the uppercase "I" in the word "Indigenous" goes a long way in showing solidarity, respect, dignity and fairness to the mostly marginalised indigenous population worldwide. This was after Wanda Nanibush, a member of a Canadian indigenous population wrote to the newspaper stating that "… I believe it's time for the Star to change their colonial editing policy that always removes the capital from Indigenous."

impact of the various encounters with modernity in the creation of multiple distinct contemporary Indigenous identities (Dietrich, 2013; Patrick & Budach, 2014; Kulis *et al.*, 2015).

As central agents and the principal actors of post/late-modernity, the current generation of young people – often tagged "digital natives" (see Bennett *et al.*, 2008) – have been the primary focus of most urban indigeneity studies. The importance of young people within the global indigenous discourse was first underscored with the establishment of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples in 2006 (see Jocelyn & Caitlin, n.d.). This was a crucial step, considering that indigenous spaces and societies have long been considered as gerontocratic[3] and alienating to young people (Jocelyn & Caitlin, n.d.). Since 2006, several institutions and agencies have acknowledged the importance of Indigenous youth, with some countries enacting state policies to promote ongoing connections and cultural permanence for Indigenous peoples through children and youth (see Sinclair, 2007; Carrière, 2007).

In their extensive work on Indigenous youth, Jan Hare *et al.* (2011) observe that there has been a significant increase in the youth segment of the Indigenous population worldwide since the first decade of the twenty-first century. Canada's official statistics shows that Aboriginal youth under the age of 25 represent nearly half of the entire Aboriginal population in the country (Statistics Canada, 2006); in Australia, youth and children also constitute more than 57 percent of the entire Indigenous population (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The authors therefore conclude that more than ever before, stakeholders are concerned about the economic, cultural and socio-political implications of the burgeoning Indigenous youth demography (Hare *et al.,* 2011).

Meanwhile, scholars remain divided on the impact of urbanisation (and/or globalisation) on young Indigenous populations. On the one hand are those who vehemently criticise urbanisation for its tendency to superpose itself upon important indigenous cultures and traditions. Scholars who hold this view argue that the

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[3] Many Indigenous communities such as the San are still largely viewed as pre-colonial gerontocratic societies where only older people (specifically the older men) can occupy the position of power, authority and responsibility (Jocelyn & Caitlin, n.d.).

increasing access and exposure of indigenous people and youth to the predominant Western consumeristic ideals via technologies engenders disinterest in local culture, while encouraging conformity to a homogenised global (youth) culture and lifestyles. This latently anti-urban discourse lends credence to the growing and popular sentiment of an "Indigenous youth in crisis of local participation" (Grixti, 2006). It must be noted, however, that this perspective obfuscates the agency of young people in choosing whether (or not) to follow certain traditions (or in accepting or rejecting their legitimacy), by framing them as victims and passive consumers, susceptible to external cultural influences and indoctrination presumably fostered by the Western world (see Grixti, 2006; Heaven & Tubridy, 2007; Marbaniang & Warjri, 2011).

On the other hand, however, is a set of scholars who argue that urbanisation is important regardless of its effects on local indigenous traditions. Scholars within this school of thought view urbanisation as an opportunity for Indigenous youth to re-invent and develop their traditions, placing them on the global map. For instance, Ugor and Mawuko-Yevugah (2015) argue that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are productively adapted and utilised by young people to reconfigure spaces and public spheres which have historically excluded them. This discourse thus imagines contemporary Indigenous youth as social actors capable of independently making productive choices (from the greater range of choices available in today's world) that can help reposition and reshape their respective indigenous communities (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Phinney & Ong, 2007). It is argued that the liberty enjoyed by youth may potentially create a hybrid version of two cultures (that is, a mixture of Indigenous local and global cultures) (see Berry *et al.,* 2006).

Amid this optimistic versus pessimistic polarising debate is the consensus that globalisation, urbanisation and digital/new media technology have indeed changed the way the present crop of Indigenous young people approach adulthood. The implication of this shift in the youth landscape is that older people in Indigenous (and even non-indigenous) societies can no longer assume that young people are merely younger versions of themselves (Heat & Walker, 2012). Hence, there is a need for re-examination and a rethink of the traditional youth-related concepts to reflect the realities of today's youngsters.

In Africa, meanwhile, despite the global attention on contemporary Indigenous youth,[4] no study to date has distinctly captured the contemporary socio-cultural identities, experiences and realities of the Indigenous youth population.[5] There is evidence, however, of what may be termed an "Indigenous youth bulge", demographic transition, and increasing technological access especially amongst the young population. There is also evidence that technology is creating new types of relationships and leading to radical changes within African Indigenous communities (see Agbor *et al.,* 2012).

My MA study, conducted in 2014, reports that new digital media technology fosters encounters with global youth cultures amongst the Indigenous youth. The appropriated cultures (such as hip-hop) are then localised to project self-identity and counter-narratives against externally imposed ones which have, in the words of Mboti (2014: 475), "left the Bushmen trapped like the object of an exhibition that is locked away behind safety glass". My MA shows how the young Platfontein Bushmen[6] utilise the language and the oppositional consciousness of hip-hop to craft culturally relevant resistant narratives while positioning themselves as a modernised people (Bodunrin, 2015).

This doctoral thesis, which is located within the urban indigeneity sub-field, draws on my MA study, but also differs significantly in scope. Unlike the MA, which largely explored the hip-hop phenomenon amongst the Khwe people, the current study sets out to examine how both !Xun and Khwe[7] youth negotiate identity, citizenship and indigeneity in present-day South Africa. As children and grandchildren of the over-

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[4] Numerous studies in countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia have shown different means through which indigenised spaces are created so that Indigenous youths can thrive in urbanity or hypermodernity (see Alfred *et al.* 2007; Dion *et al.* 2014).

[5] Studies such as Nielsen and Tomaselli (2010), focused on psychocultural experiences of San children, may be categorised as childhood research rather than a youth research. While there is a degree of commonality and overlap between children and youth research tradition, Heat *et al.* (2009) argue for the distinctiveness of youth-oriented research.

[6] I am aware of the controversies surrounding the use of the names "Bushman", "San", "Basarwa", "Khoi San", etc. The varieties of names used today are both specific and general to communities and individuals. I have used both "San" and "Bushmen" interchangeably in the study even though many of my respondents preferred the name "Bushmen". The etymology of the different terms is discussed in the latter part of the present chapter.

[7] Unlike the MA, which was solely focused on the Khwe people, this PhD study focuses on both the !Xun and the Khwe. The !Xun and Khwe are two distinct San or Bushmen groups originally from Namibia, Botswana and Angola who aligned themselves with the Portuguese and South African Armies during the border/independence war in those countries. The background of the two communities is discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

researched[8] Bushmen who were granted citizenship upon migration into South Africa in the early 1990s, the study inevitably touches on the complexity and contradiction of being imagined as "Indigenous", "migrants" and "citizens" in a complex late-modern South Africa.

Subculture theory (see Hebdige 1979) was applied to make sense of the youth's complex reality of bridging Indigenous historical antecedence (cultures, language, ancestors and so on) with contemporary urban cultures, as they try to emerge from the shadow of their more traditionally-minded parents and carve new identities for themselves. The study also addresses the methodological issues and challenges of researching such a segment of an Indigenous population in post-apartheid South Africa. The researcher intermittently spent approximately five years (from 2013–2017) in the field with the participants of this research.

The San epistemic positioning in Southern Africa

Although "indigeneity"[9] is regarded as a contentious concept worldwide, it is particularly problematic in the African context where Indigenous status is claimed by, and attributed to, groups in ways that differ from, and conflict with, internationalist understandings (Merlan, 2009: 303). Unlike in the Americas, Pacific, and other so-called settler regions where, for instance, Indigenous movements developed as a critique of European imperialism, indigeneity emerged in Africa as a response to the policies adopted by independent post-colonial African states (Ndahinda, 2011). The implication of this is that Indigenous status is often claimed by minoritised groups who exist at the margins of citizenship and who fight for recognition, resources, and rights within the postcolonial African states[10] (see Nthomeng, 2004; Merlan, 2009).

This perhaps explains why many African states are opposed to the domestic application of the concept. In Botswana for instance, the government opposes indigeneity as a separate grouping, stating that "… all Batswana are Indigenous …"

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[8] Jennifer Hays (2007: 4) describes the Bushmen as "the most researched people on the planet". Their identity and practices have historically warranted the intrusive curiosity of researchers, journalists, filmmakers and tourists. More recent research has focused more on their consequent dispossession and displacement by different national governments (see Grant, 2011).

[9] The definitions and precise use of the concept is discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

[10] The most cited case is the South African right-wing Boers (a white settler group), who appealed to the UN in 1995 to be recognised as an Indigenous group (see Douglas, 1996; Stilz, 2009).

(cited in Sapignoli & Hitchcock, 2013: 356). Also, in Namibia, the government in a report to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2009 states that "In Namibia, the term 'indigenous people' is not applicable since all the Namibians are indigenous peoples of their country" (Republic of Namibia, 2009: 1). The idea that certain groups deserve preferential privileges and entitlement (as enshrined in the global indigeneity discourse) is believed to negate the nation-building process that is ongoing in many postcolonial African states (c.f. Pelican & Maruyama, 2015).

However, despite the problem of indigenous identification in the continent, there remain a number of groups who have long been characterised as "Indigenous" with national and international acceptance. One such group is the San of Southern Africa (Merlan, 2009: 309). The San (popularly known as Bushmen) are presented in popular literature and media as predominantly hunter-gatherers, who lived nomadic lives until they were invaded and displaced following the intrusion of Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists and European colonialists, and finally, the establishment of large-scale infrastructure projects, and land concessions to corporations (Penn, 1996). Indeed, modern archaeology establishes that Stone Age peoples were almost certainly the ancestors of the present-day San (see Lee, 1979).

The popular history of San nomadism has however been contested and challenged by some contemporary San scholars such as Le Roux and White (2004: 16), who maintain that based on some oral testimonies, "the San lived in well-defined territories belonging to different bands and clans who guarded and protected their natural resources". The idea of the San being completely nomadic, has also been questioned by Kuela Kiema, (2010), a (Kua) San author and scholar himself:

> … we lived in different places within our tribal boundaries [within Tc'amnqoo, or the CKGR[11] in the dominant discourse]. We hunted here and gathered fruit from trees and shrubs. One clan had to ask for permission from another in order to gather food from outside its own land …. Migrations of Kua people would take place only within their territories. If a Bantu or a white man walks around his field, no one called him a "nomadic person". Yet we moved within our lands, within our marked tribal territories, and they called us nomads. This concept of

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[11] Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana.

nomadic has been used to deprive us of our territories that duly belong to us (23–24).

Nevertheless, with a population of over 100,000,[12] the contemporary San who today constitute a small percentage of the populations in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, and South Africa are regarded as the most disadvantaged and marginalised[13] ethnic minority in the Southern African sub-region. Each of the San groups currently possesses individual clan names, and they occupy distinct areas, speak different languages, and have individual histories and strategies of survival (Tomaselli, 1995).

The de-colonial process and the departure of the old colonial regimes in Africa effectively reinstated the pre-colonial Centre, under the dominance of which an ethnic minority (periphery) struggles for recognition (Thomas, 2016: 51). Hence, the San like many other Indigenous groups on the continent continue to struggle for self-determination that is neither founded on a desire to displace nor to overthrow the established order. Rather, it is to have representation in the body politic and official acknowledgement of ethnic uniqueness that is largely unquestioned (Thomas, 2016).

In South Africa, where Indigenous discourse (embodied in the native debate)[14] has been historically polarised along the ethno-racial lines, the San or Bushmen are elevated (albeit rhetorically) as original inhabitants whose history predates that of all later immigrants to the country. In the post-apartheid era, the Bushmen became the embodiment for a collective foundational cultural heritage to signify national unity[15] as the rainbow nation searched for a cohesive national identity (Tomaselli, 2005: 5). This exclusivity and hallowed positioning has meanwhile rarely translated into any form of sustainable socio-economic benefit for the impoverished Bushmen, who remain

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[12] This figure was obtained from the "Meerkat Kalahari Project" website (see http://www.kalahari-meerkats.com/fileadmin/files/guides/Bushmen_light.pdf).

[13] My approach to marginality in this study is the kaleidoscope of perceived and real circumstances that causes people to feel disadvantaged and may include lack of or limited access to communication technologies and means of transport (see de Bruijn & Brinkman, 2009: 12).

[14] This debate is around the legitimisation of a separation between earlier and the new inhabitants (see Werner, 1905; Lee, 1935; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009; Phindezwa, 2014).

[15] During the highly controversial 2015 State of the Nation Address (SONA), for instance, President Jacob Zuma, responding to question on racial intolerance in the parliament, was quoted as saying "the San and the Khoi Khoi are the original inhabitants and owners of the territory now being referred to as South Africa" (http://www.enca.com/south-africa/live-president-jacob-zuma-replies-sona-debate).

largely at the margins of the contemporary South African society.[16] While official South African statistics fail to recognise their existence (see, De Wet, 2012: 18–19), Shanade Barnabas (2014: 3) notes that they are merely "tolerated and considered an inconvenience to the state". Frantz Fanon (1968: 164) alludes to this kind of social exclusion when he notes that:

> … the national bourgeoisie turns its back more and more on the interior and on the real fact of its undeveloped country and tends to look toward the former mother country and the foreign capitalists who count on its obliging compliance.

The San or Bushmen suffer even more as a result of the ubiquitous effect of their highly commercialised and romanticised "savage" identity,[17] which fails to account for the social changes that have befallen them over the years (Bodunrin, 2014). This perception, which emanates from the Western cultural orientation, has been appropriated and popularised by the media, advertising agencies,[18] academics and NGOs (see Tomaselli, 1995). While these representations (often done often without the San community), have engendered much international interest (commercially, academically and altruistically), the official acceptance of this hyper-mediated identity and status potentially hinders the process of self-determination of the Bushmen. Roie Thomas (2016: 4), for instance, notes that while tourist ephemera continue to extol the lifestyle of the Bushmen esoterically, producing imagery that suggests they are still living as they did for millennia, the omission of their modern realities seem like the perpetuation of a lie.

In an interview conducted during my MA study in 2014 with a traditional chief in the Platfontein township, Kamama Mkuwa, he links the San's exclusion present-day socio-economic exclusion to the hyper-mediatised myth of them as primitive people. "… because they think we are 'primitive' and that we must be made to live like the majority

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[16] Although the enactment, performance and display of a mediatised "savage" identity by the Bushmen has helped to gain funding, win land claims, or simply sell crafts, this has nevertheless failed to result in any sustainable socio-economic development of the Bushmen (see Finlay, 2009). Some projects have been successful, but these are the exceptions (see Tomaselli 2017).

[17] This identity, a primitive "savage" portrayal of the San, is based on the idea and genomics that San or Bushmen are the most genetically ancient people on Earth, having existed for more than 40,000 years in the Southern Africa sub-continent (see Diop, 1974/1987; Schuster *et al.,* 2010).

[18] It was notably utilised by the South African advertising industry in a number of campaigns (for example, the Vodacom advertisement aired during the Rugby World Cup in 2007, in a South African Railways advertisement and even the national crest of the South African government (see Buntman, 1996).

cattle-herding tribes" (see Bodunrin, 2014: 12). While the San's primitive image provides incentives in the form of cultural/ecotourism, Mboti (2014; 2017) notes that such an epistemic standpoint will continue to foster a systemic socio-political and economic exclusion, repression and marginalisation. It also negates Thabo Mbeki's (1999: xv) declaration that individual and group identity in post-apartheid South Africa must be self-determined. As this study will show, the Bushmen youth seems to have suffered much as a result of precariousness (of identity) and marginality. This precariousness is embodied in the fact that they are neither categorised as white, black, coloured nor indigenous in present-day South Africa. The next section discusses the more complex history of the study's participants, the !Xun and Khwe.

The "Foreign Natives": the !Xun and Khwe Bushmen

The !Xun and Khwe Bushmen are the participants and focus of the present study. The !Xun are part of the Northern !Kung[19] – a large group broadly distributed in a forested area of southeast Angola and known as *Vasequela* – the "Forest San". They speak !Xûntali, a linguistic sub-dialectic of the !Kung family of languages (Barnard, 1992). The Khwe, from the Eastern Caprivi Strip, meanwhile, speak a Tshu-Khwe linguistic dialect known as Khwedam. The Khwe people speak Khwedam, Afrikaans and other languages indigenous to Namibia, Botswana and Angola. Often identified as *Baraquena* ("Water Bushmen"), the Khwe are taller and darker in complexion than the !Xun and other San groups and have been referred to as "black Bushmen" (Robbins, 2004: 6).

In Angola, the !Xun San were victimised and displaced by migrating Bantu-speakers (Sharp & Douglas, 1996). In response to this, during the Angolan war for independence, they aligned themselves with the Portuguese whose influence in Angola stretched back to the 1480s (see Bender, 1978). By the late 1960s, !Xun men were serving as trackers for the Portuguese army, becoming a formidable tactical arm. In the words of Matoka Matheus (a San recruit) the San were sent into the bush and

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[19] According to Alan Barnard (1992) the Southern !Kung are those that captured Laurens van der Post's imagination in the 1950s and who occupied the arid Kalahari regions of central Botswana. The Central !Kung who live to the west of the Okavango Delta in a swathe of desert astride the Namibia/Botswana border and the Northern !Kung are discussed above. Authors such as Marshall and Ritchie (1984) further articulated the disharmony that exist between the !Xun and !Kung.

tasked to flush out the enemy. Matheus noted specifically that they were instructed "to go kill blacks" who were "bad" and who used "pangas, knobkieries and grenades to kill them" (cited in Uys, 1993: 3–5). After Portugal's *coup d'état* in April 1974, Portuguese forces were withdrawn from Angola, and the country handed over to the liberation leaders (Uys, 1993). Fearing discrimination and possible retribution from the new government, the Bushmen who had previously assisted the Portuguese fled the country with their families on 2 November 1974 (Robbins, 2004: 8).

The soldiers who had crossed the border into South West Africa were recruited by the South African Defence Force (SADF) in South Africa's incursion into Angola. The Khwe, situated in Eastern Caprivi, found their region embroiled as a major zone in the Namibian war of independence (Robbins, 2004). Finding themselves in an increasingly hostile and dangerous position, the Khwe were likewise recruited by the SADF. In September 1976, the 31 Battalion also known as the "Bushman Battalion", consisting of the !Xun and Khwe (who were separated from their white counterparts), was officially recognised (Uys, 1993).

There has been some debate regarding the recruitment of San soldiers by the SADF. Richard Lee (1979), for instance, is of the opinion that the then apartheid South African government deployed the San much like the United States had used the "hill tribes" in Vietnam, "to fight a white man's battle at the expense of their culture" (cited in Uys, 1993: 101). By contrast, Laurens van der Post observed that life in the army complemented the San "hunter-gatherer" lifestyle, possibly saving them (the San) from annihilation and providing a sense of protection and belonging at a perilous time (cited by Uys, 1993). In similar vein, David Robbins similarly notes that the !Xun and Khwe soldiers together with their dependents (families) were indeed saved from an uncertain future (to say the least) by the SADF who were keen to do three things: to use the San tracking skills; to display the army's humanitarian qualities; and to show that the apartheid South African government harboured no real racist tendencies (Robbins, 2004: 11).

The Bushmen military involvement nevertheless contributed to prevailing circumstances that have produced the poverty and extreme dependency of this group today (Felton & Becker, 2001; den Hertog, 2013). Upon the withdrawal of the SADF

from Namibia (following Namibia's independence in 1990), the !Xun and Khwe found themselves in a similar predicament to the one they had been in when the Portuguese withdrew from Angola. Although the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO)[20] leader and the Namibian president-elect, Sam Nujoma, assured the soldiers of their safety in Namibia, many (more than 50 percent) took up the offer to relocate to South Africa (Uys, 1993; Douglas, 1996; Robbins, 2007).

The Bushman soldiers' reasons for their decision to relocate and resettle in South Africa included: their trust in the SADF, dependence on the army for salaries, their fear of retribution from ex-SWAPO fighters and the fact that their land in the Caprivi was not guaranteed (Uys, 1993; Robbins, 2007, c. 2004). The social security offered by the SADF was no small factor. Having relied on the SADF for their livelihoods for so many years, the prospect of losing that support would have been daunting. As a group, they believed they had mastered the land enough to survive another migration (Gordon, 1992).

On 7 March 1990, a week before Namibian independence, 3,720 San people (both the Khwe and the !Xun) were flown from the Omega camps in Namibia to Kimberley, South Africa in what was tagged "Operation Matrass". Upon their arrival, they were granted South African citizenship and settled in tents that had been pitched on an open arid field at Schmidtsdrift, some 80 kilometres west of Kimberley (Robbins, 2004: 8).

However, just as plans for proper housing began to materialise for the Bushmen, the political instability that erupted as a result of the reluctance of the National Party and some white groupings to accept the then proposed unitary South African state beyond apartheid led to the dissolution of Battalion 31. This meant that the military support and some of the infrastructure originally provided by the military were withdrawn and simply removed for use elsewhere. The neglected San soldiers became "homeless and superfluous misfits caught up in the destructive transition, albeit contained within South Africa's great march towards democracy and greater good" (Robbins, 2004: 11).

The period immediately after the 1994 election was one of a collapse of personal and communal vision. The uncertainty had turned to paranoia and depression. The

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[20] SWAPO was a guerrilla force fighting for the liberation of South West Africa (now Namibia). For more on the involvement of San soldiers in this war, see Ian Uys (1993) and David Robbins (2004).

Bushmen believed the army cared for them, but that the ANC government considered them sell-outs that had collaborated with the enemy – the white South African regime (Katharina Meyer, 1993, cited in Robbins, 2004). Consequently, incidents of rape, attempted suicide, extreme domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse increased dramatically, leading to more and more social dislocation. There was extreme poverty, illiteracy, and almost a complete lack of job opportunities (Robbins, 2004: 25). Also, tuberculosis, malnutrition and numerous other health problems became rampant at the then understaffed community clinic. Soon to be recorded were sharp increases in teenage pregnancies and severe abuse during pregnancy.

Traditional hunter-gathering methods and practices were seen as irrelevant and were dropped with contempt as the people became almost totally consumed with despair and violence. Many incidents of aggression were recorded between the Khwe and the !Xun and also between the young and the older. On top of this, inevitably, came HIV/AIDS just as alcoholism and drug abuse took hold of the community (Robbins, 2004: 25).

These tendencies of self-destruction probably grew out of a loss of the cultural practice of hunting and gathering, which had been lost in the cycles of war and multiple migrations (Robbins, 2004). Rupert Isaacson (2001) explained the Bushmen's difficulty in surviving when a part of them live in town and another part still in the bush. However, the emotional consequences of their dislocation and resettlement were traumatic, especially those involving language, culture, topography and climate. These woes were compounded when a Tswana group, the Bathlapin communities who had initially lodged a claim as the original owners of the land on which the San tent homes were erected in Schmidtsdrift, was awarded the land by the Land Claims Commission. Hence, plans again began for their demobilisation and resettlement (Robbins, 2004; Hart, 2011; Dicks, 2011).

Contemporary life in Platfontein

In November 1993, the SADF set up a !Xun and Khwe Trust with over half-a-million rand from the combined funds of the Bushman battalion in Namibia. The military handed over the cheque amid great celebration at Schmidtsdrift. The Trust, which comprised of insiders (!Xun and Khwe representatives) and outsiders (white experts),

was tasked with the responsibility of finding an acceptable place for the settlement of the tent-dwelling San people in South Africa. However, due to internal squabbles amongst trustees, the Trust was unable to secure a settlement, monies were squandered, and the Trust had to be disbanded in April 1996 (Robbins, 2004: 30). Later in 1997, through the intervention of the first post-1994 Minister of Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom, the land in Platfontein was purchased, and the official handing over of the title deeds took place two years later. Platfontein was purchased for R7.5 million (the money came from the Department of Land Affairs).[21] In December 2003 and January 2004, hundreds of San families moved to a township built for them by the South African government on the Platfontein farmland, some fifteen kilometres outside Kimberley in the Northern Cape, South Africa (see Figure 1.1 below).

Figure 1.1: A desolate Platfontein in the daytime. **Source**: Thom Pierce (gift to author) 2014 ©.

Platfontein seemed like a promise of a new beginning for the Bushmen. The name "Platfontein" is an Afrikaans name, which translates to "Flat Fountain". Indeed, the

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[21] A total of R14.2 million was allocated to the !Xun and Khwe for the purchase and development of Platfontein, in terms of the national housing subsidy scheme of R15,000 per household (Robbins, 2004: 31).

settlement is "flat" in every sense of the word, and the second half of its name, "fountain", seems rather inappropriate when one considers that the areas around the township are dry with sparse vegetation. In the dry season, red dust from the sand roads whirls around the settlement, while in the rainy season the roads are often water logged.

The township consists of 805 rudimentary Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) pattern houses and 120 privately-owned houses, with external pit-style lavatories and a single tap in each yard. The housing units seem inadequate for many families, as there are instances where families of more than ten live in a three-roomed apartment (Dicks, 2011). The entire township of Platfontein is serviced by two outsider-owned supply stores along the main road, as well as smaller, resident-owned tuck shops within the community. Between them, the stores on the main road sell items of clothing, a small selection of canned foods, bread and package-sealed items like biscuits and sweets. For household groceries community members travel to a franchised grocery supplier on the edge of Kimberley while some residents walk to the city's nearby landfill in search of food[22] (Dicks, 2011). Unlike most black South African townships, there are no minibus taxis and or buses to transport people to and from Kimberley. Hence, private vehicle owners from Platfontein charge a R60 fee to drive people to and from the Spar supermarket on the outskirts of Kimberley, approximately 18 kilometres away (Dicks, 2011). The lack of public transport greatly impacts the community's access to employment opportunities within the greater Kimberley area.

The leadership of the !Xun and Khwe is divided into two constituencies, traditional and community elected leaders. While traditional leadership is hereditary (each chief chooses his successor from within the family), community leadership is determined by democratic vote with re-elections taking place every four years. Ten leaders are chosen from each of the !Xun and Khwe groups and from those ten a chairman, deputy and secretary are elected. In addition, each traditional house chooses three of its members to serve in the community leadership. The combined !Xun and Khwe community leadership, also known as the community development committee leadership, consists of twenty-six members in total (Barnabas, 2014).

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[22] The situation remained the same as at August 2016.

The role of the traditional leadership is to address internal community affairs while the leadership ascribed by the community is tasked with community development concerns and meeting with government and other parties interested in the township affairs (Barnabas, 2014). The chairman, deputy and secretary of each side of the community leadership, six in all, together form the Communal Property Association (CPA). The CPA manages community-owned land, receiving an income from land hired out to farmers, as well as a monthly payment for the telecommunications tower erected on Platfontein. The CPA financially supports the two development committees (one !Xun and one Khwe), which in turn support the traditional houses. There are constituents calling for a democratic vote for the traditional leaders, citing the fact that the community now lives in a democratic nation. Many expressed concerns that that the individuals who constitute the CPA have seized control of both the traditional and development committee leadership for personal gain (Focus group, August 2016).

According to the 2011 census, there are over 5,000 inhabitants in Platfontein, with the !Xun people having a bigger population. However, an opinion leader in the township, Moshe Mahundu, in 2016 suggested that this figure and the population of the township may have risen significantly considering the current trends of early co-habitation and teenage pregnancies among young people (Moshe Interview, June 2016). The present socioeconomic condition in Platfontein has been described by Thomas Hart (2011: 22) as "skeletal urbanisation" – a condition, which fosters disintegration of tradition, poverty, unemployment as well as socio-political/economic marginalisation in the !Xun and Khwe Bushmen.

Many in Platfontein remain poor and dependent on the government social grant and welfare package meant for war veterans and retirees, disabled persons and for child support. The high unemployment rate stands at 95 % compared to an average of 22 % in the general population of the Northern Cape and 28 % in South Africa (South African San Institute, 2010). Also, 97 % of the !Xun and Khwe, live on less than 1 US dollar per day compared to 7 % in the Northern Cape and 40 % in South Africa (South African San Institute, 2010).

A study by den Hertog *et al.* (2016) noted the prevalence of a psychopathological mental disorder known as "thinking a lot"[23] amongst the Platfontein Bushmen. "Thinking a lot" is primarily caused by a person's ability to cope with life problems (den Hertog *et al.*, 2016). The study linked this mental condition in Platfontein to the lack of opportunities which stems from abandonment and unfulfilled governmental promises; poor housing and sanitation; lack of development; as well as the lack of structural activities and work to keep people occupied (Hertog *et al.*, 2016: 392–393).

Meanwhile, despite Platfontein Bushmen's complaints about abandonment and lack of government interest in the community, it is important to highlight some of government investment in terms of civic infrastructure and services in the township. Platfontein is the only geographic ethic community or township in South Africa with its own government-funded community radio station (the XK FM) (see Tyali, 2012). In addition to this, the government has provided the land, housing units, a police station, a clinic, a school and electrical infrastructure.[24] More importantly, many in Platfontein receive monthly government social welfare grants. Although I was unable to ascertain the exact total amount paid to social grant beneficiaries in Platfontein, it is my opinion that these funds constitute the main disposable income for the entire township. The funds are paid in cash on the 21st of every month by agents of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) from the boot of a van often parked in an open space behind the community police station.

I witnessed two payment days while in Platfontein and was amused at how the township suddenly became animated when these monies are disbursed on "payment day". Figure 1.2 captures a typical payment atmosphere in Platfontein. The township often becomes a buzz of activity, with babies giggling loudly, little children running around the dusty neighborhood till nightfall; the older men move from the payment booth straight to the liquor store to drink themselves into a stupor, while the women

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[23] "Thinking a lot" is a cognitive process of intense ruminating about life problems such as sad events of the past and present emotional affects which causes anxiety, worry, sadness, social consequences such as social withdrawal and often leads to severe conditions or phenomena such as psychotic illness, or "insanity" (Kaiser *et al.* 2014; Yarris 2014; Hinton *et al.* 2015).

[24] The mismatch between popular local impressions and actual state investment may be as a result of the top-down approach to development in which members are not adequately consulted before development projects are established in their community and lack of capacity to locally sustain these projects (see Tomaselli, 2003).

take their time to buy the various commodities on sale and pay their accrued debts at the grocery stores.[25] Independent vendors and sellers of all kinds of goods (ranging from electronics to foodstuff and clothing) all come to Platfontein (mostly from Kimberley) to sell their wares on the main street just a few metres away from the payment booth; ready to siphon out as much as possible of the monies just paid out to the Bushmen.

Many of the teenage and young mothers who get paid for their child's welfare often quickly exhaust the monies on clothing, wigs, jewelry, etc. An incident occurred in the evening of a day in June 2014, in which an older woman visibly infuriated by her daughter's wasteful spending of her grandchild's social grant's pay, screamed and created a scene. I was told that this sort of incident is typical on this day – anecdotal proof that the older generation occasionally finds itself at loggerheads with the young people's choices, taste and lifestyle.

The persons who make the most gain on the payment day are the liquor store owners, many of whom are non-San and who reside outside the Platfontein township. Upon collecting their monies, many of the males who prior to payment have little choice but to consume the cheap traditional "*tombo*"[26] beer, head straight to the liquor store to purchase numerous bottles of large-sized *Black Label* beer which I have seen them consume until they can barely walk. A missionary who worked with the Bushmen for many years, Ferdie Weich, believes that this culture of instant and excessive consumption without leftovers may be traced to the original culture of the San people when they consume every animal they kill because of their belief that the only safe place for the meat was their stomach. They would eat until they couldn't move, he said. In the same vein, a modern Bushman without access to hunting, who is given money and who patronises a well-stocked bottle store has the tendency to drink excessively (quoted in Robbins, 2004: 31). The phenomenon of substance and alcohol abuse pervades virtually every Bushman community in Southern Africa today; including the ≠Khomani people of the Kalahari Desert (see, Barnabas, 2008; Grant, 2011; Robbins 2004; Grant & Dicks, 2014; Mboti, 2017). Interestingly, it is a problem

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[25] Before this day, many grocery store-owners (who know individuals under the social grant scheme) allow the social grant beneficiaries to buy goods on credit against the payment day.

[26] *Tombo* is a locally made alcoholic beer sold for R1. It is consumed by many of the Bushmen days before their social grant payments.

that is prevalent with most Indigenous people in Canada, Australia and the United States (see United Nations Thematic Paper on the Health of Indigenous Peoples, 2014)

Meanwhile, Katharina Meyer, who visited the Khwe and !Xun in Schmidtsdrift in 1993, believes that alcohol and substance were used as a form of self-flagellation due to the military withdrawal from the Bushman camp base in Schmidtsdrift in the early 1990s (quoted in Robbins, 2004). Hence, in Platfontein today, where unemployment is the major problem, excessive consumption of alcohol may be linked to this. In the absence of employment, and due to the perception that they are being neglected by the provincial government, for the majority of the Platfontein Bushmen whose only source of revenue is the government social grant, alcohol may be one of the ways used to relieve their frustration and anxiety. The fact that there are no formal services in which to deposit savings (such as banks) in the township also possibly contributes to this acute "get-and-spend" culture.

Figure 1.2: Platfontein springs to life on "payment days", with traders from outside the township selling all kinds of commodities in exchange for the Bushman's pay.
Source: Itunu Bodunrin 2014 ©

The emerging social class in Platfontein

Despite what seems like a classless society and collective rurality, where all members share a similar "status situation", I observed the existence of an emerging social class within the Platfontein township. Social class refers to the social standing and the material wellbeing of groups, which confers both power and status (Haralambos 1985: 44). Whereas class refers to unequal distribution of economic reward, status refers to the unequal distribution of "social honour". Max Weber's position was that "while class forms one possible basis for group formation, collective action and acquisition of power are the other basis for these activities" (cited in Haralambos 1985: 45–46).

The emerging social class in Platfontein consists of very few individuals and families (less than one percent) whose paychecks are received outside the social grant scheme. Unlike the rest of the community, these few individuals own bank accounts, cars, have access to modern technologies and other things beyond the reach of an average Platfontein inhabitant. This is a significant finding, considering that studies have historically categorised the San as a single homogenous and socially classless society (see Lewis-Williams, 2015). These individuals are mostly adults between the ages of 35 and 50, who are business owners (liquor businesses), SABC/XK FM executive staff members, prison warders, clergymen, serving military officers in the SA army and local representatives and politicians (ANC and DA stalwarts) (see Figure 1.3).

Many of the individuals in this social class have built bigger houses and extensions more suitable to the RDP houses and the shack-like structures and tents afforded by many in the Platfontein. Due to the sharp disparity between this class of people and the rest of the community, many in this social circle have faced attacks and are denigrated by the poorer larger population. For instance, one of my interviewees, a Platfontein San inhabitant who belonged to this class (an executive staffer at SABC-owned XK FM and the owner of a Toyota Fortuner) complained about how his car and those of his fellow car owners have been targeted by hoodlums within the community. He says he believes many of these acts (which had never existed before) were due to the community's exposure to numerous media channels (Interview, August 2016).

The present study takes an interest in the children, who by the virtue of their parents' social class have unrestricted access to technology, have a greater external exposure and are highly regarded as gatekeepers of new and "hip" youth culture and phenomena (see Figure 1.4). The majority of young people in Platfontein rely on these few individuals with digital access to experience the world virtually beyond Platfontein (see Bodunrin, 2016).

However, it is important to note that the social class identified in this study cannot be compared to classes in the mainstream contemporary Western or South African society. Although the identified class of individuals is perhaps comparable to the lower middle class in a typical social class structure, they enjoy the status of the "rich" of the upper class in their local township.

Figure 1.3: Mr. Wineel Leejara, an ex-soldier and a prominent African National Congress (ANC) Stalwart in Platfontein who belongs to the elite social class of individuals in Platfontein. (**Source:** Thom Pierce (gift to author) 2014 ©.)

Figure 1.4: Moss, a son of a corporal in the South African military is one of the few youths whom by virtue of their parent's higher socio-economic status have access to new media technology. He and a few others within this social class have become influential and are regarded as gatekeepers of new and "hip" youth culture and phenomena in Platfontein. (**Source:** Thom Pierce (gift to author) 2014 ©.)

Naming issues

There are ongoing debates on specific names to use to describe the descendants of Indigenous hunter-gatherers of Southern Africa who speak a characteristic click language and who originate from different regions of the Kalahari (see Gordon & Douglas, 2000). Many of these terms are laden with controversies as well as varying degree of abuse and essentialising (see Wilmsen, 1989; Gordon, 1992). The etymology and use of each term in the study is discussed below.

Bushman

The name "Bushman" or plural form "Bushmen" is the most commonly known name outside Africa used to refer to the descendants of the hunter-gatherers who traditionally occupied the Kalahari region across Southern Africa (see Thomas, 2016: v). Its popularity is perhaps as a result of popular media representations in films such as *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980) and in literary texts such as Isaac Schapera (1930) and Laurens van der Post (1954; 1958).

There is a general sensitivity surrounding the name *Bushman*, however, which was originally conferred by the Dutch. According to Gordon and Douglas (2000) the name "Bushman" originated from the Dutch term "Bosjesmen", which was used to describe nomadic foragers who lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle during the colonial era. Many contemporary San researchers in South Africa agree that the term "Bushman" is more generally preferred by the people themselves (cf. Barnabas, 2009, Dicks, 2011; Finlay, 2009). This was indeed the case based on an interview with one of the opinion leaders in the Platfontein community:

> The name "Bushman" was given to us because of our history and nomadic background and we have grown used it. Personally, I prefer the name "Bushman" because I have grown up with. Although some people here within the do not like the name; they prefer to be called a !Xun or Khwe San. I prefer to be called "a Bushman" because it relates to our immediate family history as hunters and gatherers (Moshe[27] Interview, 15 June 2014).

As highlighted in Chapter Five of this thesis, the term "Bushman" seems to obfuscate the agencies of other San individuals such as women, children and youth, who may not be considered as Bush "men" in terms of age or gender. Throughout this thesis, I use the terms "Bushman" (or the plural form "Bushmen"), mainly because they are much preferred by my study's participants. There is no way of being completely certain, however, why some participants prefer this term, or whether we are talking about the same thing when I say "Bushman" and they say "Bushman". Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953) in *Philosophical Investigations* has argued persuasively that this may be a mere language game. Nothing guarantees that we are talking about the same thing, since meaning is context specific and is made on the go. Unfortunately, many scholars of the "Bushmen" appear to assume that "Bushman" means "Bushman" to everyone, whether the interlocutor is poor, rich, white, black, female, or Bushman, and that the concept "Bushman" is somehow transparent, stable, fixed and settled. As we will see, this study progressively casts doubt on these assumed transparencies.

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[27] This dissertation incorporates the real names of informants instead of employing pseudonyms when referencing. Many of the participants requested that their names be used in full, and that there be no masking of their involvement in the research process. This is discussed further in the methodology chapter under the heading ethics and anonymity.

Just because someone self-identified as a "Bushman" last year does not mean that he self-identifies as a "Bushman" this year. The agency exhibited by my Khwe and !Xun hosts during the course of this study suggests that they are always re-inscribing and reinventing meaning on their own terms and are not passive prisoners of arbitrary terminologies.

San

The term *San* (pronounced Saahn) is derived from the Nama word "Sanqua or Sa-au", which means those who forage as opposed to those who herd livestock (Robbins, 2004). It is perceived as the most acceptable in richly describing these southern African language groups. This is because it has been innocuously used by foremost academics (such as Le Roux, 1999), institutions (such as the Centre for San Studies, University of Botswana) as well as NGOs, government officials and social planners across Southern Africa (see Barnard, 2007).

However, several anthropologists and ethnographers who formerly used it have now reverted to "Bushman". In their later work, Le Roux and White (2004: 6), for instance, regard the term "San" to be degrading, and used to perpetuate the misrepresentation of peoples and their history. This is reiterated by a San author Kuela Kiema (2010: 70), in his memoir titled *Tears for my Land*:

> In a strict sense, *San* is a noun referring to a man who picks food from dustbins or the ground because of poverty … the name has gained popularity with those involved in "improving" our conditions, but due to the ignorance of some academics and agencies, many people understand the term *San* to be the most neutral and unifying name of all the first in habitants of southern Africa.

The term *San* is used in this study when quoting from another source. Interestingly, all this back and forth by scholars – from Bushman to San, and then back to Bushman, and so on – is done without consulting the "Bushman" subject about what he would like to be called at that specific time of the scholars' choosing and preferring a name change. If a "Bushman" wants to be called "San" in 2004, and "Bushman" in 2010, and so on, that ought to be his business. He chooses his identity as he goes. Just because he wanted to be called San or Bushman five years ago does not necessarily mean that he wants to be called that today. What if he changed his mind after you wrote your

book or journal article? Did you go back to ask? What if the Bushman you asked did not represent the majority view? Did the whole community express their preference to be called this or that via a democratic show of hands? In truth, no scholars bother to verify this. They merely go ahead with naming, simply because they have arrived at an epiphany, or because they met a Bushman informant who told them that he liked being called a Bushman. I believe that to fix that informant's identity – and that of the rest of his community – to Bushman, or San, or whatever, on the basis of questionable authority and verification, is part of the same colonial naming games that perpetuate the history of dehumanisation of the "Bushman".

Basarwa

According to Kenneth Good (1999), Basarwa is the official designation for the San people in Botswana. The term finds its roots in the Setswana phrase *bao-ba-ba-sa – ruing dikgomo* (those who do not rear cattle), "which establishes the norm by which the San are judged in negative terms" (Taylor & Mokhawa, 2003: 261). A San author extends the attribution to "those with nothing: no tribal territory, no livestock, no culture, no property, no rights, no language, no ethnic identity, no human dignity, even no chief" (Kiema, 2010: 39). The term is also said to represent "Tswana tribal hegemony over the many non-Tswana peoples who reside in the country" (Solway, 2010: 1). Hence, I consider this term (*Basarwa*, or *Mosarwa* for individuals) hegemonic and overtly derogatory, and have only used it when quoting others.

Khoisan

According to Smith *et al.* (2000: 2), *Khoisan* "is a general term for speakers of click languages of southern Africa … which physical anthropologists use as a biological term to distinguish the aboriginal people of southern Africa from their black farming neighbours". The term is generic and can also be used to refer to other groups such as the Khoi Khoi, which includes the Nama, the Korana, and the Griqua (Stavenhagen, 2005: 2; De Wet, 2012: 508).

The preceding term "Khoi" is "often used to refer to Nama-speaking peoples, who are linguistically and culturally similar to San" (Sylvain, 2005: 367). Bushman or San researchers avoid this term, however, since it does not sufficiently distinguish between

the cattle-owning Khoi people and (traditionally) hunter-gatherer San people. It is interesting to observe that the quibbling about distinctions between Khoi and San betrays the assumption that there are pure San and pure Khoi. Of course, this prelapsarian purity is a fiction (cf. Ellis, 2014).

The First People of the Kalahari (FPK)

"The First People of the Kalahari", a term often used by anthropologists during the colonial times, is said to reflect the dominant colonial language (i.e. the English language). Nevertheless, the name seems to position the bearers in tandem with the mediatised myth of them being the First People from whom all humans descended. Roy Sesana (2005) points out that the name is generally perceived to be encompassing of several completely diverse ethnic groups, particularly in Botswana.

The attempt to set up the Bushmen or San as the First People, however, is regarded by some as a racist attempt to erase the claims of other non-Bushmen Black Africans by falsely setting up the fiction that "After all, we are all foreigners – except, of course, the Bushman" (cf. Mboti 2013). It can be surmised that the "First-ness" of the Bushman is preferred by property owners – a significant majority of whom are white – to the first-ness of the "Bantu" for the simple reason that Bushman "first-ness" does not pose the same significant threat to property rights (Section 25 of the South African Constitution) that the more numerous "Bantu" do. This is further discussed in Chapter Five.

The Rethinking Indigeneity project

The present study is located within a larger research track known as Rethinking Indigeneity (RI), a project initiated by Professor Keyan Tomaselli in 1986 at the then University of Natal. According to Tomaselli (2012: 47), the project set out to rethink via postcolonial theories the place of Indigeneity – a status usually accorded to "remnant prior peoples living on their former lands in the margins of nation states". The project, which initially began by examining media representations of the Khoisan and Zulu social groups in 1986, has since coursed through multiple phases (see Table 1.1). Before 1994, RI illuminated the relationship between media representations, as a construction of reality about certain places and people, and the political processes of inclusion and exclusion mirrored in the meta-narratives of colonialism and apartheid.

After 1994, it morphed into a self-reflexive examination of the research process, particularly, the hierarchical positioning between the researcher and the researched communities. This period coincided with the development of emergent approaches like Critical Indigenous Qualitative Methods, which challenged the colonial method of Indigenous enquiry (see Smith, 1999).

Recent foundational texts such as Linda Smith (1999), Denzin and Lincoln (2008), Bagele Chilisa (2012) and Tomaselli (2012) exemplify the new advances in Indigenous sociological and cultural theory. They articulate the increasing historical purchase that indigeneity possesses within the discourse of minority rights, as well as its burgeoning status as a platform for political mobilisation against, and resistance to, the excesses of globalised capital and neoliberal hegemony. Rather than being an essentialist category associated with myths of authenticity, traditionalism, primitivism and pre-rationality, the RI project tests whether Indigeneity might be reconceived as a contemporary performance of self (as for example in my MA thesis, incorporating hip-hop, that enacts a restoration of relations to one's past while simultaneously linking subcultures to the present). Hence, if indigeneity is indeed a mixture of received tradition and a contemporary performance of self, then it follows that it is often formed in the encounter between pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity – a scrambled periodisation that characterises both the Khwe and !Xun who live in Platfontein. Adopting a self-reflexive and self-critical investigative mode, RI approaches research as a series of moments of constructive encounter, shaped by consents, permissions and protocols that establish both an intellectual and ethical basis for relations and knowledge (see Tomaselli, 2012: 47).

This study is a continuation of the RI project's work in Platfontein, which previously focused on XK FM, a SABC-owned "community" radio station, serving the community, and employing local staff. Hart (2011), Mhlanga (2009; 2010) and Tyali (2012) have examined reception, governance and development messaging of the station, while Dockney (2011) studied the reception of an M-Met EDiT video, *Voice of the Forefathers*, directed by Hart (2013), a dramatised memory of origins illustrated with animation. Other research on the community (e.g., Dicks, 2011; Grant & Dicks, 2014) has dealt with public health communication, using grassroots comics and body mapping. Finally, Shanade Barnabas' (2014) work amongst artists at Platfontein, on

the relationship between art and development in the context of heritage making and multivocality, provides further links and background. The RI project currently adopts a methodology which encourages collaboration between the researcher and the research (Indigenous) communities (see Tomaselli, 2005). It is this methodological framework that guides the current research in the Platfontein community. Table 1.1 below outlines the organic development of the Rethinking Indigeneity track.

Table 1.1: Research phases outlining the organic development of the Rethinking Indigeneity track.

Phase 1: Media Representations of the San and the Zulu, 1986 ff.

The initial interest was movie-induced tourism. The intention was to ascertain levels of media-induced tourism that arose as a result of commercially successful films and television programmes that traded in and cultural myths. The "noble-savage" myth that captured the global imagination through Jamie Uys' *The Gods must be Crazy* movies, as well as the *Shaka Zulu* television series led to the investigation of tourism at "cultural villages" such as *Shaka Land.*

Phase 2: Semiotics of the Encounter, 1995 ff.

This phase interrogated the nature of research itself. The San Bushmen were considered to be one of the most researched communities in the world. Were the San not suffering from "research fatigue"? How could we engage with the San Bushmen in a mutually beneficial way? Questions of the "self" and "other" representations— led to the interrogation of the roles of researcher and researched. How do the researchers and researched reach a common ground from which to work?

Auto-ethnographic and participatory field research methods were implemented in an attempt to foster dialogues and expose the vulnerabilities of the researchers.

The key areas of focus were cultural tourism, identity, and performance in both the Kalahari and KwaZulu-Natal.

Issues of representation, cultural policy and ways of staging authenticity were discussed.

Phase 3: From Observation to Development: Method, Cultural Studies and Identity, 2003 ff.

This phase revolved around:

a) How to make our research useful to our hosts

b) How to address the need for contemporary contextual information to supplement whatever other studies had been done on these communities' conditions of existence, and

(c) Bridging the "theory-practice" divide. Theories are mainly produced in the developed world, while the practice of research and development occurs in un(der)developed countries. Funding is frequently based on proposals written by agents in the developed world, and on received conceptual models instead of observations deriving from the proposed beneficiaries. This phase attempted to create and align theories according to what was happening in the field as opposed to narrating incidents in the field to suit the theory.

Phase 4: The development of !Xaus Lodge, 2005 ff.

This phase mobilised semiotics in an analysis of safari lodge marketing, strategic positioning and lodge-community partnerships in relation to issues of identity, representation, and analysis of Same-Other relationships. Action research was applied to shape business decisions to recover a state-development project. The views of the public-private and community stakeholders were taken into account when prescribing a model to guide the partnership.

Phase 5: Rethinking Indigeneity, 2008 ff.

Re-established the notion of indigeneity within the discipline of postcolonial studies in collaboration with the Leeds University Centre for Post-Colonial Studies. The strategies and models created in the first four phases were generalised so that they could be implemented in other community-lodge partnerships in the region.

Phase 6: Co-creation of Indigenous Research, 2012 ff.

Indigenous and local communities work in collaboration with researchers to create contextually sensitive and useful research. Strategic partnerships offer ways for Indigenous peoples to develop their own interpretations of their own material culture. Indigenous communities take an active stance in shaping their own representation and identity instead of passively conforming to prescribed roles. The present study is also located in this phase. This PhD study developed collaborative research with the Platfontein youth in seeking to make sense of the Platfontein youthscape in late modernity.

Phase 7: Psychological Dimension of Origins of Culture, 2007 ff.

Study via the lens of imitation behaviour amongst pre-school children of a-literate parents in the Kalahari, in comparison with Australian Aboriginals and literate parents of subjects in Brisbane. This phase (2007 ff.) adds a psychological component to the project.

Phase 8: Participatory Development

Subject-generated media via the method of participatory development. Grassroots comics and body maps are used as tools to illustrate what the Indigenous communities identify as pressing issues, instead of having their needs and wants prescribed by outside experts – with whom they might then work in a cooperative relationship.

Phase 9: Consolidating and Critically Examining Previous Research, 2015–2019

This phase critically examines the methods developed via the RI project in relation to the broader recent emergence of critical Indigenous qualitative methodologies (CIQM). Further, it compares the RI project with work that is being done on transdisciplinarity. Additional ground breaking work is been done on youth identities among the !Xun and Khwe Bushman groups. It critically reflects on what has been done, what has been achieved, and what should still be done within the project, working to consolidate the vast body of data, information and writings collected into a coherent body of knowledge.

N.B. Table adapted from Dyll-Myklebust and Tomaselli (2016). Although some phases may seem incongruent with the timeline, or may overlap, this is due to the organic growth of the research track.

Research process

The present study comprises qualitative, ethnographic research conducted between 2013 and 2017 with about 25 !Xun and Khwe youth (of both sexes) between the ages of 18 and 24. Due to the nature of the study, it was important to obtain data in situations that seemed typical of the participants' lives. Hence, participatory observation was the main method in observing the various sites and activities that are routinely mobilised by Platfontein youth to have a deeper understanding of what citizenship, identity and indigeneity means to them. The inclusion of the participant observation method responds to a study by María Núñez (n.d.), which found that the sole use of interviews and focus groups exacerbates the problem of identifying traditional cultural symbolic systems among Indigenous youth.

Unstructured informal interviews and focus groups were employed at varying times to complement and further validate some of the observed youth cultural patterns. Both the interviews and the focus group discussions were carried out in relaxed settings using a "non-directive" interviewing technique where there are no predetermined defined questions (see Gillham, 2000: 11). The questions were ultimately informed by the study's key research questions.

The study adopts the Critical Indigenous Qualitative Methodologies (CIQM) proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2008) – a fusion of both the Indigenous methodology and the critical methodology, which has been described as a reflexive discourse of critique constantly in search of open-ended subversive, multivoiced and participatory epistemology (cf. Lather, 2007). It not only ensures that the voices of the oppressed and colonised Indigenous persons are heard, it also resists efforts to confine Indigenous enquiry to a single paradigm or interpretative strategy (see Chapter Two for an extended discussion of the methodological approach of the study).

Decolonisation in postcolonial Indigenous research

> The "decolonial" framework attempts to engage with imperialism and colonisation at its different multiple levels (Mignolo, 2007: 155).

The term decolonisation first surfaced in Africa in the 1960s to explain the process of colonial powers' withdrawal from colonies. Today, the decolonising project is back on the agenda. The past is busy repeating itself, it seems. In contemporary South Africa, decolonisation has been used to describe the process of undoing the racist legacies of the past in the present-day South Africa (see Mbembe, 2016).

Postcolonial indigenous research is characterised by resistance to Euro-Western thought and ideals. Despite political liberation and the departure of old colonial regimes in the 1960s, following the Bandung Conference of 1955, colonial legacies continue to hinder cultural awakening in many post-colonial nation-states.[28] Many have pointed to globalisation and neoliberalism as the most visible conduit of contemporary colonisation (see Bishop, 2008; Wilson, 2008). In Africa, Bagele Chilisa and Julia Preece (2005) draw attention to the theft of African indigenous knowledge of local resources such as plants and herbs by Western-trained researchers and companies (cf. Commey, 2003).

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) observes that the process of decolonisation appears to operate in two ways: analysis of modernity/colonialism (that is, how it was formed, transformed, manipulated, disputed), and in envisioning and engaging in the collective building of decolonial futures (that is, collective resistance against new forms of (neo)colonisation or coloniality). The latter aspect of decolonisation has been extensively discussed and theorised by a number of scholars. Linda Smith (1999; 2008), for instance, explains decolonisation as creating and consciously using various strategies to liberate the "captive mind" from oppressive conditions that continue to silence and marginalise the voices of colonised non-Western societies that encountered European colonisation. It involves the restoration and development of cultural practices, thinking patterns, beliefs, and values that were suppressed but are

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[28] See Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013) book, which addresses the crisis of cultural, epistemological, economic, and political dependence created by coloniality and/or colonialism. His analysis of coloniality of power, coloniality of being, and coloniality of knowledge yields a comprehensive understanding of African realities of subalternity.

still relevant and necessary for the survival and birth of new ideas, thinking, techniques and lifestyles that contribute to the advancement and empowerment of the historically oppressed, formerly colonised non-Western society (cf. Chilisa, 2012: 14).

In social research, decolonisation is the process of conducting research in such a way that the worldviews of those who have suffered a long history of oppression and marginalisation are given space to communicate from their own frames of reference (Chilisa, 2012: 14). Coloniality[29] is said to be perpetuated through the continued usage of colonial research methodology (founded on culture, histories and philosophies of Euro-Western thought) used to construct the condition of people in postcolonial spaces (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014: 198). This dominant western methodology gives enormous power to the researcher to define, while positioning the researched as mere "specimens" rather than people (Smith, 1999). This conventional research process, however, continues to lead to marginalisation, exclusion, cultural suppression, forced assimilation or removal, and outright extermination of Indigenous groups (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Allen *et al.,* 2014).

These realities have prompted native or Indigenous researchers and their allies to consistently call for the decolonisation of (social) science research and the need for alternative Indigenous ways of knowing to replace the unchecked neoliberal-driven system that has sustained Euro-American hegemony.[30] Gracey and King (2009) in particular, propose that any examination of sociocultural and economic issues in Indigenous communities must begin with the ongoing and lingering impacts of colonisation. While the so-called Western colonial research tradition might be indigenous to the Western academy and its institutions, it excludes from knowledge production the knowledge systems of the historically marginalised and oppressed groups such as the Indigenous peoples and people of First Nations (Chilisa, 2012).

Furthermore, Russell Bishop (2008: 2011) explains that the decolonisation struggle is one of freeing selves from neocolonial dominance both in research and practice, "so

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[29] Coloniality according to Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández (2014: 198) describes the hidden process of erasure, devaluation, and disavowing of certain human beings, ways of thinking, ways of living, and of doing in the world. Unlike decoloniality, coloniality may exist without colonialism as the necessary weapon of modernity. This includes the perception that an indigenous society must adopt Western civilising conducts, if it must develop.

[30] Decolonisation, especially of research, is thus seen as the indigenisation of dominant research approaches.

that models of reform for the oppressed groups can be developed from within the epistemological frameworks of those groups, rather than from within the dominant." (2011: xiii).

In a similar vein, Maori scholar, Smith (1999) advocates for an Indigenous analysis that highlights the role of past and current imperialism in the present realities of Indigenous people. She opines that European civilisation appropriated knowledge from colonies and then reflects it back to the colonies, while reassigning the ownership and creativity to European civilisation. Re-inscription of this therefore occurs when scholars offer analyses of such phenomena without a critical appraisal of the origins of knowledge. Darling-Wolf (2003) similarly noted the "essential-ising tendencies by Western scholars in search of Indigenous traditions and authentic cultural forms in their attempts to represent 'exotic' others" (154).

To Linda Smith (1999), decolonisation thus becomes a process which helps to heal from and reverse colonisation at its many different multiple levels. By "researching back", researchers from the global South question the conventional order of doing research as well as critically analyse the dominant knowledge, discourses used to describe and theorise the colonised other in disciplines such as education, sociology, cultural studies and so on (cf. Mboti, 2012). Smith's position is echoed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), who suggests that a sophisticated deployment of historical, philosophical, and that political knowledge in combination with the equi-primordial concepts of coloniality of power, coloniality of being, is crucial in understanding the coloniality of knowledge and realities of subalternity.

In Africa, postcolonial states' continued pursuit of Western-designed notions of "development" decades after decolonisation (independence) has placed Indigenous practices and knowledge systems at risk of becoming extinct. Joel Ngugi (2002: 321) describes this process as the "sovereign colonial modernisation project" in which African states attempt to "assimilate those whom the classical colonisers had 'forgotten' to modernise". This approach is similar to those used by European colonialists who sought to enlighten the primitive indigenous population with "their blessings of civilisation" (see Ndahinda, 2011: 26). In reality, the fear that Indigenous practices and knowledge systems will become extinct is misplaced. People are always inventing and reinventing themselves, and thus are never fixed to any one code of

knowing or of practice. This will become very clear when we look at how !Xun and Khwe youths negotiate identity and belonging. These youths cannot avoid the past, but they are not its prisoners.

In the (South) African Indigenous research context, Tomaselli and Dyll-Myklebust (2015) suggest that decolonisation defines a set of ways of rethinking of indigeneity via a methodology that entails the jettisoning of imperialist epistemological assumptions of researchers as "experts" and of Indigenous knowledge as a barrier to progress. In other words, the research participants (often known as "informants", "subjects", "objects", "sources", etc.) are seen as collaborators and co-authors in the process of meaning and academic knowledge production. The active engagement and collaboration between the researcher and the researched is elaborated in the methodological chapter of this study. In the present study, decolonisation is understood both in terms of theory and practice. More importantly, I seek to build my own understanding of decolonial theory and practice. While I stand on the shoulders of giants such as Tomaselli and his international team of collaborators and their Kalahari research participants, I also seek to go beyond them in order to traverse paths of my own choosing.

The decolonial approach that frames this study is an acknowledgement of the long *durée* of colonialism, and its traces that impinge and intrude on the present-day construction and understanding of the !Xun and Khwe indigeneity and identity. The need for a decolonised study is particularly pertinent in the contemporary South African context where the call to decolonise research has reached a crescendo as a result of the country's unresolved colonial past. As Michele Fero (n.d.: 6-7) points out, "it is important to re-examine the elements from the past because they shape the present and future". The activist students who demanded that "Rhodes must fall" in 2016, more than a hundred years after his death, certainly saw that institutions and systems live long after the people who inaugurate them. !Xun and Khwe youth, too, are having to deal with the unfinished business of citizenship and belonging that their parents and parents' parents left unresolved. What fascinates me is that the youths choose their own tools and styles for forging their own identities. Such identities will always be linked to the past but are expressions of hybrid visions of complex futures.

It is also important to view culture not as a system enclosed in itself, but rather as "a system in continuous motion" (La Pastina, 2006: 141).

While previous studies tend to investigate indigeneity mostly from postcolonial perspectives, the present investigation deploys a more in-depth "decolonial" approach in order to understand how the !Xun and Khwe youth's socio-cultural identities are shaped by colonial, neo-colonial, and neo-liberal influences. This is done through immersed lived research and thick textual description and analysis of the dynamics of their livelihoods, adaptation, and adoption in the late modernity (as seen in Chapter Two)

Aim, objectives and research questions

The main aim of this study is to make sense of the emerging Platfontein Indigenous youth- scape by examining how the !Xun and the Khwe youth negotiate, construct and mobilise meanings of indigeneity, identity and citizenship. The thesis is a multi-sited ethnography that captures the links between Platfontein young people's "local everyday practices and 'global' macro-forces" in late modernity– to borrow the words of Maira and Soep (2005: xvii). The study has three main objectives, which are:

1. To examine the shifting meanings and expressions of indigeneity/Bushman- ness among present-day Platfontein youth

2. To establish how Platfontein youth negotiate identity

3. To explore Platfontein youth's conception of citizenship and belonging.

To achieve the above set objectives, the study poses the following questions:

❖ How is indigeneity constructed and expressed by selected !Xun and Khwe youth?

❖ How are !Xun and Khwe identities constructed and negotiated (particularly in the present transnational systems of contemporary cultural flow of knowledge and power)?

❖ What does citizenship (i.e., Indigenous and being South African) mean to !Xun and Khwe youth?

Outline of chapters

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the entire thesis, which is primarily a decolonial attempt to understanding the notion of indigeneity, identity and citizenship among the !Xun and Khwe Indigenous youth of Platfontein, South Africa. The chapter introduces the study and gives background to the community. Key concepts, aims, objectives, and research questions were also defined and stated in this chapter.

The second chapter discusses the research design, research methods and the analysis of data. Methodological discourses as well as the criticisms of the adopted methods and paradigms are also discussed. Furthermore, in this chapter I acknowledge my own somewhat precarious position[31] as a non-Indigenous researcher within the research community and how I manage to re-position myself in relation to my research participants. These details are particularly important when researching vulnerable groups such as the Bushmen whose lives have been scrutinised by a number of professionals attempting (ostensibly) to help or understand them (see Tomaselli, 2015). The complexities of personal and ethnic identities during the research encounter are thus debated at great length in this chapter.

The third chapter focuses on indigeneity-related discourses particularly as they relate to the !Xun and Khwe research population. International, state and local conceptions of indigeneity are highlighted in this chapter. The chapter attempts to specifically answer questions such as: how do Platfontein youth currently construct Indigeneity in relation to the past and international Indigenous discourse? What narratives of history are useful to them? What forms of representations are employed when they speak for themselves as Indigenous peoples?

Chapter Four unpacks the youth and identity discourses. The chapter explores the dynamics of identity, which, in part, are products of outside influences. Platfontein

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[31] Positionality is the technical term often used when describing researcher's social distance and objectivity – the ability to remain detached, aloof or personally separate from the people you are researching in the research field (see Spivak, 1999).

youth identity is contextualised in consideration of the youth's experiences within South African society and their growing but still tenuous connections to the broader global community. The chapter begins with the discussion and application of the Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies-inspired subculture theory, which has informed many youth studies since the post-war British era of the 1950s. Although the theory has never been applied in the study of Indigenous youth prior to this study, its previous usage in different contexts is discussed in relation to the present study. The chapter not only presents the theory, it also highlights its gaps and shortcomings, and ways to address these. Carol Markstrom's (2011) framework was also useful in explaining the multiple strands of cultural influences on Platfontein youth identity. The chapter also examines the performance of identity by the Platfontein youth – a key component missing from Markstrom's (2011) framework or model. The (re)assertion of Indigenous identity via youth's popular performance (such as hip-hop) is then discussed extensively in the latter part of the chapter.

The fifth and last chapter sums up the entire study by weaving together the study's aims, objectives and research questions into a single skein, while also discussing the significance of the study in the present historic time in the lives of the Platfontein Bushmen. The thesis of the study is reiterated, and possible directions for future research proposed.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Introduction[32]

This chapter offers a critical overview of the research methods and methodological concepts that this study drew on. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first part is a reflexive overview of the youth research paradigm as proposed by Vesa Puuronen (2005). This is vital in understanding the epistemological orientation of the study, and in situating it within existing paradigms within youth research. The second part of the chapter describes the basic data collection and analysis methods used in the study. The final part takes a reflexive turn at the decolonial approach of rethinking methodological questions related to this study. In this section, I motivate and show how I negotiated the intra-cultural hierarchies and worked towards cross-cultural collaboration with my hosts in the field.

Part 1: Research paradigm

Paradigms are abstract operational concepts andunlike basic belief systems or world views that guide the investigator, in choices of method, in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways (Puuronen, 2005). Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln[33] (1994: 105) state that paradigms comprise, on the one hand, the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community, and on the other hand, the specific element in that constellation – such as books or articles, which have had remarkable influence on the development of a specific field of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Table 2.1, adapted from Puuronen (2005), is used to facilitate a methodological reflection and position the present study within established paradigmatic frameworks. As Puuronen notes, the process of seeking one's position on the table helps to clarify central methodological issues (such as one's own inclinations, beliefs, biases, etc.), while serving as an important guide for methodological discussions (2005: 27).

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[32] Part of this chapter has been published (see Bodunrin, 2018).
[33] Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln are credited as the first scholars to divide the social sciences up into paradigms (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Table 2.1: Paradigms of Youth Research. (Adapted from Puuronen, 2005: 19–20).

Paradigm	Positivism	Realism	Constructionism
Timeframe	**1900–**	**1970–**	**1990–**
Ontological presuppositions (about reality)	a. Naive realism, "real" reality observable b. "Real" reality, only imperfectly and probabilistically observable	Critical and historical realism, reality shaped by political, social, cultural, ethical and gendered values, crystallised historically	Weak or strong relativism; local, (socially) constructed realities
a. Epistemological presuppositions (about knowledge) **b. Relations between researcher and objects of research**	a. Objectivist, findings true if confirmed by critical tradition and research community b. Dualist	a. Subjectivist, results value-mediated b. Interactive	a. Subjectivist, results constructed b. Sometimes interactive, sometimes dualist
a. Methodical ideals **b. Ideal data**	a. Experimental, manipulative b. Quantitative data matrix	a. Dialogical b. Qualitative data (interviews, observation, audio and video recordings, texts, biographies)	a. Dialogical, experimental, interpretative b. "Texts"
a. Data collection methods **b. Analysis methods**	a. Standardised questionnaire, observation, interviews b. Quantitative analysis	a. Ethnographic methods, interviews b. Qualitative analysis	a. Interviews, texts b. Discourse and conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis
Aim of research	Explanation, prediction, control	Understanding, critique, transformation, emancipation	Understanding, deconstruction, reconstruction
Theory, explanations	Biological and ecological explanations, evolutionism, functionalism, socialisation theory	(Neo)Marxism, structuralism, subculture theory, feminism, psychoanalysis	Postmodernist theories, poststructuralism, "local explanations"
Subjects of the research	Individuals, attitudes, values, opinions, hobbies, socialisation, youth work, youth associations	Youth groups, subcultures, youth groups, individuals	Texts about youth, conversations of young people, representations of youth, youth discourses, images of youth in TV, newspapers, etc.
Role of the researcher	Disinterested scientist, academic role, the servant of policy makers or administration	Transformative intellectual and social activist, advocate of the research objects (subjects)	Passionate participant who facilitates reconstruction, or indifferent observer
Images of youth	Object, determined by external: social; or internal: biological or psychological factors	Young people are considered as active, knowledgeable and creative agents	Young people are considered as both active agents and/or social constructs

The present study is located within the interpretative prism of the constructionist paradigm (see row 5 column 4). Constructionism (also known as constructivism) emerged in youth research during the late 1980s and 1990s when it was seen as a

logical step forward from the criticisms of positivism and internal deficits of realisms, which had emerged since the 1900s and 1970s respectively (see row 2).

Although there are different contemporary forms of constructionisms (see for instance, social constructionist paradigms)[34], the core and central tenet of constructionism is the idea that "what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective, and that knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind" (Schwandt, 1994: 125). Constructionists also view language conversation[35] as the basis of the ontology of the social world, while maintaining that reality is constructed by discourses, which can be revealed by studying different texts, or produced either by individuals or institutions. Hence, it is said that constructivists are anti-essentialists, who assume that reality and different objects are the products of complicated discursive practices (Schwandt, 1994).

Constructionists view young people as constructors of their worlds – as agents who can freely choose the course of their own actions (see row 11, column 3). However, in the current study, some strands of epistemological assumptions associated with realism or the realist paradigm have been adapted. This includes assumptions that:

1. the researcher is intricately part of the research process and construction of reality,
2. although knowledge can be acquired by observation, observational data is not pure until it is connected to theory,
3. the ideal data is obtained by dialogue with research participants – human beings, who are interviewed for instance, or whose biographies were collected. The interaction between researcher and researched is seen as the key to authentic knowledge,
4. young people are active, creative and knowledgeable agents, who can decide how they act relatively independently from adults, other authorities, social circumstances and social forces. Nevertheless, their actions are conditioned by social constraints (Puuronen, 2005: 26).

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[34] Social constructionism derived from phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz, and especially from the seminal work of Berger and Luckmann maintains that reality is independent of the human mind, but knowledge about this reality can only be based on the social artefacts produced, for instance, in discourses (see Schutz, 1932/1972; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

[35] Conversation in this regard includes systematic questioning and answering during social investigation (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998).

Other elements adapted from the realism paradigm include ethnographic methods, qualitative analysis, and the subcultural theories which began in the 1970s with realist scholars such as Hall and Jefferson (1976), and Paul Willis (1978) who were part of the Birmingham School (see rows two and eight). In a bid to understand the present condition and reality of the !Xun and Khwe youth in relation to their otherwise relatively well-researched past as Bushmen descendants, it was important to explore both the textual discourses around indigenous youth, as well as interview and study the "real" and actual !Xun and Khwe youth population, who interact with and who are surrounded by these discourses. Hence, by combining the study of discourses and that of "real youth", the study again combines elements of realism and constructionism.

While constructionism views youth merely as an idea or concept that can be studied via social scientific means of language and discourses, realists such as Ian Hacking (1999) argue that the category "youth" goes beyond this, particularly because the youth in question are living human beings with action, lives and problems, which cannot just be reduced to language or discourse.

The compatibility of both realism and constructionist/interpretative paradigms is highlighted by Puuronen (2005: 24), who notes that: "it is not impossible for youth studies to use interpretative paradigm in terms of method, and then to combine it with positivist type of reasoning in terms of its framing. This internal conflict can sometimes result in fruitful analysis".

Flexible combinations of these previously unrelated paradigms, techniques and practices are increasingly being accepted as means of understanding complex and constantly changing phenomena particularly in the present era that is characterised by a significant shift from predominantly text-based analyses to practice-based qualitative analyses (see Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003). This increasingly popular phenomenon is also echoed in Annette Markham's (2013: 65) concept of "methodological remix". Markham argues that contemporary interpretative research relies on "sampling, borrowing and creatively reassembling units to create something that is used to move or persuade others".

Although the present study is primarily interpretative research located within the constructionist paradigm, it nevertheless adopts elements and tenets of realism in making sense of the Platfontein youthscape in contemporary South Africa.

Part 2: Basic research methods

Qualitative study

The present study is qualitative. The preference for this methodology is consistent with the generally held belief in youth research that words and concepts, rather than numbers and statistical breakdowns, are more relevant when describing the quotidian lives of young people, the dynamism that youth possess, and the constant flux of youth identities. "Young lives," argue Tindenberg & Allaste (2015: 2), "are too complex to be measured in numbers, and qualitative methods offer greater potential to mirror the messiness of the everyday experiences that both youth and youth researchers navigate".

In some respects, the study fits the category of longitudinal research, as it was conducted between 2013 and 2017 in the township of Platfontein, Northern Cape, South Africa on a sample of !Xun and Khwe youth between ages 18 and 24. As Scott Menard (2002) observes, longitudinal studies generate rich data especially in areas of social change where a researcher goes back to the same people year after year to find out what is new and what has stayed the same. The method has proved valuable in answering questions that cannot adequately be addressed by other types of data collection designs (Menard, 2002). However, due to the challenge and cost of conducting research over such an extended period of time, researchers generally eschew this method. Funding by the National Research Foundation (NRF), through the auspices of the Professor Keyan Tomaselli long-term research project known as Rethinking Indigeneity (RI) (see Chapter One), made possible my "longitudinal gaze" at the youth of Platfontein.

Finally, the study adopted ethnography and other methods closely associated with ethnography such as, participant observation, unstructured informal interviews and focus group discussions, to generate qualitative data. These are discussed below.

Ethnography

Ethnography is a family of methods which may include participant observation or long-term engagement with research hosts in the field, informal conversations and observations, in-depth interviews, and field journals (Utrianen, 2002: 176). On the one

hand, ethnography may be regarded as the result of research that aims at describing social life in as detailed manner as possible; on the other hand, it may also refer to the method (itself) or the research process as a whole. In both senses, ethnography ultimately gives a detailed description of a very specific time period, and of certain individuals at a certain point in time. It involves direct and sustained social contact with agents, as well as richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its own terms, the irreducibility of human experience (Willis & Trondman, 2002: 5). Through immersion into the social world of those studied, ethnographers are able to make "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1988: 4-5) that persuade readers of the seriousness and quality of their research. A rich collection of ethnographic research has explored and analysed the maturational and socio-cultural experiences of youths and particularly indigenous youths (Shore 1981; Freeman 1983; Shankman 1984; Holmes 1987; Schoeffel 1995). Due to the nature of the current study, the ethnographic method seems the best choice for obtaining data in situations that seem typical of the participants' lives.

While ethnography has proven to be an effective method particularly in youth studies, it has also not escaped criticisms. Indeed, as Daniel Goh (2007) points out, ethnography has acquired a reputation of "othering" groups of people, most often ethnic minorities located in geographically (and culturally) distant places. He recalls that the genealogy of ethnographic methods can effectively be traced to colonial administrators who used them to collect information to assist them to govern and regulate minority groups as well as to accumulate artefacts for museums.

A salient criticism of ethnography is one put forward by Clifford Geertz (1988:10) regarding the issue of objectivity, about which many ethnographers are generally ambivalent. Geertz believes the act of vacillating between insensitivity and impressionism often leads to ethnocentrism. He concludes that ethnography is biased because it is chronically dependent on the researcher's own subjectivities. Contemporary ethnographers such as Tomaselli (2001) have criticised thin ethnographic description for its failure to reveal the real-to-life messiness of research process. Tomaselli argues, rather, for a kind of self-reflexivity that problematises the researcher-researched encounter. Similarly, Robert Emerson (2004: 4) criticises ethnography for being too loyal to the phenomenon (i.e. relying too much on theory

and often to a lesser degree on the actual field experience) and for failing "to show us the people". This sentiment reappears in Veronika Honkasalo's (2005) writing where she suggests that ethnographers navigate through multiple power relations, but that their choices and means of overcoming these problems in the field are rarely disclosed or explained in the final research text.

To address the criticisms of ethnography given above, Tomaselli (2001) proposes the use of a self-reflexive, self-critical model, which acknowledges details and voices from the field over the rigidity of theories. Although this approach, described by Ellis (2014: 114) as "deepening anthropology" remains unpopular among amongst scholars grounded in positivist ideals, it nevertheless suits the African context where details are in fact as important as theory. Moreover, a detailed ethnography is particularly important in the present study to understand the impact of discourses and historical trajectory in the present condition and reality of the !Xun and Khwe youth whose culture and myth are largely undocumented but embedded and reflected in oral tradition, verbal art, and performance.

Participant observation

Participant observation is a method closely associated with ethnography (see Geertz, 1988). The method is premised on the idea that social behaviour cannot be understood unless it is personally experienced (Downes & Rock, 2011). Participatory observation thus involves studying people in their natural contexts and environments and gaining insight into behaviour that comes not simply from close, detailed, observation but also from the researcher's own experiences within the group being studied. Participant observation does not prejudge issues and events (in the way a questionnaire may, for example) and, for these reasons it is said that participatory observation provides data that has a high level of validity (MacDonald & Headlam, n.d.).

Like ethnography, participant observation has been criticised by those who argue that the data collected is often based on the subjective impressions of the observer or researcher. Readers thus have no other option but to trust that the behaviour, events and experiences were exactly as described by the researcher. In the end, the research simply becomes the subjective interpretation of events by the researcher, despite the collaborative endeavours aimed at getting "actual reality" from the point of view of the

researched themselves. In this study, participatory observation is complimented with other methods such as interviews and focus group to further "thicken" the overall description.

In the course of this research I resided in the township of Platfontein and participated in the socio-cultural activities of my hosts and participants which included going to church, going to the pub at night, rap-session, *tombo*[36] drinking, soccer, burial ceremonies, and so on. Hence, I experienced first-hand some of the events and the issues raised by participants during interviews and focus groups. As discussed in Bodunrin (2016), my identity and reputation as a young black Nigerian male, facilitated a transactional and dialogic relationship with my Platfontein research participants. As soon as I was introduced to my would-be research participants as a Nigerian, I watched their faces lit up with what I took, and recognised, to be excitement. This is because the !Xun and Khwe are passionate about the Nigerian films popularly known as Nollywood, and I was pleasantly surprised to be the first ever Nigerian seen outside the television set.

Interviews

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe ... feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organised their world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world (Patton, 2002: 341).

Interviews are ideal in understanding situational behaviour and sense of self. I found them useful in complementing observation in ethnographic research. The self-identity construction of young people is also said to be best explored through their personalised stories and thoughts elicited via interviews (Burger, 2015). Their narratives offer a distinctive lens on (un)settled ways of life and allow scholars to make sense of their self-understandings, and the different resources drawn upon in their passage into adulthood (Burger, 2015). Amongst Indigenous populations in particular, interviews (sometimes in the form of traditional storytelling) offer the interviewer or the

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[36] *Tombo* is the locally brewed traditional beer in Platfontein. It is cheap and very intoxicating.

listener a way to understand the distinctive logics, values, and consequences guiding indigenous practices, conduct and behaviour (Bruner, 1990; Feldman, 1990. Baumeister & Newman, 1994).

Unstructured, one-to-one life history interviews were conducted in this study. The informal nature of the interview enabled interviewees to divulge information, which, though, at times falling outside the scope of my study, helped to understand the construction of identity of the present-day Platfontein Bushmen in general (Brinkmann, 2007). Life history interviews allowed the interviewers to construct individualised accounts of their daily lives particularly with regard to how they cope with everyday life's dire existence in often-extraordinary ways. The open-endedness of the questions also led to emergence of issues that were not predetermined.

The interviews were carried out in private homes, offices or farms, in all of which I sought to replicate relaxed settings that would help to ease the tensions and negotiate formalities. For instance, I observed that the interviews conducted in Khwedam, !Xûntali and Afrikaans were more effective than the ones in English.[37] I suspect that the fact that the interviews were conducted in a relaxed and informal atmosphere enabled participants to freely express themselves. Also, a number of friendly conversations morphed into key interviews.

A "non-directive" interviewing technique was used. This meant that there were no predetermined questions. Rather, all the questions asked were based on my observations and research questions discussed in Chapter One (cf. Gillham, 2000:11). One advantage of the face-to-face interview within an ethnographic context is that it enabled me, as the researcher, to gauge and relate some of the answers of my participants to their lived reality and experiences as I observed them. Here I followed Margaret Mead (n.d.)[38] where she says, "What people say, what people do, and what people say they do, are entirely different things".

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[37] English as a third language is spoken only by a few youths and working class families in Platfontein. In Bodunrin (2016) I revealed how these families' access to new media technology helps them to learn the English language.

[38] This popular quote is often attributed to Margaret Mead. See: https://www.thoughtco.com/margaret-mead-quotes-3525400.

Questions were asked regarding the young Bushmen's present-day identity in relation to their forebears' cultures, the extent to which they considered themselves to be South Africans, and the meaning and meaningfulness of belonging. Questions were also asked regarding relationship with researchers, especially their perception about me, the researcher invading their space. The particular age range chosen for interviews (18-24) is based on a loosely accepted definition of the term "youth", as well as on the age 18 as the limited age for adulthood in the South African Constitution.

Meanwhile, Marja Tiilikainen (2003) cautions researchers, particularly those working with ethnic minorities, who may have undergone negative and traumatic experiences from previous interviews conducted, to be courteous when conducting fresh interviews. She maintains that interviewers should be sensitive when discussing issues such as racism and discrimination, as the interviewees themselves might be the targets of racist attitudes and stereotypes. Moving to and living in Platfontein at various points in my research journey was vital in experiencing the everyday reality of the people and understanding some of their socio-cultural milieu as well as desires, wants and needs. My stay in Platfontein helped me to negotiate the building of personal relationships and trust, and to understand some of the sensitivities involved in researching such a vulnerable group. With the support of Andre Nthoto, a research participant who became my host, assistant and interpreter, I was able to get privileged access to virtually every part of the Platfontein township. Although the Platfontein farm is vast, houses are concentrated on just a few square kilometres of the land. A total of 36 "key" informants were interviewed during the study (25 young people and 11 adults).

Focus groups

The focus group is a critical part of ethnographic studies that is often used for the benefit of observing participants' interaction with one another (Smith, 2011). The hallmark of a focus group is its explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group. The fact that the focus group is based on the "collective understanding of participants' views", differentiates it from other qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews and observation (Morgan, 1997: 3).

Homogenous focus group discussions were conducted with the participants, who were grouped into two clusters of males and females. A total of six focus group discussions were conducted with the two groups from 2014 to 2016. Grouping the participating youth into gender categories was important to understand the gender dynamics within the data collected. One advantage of homogeneous focus groups (particularly ones done in informal settings) is their capacity to reduce the loneliness of group "spokespersons". Esther Madriz (2000) observes that focus groups enabled her as the researcher to probe respondents' comments, while also enabling participating youth to relate to one another in a context of collective testimonies and group resistance narratives. She concludes that this process empowers and helps participants to match problems with possible solutions. As participants share their experiences, they hear their own perceptions being validated by others, and do not have to bear the sole responsibility for their views. Issues of differences in power between the participants and the researcher are also partially addressed by the creation of a temporary majority of the minority who have been asked to tell of their experiences (Madriz, 2000).

Similarly, Michelle Fine and Lois Weis (1996: 264) observe that stories of pessimism, despair, and victimisation told in individual interviews often go through transformation in a focus group. "Despair", say Fine and Weis (1996), "begins to evaporate, a sense of possibility sneaks through, and identities multiply". This reinforces the idea that a focus group creates a temporary community and orients participants toward supporting each other and thinking about solutions to shared problems. Fine reveals that in her study the focus group participants desired to continue to meet together after the research, to listen to one another's stories and initiate actions that might improve their lives as minority groups. She thus concludes that there is an empowering potential in a focus group project (see Fine & Weis, 2003)

However, focus groups have been criticised for possibly creating a negative feeling of social pressure among participants. Leena Suurpää (2002: 33), for instance, opines that "informants may feel that the answers have to be given in a socially and morally accepted way and they may be afraid of giving "wrong answers". In the course of this study, again, my personal relationship with my research participants was crucial in ensuring certain level of trust, confidentiality and interactional friendly discussion during the focus group sessions.

Documentary photography

The present study also utilised a documentary photography approach to capture in visual some aspects of the !Xun and Khwe youth's socio-cultural activities and lifestyles. Documentary photography according to Howard Becker (1998) entails ethnographers photographing aspects of social life of people and things they observe. As Rosalind Hurworth (2003) suggests, researchers who utilise this method are in fact recording visual field notes that can be used to substantiate their observations. According to her, the strength of this method is that it is sensitive to the visual nature of social life and usually produces photographs that are good enough to be used for publication.

Photography is regarded as an advantageous method particularly for ethnographers studying young people. Not only do photographic images represent and reveal the vitality of young people, they operate on a subconscious level to elicit responses about meaning and identity (Bloustien & Baker, 2003). In his study of young people, McClintock Fulkerson (2007) maintains that photographs helped to guard against too exclusive a focus on young people's thought forms and beliefs, but rather took proper account of the observable behaviours, emotions and rituals. He concludes that photography is one means, amongst others, of paying attention to the embodiment of tradition – the inscription of tradition in "distinctive bodily practices" and the "ceaseless interplay between the messages of bodies and the messages of explicit discourse" (Fulkerson, 2007: 50).

The use of photography is not new in the study of San or Bushmen. Photography and film have long been used to record assumed primitiveness or savagery in order to feed the fantasies and desire for exotica by perceptions of the group for the sentimental cosmopolitan audiences. Robert Gordon's classic, *Picturing Bushmen: The Denver Expedition of 1925*, remains an acclaimed photographic documentation of the Bushmen lifestyle from 1925 to 1926. The Denver expedition is regarded as the first attempt on a large scale to present a systematic image of the Bushmen (Gordon, 1997: 3). The John Marshall film corpus from 1950 to 2000, is another notable contemporary example (see, http://anthropology.si.edu/johnmarshall/). More recently, Ilisa Barbash (2017) published a photographic book on the San titled: *Where the roads all end: Photography and anthropology in the Kalahari.* The book which contains over 300

images of the Ju/'hoansi and the /Gwi San as documented by Laurence Marshall and his family during eight anthropological expeditions to the Kalahari Desert in South-West Africa (Namibia) in the 1950s (see also Ruby 1993; Tomaselli 1999; 2007).

Meanwhile, critics of photography in social research have maintained that the researcher, not the research subject, frames the photographs and then narrates them based on subjective observations of the social group. One of the earliest critics of photography, Susan Sontag (1979), argues that taking photographs can be a hostile act. The camera she says: "… is a predatory weapon … the photographer aggressively objectifies others … To photograph people is to violate them, it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed (1979: 14). Sontag's claims were countered, however, by some authors such as Deborah Willis (1990), who argues that photography should not be reduced to a single objectifying gaze. To her, photography can entail reciprocity between photographer and subject, as was evidently the case in photography by the likes of the contemplative monk, Thomas Merton (see Richter, 2006).

The photographs accumulated in the course of this research were taken with the full consent of those photographed, many of whom were participants of the study. They were informed of the potential use of the photographs for research purposes and printed and digital copies were made available to them. The pictures were taken in a way that was meant to give the Platfontein youth a sense of high level of participation in the research. Pictures were initially taken with mobile phones, and later in 2014, a professional photographer and colleague, Thom Pierce, who joined the RI project, was invited to capture certain aspects of the Platfontein youth daily lives using his digital camera. We discussed the possibility of re-producing these picture in a book format on the Platfontein youth lifestyle in late-modern South Africa. Pierce's "philosophy" is to use the camera to explore issues of cultural, social and historical significance[39]. The pictures below (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) are an example of the work he produced in Platfontein in the course of my research. Nevertheless, even with full consent, the gnawing sense that one somehow takes away something from the photographed, for use in publication far removed from Platfontein, remains. Getting their consent, showing them the pictures, and providing them with electronic and hard copy prints of

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[39] See http://www.dodho.com/interview-with-thom-pierce/.

the picture went some way to assuaging this feeling. Still, research takes as much as it gives.

Figure 2.1: One of the Platfontein youths, Rusky Kabuatta at home in Platfontein in June 2014.
Source: Thom Pierce 2014 ©

Figure 2.2 – Generations Apart: A young Platfontein hip-hopper being watched by older men as he poses for a picture.
Source: Thom Pierce (gift to author) 2014 ©.

Other data collection tools used in this study included recorders (audio and video) as well as field notes (since 2013).

Sampling

The process of selecting participants for the research was based on a sampling technique known as purposive snowball sampling. This sampling technique is often used in research into very closed or informal social groupings, where the social knowledge and persona recommendations of the initial contacts are invaluable in opening up and mapping tight social networks (Maxwell, 2005). The sampling style, which has also been termed "opportunistic", enables the researcher to select participants based on the research objectives while also addressing the research question in a systematic manner (Maxwell, 2005).

This sampling technique was selected after I had identified a few group members of the hip-hop music group, DRAP JJ Stars, in 2013 who then introduced me to other young persons involved in music within the community. A few persons who willingly

offered themselves and who fitted into the category defined as youth in the study were also researched and admitted into the sample. As mentioned earlier, most of the participating youth fell between the ages of 18 and 24.[40]

A total of 25 young persons (both males and females) from the !Xun and Khwe communities participated in the study. The sample contained mostly high school graduates or dropouts born in the years after the Platfontein Bushmen migrated to South Africa in 1990. It was particularly important for me to secure a sample size that would provide enough data for me to attempt to draw collective information that is representative of the Platfontein youth base. Also, 16 older persons were interviewed in the course of the research. The adult respondents were mostly respected opinion leaders in the community, such as ex-soldiers and retirees, teachers, SABC staff members, pastors and traditional elders.

Data analysis process

All data obtained in this study through interpretative methods discussed earlier (participant observation, focus groups, interviews and a review of past literature) were qualitatively analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, according to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006: 4), recognises patterns from data, which are then constructed into themes and categories of analysis. These themes or the major categorisations are then discussed under related chapters of the study. Data were analysed in each chapter, in a structured narrative format based on the researcher's observed experiences, the working theories, literature review, and the research questions of the study.

Thematic analysis was chosen as the analytical tool due to the ethnographic nature of this research. Transcribing my own experiences, interviews and focus sessions into raw data, enabled me to re-live those moments and information I had gathered over the years. Hence, I was also able to pull out pertinent themes in the process.

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[40] Although 25 young persons between 18 and 24 participated directly in the study, 11 adults aged between 45 and 70 also participated in the study. Many of these adults were parents and grandparents of participants, who had lived most of their active lives in Namibia. It is important to get the perceptions of the older generation to understand their viewpoint as well as the stark differences in the environments both generations grew up in, and the changing community values.

Validity, reliability and rigour

As earlier indicated, this research is part of a larger research track titled "Rethinking Indigeneity". Scores of multidisciplinary researchers have gone through the project in the last two decades producing an extensive body of work on different aspects of indigeneity in Southern Africa indigenous population. These studies as well as the relationship these researchers have established with communities over the years helped to gain trust, participation and commitment of participants. The studies also thus serve as useful resources to cross-check and validate my findings in this study.

Part 3: where I stand

> The position of even the most well-intentioned researcher among
> disenfranchised or dispossessed peoples is a complicated one, fraught
> with paradox and unavoidable hypocrisies (Thomas, 2016: 37).

It is a generally held belief that researchers observing and interpreting the lives and practices of others occupy a privileged position of authority and thus can influence research outcomes by imposing values, obligations, sentiments and so on, on research subjects and/or participants. Crystal Powell (2014) adds that when a student with an ultimate academic research goal becomes involved in social research, there is an unconscious tendency to accept and dismiss certain habits and responses on the basis of research objectives or to select subjects that are more likely to generate the desired results. In her study of young immigrants, Amy Best (2007) admitted to dismissing the perspectives of some children whose experiences did not fit into her designed research frames. It is not just the researcher that is prone to such bias; Powell (2014: 68) identifies another kind of bias known as "response bias"[41], in which subjects or researched communities talk to and show the researchers things that they thought he or she wanted to hear or be shown.

However, despite the overwhelming evidence of biases, conventional scientific method continues to downplay researcher-researched positionality. As Tomaselli (2015) notes, the researcher who is placed at the apex of the research hierarchy is seen as an objective, all-knowing lead actor whose sole perspective constitutes

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[41] Martyn Shuttleworth (n.d.) lists the following as the possible categories of research bias; design bias, selection or sampling bias, procedural bias, measurement bias, interviewer's bias and reporting bias.

ultimate scientific knowledge. This Western way of knowing has however been challenged by a number of scholars, who began advocating for a more reflexive research approach that acknowledges the "messy" details of researcher-researched field relations as well as the depth of the intercultural encounters and interactions. Scholars and theorists such as Stuart Hall (1992) had earlier called for the need for researchers to trouble, examine and theorise their (our) own political and cultural identities and account for personal investments and interests which influences their worldview and thus impact their works (or at least acknowledge the near impossible task of circumventing relational inequality when claiming to give a nuanced account in research contexts) (Brayton, 1997).

The need for a critical reflexive approach is particularly important in the study of subcultures and young people whom Sue Heat *et al.* (2009: 4) describes as "powerless, vulnerable and susceptible to being coerced into participating in research often conducted by much older people". Heat therefore suggests that researchers within the youth domain must endeavour to adopt a reflexive methodology that interrogates the power dynamics as well as the conceptual rifts and schemes used to carry out youth-oriented research (Heat, 2009). Moreover, Blackman and Kempson (2010) argue that contemporary scholars interrogating subcultures must use a self-reflexive turn as a means of interrogating how collective histories, social structures and personal biographies interrelate to create a set of distinctive subcultural experiences and subjective possibilities.

Being cognisant of one's positionality not only helps to highlight who is privileged and credited, it also helps to know who is marginalised and who is discredited (Denzin *et al.,* 2008: 50). Indeed, in recent times, and non-indigenous scholars (like myself) and white Europeans have generally been challenged and criticised over their tendency to represent and speak for subaltern and indigenous groups with degree of authority that suggests a complete understanding – a position Indigenous scholars believe often leads to uninformed interpretations and misrepresentations of the indigenous people (Davis, 2010). Maori scholar Linda Smith (2006), notes that the criticism of non-indigenous scholars is as a result of their rigid use of Western epistemology and methodology, which she describes as having emblems of imperialism and colonialism. She argues that non-indigenous scholars must learn to dismantle, deconstruct and

decolonise the traditional (Western) ways of knowing and doing science, since science is already both moral and political.

The debate around the representation of otherness has been particularly rife in the so-called settler regions and countries where the colonisers and the colonised Indigenous peoples (often termed the "natives") now inhabit the colonised land supposedly as "equal" citizens. In contemporary South Africa, where the racialised legacies of apartheid remain a looming shadow, there is a special attention and scrutiny on the authenticity, motives and audacity of certain groups of researchers (mostly whites and foreign internationals). Unlike in the parts of the world today where native researchers and scholars have emerged, and are directly involved in researching their own affairs (see Behar, 1996), the largely unchanged socio-economic status of indigenous communities and groups such as the Bushmen in Southern Africa means that they remain underrepresented in indigenous research generation, and their stories are told mainly by privileged (white[42]) intellectuals (Mboti, 2014: 473).

The debate especially around indigenous representation and otherness has sometimes been between a few black scholars[43] and their white counterparts, who are often viewed as the privileged other within research context. At the 2016 Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines (CEAD) conference in Cape Town, for instance, it was observed that a single black South African delegate objected (sometimes too disruptively) and criticised her white counterparts' audacity to research and represent "our kind". Oftentimes, she posed uneasy but valid questions challenging white scholars "missionaristic" endeavour in trying to save the black population from self-destruct via research.[44] The black female delegate forms part of a growing number of educated young blacks in post-apartheid South Africa who feel the need to "disrupt" the othering status quo in social research as well as the legacies

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[42] Although it is not only white researchers who undertake research into San issues, most San researchers are white South Africans, Americans, Canadian and Europeans.

[43] Note that since the fall of apartheid, numerous studies and statistics have shown that the South African academic space is still largely saturated with researchers from the white community, which constitutes just 9 percent of the country's entire population (see Madanhire, 2013). There are, however, ongoing efforts such as the "transformation agenda" aimed at restructuring this system in the long term. The RI project has since inception included multiracial, multilinguistic, multigendered, multinational and multidisciplinary teams (see Tomaselli, 2005). This different composition changes the nature of the encounter.

[44] These objections were raised in virtually every panel presentation on black South African issues presented by both white and some black South African scholars.

of colonial/apartheid policies and practices (such as the representation of Native Act of 1936), which ensured that the voice of non-whites was unheard, is being vehemently challenged.

As Tomaselli (2012) points out, it is important for scholars researching the indigenous other to trouble and problematise their own identities (cf. Tomaselli, 2018). Anna Rastas (2014) for instance describes her "colour trouble" and the complex process of negotiating her racial identity amongst her indigenous research participants (cf. Thomas 2016: 1).[45] However, as Nokuthula Hlabangane (2014) points out, many white social researchers and scholars continue to obscure and avoid dealing with the experiences of othering that emanate from the discursive practices of their research. She is critical of the works of the highly acclaimed anthropologists Wood and Jewkes (2001, 2006) for failing to declare themselves as social actors in the research on rural black South Africans. She notes that both were silent on the fact that they are white researchers from the United Kingdom and on how this could have influenced the lenses through which they interpreted data collected in a language and at a setting whose intricacies were not immediately apparent or accessible to them (Hlabangane, 2014: 174).

In order to meet some of these criticisms half way, as a result of my own identity and position as a non-indigenous non-South African attempting to articulate indigenous issues in South Africa via this research, it is important that I adopt a reflexive turn and autoethnographic methodology, which is in itself not without fault, bias, dilemma or contradiction (see Holt, 2003). In the next section, I utilise a self-reflexive personal narrative style to tell the story of my integration into the Platfontein San community. The story reveals some of my preconceived thoughts and experiences in coming to terms with the participants of my research.

Encountering the Bushmen who looked like me

I first encountered the San in July of 2013 as a 23-year-old, first year graduate student at the Centre for Communication, Media & Society (CCMS), University of KwaZulu-

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[45] Roie Thomas (2016: 1) also admitted in her study, that as a white Australian studying or working with indigenous peoples, "I felt some discomfiture about my position of advantage and relative privilege. Wherever I have been in the world a sense of imbalance is confirmed and my resolve galvanised".

Natal. I and a few of my Honours colleagues had joined Professor Keyan Tomaselli's multidisciplinary and multi-racial team of Kalahari researchers for their annual research visit to San communities around the Kalahari Desert (see Tomaselli, 2005, 2007, 2012).

Prior to my first encounter with the Bushmen in 2013, my sole reference was the film, *The Gods Must Be Crazy*,[46] which I had seen decades earlier as a child. Hence, I was ecstatic at the prospect of seeing what I imagined to be the actual skin-clad desert settler characters of the film, perhaps in a hunting and gathering mode. My fascination with these imagined authentic ancient people who represent humanity's so-called "lost world", is comparable to the desire of the individuals in search of biblical sites – those that Robert Dessaix (1998: 190) describe as "wishing to have authentic images of their roots projected onto their consciousness".

However, after our visit to the first San community, in the peri-urban[47] township of Platfontein outside the city Kimberley, I was initially disappointed (at not seeing a "traditional Bushman" as envisaged) and mortified upon encountering a people who were neither exotic nor so different from me. The Platfontein youth on the day were accessorised in trendy modern outfits, had mobile devices and were keen to exchange email and Facebook contacts with our team from Durban. I wrote down the following in my 2013 field notes:

> … the youth I saw today in Platfontein looked nothing like Bushmen. In fact, they looked just like me.[48] It feels selfish and stupid to have expected them to appear in loincloths and behave like the hunter-gathering Bushmen (I. Bodunrin, field note, August 16, 2013).

My experience as a rural-dwelling youth who had previously negotiated the hyper-urban spaces in Nigeria and South Africa promptly enabled me to interact with the Platfontein youths as peers. For instance, when I gained admission for my

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[46] *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is a Jamie Uys 1980 film which portrayed a Bushman as a primitive desert settler with no knowledge of the world beyond (Wikipedia). See also Tomaselli (2006).

[47] Peri-urban refers to the inner rural area surrounding the urban settlement. It is where urban and rural development processes meet, mix and interact at the edge of the city (Adell, 1999). Platfontein can thus be considered peri-urban.

[48] The Platfontein youth looked like me in terms of our dress, skin colour, youthfulness (youth orientation) and our ability to weave through rural and urban identities.

undergraduate degree in a Nigerian University in 2006, I had to adjust to living with classmates who had lived their entire lives in the Nigerian mega cities (such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Abuja, etc.). Confronted with derision and discrimination in the dorms and classrooms, as a result of some of my perceived rural attributes (such as accents and "distasteful" dress sense), I was compelled to find ways to adapt to my new urban environment by quickly adopting the popular urban cultures and styles of my new environment. This included using my pocket money to buy clothes and gadgets to prove that I "belonged". I went through a similar situation in January 2013 when I began my postgraduate degree in Durban, South Africa. However, in South Africa, I connected very quickly with the few classmates from similar backgrounds as me – from black South African townships.

Meanwhile, I remained curious and desperately needed answers to some questions regarding the identity of the young Platfontein Bushmen I had met and befriended. Are they real Bushmen? Are they redefining Bushmanness? Could they be deviating totally from their traditional identity? It was not until 2014, after I had made several trips and resided in the community that I had a better grasp of the youth-led social change sweeping across the two communities in the Platfontein township. Indeed, the Platfontein youth seemed more "modern" compared to youth from other Bushman communities in South Africa (such as the ≠Khomani Bushmen). After I realised the gap in studies of indigenous youth populations in the country, I wrote a MA focused on certain individual's use of global hip-hop as a platform to articulate awareness of the structure of injustice as well as penetrate the restrictive urban spaces.

Not content with my MA's limitation of focusing on a few youths in the Platfontein township, I began to look at the possibility of doing a doctoral study that would capture Platfontein Bushmen's complex past and present reality within the ongoing discourse of nation-building discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. Hence, I settled for the present study on identity, citizenship, indigeneity of the !Xun and Khwe youth at the present historic time. The idea is to make a scholarly sense of the different ways identity, citizenship and indigeneity are conceptualised, framed, challenged, asserted and negotiated in the present late postmodern era. The Platfontein youth experience can provide some valuable vignettes of evidence and a microcosm of what many South African indigenous communities may look like in the near future.

Establishing a dialogic, transactional and reciprocal field experience

> … locals can also play a role in encounters by "turning back the gaze" (Stronza, 2001: 272).

One of the challenges undoubtedly faced by many researchers is the problem of successfully penetrating the research field as well as being accepted, tolerated and absorbed, seeing that one is merely a temporary resident who is in the community for the sole purpose of researching them (taking from them for personal advancement). The general difficulty (especially of adult researchers) in obtaining cooperation from youth is well documented in youth research (Denton & Smith, 2001). This is why scholars such as Duysburgh and Slegers (2015: 200) advocate for a mutually beneficial field experience.

During my intermittent field trips to Platfontein between 2013 and 2016, I resided and lived with one of the young participants of my research, Andre Nthoho,[49] in the two-room Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) home[50] that he shares with his girlfriend and son. It is worth noting that, according to my informants, no researcher had previously lived in this community while carrying out research. My long-term presence was thus a first. Also, of the over 10 Honours students that visited the Platfontein community, only a few of us returned in subsequent years to carry on subsequent research. These acts were undoubtedly noted by the Platfontein residents who often expressed that "others just come and go but you have stayed. You have lived with us, nobody has done this before". What do "staying" and "living with us" mean? Did I belong in the same way that Bushmen want to belong to contemporary South Africa? These questions haunt the methodology of this study.

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[49] This study incorporates the real names of informants instead of employing pseudonyms when referencing. Many of the participants requested that their names be used, and that there be no masking of their involvement in the research process.

[50] The building of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing units was initiated by the African National Congress (ANC) government of Nelson Mandela in 1994. It aims to provide housing to the previously disadvantaged and to address the severe housing backlog that has developed in South Africa. In spite of the good intentions, there has been profound criticism regarding the inferior building standards and quality of these housing units (see Moolla *et al.* 2011). In the Platfontein township, there are over 1,000 two-room RDP pattern houses with external pit-style lavatories and a single tap in each yard. The housing units seem inadequate for many families, as there are instances where families of more than ten live in a three-roomed apartment (Dicks, 2011).

Having previously established a personal working relationship with the youth from my earlier visit in 2013, I was well positioned to gain an inside perspective during my official fieldwork in 2014. Similarly, the fact that the CCMS team had been carrying out research in Platfontein also helps to gain wider acceptability within the general community.[51] As discussed in my previous study on Platfontein, a transactional process of research takes place between me (the researcher) and my host community (the researched). This is as a result of my being the first ever Nigerian encountered by the Platfontein Bushmen outside the television set, following the popularity of the Nigerian mediatised culture via Nollywood (see Bodunrin, 2014).

There are some possible reasons why researchers do not reside in Platfontein when carrying out "ethnographic" research. The first reason may be linked to the general perception that Platfontein and most Bushmen communities are dangerous spaces (see Robbins, 2004; Mboti, 2017). Indeed, I was told of numerous incidents: assaults and even murders that have randomly occurred in the township mostly by individuals under the influence of alcohol and illicit drugs. In fact, my colleague, Dr Shanade Barnabas was previously attacked at knife point in 2012 (see Barnabas, 2014). Hence, the fear of being harassed by often-intoxicated locals may understandably dissuade any potential researcher from residing in the community. Living among an economically poor population makes the researcher – a "rich" outsider – an easy target. In my case, I trusted my host, Andre, and other participants who became my chaperons in the township, to steer me away from danger. In a few cases, I understood that my hosts were carrying precautionary weapons – such as knives – to protect me – just in case. Potential attack or danger during my stay in the community was a constant possibility, just as it is a constant worry for the residents themselves and as it would be a constant worry for any resident of a poor neighbourhood. Fearing violent crime in Platfontein is not different to fearing violent crime in Johannesburg (where I am based). Hence, there is no need for an exoticising gaze at Platfontein.

The second reason Platfontein is avoided as a place to stay is similarly connected to its poor and unhealthy living conditions as well as lack of basic amenities. Barnabas

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[51] As earlier indicated, initially my access to the !Xun and Khwe population was facilitated by Keyan Tomaselli and his Rethinking Indigeneity research team (such as Barnabas, 2009, Dicks, 2011, Hart 2011; Dockney, 2011) who had developed a long-term research relationship with the community.

(2009: 95) describes Platfontein as a "desolate stretch of land … with no electricity, no running water, and no sign of city life". The tiny RDP housing units with their external pit-style lavatories have been dis-used and unmaintained. Hence, many urban-dwelling, well-funded researchers might find these conditions appalling, too indecent and/or unhealthy for survival. Most researchers therefore reside in nearby lodges and hotels in the city of Kimberley (about 18 kilometres from Platfontein), driving to the township to conduct their research. I also initially stayed in Kimberley for the first few days of my fieldwork until a few of my participants advised me to consider relocating to Platfontein. This followed my initial struggles of commuting from the city to the township. This followed my initial struggles of commuting from Kimberley to the township. As earlier mentioned, there is no public means of transportation between Platfontein and Kimberley. The few private vehicle owners charge high fees to drive people to and from Kimberley. Hence, staying in Platfontein was also part of a practical, logistical decision, not just an emotional one.

The third reason other researchers have not done this might be connected to the fear of "going native". Bronisław Malinowski (1922) used the term *going native* to explain that scientists in a foreign milieu should emphasise their roles as "participants" rather than "observers" to enhance their study of native peoples and cultures (Malinowski, 1922: 290). This position has however been criticised by numerous scholars, some of whom suggest that ethnographers risk losing their objectivity when they become too involved in the community under study. This sentiment is captured well by Stanley and Wise (1993: 221) who assert that:

> to be "committed", to be inside the group and work with it, results in the wholesale adoption of an uncritical, unquestioning position of approval in relation to that group and its actions; thus, the standard of the research becomes questioned, its validity threatened.

Living with my participants, meanwhile, afforded me the opportunity to critically reflect on intercultural encounters and other field experiences. I enjoyed a unique relationship with my Platfontein hosts mainly because of the combination of my identity as "Nigerian" and as a "youth". I quickly became an object of scrutiny and was subjected to a "reverse gaze" from my research community who were supposedly meant to be

the "subjects" of my own researcher's gaze. My Nigerian-ness in this sense gave me a special type of privilege as I became idolised,[52] and attracted many youths and participants to the study. Although I was well aware of my country's reputation as the Africa's entertainment colossus,[53] I never imagined Nollywood and the Nigerian culture would travel to such an isolated rural indigenous community in the Northern Cape Province.

As the researcher, I sometimes became the researched and as the supposed "observer", I simultaneously assumed the position of the "observed". I was literally interviewed and asked to interpret numerous clichés used in Nigerian films, such as *Chineke* (meaning God), *eewoo!* (an expression of surprise or disbelief) and many colloquialisms used in the films. I was amazed to find youths who speak accented Nigerian pidgin English. Some skip school and stay home watching Nigerian films. I wrote the following field note out of sheer amazement about the popularity of the films popularly known as Nollywood:

> The people here love Nollywood. They mimicked the Nigerian film actors and actresses impressively. They were very excited to finally meet a Nigerian in real life (outside their TV sets). I am amazed by the power of films; who will believe Nigerian culture and tradition is being beamed to and cherished by a local Bushman community, thousands of miles away from where they were made (I. Bodunrin, field note, June 2014).

Pirated copies of the Nigerian films are often on sale on CDs from vendors around the township, sold for as little as R10 (less than USD$1). The sales of these films increase around month end when social welfare grants (the source of the income for majority) are paid. According to a young participant, Skambo, the popularity of the Nigerian films in the township is as a result of the relatable settings, themes and stories in the films. The films are also seen as a vital acculturation tool and a window into African popular culture and lifestyles which many of the Platfontein Bushmen had not encountered due to their war-torn past (Interview, June 2014). Another older interviewee, Moshe, gives an overview of the general sentiments towards the Nigerian film in the township:

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[52] This included massive attention from young females in Platfontein who thronged my place of abode, excited to be my girlfriends, have babies for me and visit Nigeria (see Bodunrin, 2014).

[53] The Nigerian entertainment sector is regarded as the most dominant in Africa (see, www.un.org).

Nigerians are our brothers from another mother. Our people can relate with the films more than any other films. There are huge lessons we learn from the films, culturally, socially and even morally. We tend to learn and understand Nigerian stories very quickly especially because of the way they are communicated to us at our levels (Moshe, interview, June 2014).

Initially, I may have been thought of as a Nigerian prince, who visited the township with untold riches and fortunes (a common narrative in the Nigeria films). I was seen by some young persons as the all-knowing Nigerian who would enable big breaks from the problematic life of Platfontein. However, after days and weeks of living together, the people learnt and understood some of the reality about the Nigerian socio-economic landscape. They also realised how similar we were in terms of socio-cultural and economic upbringing. When asked of their perceptions of Nigeria and my Nigerian identity, the following were the responses during a focus group discussion session:

Moss: From the [Nigerian] films, we see that Nigerians are big people who are rich and who drive big cars. When it comes to music industry, they can come out with one song and get famous and rich with just that song. Since I am met you, I have liked Nigeria more. But I see you are like a gentleman. Not a bad guy, not shy to speak his mind. You are a guy who says his mind about things.

Andre: The first time I heard about Nigeria was during 2010 FIFA World Cup [hosted by South Africa]. Then later, I began watching Nigerian films and the Nigerian channels on DStv [subscription TV] at my Mum's place in 2013 when my Mum got DStv. I like the way they talk and the way they act in the films.

Bwayne: I like Nigeria from watching the films. I saw those small boys [referring to Nigeria's midget film stars Chinedu Ikedieze and Osita Iheme] and I liked them, they were very funny. I didn't even know they were Nigerian at the time. I liked the village setting of the film and thought waoh! this people live like us. I was puzzled when I saw another film with big houses and cities and people driving fancy cars. Then I like them even more.

> **Jason:** I first heard about Nigeria in 2010, when I first saw Nigerian movies. I saw those small boys, they were very funny, and I thought all Nigerians are very funny and naughty like them [laughs] (Focus group, June 2014).

No doubt, the prior knowledge about my national identity via the Nigerian films allowed my participants and me to freely express ourselves, communicating our experiences with one another. They seemed to appreciate the fact that a "Nigerian" researcher is interested in their lives and living their reality. I participated actively in the night life, drinking *tombo* (the local traditional beer), teaching them how to dance the Nigerian way, and being taught some local dance moves and lingo. I was also taught the basics of !Xûntali and Khwedam (the local dialects), while in turn I provided meanings of some of the Nigerian words and lingo they had learnt from the films. Virtually every process in the field was reciprocal. Hence, I conclude that the reputation of my nationality facilitated and influenced my research encounter with my Indigenous participants. This enabled me to easily transition from the realm of an outsider to an insider, and to gain the trust and wide acceptability amongst my host community.[54]

I also believe that my "youthfulness" was crucial to my development of a thriving relationship (with my host community) within the short space of time. As a young researcher researching youth affairs, I did not need to break down intergenerational barriers, and I naturally pushed for a more democratic participatory research approach. This method allowed me to interact and listen to them as peers and allow their voices (which have been missing in popular literatures on Bushmen) to come through in my research.

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[54] My ancestry cannot be directly traced to any indigenous group in Nigeria and in my West African sub-region. It is important to note that Indigeneity is highly contentious in Africa and understood in ways that differ from and conflict with internationalist understandings. Indigeneity emerged in Africa as a response to the policies adopted by independent post-colonial African states. Hence, Indigenous status is claimed by minority groups (such as Boers – a white settler group), who consider themselves (or are considered by others) as being at the margins and who fight for recognition, resources, and rights within the postcolonial African states. Hence, many African states are opposed the domestic application of the concept, stating that "all Africans are indigenous". The idea that certain groups deserve preferential privileges and entitlement (as enshrined in the global indigeneity discourse) is believed to negate the nation-building process that is ongoing in many postcolonial African states (Pelican, 2009; Ndahinda, 2011). The San are one of the few groups with undisputed "Indigenous" status in the continent (Merlan, 2009: 309).

When I first encountered my would-be participants in 2013, at age 23, I realised I was of the same age bracket as them. This similarity in age and shared experiences as young people no doubt influenced my research. More specifically, it influenced our interaction and use of less formal, youth-centric hip-hop terms such as *shit*, *nigga*, *homie* in our daily interactions. Not only would it be awkward if used by an older and perhaps white researcher, terms or phrases such as *nigga* may be considered derogatory if used by someone with a different identity from me. Our use of these terms served to break hegemony and other privileges I may have possessed as a researcher and facilitator of interviews, re-positioning me to the same level as the participants. As Tamerra Griffin (2015) notes, such phrases particularly carry a deep coded meaning amongst African Americans and people of colour worldwide. Its usage within my research context thus helped to connect better with my research participants and hosts.

However, it is important to note that despite this level of relationship and having related with my receptive research participants on a plane of good faith, certain forms of colonisation may still exist in the research process. In other words, this level of relationship does not completely obliterate the power that I held by virtue of being the more advantaged outsider in the encounter (I could leave at any time, while they could not) and the one who represents the other. In fact, my superior use of English[55] to conduct research with a group with little knowledge and use of the language, tended to confer some authority on me. Donnalyn Pompper (2010: 5) captures this perception of the researcher's privilege in a research encounter: "the researcher has control and authority over the entire academic discourse, for s/he sets the agenda, defines the research problem, identifies the questions to be answered, and decides whose voice can be heard".

In a similar vein, Field and Fox (2007) criticise the so-called ethnographic rapport and claims of trust and friendship between researchers and research subjects. They have tagged such relationships as "disingenuous" because of the ulterior motive of an academic career of the researcher. The fact that I get to construct this narrative, determine research parameters and directly benefit in terms of my academic pursuit

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[55] As stated elsewhere, a very few youths with higher socio-economic economic back ground, and access to new media and digital technology, speak fluent English language as their third language in Platfontein (see Bodunrin, 2016). These individuals served as interpreters to others.

and degree awards, thus renders the relationship asymmetrical and unbalanced. Pranee Liamputtong (2007: 210) questions the non-indigenous researcher's presence in indigenous spaces, arguing that it constitutes colonialist and disenfranchising intrusions: "morally speaking, they [non-indigenous researchers] are like pimps: coming into the field to take, then returning to the campus, institution or suburb where they write up the data, publish and build careers – on the backs of those they took data from". Also, these kinds of relationships with one's research community create a layer of complexity when taking a distant position. Hence conducting ethnography within these contexts requires self-awareness – for the researcher to consciously distinguish between becoming an insider and being won by the cause (see Chatham-Carpenter, 2010).

The question therefore remains as to how one party knows if it has served the other equitably well. Is it (im)possible for a researcher to meet the researched on common ground, with complete friendship, honesty and trust? These are some of the questions one must confront when negotiating differences in ethnography. As Judith Stacey (1988) cogently argues, the greater appearance of respect, for and equality with research subject is crucial to limiting dangerous forms of exploitation in ethnographic research. In similar vein, I argue that a mutual and dialogical relationship, such as the one that developed with my hosts, remains vital in achieving reciprocity in the field. In situations where the researcher significantly differs from the researched subject, mutuality must be negotiated.

A truly reciprocal ethnography (during the field process), according to Duysburgh and Slegers (2015), must: (1) make participation fun for informants, (2) give informants a voice, (3) allow informants to exhibit their skills or strengths, (4) offer practical help and, (5) provide self-knowledge and confidence in a sustained relationship. I want to believe my research has largely achieved all the above listed and is indeed part and parcel of the Rethinking Indigeneity project's *modus operandi*. In spite of the possible power-play that may exist, I have no doubt that this approach betters most research done from "afar", with only very limited or no time spent with the locals establishing trust necessary for any meaningful interchange to occur. My identity as a young Nigerian not only enabled me to easily immerse myself in the culture of my host community, it also helped me to develop a deeper level of friendship and bond which

one-off researchers and others who simply "hang out" may struggle to achieve within the same community.

Data collection issues

A general problem associated with informal ethnography is the spontaneity of events, which are not easily captured or recorded at the actual happening of events. This is because the researcher cannot simply disrupt events by taking notes or recording events or conversations openly. Hence, like most ethnographers, I sometimes had to write and reflect on events and conversations hours after they had occurred. This requires the ability to remember things clearly and accurately. This then raises the obvious issue or problem of accuracy, memory and interpretation, as well as questions regarding the reliability and validity of the research. Other issues encountered during the data collection process are categorised and briefly discussed below.

Representativeness: selecting participants

Although I had no clear goal or objective when I first ventured into Platfontein in 2013, I nevertheless knew I had interest in researching their indigenous youth life in late modernity. One issue with which I struggled, however, was the problem of representativeness. How does one know if the selected sample or the age-range of participating youth indeed represent the youth population of Platfontein? It is very unlikely that one considers the study as being representative of the entire Platfontein youth. The fact that the very concept of youth is loosely defined in terms of age makes it even more difficult and complicated.

This does not necessarily mean that those young people excluded from the study on account of their age cannot be considered youth in the generic sense of the word. However, the 25 youths between the ages of 18 and 24 who participated in the study can no doubt be categorised as youth based on the national and international definition of the concept.

The use of incentives

It is a common practice in youth research to offer some form of material benefit to young people in return for their participation in research. This strategy includes the exchange of cash, vouchers, entry into a prize draw, or even credits in the context of

university students (see Wierda-Boer & Ronka, 2004). While in some regard this as a fair and appropriate way to express gratitude to participants, many of whom are disadvantaged,[56,] some critics consider this inappropriate bribery and an unethical and an unscrupulous practice to encourage participation (Heat *et al.,* 2009).

In the course of this research and fieldwork in Platfontein, I often visited with gifts for my research assistant and host who helped in encouraging participants to participate in the study. Since I resided in his home, I provided food for him and his wife and sons in the course of my stay in their home and community. In 2014, I gifted him with a T-shirt which had the word "Nigeria" written on it. Andre is often spotted wearing the shirt around the neighbourhood perhaps to show his affiliation with the Nigeria, since the Nigerian culture had become popular in the township. In September 2015, I bought even more Nigerian-made clothes for his family which I sent to him alongside an old mobile phone of mine.

While one might wish to resist this culture of "something for something" culture in research practice, Heat (2009:37) notes that it is the reality within which youth researchers increasingly have to operate. Indeed, numerous authors have noted how they struggled to show material appreciation towards those that have assisted them in their research (McDowell, 2001; Powell, 2014). Moreover, the culture of "something for nothing" is particularly frowned on in many African cultural settings where in the spirit of *ubuntu,*[57] visitors or guests are expected to show appreciation to their hospitable hosts (Ebrahim, 2017).

As a result of the abject poverty in many Bushman communities around Southern Africa, begging is a survival skill for many who have scarce resources in terms of financial and human capital, educational qualifications or infrastructure (Ashley & Roe 2002; Mbaiwa 2003). Lauren Dyll-Myklebust (2011: 4) notes that Bushmen have as a result been commoditising their interactions with researchers and tourists as a means of survival. She terms this "organised begging". According to her, many within these communities hold the belief that the researcher is in their community have come to obtain commodifiable data or information, which must be sold (Dyll-Myklebust, 2011).

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[56] Linda McDowell (2001: 90) for example argues that it is importance to the recompense individuals who are prepared to answer intrusive questions from social scientists.

[57] Ubuntu is a well-theorised Southern African ethical concept that suggest humanness and harmony (Ebrahim, 2017).

However, as earlier discussed, I enjoyed a relatively smooth and cordial relationship with my Platfontein host and this limited the potential for exploitation. Perhaps, it is important to take Tomaselli's advice: while it is important to show appreciation, one must do it without being exploited (Heat *et al.,* 2009).

Insider/outsider dilemmas: Andre and I

Andre Nthoho, who became my research assistant, translator and interpreter, was also my host during the duration of my stay in Platfontein and a participant in the research. He had been nicknamed "Nigeria" for his ability to speak the popular Nigerian accented "pidgin English" learnt via watching Nigerian movies (Nollywood). Andre who is popular and liked among both the !Xun and Khwe communities is also one of the few young people who speak both the !Xûntali and Khwe languages. His bilingual ability in a way helped to relate with participants in the two communities.

Born in 1991 (on the actual year and day the Platfontein Bushmen were flown into South Africa), Andre claims he dropped out in Grade 9 due to health challenges. In 2008 he joined a group of five other boys in the community to form the community's first hip-hop group, the DRAP JJ Stars. In 2013, he also pioneered a new group of younger hip-hop heads known as the Blood Eye Gang, a name derived from the red-eye effect of smoking marijuana. Andre, like many young people, is involved in the use of illicit drugs (such as marijuana, *nyaope,* etc.) as a means of escape from the anxiety and the socioeconomic struggle of their daily lives. Many young people (some as young as seven years) converge on Andre's place in the mornings and evenings to talk about their futures. When I first moved into the Platfontein township in June 2014, Andre offered me a free space in his two-room Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) house which he shared with his girlfriend and son of two years. Like many, he and his girlfriend had no job[58] but depended solely the meagre monthly child welfare grants received from the government. "I survive on this street. I walk around every day looking for money to help my family," Andre told me in June 2014. Indeed, he spends most of his day wandering around the communities doing anything to earn, from selling of marijuana, giving haircuts and running errands. Andre's story

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[58] When I returned to the community in August 2016, Andre had a job as a security guard in a shop in the city and his wife worked intermittently with the local cleaning services.

is typical of most Platfontein youth, many of whom drop out of high school, become parents as teenagers and must shoulder enormous responsibilities. Although government primary and secondary education is free in Platfontein, nevertheless, many like Andre drop out of school before the completion of their matric year. The fact that many who have completed matric are sitting at home without jobs seems to discourage many others from pursuing education (Andre, interview, June 2014).

Despite his many economic challenges and financial needs, Andre turned down the opportunity to be employed and earn money as my research assistant and interpreter. He also didn't charge me for accommodation. Instead he told me, "We are brothers, so I will assist you. Just don't forget me in the future" (Interview, June 2014). Indeed, having established a friendship for a little over four years, we had become like brothers. Twice when I offered him R100, he gave half to his fellow Platfontein "street survivalists".[59] In another instance, some time in 2015, when we went to the store together to buy groceries for his family and me, I observed him giving away more than half of his supplies to people on the streets of Platfontein before we even got home. This generosity does contradict to some extent the wariness of Dyll-Myklebust (2011) that the Bushmen[60] typically look to commoditise their image and make money off strangers. Andre is the complete opposite of the amoral hustler. The researcher's fear of "exploitation" is, in Andre's case, completely unfounded.

Andre's gestures may be linked to Nicolas Peterson's (1997: 171) assertion that Indigenous populations hold generosity as the highest secular value. Citing Les Hiatt's (1962; 1965; 1967) long-term research among the Aboriginal population in Australia, Peterson observed that this altruistic virtue is widespread particularly among hunting and gathering communities who believe that sharing with others is the main measure of a man's goodness. He links this ethic of generosity to the long-term traditional practice where greed is condemned, and magnanimity extolled (Peterson, 1997). Indeed, the generosity and *ubuntu* of my participants – despite, or because of, their poverty – is a recurring theme in my study.

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[59] By street survivalists I mean individuals who like my host, Andre, wander around the Platfontein township and depend on others for daily survival

[60] Dyll-Myklebust (2011) referred to the more traditionalist ≠Khomani, a different group 600 km west of Platfontein.

The Platfontein street contains many "Andres" – individuals who just wander around, assured that somehow, they will earn a few bucks enough to take care of themselves, their families and their daily needs. It is not uncommon to see people share things like cigarettes, drinks, biscuits and so on the Platfontein street. Hence, after four years of visiting and sometimes residing in the community, my identity soon transformed from that of a researcher to that of Andre's friend and trustworthy friend of the community. In other words, my association with him positioned me as someone trustworthy to be allowed into personal spaces and homes. I was positioned to gain insider perspectives and multilevel understandings of local realities as I participated in a variety of events in Platfontein, including church meetings, local beer drinking, funerals, rap sessions and so on.

However, the mutual and supposed friendly relationship may be interpreted in varying and complicated ways. Did he accommodate me merely in an attempt at coping socially? Perhaps since he was jobless, working and interacting with me during our research activities in the township gave him a sense of worth, to do something useful and enabling him to kill time and be involved in a sort of job, learn something in the process that may add something significant to his own identity. He might thus be affirmed as an individual. Indeed, whenever we are up and around the community, I noticed a sense of pride even when he introduces me to a would-be participant as a Nigerian. He wore the shirt with the inscription "Nigeria" wherever we went within the township. Indeed, he was the link between me and the township. In return, I provided daily meals for the family during my stay. We also advised one another on areas of life and social relationships. To my mind, Andre did not want money or fame in associating with me. Rather, he seemed to be merely craving unique human contact with this new arrival in town. This craving is, of course, is one which we all have.

No doubt, he engineered my position within the community, and my relationship with him and other participants helped me to gain an insider perspective. As an insider, I was able to participate in a variety of local activities, and participation enabled me to experience both being an insider and an outsider simultaneously. This relationship is akin to what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe as "native ethnography", characterised by fellow third- and fourth-world researchers and ethnographers who share a history of colonialism or subjugation with their subjects.

As a result of this type of relationship (with my host and participants), "otherness" became less visible. In an attempt to deliver me from the realm of an outsider, Andre began teaching me some Khwedam and !Xûntali, such as greetings and basic courtesy that ultimately caused the people to be friendlier than usual. As in many African cultures, it is very important to greet the older people with courtesy and utmost respect. So, I was taught to say things like, "Hello, ma. Hello, sir. How are you? Please; come; thank you," and so on, in the dialect. I was never made to feel that I did not belong there. In fact, many seem to appreciate my presence as a Nigerian and the first ever researcher to reside in the community.

However, this does create a layer of complexity when taking a distant position. Although I tried to be non-partisan and distinguish between the pressure to comply and being won over by the cause, it is very difficult not to be sympathetic to the plight of the locals. Hence conducting ethnography within such context requires self-awareness of the researcher to distinguish between becoming an insider and being won by the cause.

Language barrier and use of a translator

The present research was somewhat hampered by my inability to speak Khwedam, !Xûntali or Afrikaans, as not many youth in Platfontein spoke and understood English adequately enough to converse freely. Hence, I had to largely rely on Andre as a translator.

As mentioned earlier, Andre served as both my research assistant and translator. He understood my research and interests and was able to communicate them to participating youths. However, As Liamputtong (2007: 194) contends in his research, with the aid of an interpreter or translator, it would be impossible to tell the extent to which certain nuances of meaning are lost in translation, or whether or not there were elements of fear and/or coercion in the answers given. I particularly observed, however, that the interviews conducted in Khwedam, !Xûntali and Afrikaans were more effective than the ones in English.[61] While some understood my questions asked in

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[61] English is spoken by only a few youths as a third language in Platfontein. In Bodunrin (2016), I revealed how a few "middle class" families with access to new media technology are the ones able to learn English via these technologies.

English, they often chose to respond to the questions in the local dialects (Khwedam and !Xûntali).

Meanwhile, I was taught the basics of the language. As soon as residents realised I could greet them in their own language, they became more relaxed and friendly with me and the interpreter. This facilitated almost seamless access to the community, as well as better data collection.

Ethical, legal, professional, and moral issues

One of the biggest problems faced when engaging in social research is being ethical, so that one can live with the consequences of one's actions as the researcher (Bernard, 2006: 25–26). This is in fact more innate than learned. In other words, ethics is not a matter of smoothly following the rules but of the exhilaration of self-transcendence, as well as struggle with ambivalence and conflict. As human beings by nature, we are already subject to ethics because ethical considerations are intrinsic to the human condition (Lambek, 2010: 12).

Ethics are extremely important in research practice, of course, and there need to be specifically sensitive ethical approaches when working with children and young people (Alderson & Morrow 2004). Hence, all research conducted with children and young people must adhere to the highest ethical standards, be humanising, sensitive and respectful. Additionally, children and young people must be protected and have exactly the same discretion as adult participants to refuse to answer certain questions or to withdraw from the project as they see fit (Skelton, 2008: 23).

During my fieldwork, I complied with the recommendations of both the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Johannesburg.[62] An informed consent form was issued directly to participants of the study at the start of the study. I am unaware of any damage my presence may have caused the township's residents, although this is not to say none occurred. Except for an incident in which a young female "fan" in the community was upset because I declined to accept her as my girlfriend, I have no recollection of any confrontation or altercation with anyone. The incident with "girlfriend", however, is instructive of the thin line – and the minefield – between

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[62] I conducted my Masters research in Platfontein as a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal while the present Doctoral thesis is being conducted at the University of Johannesburg.

research and life. What happens if one of your research hosts falls in love with you? Can feelings be prevented? How? Would it have been more authentic to say "yes" or "no" to the girl? Was her interest in me part of the research? Or should it be ignored as falling outside the scope of my study?

Having spent long and sustained periods with the residents of the Platfontein township, even prior to my research and fieldwork, they were well aware of my presence as a researcher, albeit a foreign Nigerian researcher – and knew of my general research interest in the youth population. During informal interviewer/conversations with "non-key informants", consent was obtained verbally.

The next chapter extensively explores how Platfontein youth negotiate its indigeneity, "San-ness" or "Bushman-ness" in the face of hyper-urban influences. What does indigeneity mean within the context of this group and young generation in Platfontein?

Chapter 3 – Global Indigenous Discourse and the Shifting Meanings and Expressions of Indigeneity among Platfontein Youth

Introduction

Indigeneity is discussed in this chapter in the light of the study participants' Indigenous identification or positioning as "First Peoples" and the supposed original occupiers of the South(ern) African territory. The analysis in this chapter addresses important questions such as: how do Platfontein youth currently construct indigeneity in relation to the past? What narratives of history are useful to them? What forms of representation do they employ to speak for themselves as indigenous people? The Platfontein youth's contemporary indigeneity is examined in relation to the ongoing global discourse on contemporary indigeneity.

On 13 September 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The obligations embodied in the Declaration describe a set of indigenous rights that can be aspired to, claimed, held, exercised or enforced by indigenous peoples either at the domestic law of the nation state or at the international law. Although it is not legally enforceable, the denouement of the declaration reflects the commitment of the 144 signatory states to provide effective legal and political recognition as well as protection and support to local indigenous population (see UN, 2007).

However, despite being signatories to the 2007 agreement, South Africa and most African countries continue to disregard indigenous claims and status of groups in the domains, arguing that such recognition pose threats to nation-building and the exclusive national sovereignty of the state (Berger, 2014). Ironically, many of the largely heterogenous African nation-states promote ethnic differentiation and cultural distinctiveness as strategies to develop cultural tourism and boost their national economies. The San (popularly known as Bushmen) are one of the Indigenous groups in the Southern Africa sub-region who despite been legally unrecognised, are positioned in sociopolitical discourses and in the tourism sector as a distinct primitive

tribal group. This essentialist positioning of the San greatly impacts the groups' social evolution and participation in contemporary national and regional sociopolitical affairs. The systematic omission contemporary cultural aspects of San people (such as modern acculturation and present-day realities) further contributes to the pristine idealisation of the group.

As discussed in chapter two, the San youth who seem to have suffered the most as a result of pristine idealisation and epistemic positioning, are engaging in varieties of ways to re-articulate themselves and rethink their indigeneity vis-à-vis their contemporary exposure. Hence, the current chapter discusses the shifting meanings and expressions of indigeneity/Bushman-ness among present-day !Xun and Khwe youth of Platfontein The chapter also examines how Platfontein youth's indigeneity intersects with global discourses on indigeneity.

One foundational issue that deeply concerns indigenous thinkers globally, is the identification and definition of indigeneity. The conceptual question of indigeneity as Paul Connolly (2009: 3) notes, "is important because being formally identified as indigenous (at international and domestic law) serves as an intellectual and practical gateway by which a claimant people may be either admitted or denied access to an indigenous rights regime". Hence, this chapter begins by chronologically unpacking the many definitions and meanings of the concept of indigeneity from its internationalist conception to its local inflections.

Complex definitions and the global indigenous discourse

> "… being indigenous to a place is not in itself what makes a people indigenous" (Kuper, 2003: 389).

Above statement was made by a member of a delegation of right wing Boers attempted to gate-crash a United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Population's meeting in Geneva in 1995, insisting that they must be recognised as an indigenous group. Adam Kuper's (1995) post-modernist discussions of the issue forms part of the highly contested "Kalahari debate", which on its own shows the controversial nature and complexity of indigeneity in post-modernity.

Indigeneity has been defined as a discourse of resistance and transformation, distinguished from simple identity politics of ethnicity by its neo-colonial context and focus on distinct extant political rights (O'Sullivan, 2014). It is seen both as a legal framework (backed by international law) and a political strategy used by certain ethnic groups (who claim "indigeneity") to craft their own terms of belonging to the nation-state as First Peoples or original occupants. Indigeneity thus acts not just as a tool of emancipation and resistance, but also as a tool of governance (*ibid*). The pride of "originality" and authenticity currently associated with "indigenous" status and identity contrasts with the previously implied inferior meanings attached to this categorisation during the colonial era. Felix Ndahinda (2011) observes that the term "indigenous" was originally coined by the colonialists in the various parts of the world to locally distinguish between "natives[63]" and other latter immigrants within the colonies (usually at a smaller scale). However, in the last few decades, the term and indigeneity discourse has forced itself onto social, political, and academic agendas globally. The subsequent internationalisation[64] of the concept brought about a range of open, yet restricted meanings and definitional practices. In other words, the reconfiguration of indigeneity in the global context allowed the concept to accrue a level certain composite and implicitly moral character, as an intellectual term and in popular usage.

The concept nowadays, as Noel Castree (2004: 153) notes, has become a highly marketable commodity that is transnationally circulated, fluid and portmanteau category that establishes commonality among different peoples with distinct histories and geographies. Given the significant benefits that accrue to indigenous claimant groups at national and international level (these include entitlement to land, territory and resources as well as access to favourable grants from the world bank), the challenge remains one of providing an internationally and domestically applicable standard identification or definition within a legal framework for groups who identify or

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[63] By natives I meant the original inhabitants of a particular place or region. The term "indigenous" was used by the European colonialist to refer to refer to the inhabitants of their conquered territories (Ndahinda, 2011: 24).

[64] Internationalisation of the concept occurred when it was legally used to define an international category of people with collective entitlements by supranational organisations such as the United Nations, International Labour Organisation and the World Bank) (Niezen, 2003; Merlan, 2009; Pelican & Maruyama, 2015).

should identify as Indigenous peoples[65] (Li, 2000; Povinelli, 2002; Cattelino, 2008; Kauanui, 2008; Barker, 2011).

The first step towards setting indigeneity as an internationally applicable identification criterion for Indigenous peoples began in the early 1970s, with the establishment of a United Nations Special Rapporteur on discrimination against indigenous population. While the United Nations (UN) at the time did not specifically define "Indigenous Peoples", it nevertheless suggested certain "indigenous rights", which are potentially claimable by self-defined Indigenous peoples. In this way, self-definition reshaped the contours of the category within the parameters of established ideas of what it means to be indigenous (Tamarkin & Giraudo, 2014: 546).

The next noteworthy event regarding indigeneity was in 1982, when the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (UNWGIP) was established. The UNWGIP embarked on significant awareness campaigns which led to the participation of more "indigenous" groups across the globe, many which had considerably similar histories of colonisation as well as those which perceived themselves as disadvantaged and historically subjected to inhumane, unequal or exclusionary treatment (see Cobo, 1987). Ethnic groups from the different parts of the world, who presented themselves as being on the margins of society began mobilising themselves by identifying with the global indigenous movement at the time (Ndahinda, 2011).

The ever-growing demands of groups identifying with the indigenous movement, coupled with international organisations' sympathy for Indigenous groups' grievances soon culminated in the establishment of another forum known as the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in the year 2000 (UNDOC.E/RES/2000/22). The UNPFII largely devoted its works to the question of definition of "indigenous persons" which led to controversies and debates over who exactly may be termed "indigenous" (IPACC, 2007; Pelican & Maruyama, 2015). Indigenous persons were defined as:

> existing descendants of the people who inhabited the present territory of
> a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture

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[65] To counter absurd claims for indigenous status, there have been calls for use of blood quantum to determine indigeneity especially in cases where there are direct benefits for being a native or indigenous (see Daes, 1996).

or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, by conquest, settlement or other means, reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant (Shaw, 2002: 56).

Above definition easily applies to the settler states and regions where European colonialism ensured the brutal displacement of prior inhabitants. Despite intercultural relationships and marriages that may have occurred in these places, Indigenous people remain clearly defined in relation to other latter immigrants or settlers in these countries. This definition is similar to Dunbar-Ortiz's (1984) definition of Indigenous peoples as "those who descended from a country's aboriginal population and, who today are completely or partly deprived of the right to their own territories and its riches" (Ortiz, 1984: 82). These definitions are still largely in use today by many indigenous activists to claim their right within individual national contexts.

In 1986, the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities through Martinez Cobo (1986: 5, par. 379) came up with a report in which Indigenous peoples, communities and nations were defined as:

those who have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and precolonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves as distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories . . . and are determined to preserve and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples.

Cobo's (1986) definition has been widely referenced by many contemporary indigenous scholars (see Hitchcock, 2001; Altamirano-Jimenez, 2013). The definition was initially criticised for its restrictiveness and limitation in excluding certain groups and individuals who may self-identify as indigenous. Hence, Cobo updated it by adding

in paragraph 381[66] that indigenous persons may include "any individual who identifies herself or himself as indigenous and who has been accepted by the group or the community as one of its members". The importance of self-identification has been stressed in several international legal instruments regarding Indigenous Peoples and has thus been used by indigenous people themselves who fear that formal definition of the term would be used by states to exclude them (Simpson, 1997:22-23). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Article 1 (2) of its Convention 169 for instance highlights self-identification as a fundamental criterion for determining groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply. Here indigenous persons are defined in the document as:

> tribal peoples whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations, and to peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabit the country at the time of conquest or colonisation.[67]

A highly influential World Bank document of 1991[68] listed specific criteria by which Indigenous Peoples may be identified in any given geographical region. These include:

    a. close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;

    b. self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;

    c. an indigenous language, often different from the national language;

    d. presence of customary social and political institutions; and

    e. primarily subsistence-oriented production.

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[66] This included paragraph particularly forms the basis of this research into the self-identification of the indigenous !Xun and Khwe youth in late modernity.

[67] Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (Adopted June 27, 1989, entered into the force, September 5, 1991) 1650 UNTS 383.

[68] See http://www.nzdl.org/gsdlmod?e=d-00000-00---off-0hdl--00-0----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4------0-1l--11-en-50---20-about---00-0-1-00-0--4----0-0-11-10-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL2.8.2&d=HASH9a0e9a2a39ec3edb1a8e8a.6.4

Australian scholar, Francesca Merlan (2009) notes that the all international definitions of indigeneity may be divided into two main categories namely, "criterial" and "relational". The "criterial" definitions according to her, proposes sets of criteria, or conditions for the identification of the "indigenous" persons, while the "relational" definitions emphasise distinctiveness and grounding relations between the "indigenous" and their "others" (Merlan, 2009: 304). In a similar vein, Cook and Sarkin (2009: 121) opine that indigeneity has been viewed in two ways: 1) as a process of coloniality and the forced positioning of indigenous peoples in a colonial social class structure and 2) in terms of self-identification that has links with a global indigenous movement.

Meanwhile, one of the main criticism of the internationalist definitions of indigeneity is that they are counterproductive to both the anthropological endeavor and various "indigenous realities" in varied contexts. They argue that that internationalised indigeneity renders society bi-cultural by granting legal and political privileges to some groups over others in a supposedly counterfactual manner (*Ibid*).The authors instead propose a simple reconciliatory sociological approach which view modern society as a mere multi-cultural society, with an array of different communities each with its own traditions and its own problems interacting more or less loosely in the overall social fabric of a country or modern state (*ibid*).

Another critic, Adam Kuper (2003: 395), argues that internationalist definitions of indigeneity, despite their undoubtedly generous scope which covers the motivations of support for often vulnerable Indigenous populations, adds another layer of essentialism. To him, the idea of culture as a basis of right claims rely on obsolete anthropological notions and on a romantic and false ethnographic vision. He argues that fostering such essentialist ideologies of culture and identity might be dangerous with dire political consequences for post-colonial states. Meanwhile Kuper's (2003) critique of indigenous authenticity and vested interests has been challenged Alan Barnard (2006: 10) who notes that "even 'imagined communities' can be real communities – assuming we recognise social reality as a social construct [just as] the notion of 'indigeneity'". While acknowledging that definitions of Indigenous peoples are problematic in a purely anthropological sense, he believes that such complexity is vital

in understanding the construction and representation of indigeneity and Indigenous peoples.

It is important to note the powerful post-colonial states such as China, India, Indonesia who have rejected the use of term "indigenous/indigeneity", as well as the Western settler states (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States) who are expressly opposed the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted by 143 nations in 2007 (see, Baviskar 2007; Gladney 1997; Karlsson 2003; Li 2000; Tsing 2007). It has been suggested that many of these powerful colonial settler states and nations refused to grant indigenous rights for fear of issues that may emanate such as power tussle, secession, reparation and so on (see Barsh, 1996).

Hence, on the one hand, the international indigenous movement is highly valued as an international instrument framed to bolster the rights of "Indigenous Peoples," with some countries enshrining it in their foundational state documents, (see Hirtz, 2003). In this sense, it is seen as a form of "globalisation from below", that provides a crucial contrast and has helped to distinguish Indigenous peoples from other impoverished "ordinary folk" (Sylvain, 2005: 366). However, on the other hand, Indigeneity is rejected by some states who interpret it to imply sovereignty of groups, attempts to power, secession, and way to garner international sympathy or means to reaching out to "higher authority" (Barsh, 1996; Niezen, 2003). Contemporary Indigenous scholars believe that both bottom-up and top-down dialogue between "coloniser" and "colonised", or relations between Indigenous peoples and the metropolitan state (of statehood, sovereignty, and territoriality) have become less relevant in contemporary times, and there now a need for some more dynamic processes that exploes the ways Indigenous people have become enmeshed in ever-wider fields of power (Nadarajah, & Grydehøj, 2016; Grydehøj, 2017).

In Africa indigeneity has generated a lot of debate among national governments, policy makers, activists and academics (cf. Oldham & Frank, 2008; Hodgson, 2009; 2011; Pelican, 2009; Nyamnjoh 2007; Tomaselli, 2001, 2005, Tomaselli *et al*., 2008; Suzman, 2002; Ngugi, 2002). While in the Americas and the Pacific indigenous rights movements developed as a critique of European colonialism and imperialism; in Africa, indigenous claims began as a response to the policies adopted by independent, post-colonial African states (see Merlan, 2009; Pelican & Maruyama, 2015). There

have been for instance, counter-arguments in some quarters that "all Africans are indigenous" and therefore deserve equal access to natural resources. The idea that certain groups deserve preferential privileges and entitlement is therefore thought to negate the idea of nation-building, a process that is still ongoing in many African states (see Lutz, 2007).

Indigenous communities and the state in Africa

Maasai[69] activists are credited with establishing transnational links, and popularising the idea that the marginality of some African ethnic groups could be addressed through participation and solidarity with the global indigenous movement. In 1989, Moringe ole Parkipuny, a Maasai activist and former Tanzanian Parliamentarian, became the first African to address the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP), as an indigenous representative (Hodgson, 2009). This, however, was a relatively late participation in a struggle initiated in the 1970s in several parts of the world.

International indigenous rights frameworks seem to particularly fit well with the agro-pastoralist African ethnic minorities who consider themselves (or are considered by others) as being at the margins of society. By the early 2000s, numerous African groups with histories of land loss, marginalisation and threats to their pastoralism and livelihood began to appeal for international solidarity, leaning on a movement bonded against what may be considered neocolonial state practices of marginalisation, victimisation and disempowerment (Pelican & Maruyama, 2015).

Scholars have thus questioned the applicability of indigeneity and "Indigenous" rights in the African context. It is argued that Africa's unique context has reshaped transnational discourses of indigeneity or rendered "indigenous" inappropriate or untranslatable for Africa (Tamarkin & Giraudo, 2014: 546). A few scholars have suggested that Indigeneity in African only serves to promote an essentialist ideology of African culture and identity (e.g. Pelican & Maruyama, 2015). Although, virtually all African countries are parties to international agreements to protect Indigenous rights (via the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UNDRIP),

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[69] The Maasai are an ethnic group inhabiting southern Kenya and northern Tanzania.

many states however fail to uphold the practical obligations of recognising the indigenous status of groups within their domains (Cook & Sarkin, 2009).

Felix Ndahinda (2011: 24) believes that Africa's opposition to indigeneity may be traced to "the chauvinistic discourse of primitivity during colonialism that views all Africans as Indigenous". This position is consistent with the popular narrative that Africa is the cradle of humankind – a continent with the longest history of human occupation, containing the greatest range of human genetic and cultural diversity (Nyamnjoh, 2007). When the early European colonialists conquered and took control of native lands in Africa, they instituted clear legal boundaries between themselves (the colonisers) and the colonised under the colonial laws. These institutionalised differentiations, and the colonial legacy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule) – led to distinct level of otherisation and division not just between the colonisers and colonised, but also between diverse local groups. These boundaries were overlooked after independence and withdrawal of the colonialists, however, as African states tried to distance themselves from colonial politics and the differential treatment of dividing citizens based on race or ethnicity.[70] Hence, all prior occupants of the lands were assimilated into the newly crafted national identity (Suzman, 2002).

However, viewing postcolonial practices and forms of knowledge such as traditional medicine, ancestor worship, and chieftaincy as "indigenous" thus retains the idea of a collective regional indigeneity. Hence, unlike in colonial settler states and regions where there is a clear historical distinction (between natives and settlers/non-natives), there is no such distinction in the African context. The problem of indigenous identification in Africa is similarly echoed by Anthropologist, Igor Kopytoff in his classic 1987 essay, *The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture*, where he argues that, African societies tend to reproduce themselves at their internal frontiers, thus continuously creating and recreating a dichotomy between "original inhabitants" and "late-comers" regarding which political prerogatives are negotiated.

Hence, today, there is clear-cut distinction between the supposed "first nations" and "dominant societies" that is implied by the universal notion of indigenous peoples. Questioning the applicability of the universal notion of indigeneity in Africa, scholars

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[70] Admitting indigenous rights may thus be seen or as a form of segregation that designates certain territories for certain ethnic groups.

such as Erika Sarivaara *et al.* (2013) and Keyan Tomaselli (2005) have suggested a need to rethink indigeneity at the micro level, based on the preconditions of belonging of individual groups, and possibly on a personal level. This is because different groups and group members possess and undergo distinct assimilation processes, histories of colonisation, or complex legislation regulating membership as indigenous people.

According to a survey by the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC), African indigenous groups are distinguished by hunter-gatherer and mobile pastoralist backgrounds (that is, those people who lived with cattle, sheep or camels and migrated according to the rains and pastures (IPACC 2007: 25). However, there are a few exceptions this definition, as seen in certain cases in Southern Africa[71] and Morocco, where a group's claim to indigeneity differs slightly (Peeters, 1993).

The generalisation of the experiences of African indigenous groups is evidenced in IPACC's definition of African Indigenous groups, hence Dorothy Hodgson (2009) suggests the need for a case-sensitive approach that examines the individual experiences of African groups in different historical contexts. She notes that certain ethnic groups on the continent have systematically shifted and adapted their positions over the years along variable national and international situations. For instance, a study of the Maasai and Hadza people of East Africa (Tanzania) revealed that while both groups adopted the global discourse on indigenous rights to secure cultural and political rights as well as access to land in the early 1990s, they have both changed their lobbying strategies since the 2000s by gradually refraining from the discourse and rephrasing their claims in terms of pastoral livelihoods in response to the development framework currently favoured by the Tanzanian government (Pelican & Maruyama, 2015: 52).

The conceptualisation of indigeneity, however, has been most problematic in South Africa and in most Southern African countries. This is perhaps due to the manner in which the terms ("native" and "indigenous") were used during colonial and apartheid regimes to foster racially alienating colonial agendas and policies. The Kalahari debate

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[71] The Basters of Southern Africa (mostly in Namibia and South Africa) are descendants of mixed European-African ancestry, whose history intersects with those of other Africans but which differs from them in many ways (see Peeters, 1993).

and contestations of the San indigeneity as well as the racialised sentiments attached to the category are discussed below.

The "great Kalahari debate" and racialised indigenous discourse in South Africa

The "great Kalahari debate" was about the San or Bushmen of Southern Africa and their relationship with the outside world (Barnard 1992: 298). It questioned whether the Bushmen were indeed isolated hunter gatherers living far enough from the edge of farming and mercantile capitalism as to represent aspects of our prehistoric past, or whether they were a mere underclass in various stages of incorporation into the global economy (Solway & Lee 1990; Wilmsen 1989).

The debate has divided scholars into two sets of extreme contrasted positions and views. On one side are the "traditionalists" such as Richard Lee and others who present the Bushmen of the 1950s and '60s as independent, affluent foragers "who represent many crucial aspects of the 99% of human life on earth" (Lee, 1979: 1; Lee & DeVore, 1968, Marshall, 1976). On the opposing side are the "revisionists" such as Edwin Wilmsen and others who challenge this view by arguing that the Bushmen were an underclass who were historically part of larger social formations but who became a dispossessed and marginalised proletariat cut adrift from the surrounding economies after the collapse of mercantile capitalism (Wilmsen, 1989: 127).

Although anthropological and political in character, the debate's fuel is historical and archaeological evidence. Earlier, the emphasis was on the prehistory of Bushman-Bantu. This debate is thus consequential in understanding the highly politicised nature of indigeneity in South Africa. Prior to the 1960s, the (white) colonial and apartheid administrations in South Africa categorised the Bantu-speaking black majority and the Khoisan[72] as "Indigenous" or "natives". The status of a native is well explicated in the Cecil Rhodes-proposed "native bill for Africa" of the Glen Grey Act of 1884, and the Natives Land Act 1913. Under both Acts, natives were defined as labourers merely needed in the project of building of the Cape and creating wealth for the whites. The "natives" were excluded from being South African in a "Union of South Africa" that

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[72] The Khoisan is a more generic term that consists of the Bushmen (San), the Khoikhoi, Nama, the Korana, and the Griqua and other so-called aboriginal peoples of South Africa who were distinguished from their black farming neighbours by their click languages (see Stavenhagen, 2005: 2; De Wet, 2012: 508).

legally consisted of the British and the Afrikaners (see Baker, 1944: 61, cited in Mboti, 2013).

By the early 1970s, however, upon realising the pride of "originality" and the sense communal ownership associated with the term "native" and "indigenous" (following the popularity of the global indigenous movement), the apartheid government began referring to the supposed "natives" as "foreign-natives". The government maintained that they were not Indigenous South Africans and identified each ethnicity as "Vendans", "Zulus", "Transkeians", "Bophutatswanans" and so on (Neocosmos, 2006). This change of name was part of the continued attempt to delegitimise blacks from claiming indigenous citizenship in South Africa. This racialised controversy around indigeneity is also reflected in the official census. In the census conducted in the late 1970s, the term "Black African" was used to refer to the Bantu-speaking black majority. However, the use of "African" was later rejected by the Afrikaners, who felt the term excluded them from also being "Africans" (as do many/most Coloureds and Indians) (Neocosmos, 2006).

These processes of (re)naming non-white South African majority groups meanwhile effectively ignored the existence of a group thought to have an undisputed Indigenous status – the San (see Lee *et al.,* 2002). It is on record that since the 15th century, the San or the Bushmen have been in the anthropological consciousness as subjects of anthropological research and studies conducted by some of the earliest Western[73] anthropologists (see Schapera 1930; Lee 1976; Headland & Reid, 1989; Barnard 1992, 2007). From the 20th century, the white-led colonial and apartheid administrations effectively took control of San representation, recuperating their image and exhibiting [74] them as the distinct noble savages, from whom all humanity evolved (Maughan-Brown, 1987; Barnard, 2007; Mboti, 2014). Hence, there is no record of the

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[73] Most of these white western researchers have been interested in the San hunter-gatherer lifestyles since the 16th century, click languages and ancient rock art, genomes, and so on. The few black authors such as Alex la Guma and Mongane Wally-Serote who acknowledge the San in their writings, articulated them as progenitors in the South African struggle against colonialism. Authors such as Masilela (1987) and Mboti (2014) have questioned the absence or shortage of black authors within Bushman and indigenous research in South Africa. The RI project has, however, enabled some books and chapters authored by Indigenous people to be published by an academic press (see Lange *et al*. 2013; Bregin & Kruiper, 2004).

[74] Maughan-Brown (1987: 117) reveals that Bushmen were put on exhibition across South African and European cities.

Sans' collaborative effort with other non-whites in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in Southern Africa.

However, while the colonial representation of the San led to their global popularity as "global natives", it impacted their local involvement in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, in solidarity with other local non-white South Africans. In other words, the colonial government's global romanticisation of the San may have culminated in their docility during the struggle. This, combined with their small population, may also have led to them being omitted as an ethno-racial group in 1948 when the apartheid regime created its four official racial population groups namely: Black, Coloured, White and Asian/Indian[75] (Population Registration Act 30 of 1950; Gradín, 2011) (see also Figure 3.1 below).

The general attempt to epistemologically relocate South Africa back into Africa in the 1990s following the collapse of apartheid, also included the affirmative re-centring of the San as the common heritage for all South Africans (Jeursen, 1995). As Stuart Douglas (1996) notes, most South Africans at the time were ignorant of the real plight of Bushmen. Hence, there remains a disconnection and even division between the black majority in South Africa and the Bushmen – the supposed indigenous population (see Bodunrin, 2015). These problematic (mis)conceptions of indigeneity in South Africa have thus made the concept highly contested in contemporary South Africa and claimed by groups other than supposed aboriginal population.[76] What then are the plights and current realities of the San population in South Africa? The realities of young people who embody the present-day struggle of San people in contemporary South Africa are discussed in the next section.

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[75] These racial categories and classifications are still officially used in post-apartheid South Africa. See Figure 3.1, which shows the breakdown of 2011 census in which the !Xun and Khwe San (the participants of this research) were categorised as "Others"

[76] This includes some ethnic groups within the Bantu speaking black majority, and the right-wing Afrikaners who have self-identified as "Indigenous" (Stilz, 2009; Douglas, 1996).

Platfontein

Main Place 383004 from Census 2011

Area: 1.77 km²
Population: 5185 (2933.34 per km²)
Households: 1277 (722.45 per km²)

Gender	People	Percentage
Female	2826	54.50%
Male	2360	45.52%

Population group	People	Percentage
Other	4474	86.29%
Black African	659	12.71%
Coloured	25	0.48%
Indian or Asian	25	0.48%
White	1	0.02%

First language	People	Percentage
Other	4799	92.56%
Afrikaans	235	4.53%
isiNdebele	60	1.16%
Xitsonga	21	0.41%
isiZulu	20	0.39%
SiSwati	19	0.37%
English	13	0.25%
Setswana	5	0.10%

Figure 3.1: Screenshot of the statistics from the 2011 census in Platfontein. The !Xun and Khwe as well as their language are unrecognised and simply categorised as "Other".
(**Source:** https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/383004, 12 January 2017).

Being a young Bushman in contemporary Platfontein, South Africa

Understanding contemporary indigeneity and the process of indigenous knowledge production in late-modernity requires attention to both the temporal and the social realms. In other words, it is imperative to acknowledge Indigeneity as a historically contingent formulation which changes with time in differently contested social fields. Even within international fora, the indigenous worldview has been reframed in recent times as a resource for saving the planet from climate change and the notion of *vivir*

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bien, or "living well". There has therefore been a significant shift from the highly essentialised notion of viewing indigeneity solely from the perspective of rural indigenous people (Postero, 2013; Kulis *et al.,* 2015).

Like many Indigenous groups, the !Xun and Khwe of Platfontein have adapted their indigenous strategy in relation to the changing times and reality of modern-day South Africa. Initially, when the two groups migrated to South Africa in the early 1990s, their pristine hunter-gatherer descent was mobilised to advocate for political participation and inclusion and to partake in opportunities available to the previously disadvantaged South African ethnic groups. This is particularly vital to the !Xun and Khwe, following the perceptions in some quarters that they are "traitors" and "collaborators" of apartheid (having been militarised by the apartheid army in the 1970s, against the liberation of Southern African countries) (see Robbins, 2004).

Unlike in parts of the world where indigeneity and indigenous rights are used by groups to demand justice, reparation on land ownership, and a platform for reclaiming natural resources from the oligarchy and from transnational corporations (see Canessa 2006; Postero 2007; Webber 2012), the Platfontein socio-political indigenous discourse which began in the 1990s, was geared towards the pursuit of legitimate citizenship in a new country. This was at a time when the African National Congress (ANC) led by Mandela was seeking new a cohesive national identity, in which South African Indigenous groups are positioned as the foundational elements for all other ethno-racial identities (Soskolne, 2007).

In the newly transitioned, politically charged environment, the San were looked upon by the new government as symbols and a bridge between the past and the future (Tomaselli, 1995). This new image, which is mainly derived from Laurens van der Post's original nostalgic description of the San, was revived in the "New South Africa" through a number of genres, such as films (e.g. *Sarah*), TV (e.g. *The Honeybird, The Mantis Project),* literature (van der Post, Stuart Cloete), TV documentaries and magazines (*People of the Great Sandface,* the TV programme on environment, *50/50*), PR and advertising, tourist brochures (Tomaselli, 1995: i).

However, after the !Xun and Khwe migrated into the peri-urban settlement of Platfontein in 2004, they began rethinking their identity in terms of socioeconomic

development and wellbeing. They sought contemporary identities while retaining their precarious indigenous identity. These attempts are part of a global movement towards contemporary urban indigeneity by many indigenous communities across the globe. Contemporary Indigeneity, according to Peter Berger (2014), may be divided into three forms, namely; ascribed indigeneity, Indigenous indigeneity, and claimed indigeneity. "Ascribed indigeneity" refers to the indigeneity unilaterally assigned to the Indigenous population. The relationship between those who ascribe the indigeneity to the so-called natives is often asymmetrical and monolithic (Berger, 2014: 20). As earlier mentioned, the San in contemporary South Africa remain embedded in the "noble savage" perceptions continually popularised by anthropologists, filmmakers, NGOs and other forces external to the San. However, while this ascribed indigeneity promotes cultural tourism, it has also had an adverse effect particularly on the lives of young people who wish to be seen as "normal people". Explaining the impact of such ascribed indigenous identity, Skambo Lenda notes that the world wants to know nothing about contemporary San, but these superimposed pristine stereotypes:[77]

> Whenever people from outside come here, they come hoping to see us behave like these stereotypes. They never see us as normal people. People must come here with normal minds to know exactly what is happening here (Skambo, interview, August 2016).

"Indigenous indigeneity", meanwhile, refers to local sacrificial practices and performance through which indigeneity is constructed. This type of indigeneity is local, symmetric, and relational, as the people are themselves are often the creators of this representation (Berger, 2014: 20). In Platfontein, despite the history of externally ascribed indigeneity of a pristine "Bushman-ness or San-ness", young people are metaphorically reclaiming and reworking these identities to highlight contemporary socio-economic issues, needs and realities. Their interest in self-representation and authoring their own narratives is most evident in the numbers of local socio-cultural pressure groups and organisations in Platfontein protesting externally fostered representation and seeking locally-initiated programmes. One such group is the Southern African San Development Organisation (SASDO) formed by some young

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[77] Stereotypes are negative and often exaggerated beliefs associated with different categories of people. They generally function to rationalise certain behaviours towards those/certain categories (Jahoda, 1979).

adults in Platfontein in March 2017. The organisation is headed by Moshe Mahundu, an adult in his 40s. Moshe sought to use the organisation to encourage the participation of young people in Platfontein. The organisation's official Facebook page reads:

> We are San young men and women who are passionate about the development of our own people. We believe that we know and understand our own issues more than anyone else and thus, we are the ones who can address those matters better (Facebook 2017, with permission).

Figure 3.2: In April 2018, the Southern African San Development Organisation (SASDO) announced its funder with this picture on its Facebook page.

SASDO has been sensitising locals, especially young people, on how to contribute to the economy, to address challenges of poverty and lack of education. They also run

workshops on how best to locally manage San identity, project a positive image and escape the cycle of exploitation by the so-called San organisations run by outsiders. The organisation believes that acts of resistance through deliberate cultivation of cultural continuity, or directly, through organised efforts by youth, will go a long way in sustaining and preserving the San culture and identity. On 17 April 2018, the organisation announced its partnership with the South African Lotteries Commission (NLC) (see Figure 3.2 above). Youth-led local organisations such as SASDO are examples of how young people in Platfontein are repositioning themselves as authors of their own contemporary indigeneity discourse. These organisations and other young subcultural formations within the townships are formed as protest bodies against existing community leadership structures such as the CPA and the San Council, considered gerontocratic and self-serving. During a focus group discussion, many of the young people expressed concern that individuals who constitute the local leadership structures in the township mismanage resources and unequally distribute resources and opportunities to favour their own families (Focus group, August 2016).

In the process of self-representing themselves, the young people of Platfontein are cognisant of the power of their indigenous status as a powerful tool to remain relevant in the highly racialised and ethicised post-apartheid era. In fact, many have leveraged on the San's revered status to seek employment in the booming culture tourism sector in the Provinces of the Western Cape and the Free State. Hence, publicised negative connotations, reclaiming these names such as "San" or "Bushmen" and continually performing reproducing indigenous narratives is very important.

However, as highlighted earlier, the ancient San practices such as rituals, healing dance, storytelling, and so on, are almost non-existent in contemporary Platfontein. Nevertheless, there remains a deep sense of indigeneity, which based on the self-consciousness of ancestry and which is given a communal meaning through living together in the confined territory of Platfontein. Indigeneity thus remains expressed in the social fabric and even in contemporary non-traditional practices and relationships.[78] The important criterion for indigeneity in this sense is the identification

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[78] I have argued elsewhere that the contemporary practice of hip-hop among Platfontein youth may be interpreted as a new form of the San storytelling tradition (Bodunrin 2016).

by and with one another's daily struggle that results from the consciousness of selves as a people with a distinct cultural identity.

The third type of indigeneity, known as "claimed indigeneity", is characterised by a nascent Indigenous identity which has been popularised in the global political arena. Within this sphere of indigeneity, there are no cultural performances. All that is needed is a political will and leanings toward supranational indigenous movements (Berger, 2014: 19). In Platfontein, this form of indigeneity has been fostered by national and regional San Organisations and NGOs such as the South African San Institute (SASI) and the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA). SASI in particular has been instrumental in connecting the Platfontein San with the global indigenous rights discourse. According to the SASI official website, SASI was established as a support organisation to secure basic human rights for San people, becoming a Trust in April 1996. "SASI was formed to implement programmes in three areas: legal support and advocacy, culture and heritage and language, and tourism through the development of income generation projects." (http://www.sasi.org.za/wwa.html). While the state-led multiculturalism and rainbow-nation discourse since the 1990s delegitimises identity politics, with no special official recognition for San, Khoisan and other indigenous ethnicities, popular national discourses nevertheless continually elevate the San and Khoisan to the position of original landowners and first inhabitants of the South African territory. San scholars have rightly questioned the place of the San in the tourism paradigm, wherein their position as ethnically unique is systemically denied except within representations for tourist consumption (see Mogalakwe, 2003: 87; Mboti, 2017). Cook and Sarkin (2009) opine that unless Southern African governments recognise the San as Indigenous, the San will remain fixed in the tourism space and isolated from broader socio-economic development opportunities.

What follows is a thematic analysis of data about indigeneity and self-identity drawn from interviews with 15 Platfontein youth regarding their perceptions of their indigeneity. The way these youths speak about indigeneity offers important insight into how they conceptualise and emotionally negotiate being associated either with San indigeneity or the Bushman myth, as well as their sense of place in a changing world and the security of their future within the South African context. Their social positioning

on the cusp of upward social mobility in a nation characterised by persistently racialised and politicised economic inequalities, is experienced both as a privilege and a burden. Below are discussions of the issues Platfontein youth believe specifically affects them as a result of being "Bushmen" in contemporary South Africa.

Bushmanness as a curse

> It feels like we are cursed as a people, cursed by the gods. It's the gods' fault that we live very poorly like a primitive society and nobody seems to care about our development. People laugh and ridicule us and our language. We are considered not good enough in everything (Rinae, interview, August 2016).

The quote above is by a young female Platfontein San, Rinae Nduba, who captures the frustration of many Platfontein youths regarding the impact of their highly mediatised indigenous ancestry as "Bushmen" in the contemporary world. Does this "Bushmanness" hold back the youth of Platfontein in a highly fluid late-modern world? By "Bushmanness", of course, I mean the historical and territorial anteriority of hunter-gatherers often associated with their ethnicity as San people (see Wessels, 2016).

Many of the Platfontein youths struggle to negotiate the public's pristine perceptions of them and the actual modern lives increasingly sweeping through the Platfontein youthscape. Interestingly, despite a lack of commitment to traditional San practices, many still continue to identify as San. For instance, Rinae says:

> Although I don't do traditional things, but I remain a Bushwoman. However, I am worried that it's gonna be extinct and we are gonna lose every kinda Bushman culture in this community. For me personally, I am presently not interested in culture (Rinae, interview, August 2015).

Indeed, a number of young people appear to have been trying consistently to find ways to mix their traditional indigenous heritage with more modern culture. Obert, for instance, believes that *culture mixing* is imperative and has become popular among many Platfontein youths:

> Personally, I think mixing tradition like language and all these modern stuffs like hip-hop that we do here is important. I don't think in today's world, we can go far with just traditional culture, dance, music, and so on. We have to adapt to

new things that we learn from outside. What I mean is, mixing our own tradition with the latest and modern culture (Obert, interview, August 2015).

A similar sentiment is echoed by Andre:

We have to acknowledge the fact that we are San people, but that we no longer exist in those ancient traditional days. We just must embrace our past but also behave like modern youths. We must be allowed to do what we want, display swag and rap like the American superstars, you know what I mean? (Andre, interview August 2015).

Another youth, Daniel Kapira, one of the more respected hip-hop rapper in Platfontein shares this view:

You see, the Bushman thing is our background and we cannot escape it and cannot leave it, but, we also have to keep it real and be honest with ourselves. We are not whom those people out there think we are anymore. I, for instance, prefer modern stuffs (music, dance) to traditional songs, but we have to find ways to combine traditional and modern stuffs (Daniel, interview August 2015).

Youth's exposure via formal education and the new media technology is seen to have fractured the traditional youth transitioning into adulthood in Platfontein. Hence, as the contemporary Platfontein youth continue to search for a balance between their perceived primitive indigenous identity and modernity, they do not want to be treated differently from their contemporaries in the urban areas. In the words of one participant, Robert, they just wish to "be treated like normal people".

While many considered Bushmanness to be burden, considering the derision and lack of opportunities within and outside their community, a few persons such as Jason believe their indigenous identity must be harnessed in a positive light:

You see, being a Bushman has disadvantages but also advantages. I have realised that we young Bushmen have been overlooking our own advantages of being a Bushman. You see when I first travelled to the outside world, and I was received in two totally different ways. Some received me with that mentality of "he's just a Bushman nothing more", while others received me with so much respect, saying "Ah the indigenous people, the real leaders and pioneers of

South Africa", they take with you with that respect and that kind of thing (Jason, interview, August 2015).

Hence, it may be concluded that that the contemporary Platfontein youth who struggle to negotiate and contend with the enormous pressures of being indigenous in late modern times, continue to find ways and means to express their complex identity. The pressure to behave in certain way not only emanates from the outside of the indigenous community, but also from the inside, often by traditional-minded parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents. This has led to generational tensions and clashes, some of which are now discussed.

Generational tussle in Platfontein

> Our lifestyle is very different from the old people, because as young people are educated and exposed to modern new things. This is the cause of our problems (Orbert, interview, 2015).

> I feel like we are being ignored by the elders. They struggle to empower us and make us strong as youth, in terms of providing us with some elementary needs (Orbert, interview, August 2016)

There are generational rifts and conflicts as a result of the disconnection between the more traditional-minded older generation and the younger generation in Platfontein. The younger people in Platfontein have struggled to balance the demands of the hypermodern contemporary life and the expectation of their parents and grandparents, since their relocation to the township in 2004. The lack of skills and knowledge of the fast-paced hypermodern world has caused many young people to challenge the traditional authority of elders as opinion leaders and custodians of knowledge (Jason, interview, June 2015).

Many young people progressively no longer look up to adults for instruction and inspiration, preferring to rather draw inspiration from digital/new media technologies. Back in 2014, an elderly couple, James and Judy Kabuatta, whom I had assisted working their subsistence farmland, lamented to me how their children are uninterested in participating in household responsibilities allocated to them as their parents, but rather spend most of their time drinking and playing music, which does

not bring financial benefit to them and their families. Many of the interviewed adults expressed their fear that the current trends of massive appropriation of modern culture by the youth may completely override the local traditional culture in the near future. They also accused the younger generation of failing to approach their elders for mentorship and guidance. The young people in turn blame the older people for failing to reach out to them, rather leaving them to negotiate the harsh realities of contemporary life.

Explaining the situation and issue of generational rifts, Skambo, like many young people in Platfontein accused the older people of failing to mentor and trust young people with responsibility, as they are deemed incapable of making decisions for the benefit of their society:

> To tell you the truth, here, everybody is on his own. Both within family and within the community. I would say there is a disconnection between us and our parents. … The Community Property Association (CPA) board is filled only old people who will never understand what we the youngsters go through in our daily lives. The elders are just sitting there judging us, without knowing or living our reality. They say youngsters are too lazy, they all drink too much, when they actually do not give us chance to take charge (Skambo, interview June 2015).

Similarly, Jason, a young participant, says the older people have failed in their primary responsibility of guiding and mentoring young people:

> What the young people here lack is soul food from elders. We lack direction in life. Our parents are nowhere to direct we their children on specific things to do and how to live their lives. This is why we the youth do not have a have a proper view of life. We just do what we do for today's pleasure and not for tomorrow's satisfaction (Jason, interview June 2015).

Rinae Nduba maintains that it is this lack of mentorship that has led many young people to find solace in alcohol and illicit drugs:

> We the youths are isolated. No connection between us and the leaders. This is why a lot of young people are trying to get themselves busy by being involved in alcohol and drugs. No connection between the young and the old especially our leaders. We are disconnected from them and the outside world (Rinae, interview August 2016).

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Meanwhile, Skambo believes young people are also to be blamed because they lack the will and commitment to organise themselves into a strong formidable unit. He believes that when young people of Platfontein organise themselves, they will they gain respect from the adults and older generation, as well as be able be able to look after and improve their own socio-cultural well-being and voice. Skambo decries the youth's lack of interest in forming a pressure group, however.

Indeed, the Indigenous youth organisations are significant in asserting youth voices in within the Indigenous community. A study by Roe Thomas (2016) reveals how the establishment of the San Youth Network – the youth arm of Khwedom Council, in Namibia, ensured that voices of youth are heard. The youth organisation organises sociocultural activities and is involved in the San Youth Capacity Building Project (SYCB) (Thomas, 2016).

Repairing the generational divide, informally, via mentorship programmes, is a concern for both the old and the young. At the very least, this would allow the elders to directly reach out to the youth in the Platfontein community. Skambo asserted that, "There is no way a child does not need his parents' input. We need it". Such an initiative will go a long way in fostering traditional continuity where Indigenous elders teach and mentor the youth. McIntosh (2002: 1) writes about a similar intervention which occurred in an indigenous community known as Yolngu in the Northeast Arnhem Land, where Indigenous female elders organised programmes aimed at finding indigenous solutions to the problem of low self-confidence among the youth as well the youth's lack of interest in the Yolngu Indigenous culture. The initiative, according to McIntosh (2002), helped reduce the rate of substance abuse, drug addiction, teen suicide, TV and video-induced apathy and other worrying issues widespread amongst the youth in the community (McIntosh 2002: 1). In Platfontein, such a programme would go a long way in engendering and rebuilding the broken relationship between young people and the older population.

Battling alcoholism and drug abuse

> You see, the reason why people drink and abuse alcohol and drugs too much
> is because when people here wake up, they have nothing to do, then if you meet

up with your friends, you go out and drink and do *yaope* (Skambo, interview, August 2016)

The problem of excessive consumption of alcohol and abuse of drugs is well documented among the Bushmen of Southern Africa. Numerous publications have cited this problem as a major impediment to development in San communities (Finlay, 2009; Barnabas, 2014; Mboti, 2017). As ealier stated, Katharina Meyer, a missionary who worked with the !Xun and Khwe Bushmen in Schmidtsdrift in 1993, suggests that alcoholism and abuse of substances among the !Xun and Khwe peoplemay be traced to the 1990s, following the withdrawal of the South African Defence Force camp base in Schmidtsdrift (quoted in Robbins, 2004).

In contemporary Platfontein, where the feeling of government abandonment persists, and unemployment remains major problem, excessive consumption of alcohol and substance usage is rife. In the absence of employment and due to perceived neglect by the provincial government, the majority of the Platfontein Bushmen whose main source of income is the meagre social welfare grant, use alcohol to relieve themselves of frustration and anxiety. Of course, the frustration and anxiety are only relieved briefly, but always multiplies because alcohol abuse locks drinkers into a vicious cycle. In 2004, on receipt of complaints of the deteriorating situation from members of the ≠Khomani San community, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) intervened, beginning with comprehensive research. One of the findings of the study is that the continuing poverty amongst the San, despite land ownership, is linked to the communal alcohol abuse (SAHRC, 2004: 6). Alcohol and substance abuse was found to affect the local production of craft sales to tourists and other endeavours that have potential to improve the local socio-economic welfare of the people.

Commenting on the subject, Jason states that he believes that the youth should not be blamed for substance abuse and other crimes, as these things existed long before they were born:

> Again, this issue of drunkenness and people abusing drugs. It's been here before people were born. And up till now, it remains an issue. And young people also struggle here. As I have said earlier, the youth are not receiving soul food

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from parents and many are being misled by peer pressure (Jason, interview, August 2016).

Rinae Nduba also makes a similar point, arguing that the lack of sensitisation, mentoring and job opportunities causes many young people in the township to channel their energies towards drugs, alcohol and illicit sex which often leads to teenage pregnancy:

> We the youths are isolated. No connection between us and the leaders. We are also isolated from the larger outside world. This is why a lot of young people are trying to get themselves busy by being involved in drugs. Young people need motivation and empowerment, empowerment hence, they turn to drugs. With empowerment, there will also be sensitisations on things like drug and teenage pregnancies which are issues affecting young people in this community (Rinae, interview, August 2016).

The abuse of drugs and alcohol (which sometimes leads to violence) is inextricably linked to joblessness and lack of opportunities. These substances offer temporary escape from their marginal and precarious lives.

Education

A salient issue raised by the young Platfontein participants of this study was the issue of schooling and how the education offered to them in the township school[79] fails to adequately equip or prepare them for opportunities in the wider world. Of the 15 youths who directly participated in the study, seven were high-school dropouts. Rinae, who graduated from the school and went ahead to obtain a Bachelor's degree from the University of the Free State (in Bloemfontein), was the first to draw my attention to what she terms "a symbolic violence" via the educational system. "Look at our school and education system," she said. "We may never produce medical doctors, IT experts or scientist because they do not offer us science subjects. This is a symbolic violence against us" (Rinae Nduba, Interview, August 2016). The absence of science-based subjects as well as studies of the history of the San contributes to the sense of

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[79] There is just a single school in the Platfontein township – the XunKhwesa Combined School is located in between the Khwe and the !Xun community in Platfontein. It is managed by the Department of Education and staffed by teachers who come from the neighbouring city of Kimberley.

institutional failure of the education system as well as the symbolic viaolence that Rinae Nduba pointed to.

Language is a crucial element of cultural identification, and studies have shown that teaching students in their mother tongue goes a long way in sustaining their interest in education (Global Partnership for Education, 2014). However, in Platfontein, the formal classroom environment is led by teachers from outside the community, with no cultural connection to students, and who teach solely in Afrikaans, drive expensive cars and live in Kimberley. The fact that the subjects are often taught by white and coloured teachers from outside the township, who speak Afrikaans, and who are generally insulated from the daily lived realities of the student, makes it difficult for learners to connect with them on the same level.

Furthermore, the prioritisation of indigenous history and knowledge amongst learners in formal education is regarded as critical to the pedagogy in indigenous communities. Ian McIntosh (2002), an Aboriginal scholar, calls this the "two-way education". According to him "two-way education" may include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal education (that is, Indigenous and non-indigenous education). He cites an example of an education system in rural Northeast Arnhem Land, Australia, where Indigenous elders were involved in the local formal education after it was observed that Aboriginal education was not given priority by the government. He notes that the elders go to the local schools on Thursdays to teach the young people about the Yolngu culture. They take them to hunt, show them how to weave, and help them connect with the old people so they can spend time together (see McIntosh 2002: 1). This is a salient example of how formal and informal education can be handled in an urban indigenous space. There is thus an apparent need to train teachers from the community to teach in the local school. When rural youth are taught by teachers whom they identify with and who share their daily struggles, they tend to respond more positively (Global Partnership for Education, 2014).

The nexus of joblessness and school drop-outs is a vicious cycle. Rife unemployment discourages other young people from completing high school, since they do not see the point of it. Because they drop out, they are even less qualified to be employed. Jason points out that "School here seems useless, because the people who

matriculated remain jobless, didn't go to varsity and this just does not motivate others to take education and life seriously" (Jason, interview, August 2016).

Conclusion: The changing notion of Indigeneity among Platfontein youths

It is Antje Dietrich (2013: 20) who asks, "What makes indigenous indigenous; what makes a space indigenous?" Dietrich's question was in lieu of her struggle to map out Indigenous traits amongst the so-called indigenous population in the Latin America. Her initial questions further led to other questions such as: who defines indigenous or indigeneity and which functions and meanings are visible behind these definitions? She concludes that the meanings of indigeneity are changing, and depending on the context, those changes can even lead to a contradictory meaning (Dietrich, 2013: 20).

The youth in the Platfontein township are attempting to assert their agency by redefining what indigeneity means to them. They do this by opposing and resisting the discourse which paints them as powerless, primitive, noble savages. There are also generational tensions between the youth and the more traditional-minded older generation which blames them for lack of cultural vigilance and delinquency. As Joseph Roach (2009) suggests, these youths are "looking back while moving forward" as they re-imagine the indigeneity handed down to them by the previous generation. It was observed from the numerous interviews conducted with the Platfontein youths that whilst they appreciate the symbolic value of being included in indigenous discourses as natives, they nevertheless feel a need to self-represent themselves as "normal" youth, present in modernity, not frozen in primordial times.

Platfontein youth illustrate the refutation of the idea popularised in the 20th century academy that "urban locales are spaces where Indigenous culture goes to die" (Gagne & Trepied, 2016: 8). Rather than passively die, indigeneity morphs into a different kind of hybrid and multipronged response where indigenous people assert and define themselves within the context of a rapidly changing late modern era.

In the face of the seismic sociocultural changes taking place, the Platfontein youth attempt to create an alternative identity against the primitivist one historically fostered on them by outsiders. While they continue to claim Bushmanness, they seek a more agential process that seeks to reimagine the Bushman in contemporary times. A

participant succinctly captures this when he says: "We are Bushmen, there is nothing we can do about this. In fact, we embrace this, but now wish to move the Bushmen thing forward to the next level" (Orbert, Interview, August 2015). While I agree with Ayiri's (1971: 96) assertion that "change may either be an improvement to the *status quo*, or a retrogression to the *ante status quo",* it is difficult to determine the impact of the change(s) taking place in Platfontein without first identifying and undoing the externally-authored status quo that presently exists.

Chapter 4 – Youth and Identity: Being Bushmen Youth in Contemporary South Africa

This chapter will consider the possibilities of applying the the theoretical framework of subculture theory to the the study of the !Xun and Khwe youth of Platfontein, before launching into an examination of different aspects of youth, identity and being Bushman. This examination will be carried out partly by drawing on Carol Markstrom's (2011) model of indigenous identity. The chapter will analyse different perspectives from the participants of the study on the subculture of hip-hop as well as views on language, the generational divide, citizenship, and others. Together with Chapter Three, this chapter will constitute the heart of the study as it presents and weaves together the findings, discussion, and interpretation.

The subculture framework emanated from earlier approaches in the study of popular youth culture and lifestyles (see Thrasher, 1927; Hebdige, 1979). Despite extensive application of the theory to various groups across different national and regional contexts, subcultural theory has rarely been applied in Africa and certainly not to rural Indigenous youth populations. The application of the theory in the present study is particularly daunting, considering that it has been intensely criticised by some contemporary scholars who regard it as obsolete and inapplicable to the contemporary youthscape. Critics of the theory argue that the studies of youth culture have progressively shifted focus from the bounded, collective, class-based structure of the 1970s local Western societies, to the more individualistic, depthless, eclectic and fragmented global youth expressions of today (see Blackman, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Bennett, 2005; Ugor, 2013; Ulusoy & Fırat, 2018).

The classic Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) version of the theory, used to make sense of the post-World War II British youth landscape, has been particularly criticised for encouraging collective fixity, structural determinism, and for its lack of attention to the relationship between youth cultures and broader social structures (cf. Muggleton, 2000). A "post-subcultural paradigm", which utilises post-modern approach to emphasise the fragmented and transitory aspects of contemporary youth, has been proposed in recent times as a more viable alternative

(see Ugor, 2013; Blackman, 2014; Hodkinson, 2016; Ulusoy, 2016). Meanwhile, many of these criticisms and counter approaches fail to incorporate empirical data to substantiate theoretical arguements (Greener & Hollands, 2007).

Hence, the present study critically applies the theory to an empirical inquiry and case study of a contemporary !Xun and Khwe hip-hop subculture in Platfontein, South Africa. I argue that the contemporary landscape in Platfontein is in some (but not all) ways, is similar to the post-war British youth era when young people's access to resources and technologies culminated in youth's increased independence from family and engendered the formation of a distinct working class style-driven youth subcultures (Leys 1983; Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979). In other words, the !Xun and Khwe youth of Platfontein who are currently in a transitioning period, exhibit collective subcultural qualities styles and class structure that defined the subcultures theorised by Dick Hebdige (1979) and his CCCS contemporaries.

For analytic purposes, this chapter condenses the various conflicting ideas and perspectives of the CCCS subcultural theory[80] in relation to the present case study. The identified subculture in Platfontein consists of young adults (aged between 18 and 24) who have distinguished themselves from the larger Platfontein population in a number of ways and are mostly involved in the global music culture of hip-hop. The chapter examines the applicability of both the classic subcultural and the modernised post-subcultural approaches to the current case study.

Subculture theory: Chicago and Birmingham approaches

The concept of subculture was first developed in the 1920s by the Chicago School of Sociology as a major explanatory mechanism to understand delinquency and deviant activities (such as drug taking, petty crime and gang membership) among young people in the United States (see Park, 1925; Thrasher, 1927, Cohen, 1955; Becker, 1963; Irwin, 1970). The Chicago School's subculture theorists were interested in constructing a collective model of juvenile delinquency as an alternative to the more popular individualist criminology accounts of deviancy as symptomatic of individual disorders in the 1920s (see Merton, 1938). The Chicago school subculture scholars

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[80] Although the CCCS subcultural theory mainly focused on local, marginal and working-class youth subcultures in the post-war British era, there were significant variations among the CCCS writers.

posit that deviancy is a product of social problems, and that, like unemployment and poverty, deviant behaviours such as theft, violence and drug taking, were "normalised" responses through which young people empower themselves (Bennett, 2001: 18).

Albert Cohen's (1955) work titled, *Delinquent Boys: The Subculture of the Gang*, best embodies the subcultural theory of the Chicago School, and US traditional youth research. Cohen, who is regarded as the first to theorise youth delinquency as a collective phenomenon, posits that subcultures emerge as a result of a "mutual gravitation" of those who suffered similar "problems of adjustment" which stems from their disadvantaged background. Such individuals, according to him, respond to their lack of status or direction by forming alternative sets of collective norms, rituals and values which render status-worthy the characteristics, abilities and attitudes they share (Cohen, 1955: 65–66).

Muggleton (2000) contends that Cohen (1955) and the Chicago School theorised subcultures as a "problem-solving device" and as an alleviation of "status frustration" where subcultures provided youth – who suffered educational failure and blocked futures – with an opportunity to "construct a viable identity" (cf. Murdock, 1974). The Chicago tradition of viewing subcultural formations purely as counter anomie, anti-authoritarian, destructive, anarchistic, subnormal, dysfunctional, delinquent and resistant remains popular in fields such as sociology, criminology, psychology, and psychoanalysis (Thornton, 1997). The subculture theory, as Shane Blackman (2014: 496) puts it, "increased the methodological and epistemological diversity in the study of 'deviance'".

The Cultural Studies approach to the study of subculture was popularised in Britain by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)-based theorists to explain non-deviant expressions of counter-discourses and cultural practices of working-class[81] youths in post-war Britain (see Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Cohen, 1980). The CCCS theorists modified the original Chicago School model of subculture through application of a structural Marxist perspective to class and power that focused more on the collective style of "subcultures" such as the Teddy boys, the

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[81] "Working-class" here refers to young persons who suddenly gained independence from parents following employment in factories after the war, and thus could afford a distinct style (fashion and taste) with their wages.

mods, rockers, hippies, punks and skinheads (Bennett, 2001). The appropriated style of these working class youth groups were seen as strategies of resistance to both the ruling class ideology and to structural changes taking place in British society during the 1960s (Bennett, 2001). Thus, subcultures were understood by the CCCS as tightly bound social groups of young people, distinguished from the dominant society by their own normative structures, rules and, in the case of youth subcultures, class, style of dress, argot, territory and musical taste (Bennett, 2001: 171).

Unlike the Chicago School's interpretive sociological framework, the CCCS's Cultural Studies perspective of subculture theory is seen as more innovative in its understanding of deviance as being informed by consciousness and agency. The CCCS model created the distinction between subcultures and delinquency, enabling subculture to be freed from the theoretical pathology of crime (Blackman & Kempson, 2016). Through the articulation of Levis-Strauss' theory of myth, homology and structuralist theory of bricolage (style), subcultures were wrapped in Gramsci's idea of hegemony and placed in the centre of the Marxist base (Hall 1980: 27–28). They were decontextualised from pathological explanations and articulated as trying to resolve social contradictions through performance of multiple narratives of bricolage, which celebrated their agency (Blackman, 2014: 7).

Within the CCCS paradigm of the subculture theory, "class" became a central category as cultural configuration is assumed to be mediated through "class cultures". As Clarke *et al.* (1976: 13) put it, "subculture and class are analytical categories that are only separable as two sides of the same coin". Most of the CCCS subcultural works were focused on the working-class youth[82] in the marginal part of London popularly known as "the East End". In his article titled "Subcultural Conflict and Working Class Community", Stanley Cohen (1972: 30) states that "… from my point of view, I do not think the middle class produces sub-cultures, for sub-cultures are produced by a dominated culture not by a dominant culture". From Cohen's (1972) statement, it is

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[82] Contemporary authors such as King and Smith (2018: 45) have challenged the interest of early subcultural scholars on working-class youths. According to them "there seems to be no empirical or theoretical reason to presume that subcultures must be found exclusively in subaltern social groups". The many limitations or criticisms of the CCCS analysis are discussed at the latter part of this chapter.

obvious that subcultures were conceptualised as a sub-group which exists against the hegemonic culture of the dominant class.

Peter Willmott (1969), who was one of the earliest scholars to apply the subculture theory in the British fieldwork in the 1960s, examined the range of cultural options available to working-class youth in London's East End. He declared that working-class boys in London formed subcultural groups based on their social class. He argued that the idea of a classless youth culture (that was being debated at the time) was premature and meaningless. Similarly, Hall and Jefferson, whose book, *Resistance through Rituals* (1976)*, is regarded as the centerpiece of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS)'s work on post-war youth cultures, argued against the widely endorsed "embourgeoisement thesis".[83] They maintained that the class struggle which had characterised the previous 150 years may have ended, with working-class people becoming more middle class in their outlook due to their increased wealth (see Leys, 1983: 61). In their research on the Teddy boy[84] subculture of the 1950s, they note that:

> The group life and intense loyalty of the Teds can be seen as a reaffirmation of traditional slum working values and the "strong sense of territory" as an attempt to retain, if only imaginatively, a hold on the territory which was being expropriated from them (Hall & Jefferson, 1976: 81).

The class-based discourse within subcultural theory continued with the seminal work of Dick Hebdige (1979) focused on the semiotic interpretation of a mixed working-class and middle-class youth subcultures. Hebdige argues that subcultures organise themselves on a class basis, that is, within a social order fractured by class. In his

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[83] The embourgeoisement thesis argues that with the increasing affluence of the post-war period, British society was becoming classless (see Butler & Rose, 1960).

[84] Teddy boys emerged in the 1950s as Britain was coming to the end of post-war austerity as the first face of British youth culture. They were mostly young working-class boys and teenagers who first created their own unique teenage style in Britain. They were very distinctive in their hairstyles and outfits (http://www.bbc.co.uk/britishstylegenius/content/21870.shtml).

study of the mods[85] and the punks[86], he notes that the mods' fetishisation[87] of expensive and highly desirable commodities (such as Italian sharp suits and designer sunglasses), symbolised an emphasis on leisure time rather than physical territory as a threatened space. Hebdige argues further that the mods' collective antidote to their workday existence as office boys and unskilled labourers was to take control of their night-time and weekend leisure through conspicuous all-night clubbing and a steady stream of speed pills.[88]

Also explored by Hebdige (1979: 90) were the ways in which class-specific experience was encoded in leisure styles (also based on London's East End community). He believes that subcultures may undergo the same trajectory but possess individual differences and style. For instance, he saw the punks as a deviant rupture who are politically conscious, picking at the sores of soft capitalism, demonstrating that power and corruption need to be exposed. Below is Hebdige's notion of subcultures:

> Subcultures form communal and symbolic engagements with the larger system of late industrial culture. Their styles are produced within specific historical and cultural "conjunctures" … they are not to be read as simply resisting hegemony or as magical resolutions to social tensions – as earlier theorists had supposed. Rather subcultures cobble together (or hybridise) styles out of the images and material culture available to them in the effort to construct identities which will confer on them "relative autonomy" within a social order fractured by class, generational differences, work, etc. (Hebdige, 1979: 90).

Another key tenet of the CCCS subculture is style. Hebdige (1979) argues that the "stylistic resistance" of subcultures was a subversive reaction by young people to a

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[85] Unlike the other youth subculture in post-war Britain, the mods were a working-class youth subculture focused on fashion and music (modern jazz). Source: Wikipedia.

[86] Punk is a subculture which emerged as a bricolage of almost every previous youth culture that existed in the West since the Second World War (see http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wikki100k/docs/Punk_subculture.html)

[87] Fetishisation is a form of obsession, in this case with expensive items of fashion clothing, in which the object is held in esteem by the group because of the special meaning which it is collectively deemed to have (Bennett, 2001).

[88] Speed pills are party drugs and stimulants which keep one awake and hyper-active for hours. Hebdige has been criticised as one of the early youth scholars to "normalise" illicit drug use by theorising it as a non-deviant expression of counter-discourses by subcultures (see Blackman, 2010: 337).

contradictory situation in respect of both age and class (cf. Hodkinson, 2007). The young working-class people studied by the CCCS scholars all had individual unique stylistic identity and expressed imagination through numerous creative practices (Hall & Jefferson, 1976: 13).

However, Hall and Jefferson (1976) contend that while subcultures possess no distinct "world" of their own, they are embedded and remain loosely defined strands within the "parent culture".[89] They note that:

> Subcultures must first be related to the "parent culture" of which they are a sub-set … then they must also be analysed in terms of their relation to the dominant culture – the overall disposition of cultural power in the society as a whole. They exhibit enough distinctive shape and structure that makes them identifiably different from their "parent" culture. They are sub-sets, with significant things which bind and articulate them with the "parent" culture. The idea is thus to mark out the differentiating and the binding axis of the subcultures (Hall & Jefferson, 1976: 14).

British scholar Stanley Cohen (1980), whose life-long research was primarily focused on the links between the youth subcultures and the more dominant "parent cultures", interpreted the various youth styles of the post-war British era as mere sectional adaptations to changes which had disrupted the whole East End community (the specific area where most subcultural activities took place). He defines subculture as a compromise solution between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents and the need to maintain parental identifications (Cohen 1980). Based on his (Cohen's) analysis, styles such as the mod, ted and skinhead (which were popular among British working class youths), were seen as attempts to mediate between experience and tradition which were both familiar and novel. He therefore concludes that the latter function of the subculture was to express and resolve the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture (Cohen, 1980).

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[89] The parent culture referred to here, does not necessarily mean the culture of their biological parents, but rather the culture of their clan, neighbourhood and society (Murdock, 1974). This is however different from the mass culture.

Another notable CCCS theorist, Phil Cohen (1972), describes subcultures in terms of how they facilitate a collective response to the breakup of traditional working-class community. Cohen, whose study was similarly focused on the lifestyle of young people in the East End during the 1950s and '60s, observed that it was the urban redevelopment programmes in the East End of London during the 1950s, and the relocation of families to "new towns" with modern housing estates, that culminated in the irreparable rupturing of traditional working-class ways of life. In other words, his argument is that subcultures were formed by youth from traditionally working-class families who struggled to come to terms with the loss of former working-class communities and structures while trying to integrate into a new environment and new pattern of existence (Cohen, 1972, cited by Bennett, 2001: 19). Cohen therefore concludes that subcultures were an attempt on the part of working-class youths to bridge the gap between life on the new estates and the former patterns of traditional working class life.

Finally, another aspect of the CCCS subcultural theory that more contemporary scholars have alluded to, is the influences of powerful commercial or commodity culture on subcultures. Hebdige admitted in his later works that subcultures' appropriation of these commoditised cultures produces counter-hegemonic styles (see Hebdige, 1988; 1999). For example, he described the modern punk subculture as a unique mixture of an *avant-garde* cultural strategy, marketing savvy and working-class transgression produced in the face of a section of British youths' restricted access to consumer markets. He underscores the line between subculture as resistance and commercial culture as both providers of pleasures and an instrument of hegemony.

Hebdige's position is believed to have been influenced by Mark Abrams (1959), who is credited as the first scholar to implicate capitalism as a key factor in the emergence of the "teenage consumer" as a distinct sector of a purchasing public. This suggests that there has long been a "resignation that market forces inevitably deliver a commercialised and subculturally neutered version of youth culture" (Huq, 2006: 79). This is consistent with a similar assertion by Jonathan Rutherford (1997: 114) that "the global marketplace transformed youth cultures and their signs of revolt and rebellion into commodities, and aesthetic of the 'youth'".

Scholars such as Andy Brown (2007), however, have countered these arguments, arguing that it is a mistake to assume that subcultural movements must be attached to commercialism, and that there is a possibility of the need for authenticity amongst subcultures. Indeed, globalisation and the increasing proliferation of the new media technology such as the internet have led to the what Greener and Hollands (2007) term the "delocalization of subcultures". The internet in particular has been used by young people to create and maintain collective (subcultural) identities. Hence, scholars have found it necessary to re-imagine subcultures in relation to the centrality of technologies using a self-reflexive approach to explore how collective histories, social structures and personal biographies interrelate to create a set of distinctive subcultural experiences and subjective possibilities (Blackman & Kempson, 2010).

The contestations and different paradigmatic approaches employed in different theoretical explanations reflect the complexity of applying the subculture theory in contemporary times. It has been labelled "a 'chameleon theory' which possesses an ability to change its hue according to the sociological paradigm" (Blackman, 2014: 104). Similarly, Albert Bell (2010: 153) calls it a hotly contested theory and analytical tool which remains relevant in contemporary debates in Cultural Studies, Sociology and Criminology.

Criticisms of the subculture theory

Despite offering valuable, sophisticated insights, many of which are still significant, the subcultural theory is far from being uncontroversial and has been extensively criticised by youth scholars. Much of this criticism has been consolidated under the following two categories:

1. Early criticism that relates to structural considerations of the theory, and
2. Post-modern criticism (popularly tagged "post-subcultural studies") that question the conceptualisation of the theory and its applicability in the contemporary youth landscape.

Early criticism of the theory refers to the criticism that emerged from within Britain, "just as soon as the ink was dry on some of the original subcultural works in Birmingham" (Huq, 2006: 10). Critics such as McRobbie and Garber (1976) of the Birmingham

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies point out the failure of the CCCS to include the account of girls' involvement in subcultures, as well as black and Asian youth cultures. McRobbie and Garber identified a strong subculture known as "teeny boppers" among young girls, argue that the all-girls "teeny bopper" culture is an equally significant form of youth culture just as the male dominated subcultures. They found out that the female subculture was less visible because of the stricter parental control to which girls are subjected, which forces them to construct their subcultural activities around the territory available – the home and the bedroom (McRobbie & Garber, 1976). In her later work, McRobbie (1994) attributes the failure of the CCCS to acknowledge this home-centered teeny bopper culture to the selective bias of the researchers and her fellow colleagues at the CCCS. Hence, the present research takes into account this gender dynamic. Despite the fact that most participants in the study were male, the study however does explore the socio-cultural activities of the Platfontein female subculture and hip-hoppers.

John Clarke (1981) of the CCCS similarly faults the Centre's research for starting off and focusing on the most stylistically spectacular working class youth, rather than studying the variety of responses of marginalised groups. Clarke believes this was intentional, as the study of a more marginalised group at the time may have contradicted the CCCS position and theory. While pointing out that the motivations, practices and social backgrounds of subcultural members were essentialised in the CCCS theory, he also notes that the theory fails to account for non-subcultural youth and so-called "part-timers", who are often categorised as dupes of the culture industry (Clarke, 1981). In addition to the CCCS' obvious occlusion of factors such as gender and class, it also occludes race, ethnicity and other categories from its analysis (see Thornton, 1995; Bennett, 1999). Interestingly, the present study focuses on the so-called "marginalised" population outside a western setting.

Most of the criticisms of the CCCS subcultural theories have emanated from post-modern scholars tagged the "post-subculturalists" (see Butler, 1990; Miller, 1997; Diethrich, 1999, 2000; Jerrentrup, 2000; Roccor, 2000; Muggleton, 2000). This raft of discourses and criticisms and debate began in the mid-1980s when some youth scholars declared the "end of youth culture" (see Frith, 1984; Young, 1985). The post-subculturalists questioned the applicability of the Birmingham Centre's model of

subculture in a post/late modern world where taste and aesthetics rather than social class have become the resources for the creation of identity and styles (Bucholtz, 2002; Ball, Maguire & MacRae, 2000). They argue that today's social relations do not have the same rigidity as the past, as global youth culture and style has become depthless, transitory and internally fragmented, and that (Maffesoli, 1996) and that the visible decline of high culture and an increase in the consumption of popular culture by the upper classes in Europe and the US may have rendered subculture classless (Purhonen, Gronow, & Rahkonen, 2009). "They present an individualized understanding of the subculture as simulacrum, where no authenticity exists and individuals are free-floatingly, signifying any identity" (Blackman, 2005: 16).

One aspect that the post -modern critics find problematic, is the inability of subculture theory to acknowledge the centrality of media in the post-war era and in the composition of subcultures. Indeed, many contemporary studies have shown how the new media technology, especially the internet, has emerged as a vital tool in the representation and construction of youth identity worldwide (see Bennett, 2001; McQuay, 2005). The internet is seen both as a "supplement" to participation and as "primary" or "sole" source of subcultural participation (Williams, 2006). For example, a study by Greener and Hollands (2007) on "virtual psytrance" – a global internet-based subculture where young adults enjoy and participate in "psychedelic trance" (a form of computer-generated dance music), rejected the notions that subcultures must be primarily local (rather than global/virtual) and singularly class-based. They argue that the new media technology enables the virtual psytrancers as a modern subculture to transcend locality to create and sustain a strong shared set of values, practices and belief systems, and international connections (Greener & Hollands, 2007).

Other scholars have faulted CCCS' very conceptualisation of subcultures. For instance, Simon Frith (1984) asks: "Why should anyone even romanticise youth and 'ordinary kids'? They are too passive to warrant investigation … their change of style, resistive and subversive nature are typical and not necessarily to signify a moment of symbolic refusal" (Frith, 1984: 219). He further argues that membership of youth groups is loose – as most adolescents and teenagers pass through groups, change identities and play their leisure roles for fun. He therefore concludes that there is a need to reconcile adolescence and subculture, as subcultural studies are an

unnecessary overlap of the extensive studies previously done on adolescents (Frith, 1984: 219). The lack of proper conceptualisation of the theory is believed to have culminated in "a situation where the term 'subculture' has become a 'catch-all' term for any aspect of social life of young people in which style and music intersect" (Bennett, 1999: 599).

As Chris Jenks (2005: 7) put it: "the concept of subculture is blurry in meaning and confused with other related contemporary terms". This is due to the incoherent fashion in which the theory and the emergent discipline of subcultural studies developed. In her critique of the chronological reductionism of the subcultural theory, Rupa Huq (2006: 41) accused contemporary scholars of trying to compartmentalise ideas within the theory in a chronological order, when indeed the theory has developed and continues to evolve in an irregular and much more arbitrary fashion.

In conclusion, the criticisms of the subcultural theory are fundamentally against the conceptualisation as well as the deterministic tendency in assuming that young people behave in certain ways and hold certain values according to their economic class. Many critics believe that by focusing on age, class and male gender in a western setting, the theory systematically occluded other vital categories of persons and groups, as well as other factors that influence subcultural formation. Despite these many criticisms, the present study applies the theory to the popular hip-hop group among the !Xun and Khwe Indigenous people of Platfontein, South Africa.

Platfontein youth as a subculture

Subcultures traditionally represent alternative cultures and practices relative to the dominant culture of an established society. They are formed as creative expressions of cultural difference by marginalised groups which construct themselves within and against the governing culture from which they are born (Kahn & Kellner, 2005). Their comparatively small population size, associations, manifold novelties and activist temperaments, all serve to ensure that subcultures are constructed (Kahn & Kellner, 2005). Also, beyond the ideological dimension of the CCCS subculture, subcultural scholars agree with Clarke et al.'s (1975: 45) position that subcultures are also everyday young people who win cultural spaces in neighbourhoods and institutions, have real time for leisure and recreation, and actual room on the streets or street

corner. Blackman (2014: 7) similarly views them as "an imaginary working alongside the actual".

On most counts, the subculture in Platfontein has a similar make-up and structure as the 1960s post-war British subcultures. There are salient similarities and parallels between the participants of my study and the post-war British youth studied by the CCCS theorists – although it would be facetious to claim a one-to-one correspondence or even to overdraw the similarities. The leap from post-war London to 21st century Platfontein, for instance, clearly fits uneasily, but I am looking not so much for an absolute fit as for a robust conceptual entry point.

The Platfontein subcultural homogeneity, connectedness and adaptation may be regarded as a counter-hegemonic practice to that of the parent culture in the township. As this study later found, the Platfontein subculture may have been formed as a protest body against existing gerontocratic community leadership structures such as the CPA and the San Council. During a focus group discussion, many of the young people expressed concern that individuals who constitute the local leadership in the township mismanage resources and unequally distribute resources and opportunities to favour their own families (Focus group, August 2016).

The Platfontein youth, who are children of immigrant "Bushmen", meanwhile leverage on their own hyper-modern exposure and experiences as young people in the present age. But unlike the young people, many of the older people in Platfontein have had very limited exposure to modernity, having grown up in extreme rurality. They previously lived in tents and relied on oral story telling as their only collective leisure activity in their youthful age. Their only prior encounter with modern media technology was via the Army in the 1980s, when their white bosses used radio, television, walky-talkies and sophisticated weapons (Robbins, 2004). Hence, this study takes into account this history and rurality in the collective framing and construction of the subcultural identity of Platfontein youth.

Thus, the acculturation pattern of the Platfontein youth differs significantly from that of their forebears and that of other South African adolescents in general. The distinctive element of the Platfontein subculture is most clearly embodied in their appropriation of hip-hop – a global youth phenomenon. They appropriate the global youth cultural

practice of hip-hop, and then use their local dialects to rap about the condition of poverty (which is widespread in many South African black townships), as well as about their collective history of war-ravaged homes in Namibia and Angola. The hip-hop subculture in the Platfontein township is seen as a distinct part of the parent culture. The youth subculture exists not in opposition to the local parent culture but in relation with it. In other words, the youth are conscious of their indigenous ancestry, and despite embracing "foreign" cultures, are conscious of their indigenous selves. This is consistent with the sentiment of Hall and Jefferson (1976: 14) that "subcultures possess no distinct 'world' of their own, but they are loosely defined strands within the parent culture".

While some authors have suggested that British post-war youth subcultures may have been formed as a result of frustrations, conflicts and strains caused by the expectation of adults, prolonged admittance into the adult world, and ultimately complicated by class-based problems (Clarke & Jefferson, 1973), the subculture in Platfontein was perhaps formed as a result of the older generation's attempts to evolve into their new hypermodern South African environment since migrating in 1990. The implication of this is that, whilst the younger generation is proactively seeking creative and innovative ways to integrate and voice themselves in their new environment, the older generation continues to struggle to acculturate.

The Platfontein subcultural formation is thus in tandem with Phil Cohen's (1972) idea of subculture as collective response to the breakup of traditional working-class communities, when young people whose families relocated to "new towns" with modern housing estates. The British subcultures may be seen as an attempt on the part of working-class youths to bridge the gap between life on the new estates and the former patterns of traditional working-class life (Cohen, 1972, cited by Bennett, 2001: 19). The older generation in Platfontein was broken up by being demobilised from the South Africa Defence Forces, leading to the current general paralysis, before being dumped on a windy and dusty plain several kilometres from the nearest town. In Platfontein, of course, there is no real working class to speak of. Rather, you have youths who are trying to emerge out of the shadow of their parents, who, after demobilisation from the army, have had few if any life prospects. The youths are

exploring subcultures in innovative but complicated and contradictory attempts to come to terms with or even escape the stigma that marks their formerly soldier parents.

Another aspect of the CCCS theorised subcultures that is relatable to the Platfontein youth is the collective and class[90] dynamics, although many contemporary scholars argue that collectivity and class are no longer relevant in contemporary youth analysis. For instance, Joanna Davis (2006) posits that young individuals nowadays tend to pursue and embrace individual distinct life trajectories, often as a result of adult responsibilities, as well as the bodies and identities portrayed in the global digital media.[91] However, I argue that class and the collective approach remains very relevant as a variable of subcultural analysis in this study and possibly in the study of other modernising contemporary ethnic youth groups.

The collective history and closely-knit ties within the dominant "parent culture" in Platfontein is also reflected in the youth subculture. Newly appropriated cultures and identity often permeate very quickly through the existing communal structure from the technologically advantaged few individuals with digital access (who may be regarded as having higher social class) to the majority who depend on these few for digital experience (see Bodunrin, 2016: 162). The present study has therefore shown that "social class" is a very significant factor in a community undergoing sociocultural and economic transformation such as Platfontein.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that the social class structure in Platfontein cannot be compared to that of the typical capitalist society. The middle-class in Platfontein, for instance, cannot be compared to the middle class in the cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg or Cape Town, or even nearby Kimberly and Barkly West. Despite these class variations and the "class-positioning" of some individuals, members of the Platfontein youth subculture intermingle to form a group.

The subcultural activities described by researchers in the CCCS are also similar to those of the Platfontein youth subculture in terms of recreational intoxication and use

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[90] As earlier discussed in Chapter One, Class broadly connotes material wealth, social standing and self-esteem as a basis of identity of a few persons in the township of Platfontein.

[91] Joanna Davies suggests the need for the theorisation of more flexible terms such as "scene" compared to a more bounded term of "subculture". Also, Paul Ugor (2013) suggests that youth culture has become less bounded and classless, arguing that universal access to digital new media has created a level playing field for young people globally.

of illicit drugs. Hebdige (1975: 197) and Paul Willis (1972, 1978) detailed drug consumption within the British post-war era subcultures. They contend that these "counter-hegemonic practices" are pursued on the basis of leisure and pleasure. They argue that this is how subcultures both regulate conduct and promote experimentation within a framework of social order, even though numerous studies have interpreted this as deviance (cf. Becker 1963). As in this study, hip-hop in Platfontein are known for their recreational use of drugs. No doubt, these illicit drugs are used by the youths as means to escape their dire social reality. It is interesting to note that the smoking of marijuana and use of other illicit drugs is done collectively during group rap music sessions.

Michelle Gourley (2004: 17) observes that drug usage amongst contemporary youths often follows a collective subcultural pattern. She argues that this social context engenders support networks and collective experiences. Meanwhile, Blackman (2010) questions what he calls "drug normalisation" and systemic legitimisation of prohibited drugs among youth subcultures. He traces this phenomenon to the drug normalisation theory and framework which sought to interpret substance consumption as a condition of normalisation separate from crime. He states that this theoretical position was first articulated by Chicago School's Alfred Lindesmith, Howard Becker and David Matza, who in turn influenced the UK National Deviance Conference and subsequent CCCS research. More recently, Blackman (2010: 337) has argued that drug normalisation has been promoted by digital communication technology which is in turn mostly driven by profit-driven mainstream capitalism. However, it is important to note that while most subcultures collectively indulge in illicit drugs, not all subcultures get involved in illicit drugs. For instance, studies such as those of Haenfler (2006), Williams (2006) and Williams and Copes (2005) detail how certain subcultures intentionally abstain from consumption of intoxicants because of the belief that such behaviours are already common in the dominant youth cultures.

While I acknowledge the criticisms and limitations of the subculture theory, I have nevertheless chosen it as the theoretical framework of the present study based on its robust and comprehensive explanation of the postmodernist reality of the Platfontein youth subcultural practices and styles. Like the post-war British working-class youth

(see Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Bennett, 1999), the !Xun and Khwe San youth are currently undergoing a postmodern transitioning process.

The subcultural theory has been applied on a surface level in a similar fashion to that of Howard Becker (1963) and Barron Clinard (1974) applied it. To these authors, "subcultures" possess distinctive shared values and cultural practices that are different from the mainstream. In the context of this study, the mainstream "parent" culture is the more dominant !Xun and Khwe traditional Bushman culture which has been the norm in the community for several years. Thus, the study has contextualised the concept of subculture to make sense of the distinctiveness of a youth segment which is distinct in terms of its relationship to the dominant culture or "parent culture".

Taking a cue from Dick Hebdige's (1999) study, it can be argued that the Platfontein youth acculturation of hyper-modern attributes may have been necessitated by external factors beyond the control of the youths themselves. It might be interpreted as a byproduct of globalisation and media technologies which erode their local community located within an urban centre. As discussed earlier, Hebdige (1999) believes that social relations are continually transformed into culture, and hence a subculture can never be completely "raw", rather it is always mediated and inflected by the historical context in which it is encountered – posited upon a specific ideological field which gives it a particular life and particular meanings. The subcultural style of the Platfontein youth is therefore not novel, rather it is the result of their own history and present circumstances in a hypermodern society.

While the Platfontein hip-hop youth subculture may be regarded as a localised group, the subculture taps into the power of the global new media to keep up with global youth (hip-hop) trends. This is done by tapping into their indigenous roots and structures, which diminishes class disparities.[92] Hence, despite class divisions among members, there is a sense of shared prestige within the subculture, as members leverage on the influence of a few group members from middle-class homes, who have access to "modern luxuries" such as the digital media technologies. Hence, like most modern

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[92] The class distinctions between members of a subculture also reflect the class structure within the main parent culture. However, as stated earlier, the larger Platfontein society generally maintains closely-knit ties that emanate from their collective history as a small, homogenous San Indigenous population (see Chapter One).

subcultures, the digital media remains central in re-working their identity (Clarke, 1990).

The contemporary Platfontein hip-hop subculture is thus an embodiment of the community's unique history, which forms part of the texture of everyday culture, and which brings to fore an absent but unique past into the concreteness of the present where it is apprehensible by the senses of the body.

Indigenous youth identity: Setting the scene

A few seminal studies have examined the complexity of Indigenous youth identity and how such youth negotiate the hyper-urban spaces they find themselves in late-modern times (see Peters & Anderson, 2013; Dietrich, 2013). Partly in response to these studies, countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia have initiated programmes aimed at creating indigeneity-friendly spaces that may allow Indigenous youths to integrate into urbanity (Dion & Salamanca, 2014). South Africa has, however, lagged behind in terms of promoting and provisioning spaces friendly to indigenous youth and their narratives. I have argued elsewhere that in the case of the San population in South Africa, appellations such as "Bush'man'" and "Bush'woman'", which are often used by San scholars in discourses, tend to seamlessly obscure accounts and agency of young people who may neither be categorised as "men" nor as "women" (Bodunrin, 2018).

The current chapter provides a comprehensive review and analysis of the complex identities of the young, networked Indigenous San youth of Platfontein, South Africa, who are caught between the crossfire of global mediated urban identities and the multi-authored, romanticised, pristine identity[93] often promoted by their traditional-minded parents and grandparents, government, filmmakers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These young people, whose local environment is increasingly eroded by new media technologies, struggle with an identity crisis as they seek orientations from the broad variety of convergence and cross-mediated media available to them (Bodunrin, 2014).

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[93] Studies such as Michael Taylor's (2000) have shown that the self-representation of older San in some contemporary contexts is inextricably bound up with a San identity as pristine hunter-gatherers.

The Platfontein youth identity is examined in this chapter within the broader context of a disruptive history that has culminated in poor socio-economic conditions and a fractured relationship with other previously disadvantaged groups in contemporary South Africa. Carol Markstrom's model of indigenous identity is useful in identifying the youth's processes and sources of identity formation, which include experiences within their local ethnic community and local South African influences, as well as their growing connections with the global movement (see Markstrom, 2011). The performance of identity embodied in the popular culture of hip-hop is also discussed to highlight how global cultural forms are adapted in local contexts for self-representation.

While I acknowledge the difficulty of fully capturing the fluidity of contemporary youth identity in this study, the adopted participatory observation method was useful in closely observing young people's daily enactment and performance of identity in Platfontein. In other words, participatory observation allowed me (as the researcher) to compare interviewees' responses on questions of identity with performance or enactment of such claims of identity in a natural setting. The chapter begins with a critical review of the two salient concepts, namely, "youth" and "identity". These are systematically discussed in the next sections.

Unpacking the youth discourse

The term "youth" generally connotes the period of life between childhood and adulthood. Although similar terms such adolescent, teenager, tweenie, young adult, and so on, have been used by scholars as a substitute for "youth", these terms as Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou (2008: 2) note, "misleadingly suggest a homogeneous social and cultural experience that hardly corresponds with the real-life diversity of young people. Furthermore, the rigidity and chronological boundaries these terms create ignore the increasingly fuzzy borders between life phases, as well as how young people experience these borders" (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2008). For instance, "adolescence" – defined as a transitional period marked by deviance, lack of autonomy and competence – is judged against the normative benchmark of adulthood and adult norms (Bucholtz, 2002).

While the preferred term in this study – "youth" – is not without its own conceptual difficulties (see White, 1997; Lalor *et al.,* 2007), nonetheless it offers a more flexible starting point for a discourse-based youth research. The term, as Wyn and White (1997: 22) note, "is loaded with several meanings that relate to the different types of transitions that young people go through from childhood into adulthood". In this study, the term "youth" refers to a largely ignored indigenous age group (18–24), who have grown up in the peri-urban settlement of Platfontein, and who struggle with the complexity and contradiction of being imagined as "indigenous", "immigrants" and "citizens" in late-modern, post-apartheid South Africa.

Knowledge and perspectives about young people have become a socio-political necessity in post modernity. The practice of researching youth began at the end of the 18th century as a bourgeois construct within the educational systems (Mørch, 1985). Since then, various aspects of youth life have been explored, using different approaches. For instance, from around the 1920s to 1950s, youth research was primarily focused on understanding an aspect dubbed "the youth problem". This included general youth delinquency and behavioural practices such as criminality, drug use, political apathy, and health issues. These studies, which were mostly descriptive, defined youth by age and social institution such as school (see Park, 1925; Thrasher, 1927).

From the 1960s, however, there was a shift from pathologising youth or viewing youth as a problem to seeing young people as a creative and innovative force in society. Termed "cultural youth research", the research of the 1960s and '70s collectively examined young people in terms of their stylistic class formations or what was popularly termed "subcultural identities". As discussed extensively in Chapter Four, research by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) embodies the mainly qualitative youth studies of this era (see Cohen, 1972; Clarke & Jefferson, 1973; Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Willis, 1978; Hebdige, 1979).

From the early 1990s, youth research began to emphasise the individuality and diversity of youth cultural expressions situated around aesthetic preferences and commodities, as opposed to the "collective" aspects of earlier youth research tradition (such as the Birmingham School tradition). In fact, many of the prominent youth

scholars who emerged around this time were tagged "post-subculturalists" for their direct criticism of the Birmingham School's perceived structural collective fixity (see Butler, 1990; Miller, 1997; Bennett, 2005). Many of the scholars of this era were mostly concerned about young people's participation and social integration processes within a "modern and post-modern individualised society" (Thompson, 1995).

The 1990s youth scholars also fiercely contested the term "youth". While previously, membership of the category "youth" was exclusively decided by age and via social institutions (such as school), the 1990s scholars argued that the exclusive association of "youth" with age has been weakened as the traits once connected with youth are now observed across a far broader age range in post-modern society (Wyn & White, 1997). Hence, the term "youth" became a colloquial term for persons distinguished from the remainder of the population not just by age but by a certain level of agency, social power and relationship to the labour market[94] (Heaven & Tubridy, 2007: 150). Policy makers, youth organisations and other prominent stakeholders nevertheless, continue to legally stipulate varying age range in their definition or classification of youth. For example, while both the National Youth Commission Act (as amended) and the South African National Youth Policy agree that ages of "youth" are between 14 and 35, the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) defines it as young people between the ages of 16 and 24. These figures are meanwhile entirely different from those of global or international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), which define youth as between the ages of 15 to 24 (UNESCO, 2002).[95] What seems clear is that the category of youth is a moving target.

In the present era, a multiplicity of late-modern discourses on youth have again reverted to a "collective" approach to examining the networked interactions that exist amongst contemporary youths. As Sun Lim (2013) argues, youth identity in late modernity is formed through peer interactions of networked collective identity. The global homogenisation of youth culture and lifestyles enabled by the digital new media technology, has led to the (re)imagining of "youth" as "co-travellers" rather than "sole travellers" (Arnett, 2010). Authors Valentina Cuzzocrea and Rebecca Collins (2015)

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[94] It is assumed that youth typically consume cultural phenomena and assume styles of behaviour and dress that are different from the comparable habits of children and adults (Heaven & Tubridy, 2007: 150).

[95] As mentioned, the Indigenous !Xun and Khwe young participants were between the ages of 18 and 24.

coined the term "Collaborative Individualisation" (CI) to explain that contemporary youths are simultaneously self-reliant but also in need of support and collaboration. Their findings are based on an online survey in which participants were drawn from western countries whose populations who have unrestricted access to digital technology. They conclude that CI provides constructive responses to young people's changing socio-economic needs and refocuses attention on young people's *situatedness* (Cuzzocrea & Collins, 2015). Indeed, the generational context in and through which young people become adults appears to have transformed.

In Africa young people have been imagined as apathetic sufferers embedded in social dynamics that do not threaten fundamental power structures (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005). Unlike the earlier generation of young people who were actively involved in the pre-1960s struggle against colonial regimes, post-colonial African youths are generally youths as "makers and breakers" of new culture and phenomena in the wake of the rise of the neoliberalism (Durham, 2000; Ugor & Mawuko-Yevugah, 2015). Having been excluded from education, healthcare, salaried jobs, even access to adult status, contemporary "youth" in Africa is seen as permanently straddling social categories and lingering in a state of "waithood" (Honwana, 2015). Here you may have noticed that I have surreptitiously smuggled in a qualifier, in order to privilege not just normative youth but the concept of marginalised youth. Essentially, I want to propose that not all youth are "born" equal. Rather, some youth are economically and socially privileged, while others seem to be merely "unwanted youth" and "surplus youth" within the projects of neoliberalism and, lately, transitions to the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is these marginal youths that we will see in Platfontein. It is these that I am most interested in. Former South African Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel, as Chairperson of the National Planning Commission that drafted the National Development Plan 2030, stated that:

> *Eighteen years into democracy, South African remains a highly unequal*
> *society where too many people live in poverty and too few work. The*
> *quality of school education for most black learners is poor. The apartheid*
> *spatial divide continues to dominate the landscape. A large proportion of*
> *young people feel that the odds are stacked against them. And the legacy*

of apartheid continues to determine the life opportunities for the vast majority (Tambo, 2014: 30–31) [Emphasis added].

Manuel might as well have been speaking of the "surplus youth" of Platfontein who are the subject of this study.

Gerontocratic power structures, combined with the power of millennial capitalism's material fantasies, have been identified as a factor in the intensification of youth marginality (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005). Young African males, in particular, face the strains of shifting formulas of gender power and the threats to masculinity posed by their impotence in economic and family life (Sommers & Uvin, 2011). They are stalked not just by the spectre of unemployment and underemployment, but also *unemployability.* Due to many of these problems, Sommers and Uvin (2011) suggest that many African youths express themselves through desperate attempts at migration or delinquent acts and violence.

In South Africa, there has been a significant scholarly focus and recognition of youth's distinctive contribution to the country's political struggle (Bundy, 1987; Naidoo, 1992; Beinart, 2001). The youth uprising of Soweto 1976, followed by the school boycotts and revolution in the mid-1980s, is regarded as a turning point in the anti-apartheid struggle, in the sense that it gave rise to unprecedented levels of popular mobilisation and resistance that eventually ushered in the new democratic government (Naidoo, 1992). During the struggle, the term "youth" appeared to mean anyone engaged in "unrest" – mainly young, black, unemployed men (Seekings, 1996).

The apartheid government promoted the idea of these mostly black young people as "lumpen youth" and a "lost generation"[96] for their active and violent engagement in political protests, school boycotts and challenge of the authority of their parents and teachers and engagement in violent protest (Naidoo, 1992: 146). In opposition to the "lost generation" narrative, anti-apartheid liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) simultaneously labelled young people as "young lions" and comrades of the liberation movement (Seekings, 1996). Essentially the definition of youth depended on which side of the fence one tended to be looking from.

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[96] The term "lost generation" is used to refer to a generation or cohort of youth who are without a future, who are angry and ready to fight (Seekings, 1996).

While there was a decline in youth organisation and socio-political participation in the first decade after apartheid (Mhlambi, 2004), in recent years, young people have again repositioned themselves at the forefront of protests against persistent marginalisation, deepening inequality, poverty, poor service delivery, and a sense of general betrayal by the African National Congress-led democratic government. The 2015 "fallist movement" which emanated from two separate protests, namely the "Rhodes Must Fall" call (an "occupy" type protest at the University of Cape Town to remove the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, but also to do away with the system of imperial corruption that Rhodes set up at the height of the nineteen century) and the "Fees Must Fall" movement (a nationwide student protest for free, decolonised education). These constitute perhaps the most significant youth protests of the post-apartheid era (see Isdahl, 2016; Grange, 2016). The protests brought to the fore South Africa's colonial legacies and status as a settler state, leading to questions about decolonising many facets of South African society and public life, from Africanising history and the school curriculum to the land ownership debate, issues of race relations and class struggle – all of which speak to the conditions of structural disenfranchisement and exclusion of the non-white majority in contemporary South Africa (Grange, 2016).

Contemporary youth movements in the post-apartheid era in South African have leveraged the power of new media technology to organise themselves. Scholars such as Tanja Bosch (2016), who have written extensively about digital activism and resistance amongst contemporary South African youth, argue that the protests were initiated and organised through new and social media platforms. Beyond the subject of youth and protests, a number of scholars have also focused on youth representation in the mainstream media (Smith 2011; Norris *et al.,* 2008; Amoateng, 2015). The bulk of post-apartheid era youth research has been largely focused on a youth segment known as "born frees" (see Mattes, 2012; Norgaard, 2015) or those whom Barbarin and Richter (2001) describe as the "Mandela children".[97] This set of youth born in the early 1990s after the fall of apartheid, has been socially positioned as frontline subjects of historical redress in a "new" South Africa (Waetjen, 2013: 150). A popular topic has been the interaction of the born frees with new and digital media.

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[97] The Mandela children like the born frees are those children born around February 11, 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison. This event heralded in radical social and political changes in South Africa (Barbarin & Richter, 2001).

A notable shortcoming of many of the post-apartheid youth studies appears to be their *urban-centricity*: the sole focus on the urban-dwelling youths (often university students) and young people in large urban townships near cosmopolitan cities such as Soweto, Khayelitsha, Langa, Alexandra, Diepsloot and so on. Hence, the young people in these large urban townships are seen as ultimate measures for rurality (Bodunrin 2016). Such studies generally fail to incorporate the narratives and perspectives of young people in marginalised and out-of-the-way townships and rural areas. The location of these areas outside media-privileged metropolitan sites and spaces often leads them to be perceived as "digitally-disconnected" and as the "third world" within (South) Africa (cf. Molawa, 2009). The bias towards cities is problematic considering that statistics have shown that the majority of contemporary South African youth still reside in these rural townships (Bosch, 2016). In any case, some recent studies also reveal that the digital divide between urban and rural township is not unbridgeable. There seems to be merit in regarding the increasing access to digital technology in many rural spaces as a factor in the increasingly active involvement of perceived isolated "rural" township youths in the socio-economic and political life of mainstream and urban centres (see Bodunrin, 2014).

Focus on traditional chiefs, elders and older opinion leaders (see O'Brien, 2017) has also been a characteristic of studies of indigenous communities, to the detriment of youth issues and identities. Once could call it a gerontocratic bias. However, there seems to be evidence that such lop-sidedness is progressively being challenged by indigenous youth, who are increasingly aware of their agency and are finding all manner of voices, using media and other platforms that are available to them. Deepening access to new modes of mediated communication has meant that indigenous youths are able to negotiate and fashion new types of indigenous hybrid identities and relationships that are redefining normative conceptions of indigenousness, indigeneity and belonging. This has seemed to create generational tensions between them and the more traditional-minded older members of the community, who frequently criticise them for "failing to look up to elders for knowledge" (Florey, 2009: 21), and being "more interested in urban or city life and activities rather than their own roots and traditions" (Espinosa, 2012: 451). As Cara Heaven and Matthew Tubridy (2007: 149) opine, "the [Indigenous] youth are seen as being implicitly rebellious, born as much from a desire to reject the generation that went

before them, as from an identification with what they have become … they are seen as part of the society". Hare *et al.* (2011) see contemporary indigenous youth as stakeholders who will leverage the congressive nature of the present era to develop new ways to carry on and transmit timeless knowledge and values. In the next section the concept of identity is broadly reviewed in relation to shifting contexts, conditions, and meanings.

The complexity of identity and identity formation

Identity, due to its extreme abstractness and pliability, is virtually impossible to define empirically (Hall, 1996). However, it has been productively linked with the politics of inclusion, exclusion and belonging, in the context of strategic self-and other-positioning. The concept is seen by some as having evolved from considerations of self and other, sameness and difference, and fluidity and irreducible situational contingencies that are negotiated in ways that reflect agency and the politics of alterity around the world (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003). The process of self-definition and identity formation is regarded as always already complex and fluid with no fixed prescription of what values are appropriate (Kroger, 2004). Identity formation is best understood in the build-up of a sense of belonging to a collective group that is based on shared physical features, ancestry, history, residence, lived experiences, cultural practices and values, language, or legal definition (MacKay 2005: 7).

Due to fuzziness and complexity of the notion of "identity", some scholars have suggested doing away with it all together (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Alcoff, 2000). Some others, however, refuse to give up on it and have introduced alternative concepts that they feel more ably capture and reflecte the dynamic fluidity of identity and of the human social and self-expression believed to be influenced by multi-layered factors. For instance, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) proposed and extensively theorised an alternative concept of "identification" to explain the "processes" of identity formation and how specific identity positions come to achieve a subjective centrality such that they operate as virtual "master codes" in shaping social actors and their public roles at particular moments. Identification, they argue, is not merely an inevitable consequence of inhabiting a structural situation but one that requires the performance and performitivity of identity work in the fields of culture and politics (see Brubaker & Cooper, 2000).

Broadly, two main approaches to understanding identity can be identified. The first is the more conservative, known as the primordialist approach. This approach views identity as a supposedly objective criterion, one that is naturally given and fixed. It also imagines the self as belonging to a collective group that is clearly defined by criteria such as common ancestry, fraternity or common biological characteristic (Hammond & Axelrod, 2006). The second, known as the instrumentalist approach, is rooted in social constructionist theory. This approach views identity as something that is predominantly formed through political choice. Scholars operating within the instrumentalist approach assert that identity can be actively reconstructed, reframed and even consciously transgressed or reconstituted to suit a particular local context or interactional project (see Butler, 1994; Dunn, 1998; Tan, 2005). The latter approach has been extensively theorised within the context of post-modernity where identity is perceived as a fluid construct, by which an individual can oscillate across numerous identities (see Butler 1994).

By extension, three main typologies of identity can be identified, namely, personal identity or self-identity, socio-cultural identity and collective identity. Personal identity has been taken to refer to the construction of an individual sense of self, or how individuals choose to identify and understand themselves and their world in both a descriptive and a prescriptive sense (Giddens, 1991; Bjorck, 2000; Heaven & Tubridy, 2007). Social or ethnic identity, meanwhile, is the identity given to individuals in terms of social groups, about which they have little or no choice (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, race). Finally, collective identity is shared by social groups, and individuals can voluntarily choose to identify with groups and collective courses (Goffman, 1990). The bulk of contemporary research on identity focuses largely on the link between these three types of identity.

Identity is understood in this study as the development process in which the individual constructs the self as an adaptation to their context (see Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). From this perspective, the young people of in Platfontein are seen as experiencing numerous conflicts in their development of identity (in terms of cultural maintenance and cultural integration or healthy adaptation to the dominant culture). While they recognise their relative group status and attributes as Indigenous people, they simultaneously experience pressures to assimilate into the mainstream culture.

Numerous studies have shown that contemporary cultural identity, identifications and configurations are influenced not just by the local cultural milieu, but also by broader national and global factors (Giddens, 1991; Phinney, 1992; Hall, 1996, 2004; Bjorck, 2000; Phinney & Ong, 2007). The ecological model of ethnic identity formation propounded by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989) succinctly captures these nuances. This theory suggests that the properties of individuals and their environments interact to produce constancy and change in individuals' characteristics during the course of life (see Figure 4.1).
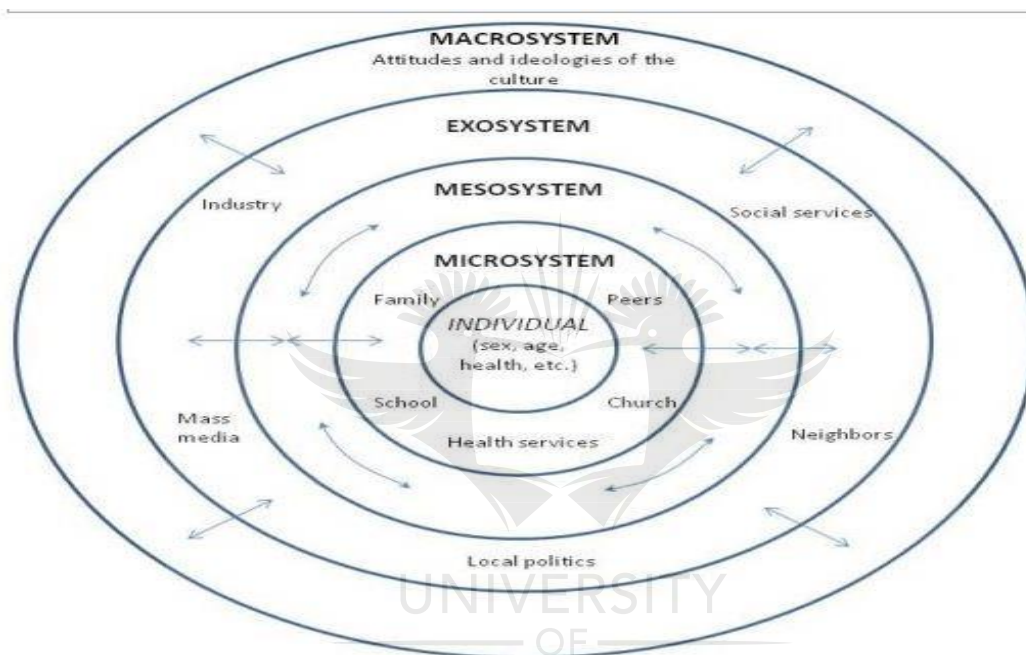
Figure 4.1: Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development (**Source:** Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner (2001) argues that young people develop their identities, ranging from proximal processes (i.e., peer interactions and contact) to wider sociocultural tendencies (i.e., family norms or values). This theoretical assertion is echoed in the work of Stuart Hall (1996), who suggests that social identity must ideally be treated as a process, in order to take into account, the reality of the diverse and ever-changing social experiences. Hall argues that in a sense, identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: "not 'who we are' or 'where we came from,' so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation" (Hall, 1996: 4).

Postmodern identity theorist, John Storey (1999), adds that individual consumption should be seen as an expression of identity – indeed that cultural consumption should be seen as one of the most significant ways we perform our sense of self. While this may not imply that "we are what we consume", or that our cultural-consumption practices determine our social being, "it does mean that what we consume provides us with a script with which we can stage and perform in a variety of ways the drama of who we are" (Storey, 1999: 136).

Scholars who have carried out the study of youth identity as far back as the medieval era in Europe have observed that young people's identity was in that context defined simply based on the social rank and kinship network into which they are born. However, from the early modern period, the rise of the middle class began the shift in the standard for self-definition, as wealth rather than kinship ties became the new measure of social status and self-definition (Baumeister, 1986; 1987). The subsequent Protestant split, and the progressive decline of the Christian faith, is said to have later given rise to an era in which individuals had the liberty to adopt and reject beliefs, traditions and identity (Baumeister, 1986; 1987).

The process of forming a social identity by young people seems to involve a menu of choices that the individual experiments with before the inevitable onset of adulthood. Young people apparently move steadily from a stage of ethnic or "racial unawareness" to one of "exploration" to a final stage of an "achieved" sense of racial or ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This position is consistent with Thomas Parham's (1989) assertion that the process of identity formation "spirals" back to revisit previous stages – each time from a different vantage point. Hence, identity may be seen as "an internal self-constructed, dynamic organisation of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history", which facilitates psychological differentiation from others (Marcia, 1980: 159). This sense of emerging identity, characterised by "a flexible unity", is what makes an individual less likely to rely on others' views and expectations for self-definition (Marcia, 1980: 159).

Marcelo Suarez-Orozco (2004: 177) has argued that identity formation is not so much a linearity in which one passes through a variety of stages on the way to achieving a stable identity but rather, as a fluid and contextually driven process. Although the social context is essential in predicting which identity is constructed, as in the case of

migrants, they perform complex multiple identifications that involve bringing together disparate cultural streams (Suarez-Orozco, 2004). That is, they are constantly reinventing and rediscovering themselves through interactions in social structures, particularly peer reference groups and institutionally circumscribed roles, values and ideologies. Identity is thus "socially constructed", an interaction between an internal psychological process and external process of categorisation and evaluation imposed by others. Basically, the social context is essential in predicting *which* identity is constructed (Suarez-Orozco, 2004).

From these generalisations, we arrive at the consideration of one aspect of contemporary youth identity that has gained most traction in recent times – online identity. The transnational online environment where young people spend a sizeable portion of their time has enabled integral sites of identity, creating contexts, sources and resources for iterations of a distinct contemporary "youth identity" (Castells, 2007; Long & Chen, 2007; Allaste & Tiidenberg, 2015). Social media, in particular, has been identified as a vital tool for identity negotiation, formation and self-representation (Douglas & McGarty, 2001; Ellison *et al.,* 2006; Gibbs *et al.,* 2006). Social media has meant that researchers "can now see and hear directly from youth about how they see themselves and how they believe the mainstream world sees and positions them" (Hughes-Hassell, 2017: 16).

How are new media technologies facilitating political participation amongst youths and creating social change? On the one hand are scholars who firmly believe that social media and the new media in general deepen youths' levels of political knowledge and participation (Buckingham 2006). Others, however, are skeptical about this claim, suggesting that in fact social media does the opposite: it lowers the level of political knowledge regarding matters of the public sphere of mainstream liberal politics. Brian Loader (2007), for instance, argues that youth have a parochial knowledge of mainstream politics, embodied in their often-negative reactions to sociopolitical issues on social media. He suggests that this is proof of symbolic collective behavior, which is antithetical to the survival of institutionalised democracy and the culture of active citizenship (Loader, 2007).

How relevant are these generalisations to a study of youth identity in Africa? First, a look at the demographics. A study by the Population Reference Bureau (2009) shows that the African youth population (especially 15–24-year olds) are growing increasingly faster than in any other part of the world (Population Reference Bureau, 2009). In South Africa, Itha Taljaard (2008) identifies a phenomenon known as a "youth bulge"[98] which seems to have become a great concern to demographers and policy makers. One would think that the "youth bulge" (Agbor *et al.,* 2012) on the continent would have led to corresponding bulge in sturdy research on youth identity. However, this is apparently not the case. Where comprehensive studies have been attempted – such as South Africa – identity remains intricately linked with the ethno-racial and class formations of the apartheid era (Alexander *et al.,* 2015). The transition from apartheid to a "non-racial" democratic society in 1994 has apparently done little to erase racial cleavages. Indeed, it has in some cases made them worse. We saw, with #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFAll, how the racial cleavage returned with surprising force. It appears that the compromise and transition of 1994 neglected to ask the uncomfortable and hard questions, and it is left to the "born frees" to find new frameworks. But nothing is straightforward: there is a persistent cloud of confusion about who belongs where, how and why. Youths who are members of different ethno-racial racial groups are today increasingly confronted with the complexity of negotiating these heritages, legacies, and realities on their own terms. Finding their place in the unravelling cultural integration and nation-building process is no longer a given, if it ever was.

Complicating matters is globalisation. The identity of the majority of black youth has been described by Stevens and Lockhart (1997) as a "Coca-Cola" culture – a worldview informed by American individualism, competition, and individualistic aspirations. So-called cultural imperialism, transnational celebrity role models, pervasive neoliberal economic structures, and the dominance of Western consumerist ideological frames (such as McDonaldisation and Hollywoodisation), converge to complicate the identities of many black youth (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997). The

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[98] "Youth bulge" is the phenomenon of a very high number of young people compared to a country or continent's ageing population is known as a youth bulge and is common in most developing countries where the infant mortality rate has been reduced, but women still have high fertility (Taljaard, 2008; Agbor *et al.*, 2012).

immediate shifts from political activism in the early 1990s to becoming "Coca-Cola kids" was determined not just by the new socio-historical contexts, but also because many black youths seemed to have chosen to actively embrace this worldview as a way of achieving deeper integration (Norris *et al.,* 2008). The presence of globalised American ideological symbols at all levels of the contemporary South African society – via language, dress codes, recreational activities and so on – has become normalised for contemporary South African black youths.

For whites, the post-1994 transformation has meant a downgrading from a political majority to a numerical and social minority relative to black groups (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996). The position of privilege previously enjoyed by them continues to be disrupted, with policies such as affirmative action, black empowerment and other policies aimed at expediting and mainstreaming the economic participation of historically disadvantaged blacks and other non-whites. Appelgryn and Bornman (1996) have suggested that the gradual hollowing out of whites' common privileged position has engendered the return of certain racist orientations towards black people – perceived as benefiting at their expense (or "reverse apartheid"). Pessimism about South Africa ultimately engenders ambivalence amongst white youths with respect to the certainty with which they claim South Africanness (Appelgryn & Bornman, 1996).

Similarly, for Coloureds and Indians[99] who are often regarded as the victims of apartheid complicated racial segregation and categorisations, identity has been quite a complex issue. There is an (un)popular sentiment that they were considered as "not white enough" during apartheid (despite enjoying comparative privilege relative to the blacks) and "not quite black enough" for benefits accrued to blacks in the post-apartheid era (Adhikari, 2005). While they identified with the highly subversive category "black" during the struggle against apartheid, they nevertheless enjoyed comparative privilege relative to the blacks, which was lost after 1994. Since the fall of apartheid, many Coloureds and Indians seem to have realised that the ascribed meaning of the heterogeneous identity "black" does not neatly fit their reality as

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[99] The Coloureds and Indians are part of the ethno-racial categories created by the apartheid regime in 1948. The Coloureds are a multiracial ethnic group in South Africa with ancestry from African, European, and sometimes also Asian while the "Indians" are South African with Indian descent who migrated from colonial India in the 19th and 20th centuries (Wikipedia). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloureds.

individuals and ethno-racial communities (Norris *et al.,* 2008). Hence, Norris *et al.,* (2008) suggest that there are probable resentments by these groups towards blacks in post-apartheid South Africa. They argue that like the white South Africans, their South Africanness has become much weaker, perhaps as a result of their relative privilege (Norris *et al.,* 2008).

Derilene Marco (2011: 97) predicts that post-apartheid society in South Africa may for a long time to come inevitably continue to rely on the language of racial and cultural classification entrenched by apartheid. Despite significant efforts aimed at fostering a non-racial, cohesive South African identity, racial tensions and conflicts (sometimes through the social media and online media comment sections) show that huge contradictions remain.

Into this maelstrom of contradictions is thrown indigenous identity, which is the subject of the current study. Youths from the uncategorised Bushman or San Indigenous population struggle to develop a sense of citizenship in a divided South Africa – a struggle that is linked to a deeper tussle to develop a sense of self that is integrally attached to their indigenous cultures, while functioning effectively in hypermodern South African society. To negotiate the tensions, particularly during times of transition, Indigenous youth improvise upon received meanings, engaging in creative endeavours, which leads to new synthesis in meaning systems and discourse (Adelson, 2000; Swan & Linehan, 2000). This occurs at multiple levels, which include individual, peers, family, extended kinship structures, community, and larger society, and global youth culture (Murray, 2000). Together, these influences put indigenous youth at the nexus of competing expectations thrown up by imperatives of social change, global influence, dominant social paradigms, poverty, joblessness, and indigeneity.

How then are we to study the modes and mutations of indigenous youth identity? Carol Markstrom's (2011) model of indigenous identity, contains some identified variables of Indigenous youth of identity formation highlights for me the complex, multi-layered composition and shifting contexts of contemporary Indigenous youth identity in Platfontein, South Africa. The model captures the distinctive patterns of enculturation

and multi-cultural competence[100] among a youth caught up in sharp global contradictions. In the latter part of this chapter, the performance of identity is discussed in relation to the Platfontein youths, especially as this is the key component missing from Markstrom's model. In my study, the popular cultural practice of hip-hop is examined as a form of performed identity and as a form of popular glocalised identity amongst the youth of Platfontein (cf. González, 2016).

Understanding Platfontein youth Identity using the Markstrom model

Figure 4.2: Carol Markstrom's model of indigenous youth identity containing levels of identity according to types and dynamics and sources of influence. (**Source:** Markstrom, 2011: 520).

The Markstrom (2011) model reveals the various sources of influence inherent at each identified level of influence, while also showing how each level is associated with the different types of identity that are mutually interactive and influential (as indicated by the bidirectional arrow in Figure 4.2). Also, visible in the model are the dynamics of identity, which are partly products of the sources of influence, and which represent the salient themes of identity at a particular level.

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[100] By multicultural competence, I meant the ability of contemporary the Platfontein youth to function effectively within two cultures while maintaining indigenous/cultural identity.

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Markstrom (2011) (see also Markstrom & Iborra, 2003; Markstrom, 2008) argues that the identity formation among contemporary Indigenous youths operates at three levels namely, local, national and global. These three layers recognise the influence of historical colonial oppression as well as the impact of expanding digital technologies in the development of assembled bicultural, multicultural or hybrid identities of the contemporary indigenous youth.

Although, Markstrom's model is primarily based on the American Indian (AI) youth population, it nevertheless "provides guidance along with examination of identity formation of indigenous youth in other parts of the world" (Markstrom, 2011: 519). The model provides a valid framework and prism for understanding identity in Platfontein partly due to the similarities between the "urban" American Indian (AI) youth population in Markstrom's study and the increasingly urbanised !Xun and Khwe youth of Platfontein. My overall purpose in utilising the model is to try and illustrate the multiple sources of influences and types of identities that exists amongst the contemporary !Xun and Khwe youth population in the present-day South Africa. Below, I draw from the model further useful categories of analysis.

Identity at the local level: Ethnic identity

The local level of identity, also known as cultural or ethnic identity, reflects that which is of significance within the local proximal context, such as shared cultural beliefs, values, and practices. Markstrom subdivides the local level into three main components: identification, connection, and culture/spirituality (see Figure 4.3 below). Identification refers to self-perception and one's identification with a local clan or tribe within the broader indigenous community. Connection maps the sense of connectedness to kinship, genealogy/ancestors, and land/place, while the last component, culture/spirituality, comprises language, history, world view, values, beliefs and local practices. These three components of local identity have repeatedly emerged in the literature as core aspects of identity that can enhance individual wellbeing and operate as protective factors for various Indigenous groups (Baldwin *et al.,* 2011; Walters *et al.,* 2002; Kulis *et al.,* 2015). Markstrom's opinion is that identification with a particular culture (tribe or ethnic group) is foundational, and clan membership is primary to identification (Markstrom, 2011: 521).
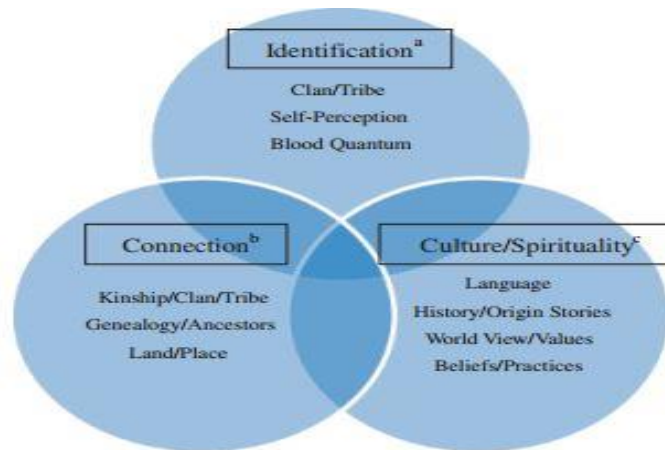
Figure 4.3: Carol Markstrom's local level dimension of indigenous identity.
(**Source:** Markstrom, 2011: 521).

Crucially, the local level also reflects the understanding of an individual or group's experiences, actions, and choices. The level highlights the often-neglected topic of historical and culturally embedded identity constructions specific to a group. In the case of children, for instance, connections with tribal heritage and level contacts with indigenous roots are often determined by parents. However, as they grow up to become young adults, children have more flexibility to explore and incorporate the other components of Markstrom's model, such as the adoption of non-indigenous culture and bicultural orientations (c.f. Kulis *et al.,* 2016: 217).

Markstrom's conceptualisation of the local level of identity echoes Phinney and Ong's (2007: 271) definition of identity – as something derived "from a sense of peoplehood within a group, a culture, and a particular setting". In his early works, Jean Phinney argued that ethnic identity is not just determined by being born into an ethnicity, but by exploring the meaning of ethnic group membership, participating in ethnic group cultural events and activities, and learning about one's family ancestry. He argued that these processes enable one to develop attachment, affinity, and stable commitment to the group (see Phinney, 1992).

In the current study, the local level is developed and understood in terms of the Platfontein youth's own perceived connection and identification with their local San indigenous culture and heritage (this includes culture/spirituality, language, history,

world view, values, beliefs and local practices).[101] The general sentiment amongst the 25 Platfontein youths that I interviewed is that for them, San indigenous identity is foundational and to some extent non-negotiable. Belson and Andre argued that this identification with Bushmanness is a maternal/paternal issue that that is naturally conferred:

> The traditional thing is our background. But as a young guy, I am not completely buried in it and cannot to it relate well. However, I will never leave the tradition even if I love hip-hoppin' and swaggin' (Belson, interview, August 2016).

> It is my culture and I can't change that fact. But as a young guy I have to love hip-hop and all these modern stuffs. This is natural thing because I didn't exist in those traditional days, we only hear stories about it here and there (Andre, interview, August 2016).

Another participant, Diana similarly agrees that San indigenous identity is naturally embedded and remains manifested in their everyday use of the local San languages and dialects (Interview, August 2016). However, many participants and respondents admitted to having limited knowledge of the *actual* mystic San traditional practices related to the identity discourses. The lack of traditional activities such as festivals,[102] rituals and so on, as well the increasing dependency on the digital new media technology, meant their own highly famed traditional practices are progressively "forgotten" or relegated to a mythic form. Ironically, some Platfontein youth admitted to learning about their own traditional culture from the popular media – through films and documentaries made by non-San about the popular San hunter-gatherer cultural practices. Basically, due to the lack of culturally-based native education which were historically passed down to the younger generation via the oral tradition, the young

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[101] It is important to state from the onset that the Platfontein Bushmen described in this analysis do not enjoy similar status and privilege as the American Indians (AI) described in Carol Markstrom's (2011) model. In other words, they are not distinctly placed as an ethno-racial category in official forms, documents and by the census board. Unlike in the United States and other settler countries where Indigenous status and populations are acknowledged (and given certain privileges) as First Peoples in foundational State documents, the Platfontein Bushmen like other Khoisan groups in South Africa remain legally unrecognised. Nevertheless, they remain articulated in formal political discourses as First Peoples, and their images are used in nationwide campaigns, advertisements and other government official promotional materials (Verbuyst, 2016).

[102] The only festival in which the Platfontein San people participate in recent times is the Kalahari Desert Festival organised by the European Union in association with the Northern Cape Tourism Department. The fact that a so-called traditional festival is externally organised makes the enactment of cultural identity very problematic.

"Platfonteiners" have their own cultural identity projected back to them by sources external to them. The danger that such third-party media narratives might contain distortions is real.

Moshe Mahundu, a middle-aged man of about 45, decries the fact that the new media technology has not only disrupted the traditional way of passing down the San culture and tradition to younger generation via oral tradition, but has also led to the acculturation of "foreign" values:

> Technology is good, and many tribes have taken advantage of technology. Hence, if we in Platfontein don't embrace technology, we will be left behind. However, the sad part of technology is that our youngsters learn bad things from them. It is even worse here in Platfontein because majority of them are unemployed, hence they try to practice all they watch in the media spaces. Even we, the parents have failed to create time to mentor our children because all we discuss nowadays are things from TV. Where does this leave our cultural practices? (Moshe, Interview, August 2016).

Interestingly, the real and perceived breakdown in tradition and increasing loss of Platfontein tribal indigenous or traditional identity has not erased a communal sense of identity in Platfontein. I suspect that such a communal sense of identity is retained by the closely-knit relationship households have with one another. I argue that this is because people currently live together in proximity with virtually little or no class differences. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the young participants in my study are compelled to live in proximity together in the township enables them to develop strong subcultural connectedness, as well as a similar group sense of identity and worldview. One might argue, of course, that such a cultural connectedness is not intended but rather happens by default. My answer to that is that it is still consistent with how identities are formed anyway.

Identity at the national level: Bicultural, multicultural, and hybrid identities

Despite global, economic, technological and social transformations, nationality has remained an influential identity category. It still forms the basis for collective self-determination, political sovereignty and sense of belonging. The national level of identity, according to Markstrom (2011), addresses the non-indigenous cultural influences operating within the national context. Markstrom acknowledges that

indigenous youths must negotiate the complexities of living in a broader, all-encompassing and influential national context. Her study finds that indigenous youths sometimes realise that the values by which they are socialised may conflict with those of the national culture in which they also exist (Markstrom, 2011). The bicultural, multicultural or hybrid identities that develop as a result of assembling different arrays of culture available within the national context have been the focus of a number of scholarly works. The national level of identity, according to these studies, recognises the pervasive influence of colonial oppression, historical trauma and similar pressures on Indigenous youth (Duran *et al.*, 1998; Trimble, 2000; LaFromboise, 2006).

An interesting aspect of the study was to ascertain how the Platfontein youth interacted with South African national values (if there is such a stable thing), culture and identity. Worth noting is the fact that the participating youth in this study are the first generation of Platfontein Bushmen born in South Africa. It would thus have been expected that their identification with South Africa was at least stronger that that of their parents and grandparents. Ironically, many of the participants claim that they do not feel "South African" at all. This came as a surprise to me, and I sought to elicit reasons as to why this was the case. Most young Platfontein participants point out that they felt unwanted, alienated and derided by neighbouring communities outside the Platfontein township. The surrounds of Platfontein exist as a kind of "outside world", suggesting a pervasive sense of alienation.

The suggestion is that the youth of Platfontein are prevented, by default, from feeling that they belong in South Africa. Their sense of not belonging is imposed on them by a surrounding world perceived to be hostile to their integration. Diana, for instance, noted the complexity of enacting this identity outside the Platfontein township due to stigmatisation and derision within the neighbouring communities:

> To say the truth, the world *out there* do not like us. These black people (South Africans) in particular hate us. They mock us and call us "*kuuukuu*" people because of our language and its many cliques.[103] The Tshawana people

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[103] The San's complicated relationship with other South Africa ethnic groups (especially the non-whites) can be understood within the historical contexts. Orth (2003) and Boden (2003) both point out that the Platfontein Bushmen's antecedents as apartheid collaborators can be fingered as the genesis of their broken relationship with the African National Congress (ANC)-led government and other ethnicity who undermine their nationalism and political legitimacy in post-apartheid South Africa (see Robbins, 2004).

especially are very terrible. We do not know what we have done to them to deserve this terrible hatred from them (Diana, interview, August 2016) [Emphasis added].

Diana regards the feelings displayed by other people toward them as one of "hatred" and "terrible hatred". Pressed about the reasons for this "hatred", she claims not to know the reason for it, although she hints that it might be because of the way their indigenous language sounds. She frames the Bushman as the "innocents", who do not know what crime they have committed. James Kazumba also thinks that the mockery and derision results from inability of people outside Platfontein to relate to their native language. "The language is very difficult for other people to understand when we speak. This is the reason why other people don't trust San people" (James, interview, August 2016). Whatever the cause, Diana recoils from the world because of her perception of its antipathy towards her and her people. She recoils from the world because it recoils from her.

More than 20 years after independence, San people in contemporary South Africa, when compared with non-Natives, typically exhibit higher rates of lack, deficiency, inadequacy and a general state of being left behind: lacking a high school qualification; high unemployment; inadequate housing and homelessness; infant mortality, accidental death, diabetes, and substance use-related illnesses and mortality; child abuse and neglect (Le Roux, 1999). The sense of being cast-off and unwanted is overwhelming. Rinae Nduba gives an account of the general discrimination and systemic racism *vis-á-vis* the educational system:

Let me just be honest nne? I don't feel any connection to this country (South Africa). People out there make fun of us and our language. Sometimes it seems like it is God's fault. Why did he create us in such a way that people had to make fun of us in everything? We are considered not good enough for everything like you have to see from the education system. Do you know in this community we will never be able to produce medical doctors, IT experts or PhD graduates? This is because the school here do not offer science subjects in the first place. So, it is like a symbolic violence and racism against us. Hence, I don't feel like we are part of the system (Rinae, interview, August 2016).

Rinae goes as far as to suggest that there is a conspiracy against the San of Platfontein. The sense that I was talking to an "unwanted" youth was all pervasive. Interestingly, Rinae uses a very common South Africa-esque colloquialism as she speaks – the "nne", which suggests to me that she is also being unconsciously interpellated by South Africa. As we will note, the identity of the youths is by no means one-dimensional. Rather, it is multifaceted and complex.

The contention that the general stigmatisation of Platfontein inhabitants is behind their feeling of alienation from a South African national identity and sense of citizenship is illustrated by Skambo, who said:

> We feel like outsiders, we do not feel part of whatever is going on in South Africa. We feel like the country does not celebrate us, so why should we care about them or celebrate for instance sporting achievements of Caster Semenya. They just think we are irrelevant and don't know anything. A TV station came here the other day. I just sort of hear them while sleeping. They went to a house in which the person they visited was mentally disturbed, they see the house is not in good condition and they televised it. This is why they conclude at the municipality level that they won't build houses for people in Platfontein because they do not know how to maintain it. They make fire inside (Skambo, interview, August 2016).

However, Skambo is not just talking about alienation. When he says, "…they just think we are irrelevant and don't know anything", the emphasis is on "irrelevance". That is, at the heart of his estrangement is a reaction against the apparent institutionalisation of "surplusness" of indigenous people in general and indigenous youth in particular. Studies have shown that indigenous youth in urban environments with legacies of migration face stigma, often have to navigate cultural conflicts and acculturation related stresses, and frequently encounter discrimination at the hands of non-natives (see Jumper-Reeves, Dustman, Harthun, Kulis, & Brown, 2014).

The stigmatisation, negative labelling and stereotyping of poor and vulnerable people and groups has long been noted (see Waxman, 1983; Goffman, 1990). Stigma demeans and prevents people from full acceptance in society (Waxman, 1983). For instance, socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods that lack the basic amenities of modern or wealthy neighborhoods are often susceptible to labelling and

stigmatisation. This intensifies the inequalities and social exclusion (Lupton 2004). According to Deborah Warr (2007:17) neighbourhood stigma generates conditions for personal isolation, limiting opportunities to develop bridging networks with people outside the area, restricting the flow of prospects and information into areas, and constraining cooperative action.

The general alienation among the immigrant youth of Platfontein in South Africa is consistent with findings by John Berry (2007; 2013) who has written extensively on immigration, acculturation, adaptation and identity amongst ethnocultural youth. Berry maintains that youth who find themselves in culturally diverse societies that have emerged following colonisation and immigration often struggle with acculturation issues related to adaptation to a new and diverse environment. Berry relates this condition to an acculturation typology that includes four quadrants, representing those who adopt only their original culture (separatist), the host culture alone (acculturated), both cultures (bicultural), or neither culture (marginalised) (Berry, 2003; 2007). Platfontein youths fit into virtually all these four quadrants. This shows the highly complex nature of their present-day identity.

Interestingly, the stereotyping and the stigma which disqualifies the Platfontein San from being "accepted" can also be attributed to something other than indigenousness: their immediate past history as "collaborators" with the white apartheid government (see previous discussions in Chapters 1 and 3). At least, it seems that their indigenousness cross-fertilises with their history as collaborators or enemy combatants, to produce a new hyper-surplus identity. Gordon (1995: 2) argues that the Platfontein soldiers' involvement in the war against black nationalist movements across Southern Africa both impacted and was impacted by their San identity. Upon independence, many of the governing liberation movements positioned the San "as 'distinct' and 'other' to create narratives in which San were stigmatised as 'traitors' who collaborated with enemies and were especially brutal". A number of studies have suggested that the legacy of San military identities continues to contribute to the Platfontein Bushmen's multifaceted social, political and economic marginalisation since their relocation into South Africa (Gordon, 1995: 2; Barnabas, 2014; 144–155).

As intimated, the identity of the youths is, however, multifaceted and complex. For instance, I noted that – despite the stigmatisation, perceived discrimination, and the

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general lack of acknowledgement of a national influence on identity – many of the youth I spoke to were aware of a spectrum of popular South African cultural forms such as food, music, dance and so on. Although most of this knowledge came from sources such as school, the internet, national television and radio, a few individuals who have lived and experienced life outside Platfontein appeared to have a broader, more cosmopolitan and perhaps bicultural or multicultural perspective and worldview. They speak fondly of their experiences outside Platfontein, but still claim to feel more "at home" in the township. Sartjie (21) for instance reflects on her experience, working outside the township:

> I worked in the Western Cape in a tourist farm called !Khwattu[104]. I enjoyed meeting new tourists from Australia and other places from whom we learnt new cultures, music, dance, while we taught them our own culture. I had to come back to Platfontein due to financial problems[105] (Sartjie, interview, August 2015).

Another participant, Jason, who has lived in Bloemfontein, the provincial capital of the Free State Province), recounts his experience on being San in the city. While he agrees that there is a justified general sense of abandonment in Platfontein and disconnection from the national mainstream, he thought it was more significant to speak about the opportunities that young people can leverage as Bushman outside the township:

> It is true that we do not feel connected to South Africa here because, to be frank, since we migrated into South Africa in 1990 and the government has not done much for us ever since. The very same government have been doing much for their people but not for us. This kind of reflect their feeling towards us as the Bushman or the San people. They look down on us.

> However, being a Bushman comes with both advantages and disadvantages. What I have realised having lived in Bloemfontein is that we the Bushmen have been overlooking our own advantages of being a Bushman. For instance, for me as a rapper, I became exposed to the outside world, and I was received in

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[104] A google search of the official website (https://www.khwattu.org), shows that !Khwattu is a Non-Profit Company, tourist friendly San Culture and Education Centre jointly directed by the Swiss Ubuntu Foundation and "San communities", represented by WIMSA (Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa).

[105] As noted elsewhere, although poverty (in an economic sense) persists in Platfontein, the communal spirit where people share what they have with others reduces the effect of poverty (Bodunrin 2016).

two totally different ways. Some received me with that mentality of "he's just a Bushman nothing more", while others take you with so much respect, saying "ah! the indigenous people, the real leaders and pioneers of South Africa", they take with you with that respect and that kind of thing. Through music I made a lot of friends. It is such an unfortunate situation that I am back in Platfontein (Jason, interview, August 2016).

Going beyond the physical as well as socio-cultural borders and confines of Platfontein appears to have the effect of upsetting enforced parochialism and marginality. It may be surmised that, were the young people of Platfontein to explore the world outside their local township, they might discover not only the cultural syncretism of South Africa but also that there is enough room for all its citizens. At least, this is the promise of its bill of rights, that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

Is the issue as simple as *simply* venturing outside Platfontein, though? Some seem to think so. For instance, Moshe Mahundu, who works with the local radio station, stated that:

Most people prefer to earn a living here in Platfontein out of fear of discrimination in the outside world. I think our youth must go out there to compete with others. I think many of them have talents and can really compete. The mentality of wanting to stay here in Platfontein and get a job here is bad (Moshe, interview, August 2016).

However, it is not that simple. Staying put in Platfontein has the advantage that the youths do not have to deal with the stigma of the "outside" world. That is, there seems to be safety in numbers, although such a safety is rife with its own contradictions. Essentially, those who stay put have embraced Platfontein's marginality and wear it like a badge. Leaving behind this "protection" of marginality launches them into a larger South Africa which is not only competitive and violent but might further entrench the youths' sense of hopelessness if they fail to "make it" there. A more significant reason for staying put in Platfontein, of course, is that it is economically prohibitive to venture out as well. For instance, one needs money and employability (in the form of a skill and a qualification), neither of which the youth have.

While the majority of the Platfontein youth who participated in this study have lived in the Platfontein township their whole lives, a few individuals (3) had ventured, lived and

worked outside it. Those who have lived outside and have had external exposure are of interest to this study in terms of the uniqueness of their experiences outside Platfontein. For obvious reasons, these three participants tended to have a broader and more cosmopolitan worldview than the others. They also tended to be more sympathetic to the idea of identifying with being South African. As I have argued elsewhere (Bodunrin, 2016), these categories of persons and the few others within the township with unrestricted access to new media technologies (such as internet-enabled mobile phones, digital satellite television and so on) are regarded as opinion leaders and gatekeepers of new culture and trends within the Platfontein township. It was also observed from the onset that these "exposed individuals" were more comfortable communicating with the researcher in English (as a result of their exposure and prior relationship with non-San persons).

The media, especially digital TV and social media (which few people own) are the main source of influence on national issues and culture amongst these few privileged individuals in Platfontein. I found that the social medium of Facebook in particular is also utilised by these few persons as a resource to forge common solidarity with other Khoisan groups who share similar legacies and navigate the same cultural conflicts and face frequent encounters with discrimination from non-natives. Indeed, Facebook has become a vital platform to forge common grounds of belonging and contesting citizenship for the different San ethnic groupings dispersed across the country. For instance, it is the space through which the Platfontein youths engage in national discourses such as the land issue in South Africa where they have sometimes been described as the original land owners of the country. It was on Facebook that a picture such as the one posted below (Figure 4.4) was used as catalyst for discussions on San identity and position within the contemporary South African socio-political landscape.

Figure 4.4. A screenshot of one of the memes used by San people on social media to engage in broader South African debates such as those on land and land redistribution. (**Source:** Facebook).

As Roie Thomas's (2016: 305) study shows, ethnic minorities are empowered by social media and information websites. The universal reach of such social networking is leveraged by the San to challenge the general stereotype of the San as "'just cattlemen' in their own country and as primordial, infantilised, romantic commodities as perpetuated though tourist channels" (Thomas, 2016), as well as to cement the pan-San, pan-Bushman or pan-Khoisan discourses on social media. It is a critical entry point for exploring contemporary manifestations of common struggles and commitments that sustain indigenous cultures and identity. A study by Stephen Kulis *et al.* (2016: 216) shows that American Indian youths in the United States (especially

those who exist in urbanity) utilise the social media to reimagine and promote their indigenous culture and identity (Kulis *et al.,* 2016: 216).

Identity at the global level: Indigenous and hybrid identities

The global level of identity encompasses the development of awareness, affinity and identification with regional and global Indigenous societies, which links to certain sensibilities and practices rooted in a recognition of common struggles and commitments to sustain indigenous cultures (Markstrom, 2011: 521). In this chapter the global level of identity is understood in terms of global cultural influences on Platfontein youth identity. The rise of the Western-dominated new media has given rise to an homogenised indigenous global discourse. Rather than use the imperialist framework to explain the Western media's influence and dominance in Platfontein (see Agba, 2002; Burch, 2006), I have opted to use the "cultural globalisation" thesis – to point out the hybridity and cultural melange that develops as a result of global and local cultural contacts[106] (see Matos, 2012). I take the view that the global influence of new media does not entirely dismember local culture in the case of Platfontein but provides material through which the youth construct a hybridised identity as they negotiate their complex peri-urban realities.

The concept of "hybridisation" is seen by cultural globalisation theorists as well suited to the exploration of the complex flows and the "cultural mixing" of contemporary globalisation processes. Cultural globalisation theorists have underscored the need to recognise the blending of local cultures with global foreign influences, switching to an understanding of global culture as being grounded in a process of hybridisation, and not homogenisation or simply cultural diffusion of Western values (see Matos, 2012: 5–6). The hybridisation argument thus contends that the impact of global culture does not lead to the extinction of the local, but, rather leads to the blending of local cultures with global foreign influences. Hybrid styles are in essence a result of the combination of modern techniques or Western/American influences with national or local identities (Matos, 2012).

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[106] The cultural imperialism theories gave way to the "cultural globalisation" perspectives around the 1980s and 1990s. This was seen as a shift away from a more rigid, neo-Marxist, one-way model of cultural domination towards a more sophisticated analysis and appreciation of "multidirectional flows" across countries, acknowledging the emergence of regional markets, the resistance of media audiences to Western culture and the diversity in the forms of engagement with media texts (Matos, 2012).

In Platfontein, it appears that new media technology has allowed the youths (via the "gatekeepers") to select and adopt certain identities that relate to their present realities. While the majority of the Platfontein youths who participated in my study claim not to have any attachment to a collective South African culture and identity, I could still observe unmistakable traces and acknowledgements of wider influences, some national and others global. Moss Mbangu, one of the "gatekeepers" with relatively unrestricted access to digital new media technology, reiterated the power of such platforms:

> You see, it's not like we are no longer interested in our culture, but the fact remains that times have changed, nowadays. I just sit in my house and watch DStv and see a whole new world and news about my hip-hop idols. For instance, I remember the news about 50 Cent being a bad father during graduation. I see my news basically from my TV. We no longer gather around fire to listen to stories and all that stuff (Moss, interview, August 2016).

Central to this study is the hybridised popular culture and identity constructed around "hip-hop". Hip-hop, which is discussed in this chapter as a form of performed identity, is the form that I believe best embodies the mix of local and global amongst Platfontein youth.

The notion of performed identities refers to the identities embedded in the social interaction, practices and activities that young people routinely mobilise or engage. Judith Butler (1990) defines "performed identity" as an almost inevitable consequence of inhabiting a structural situation. Identity performance confirms the status quo of an individual via language, dress, intercultural relationships, and so on (cf. Morgan & Warren, 2011). The significance of performed identity was first emphasised by Joseph Roach, who asserted that "the body is not a mute facticity … analysing performance allows us to fathom the disparity between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences" (Roach, 1996: 26). Reflecting on the significance of performed identity in understanding change in social conceptions that have been naturalised, normalised and habitualised in a particular place and time, Helen Gilbert (2013: 177) notes that social and cultural experiences that are otherwise resistant to articulation can be tracked through "genealogies of performance" that pay attention to kinaesthetic vocabularies.

Identities such as race and gender are all regarded as social constructs that can be naturalised, normalised and habitualised in a particular place and time. These identities can easily be tracked down through performances (Butler, 1990).

In this regard, one main weakness of the Markstrom (2011) model is its inability to acknowledge the significance of performed identities embedded in the socio-cultural activities of Indigenous youth populations. Since performed identities are complex, nuanced and often intangible, they are best captured using a participatory observation qualitative approach.[107] At least, this is the position that my study argues for. Markstrom (2011) and Kulis *et al.*'s (2015) use of quantitative data sets and over-reliance on interviews in "measuring" America Indian youth identity, obfuscates "performed identities". How does one reliably "measure" performance of identity at all? Through long-term participatory observation among the Platfontein indigenous youth, this study explored the performance of a glocalised identity (mixture of global and local) embodied in the Platfontein hip-hop culture. The discussions also include factors that influence the popularity of hip-hop amongst Platfontein youth as well as the aspects of local culture that are shaped and influenced by global hip-hop culture.

Hip-hop as a form of performed of identity

Hip-hop is a contemporary cultural form[108] which emerged out of the rap[109] component youth subculture within the African-American community in South Bronx, New York, during the mid-1970s (Rose, 1994). An American street gang member by the name "*Afrika Bambaataa*" formed the first hip-hop group called "The Zulu Nation", in an attempt to channel the anger of the young people in the South Bronx away from gang

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[107] For instance, a study conducted on Chicago street gangs reveals that while some young men denied being ex-convicts, the researcher was eventually able to identify the young men who had been to prison through their language, the way the wore their trainers (shoes), and the way they placed their feet when standing. This reiterates the visibility of embodied performance even when not intentionally performed. The contestation against performance as a subjective venture is acknowledged and taken into account in this analysis, however (Conquergood, 1997).

[108] Hip-hop is regarded as a "cultural" form because it contains the key elements and patterns of symbolic action and meaning that are deeply felt, commonly intelligible and widely shared among members of the hip-hop community. This is also in tandem with Gary Ferraro's (1998: 16) assertion that "for an idea, or a behaviour to be considered cultural, it must be shared by some type of social group".

[109] Rap is a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music (Rose, 1994). The culture of hip-hop incorporates four prominent elements: rapping (i.e., the oral), tagging or bombing (i.e., the visuals: marking the walls of buildings and subways with graffiti), DJ-ing (i.e., aural: collaging the best fragments of records by using two turntables) and breaking (i.e., physical: break-dancing) (Hager, 1984). It later expanded to include verbal language, body language, attitude, style and fashion (Kitwana, 2002).

fighting (Lipsitz, 1994). It is also important to note that hip-hop emerged at a time when the Richard Nixon-led government began to publicly privilege white supremacy in racially coded terms (Navarro, 2015) – perhaps similar to the current Trump administration's overt race baiting. This was after an election in which Nixon appealed to the "great silent majority" whom were white and felt "displaced" or "silenced" by the Civil Rights movements of the time (López, 2014: 23). Hence, the early hip-hop artists began to expressly criticise systemic racism, which the mainstream political discourse of the era was silencing. Young, marginalised African Americans tuned in and related to the hip-hop's political messages about racial injustice, police brutality and the dire social conditions highlighted in early hip-hop music (Navarro, 2015: 2). The history of political activism of hip-hop in the United States is best summarised by foremost hip-hop scholar, Tricia Rose, who states that:

> [Hip-hop] is a cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalisation, brutality, truncated opportunity, and oppression within cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity and community. It is the tension between the cultural fractures produced by post-industrial oppression and the binding ties of black cultural expressivity that sets the critical frame for the development of hip-hop (1994: 9)

By the 1990s, hip-hop had become a significant and inerasable feature of US popular music cultures,[110] with an audience of over 500 million in the United States and beyond. Nowadays, hip-hop has become a global brand that is adaptable, localisable and prone to incessant appropriation, and can be used in new social and linguistic environments (McLeod, 1999; Motley & Henderson, 2008). A culture that began among a small subculture of young urban-dwelling African-Americans has morphed into a global youth expression that transcends race, ethnic, class and geographic boundaries. Jason Rodriquez (2006) observes that hip-hop became embraced by white youth in the United States when the youth began supplanting the racially coded

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[110] Popular music is musical compositions which appeal strongly to a wide group of ordinary people in the mass society. The term "popular" is an empirical sociological basis that refer in some way to an existing social category "the people" or "the masses" in contrast to both elitist high culture and traditional tribal culture (Defleur & Dennis, 1994; Fabian, 1997).

meanings embedded in the music and replacing them with "colour-blind"[111] ones. This "colour blindness" provided whites with the discursive resources to justify their presence on a cultural scene formally regarded as "black", and more importantly, to appropriate hip-hop for their own purposes (Rodriquez, 2006).

Similarly, Joseph Sciorra (2011) reveals how white Italians artistically created "hip-wop" from the mainstream hip-hop by apparently excising the gangster image which permeates the popular narrative of the genre from the United States. Peter Webb (2007) reveals how youth in Bristol (in South West England) similarly adapted and transformed the global hip-hop music culture and genre to a localised form tagged "trip-hop". While the commercialisation and modification of hip-hop over the years has caused many to challenge its authenticity as an activist, conscious and underground youth movement (e.g. McLeod, 1999; Clay, 2003), some scholars believe that the core essence of hip-hop remains authentic: the genre remains deeply shared by the marginalised and groups on the socio-economic fringe (Rose, 1994).

Some studies have linked hip-hop to violence, drugs, crime and deviancy[112] amongst practicing youths. Shawn Ginwright (2004: 32) for instance notes that: "hip-hop culture validates, legitimises and celebrates experiences of violence and pain". Studies have also shown that young people who listen to hip-hop are more likely to be deviant and violent (see Miranda & Claes, 2004). As a culture which stems from the tide of racialised violence, deviance, resistance and violence remain stereotyped as the hallmarks of contemporary hip-hop – a genre heavily censored as a result of artists' use of expletives and graphic idioms, metaphors and expresssions (Ginwright, 2004).

However, Alex Perullo (2005) highlights that it is the context that surrounds hip-hop that is infested with drugs and violence. As such, hip-hop is merely reflecting the reality of hip-hop artists, often from the marginalised surburbs and spaces associated with violence, and hooligans who rather use the music genre to project counter-narratives of themselves as creative and empowered individuals in the society. Perullo argues

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[111] Colour-blind ideology is the assertion of essential sameness between unequal racial and ethnic groups in America (Frankenberg, 1993).

[112] Scholars such as Blackman (2010) have argued that the deviance attributed to hip-hop is not necessary something negative or socially unacceptable. It is argued that deviancy amongst youth is normal, as it provides individuals with agency and creativity in the face of moral obligations. Thus, a deviant subculture is created to counter anomie, where symbols, rituals, and meaning promote social cohesion (Blackman 2010: 202).

that youths in these areas have in fact turned hip-hop into a critical medium of social empowerment to alter the conception of youths as hooligans. Perullo's study is consistent with that of Mary Bucholtz (2002), who argues that contemporary hip-hop is a diplomatic means and solution to deal with the complex situations and adverse circumstances that confront many of today's youth. In other words, "hip-hop is employed to cope with social pressure, political instability and economic hardship" (Bucholtz, 2002).

In Africa, hip-hop rode the wave of globalisation and expansion of neoliberal economic and political structures which resulted in socioeconomic development in some places (ShivJi, 2006; Ntarangwi, 2009). The emergence of non-governmental radio and TV stations in the mid-1990s, who were then competing with the established state-owned media for customer base, led to hip-hop artists' access to recording and studio equipment. It was at this point that local production of high quality music generally became available for airplay at the new growing private radio stations. This began the practice where enthusiastic African youths began recording on high quality compact discs, which were aired on radio and TV stations (Ntarangwi, 2009). While the globalisation of hip-hop has occurred in a number of ways in Africa, scholars such as Tope Omoniyi (2006) believe that the most prominent factor in the establishment and growth of the music genre was the dedicated digital satellite channel, "Music Television (MTV)". According to Omoniyi, it is the creation and set up of MTV's 100th channel on the continent that led to the boom in African hip-hop.

Since African music generally goes beyond its natural aesthetic function to reasserting an erstwhile African identity (Basu & Lemelle, 2006), hip-hop blended naturally with African cultures, revealing the sociocultural realities of the practicing youths. The genre was re-Africanised in different parts of the continent into local contexts through the addition of local traditional linguistic and cultural elements. In East Africa, for instance, Chris Wasike (2013) reveals how a localised hip-hop rap sub-genre in Kenya tagged "*genge*" arose to give voice to marginalised urban youth. In West Africa, "Afro hip-hop" is a sub-variety of "mainstream" hip-hop in which several core traditions and the descriptive features of the mainstream form of hip-hop are indigenised into local varieties of the sub-region (Omoniyi, 2006). Tope Omoniyi's (2006) study shows that the Nigerian hip-hop in particular assumes a translocal dimension through discursive

negotiated and constructed linguistic tools such as code switching (CS), reinterpretation, (co-)referencing, and colloquialisms.

In Southern Africa, the Africa sub-region with a similar history and experiences of racial oppression as in the United States, hip-hop emerged as an underground movement employed by youths to resist the racial oppression of the white ruling classes during apartheid (Everatt & Sisulu, 1992; Nixon, 1994; Rosenberg, 2002). The marginalised youth population at this time began by adapting the lyrics of popular US hip-hop group "Public Enemy", transforming their songs such as "Fight the Power" for their own revolution (Battersby, 2003). As Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu writes in his foreword to Sue Williamson's (2004) book, resistant tools such as hip-hop and other art forms were mobilised to transcend the youth's experiences and circumstances of extreme victimisation into an expressive form against the apartheid forces that sought to dehumanise them.

However, the freedom of expression that accompanied the democratic era in 1994 led to the commercialisation of critical musical forms, with the net effect that hip-hop music culture that was formerly embedded in conflict and acted through resistance and evasion during apartheid evolved into a less defiant, aesthetic urban music form for all races. It not uncommon, for instance, to see white youth engaging in hip-hop in post-apartheid South Africa (Bodunrin, 2014). James Battersby (2003) regards hip-hop as one of the few post-colonial (apartheid) texts that reflects South Africa's post-racial identity.

However, some urban hip-hoppers such as Tumi Molekane and Riyadh "Youngsta" Roberts continue to use hip-hop critically to protest the social issues encountered mostly by working class South Africans today (such as unemployment and poverty). Such artists often face rejection from the mainstream media and corporate sponsors, who deem them unfit for their agenda (Nts'oana, 2014). Excluded from the mainstream, many such artists have used the social media platform such as YouTube to distribute their music. Nevertheless, they struggle to get the attention and commercial success of mainstream artists such as Cassper Nyovest and AKA. Marginalised youths in urban peripheries engage with rap as a means to create spaces to penetrate public spheres that often exclude them. Hip-hop in South Africa remains

a potent tool in the hands of marginalised groups, particularly those in townships and rural spaces with limited access to the mainstream media (see Schoon, 2014).

Studies have shown how the oppositional language and consciousness of hip-hop is used by indigenous youths to communicate and assert themselves into the public consciousness while creating a space to engage in politics (Morgan & Warren, 2011; Bodunrin, 2015). Jenell Navarro (2015), who has traced the history of hip-hop amongst indigenous youth populations to the late 1990s when the American indigenous group "Rezervation" used hip-hop to challenge cultural genocide and contemporary post-racial discourse, argues that hip-hop became a medium to engage the process of decolonisation through the following:

1. disseminating a conscious pan-indigeneity through lyricism and alliance building
2. retaining and teaching Indigenous languages in their songs, and
3. implementing a radical orality in their verses that revitalises Indigenous oral traditions/storytelling (Navarro, 2015: 2).

Hip-hop in Platfontein[113]

The beginnings of the hip-hop phenomenon in Platfontein can be traced to 2009, when five youths, namely, Daniel Kapira, Robert Kabuatta, Andre Nthoho, Piet Jonas and James Kazumba came together to form the first hip-hop group known as DRAP JJ Stars. The name "DRAP JJ" was constructed out of the first letter of each group member's first name. The group became popular with their first album titled *Namibia, Angola en Botswana* in 2009. The songs on the album were all sung entirely in the !Xun and Khwe dialects and reflected the historical trajectory and multiple migration of the Platfontein Bushmen over the last five decades. The story narrated in the songs resonated with many Platfontein inhabitants, who ignored the rather unusual genre (hip-hop) chosen as a medium to invoke the message of the !Xun and Khwe diaspora. The Khwe traditional chief, for instance, who listens to the music on radio, believes the music "tells the story of a difficult past" (Interview, June 2014). The album, which was produced in the local community radio station, XK FM's recording studio, was made

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[113] This section of the thesis has been published (see Bodunrin 2016).

available to the youth on compact discs (CDs). This was later converted into Mp3 format for mobile phones and distributed amongst the youth via Bluetooth.

Subsequent albums and songs produced by the DRAP JJ Stars were not as well received as the first album, however. This according to sources (especially at the local radio station), is due to the fact that subsequent songs by the groups were mixed with Afrikaans and English languages and were laced with expletives. The radio station, hence, was unable to play songs on the family-oriented airwaves. Many observers in the community also noted that after the release of their first album, many of the DRAP JJ Stars members became delinquent and even dropped out of school to take on menial jobs to be able to maintain a 'hip-hop lifestyle'.[114] In 2014, the group split as a result of "lack of commitment" from members, most of whom had become parents and had to find means (including working as farm guards) to cater for their families. Still, the group's music and popularity had not gone unnoticed; it inspired other young people within the township to form new hip-hop groups. Notable amongst the individuals and new groups of hip-hoppers are the Blood Eye Gang and the BIC.

The Blood Eye Gang is much younger and consists of eight members who are in their final grades in high school and who all have relatively well to do parents, by Platfontein standards. Because of their parents' socio-economic status, most of the members of the Blood Eye Gang are able to afford the paraphernalia of hip-hop such as neck chains, sneakers, head bands, caps, tattoos and jewelry, and to own technological gadgets, drive cars and be exposed to life outside the Platfontein community. The name 'Blood Eye' was apparently coined from the red eye side-effect of smoking marijuana during the group's hip-hop sessions. The group typically meets during the evenings to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana, substances which they claim are necessary as they give inspiration for their music. Moses (popularly called Mozz), says, point-blank, "When I smoke this shit,[115] it gives me inspiration and confidence" (interview, June 2014). Mozz is the son of an army corporal in the South African Defence Forces (SADF). Mozz's family owns a car, washing machine, DStv and internet-enabled mobile phones, possessions which – in the midst of general impoverishment of the township – place them as a Platfontein elite. Mozz not only

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[114] As earlier stated, hip-hop does not have economic benefits in Platfontein. While artists become popular as local celebrities within the township, their economic status as unemployed youths persists.
[115] Referring to the weed in his hand

belongs to this minority and elite class of Platfontein but captures this elitism in his hip-hop identity. He is trendy and can afford to maintain the general hip-hop lifestyle as if he were a well to do youth in the city. Mozz and the other members of this group speak relatively fluent English, a language which other young people in the township have not even a smattering of.

BIC, on the other hand, is an all-female group made up of three cousins, namely, Diana Shiwara, Sartjie Shiwara and Nikkita Shiwara. "BIC" is an acronym for Best Incredible Choir. The gender composition of BIC is interesting because hip-hop is a male dominated music genre. These female hip-hop artists construct their identity based on American female artists such as Nikki Minaj[116], reflected in this line from one of their songs titled "Freaky World": "Nicki Minaj who you think you are… this is our world, our freaky world world…". Many of BIC's rap songs reveal generational disparities between the girls and their mothers. For instance, in the song "Diana ft Mully", Diana says, "I did tell my mother this is me, this is my life, face your own".

Like the Blood Eye gang, the BIC officially began making hip-hop music in 2015 and performed on stage during the Kalahari festival in that same year. Their songs, mostly rendered in !Xun, Khwe and English, typically reflect their exposure to global media and popular culture, as the following lines from the song "BIC Plat" show:

I am here to do ma job,
Amma rip you up like Nicki Minaj,
Amma hit it up like Willow Smith.
Check BBM and Twitter maybe you can follow me,
Give me a request on Facebook and amma check you later.

Gottlieb and Wald (1994) have stated that female performers in the United States go through complicated metamorphoses as they appropriate and disavow a traditionally masculine space. However, the BIC rappers do not recall any male chauvinism in the admittedly small musical public sphere of Platfontein. Instead, they unanimously claim that they have good 'working' relationship with their male counterparts with whom they have collaborated severally and made many duets.

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[116] Nicki Minaj is a female American rapper

Figure 4.5 Diana Shiwara, a member of the BIC. **Source:** Andre Nthoho (gift to author) 2014 ©.

The Blood Eye Gang, the BIC and other individuals (about 10) involved in hip-hop in the Platfontein community produce their music a Do It Yourself (DIY) recording studio located on the !Xun side of the township. This has been a suitable alternative since the SABC refuses the artistes use of their upscale recording studio. Moshe, an archivist with the local SABC-owned radio, reveals that the station stopped allowing the local hip-hop artists use of its studio partly because of tight schedules but largely because of a perception by officials that local hip-hop music has fallen short of the cultural norms and the ethical standards of demanded by the state broadcasters. Due to this censorship, the artists have had to look for alternative "invented spaces" (see Miraftab 2006). Since 2013, hip-hop music in Platfontein has been produced from the UB bedroom studio (see Figure 4.6 below).

Figure 4.6 – Some of the Platfontein hip-hoppers recording songs in a makeshift bedroom studio in Platfontein township. **Source:** Thom Pierce (gift to author) 2014 ©.

Many of the Platfontein artists perform their music at the annual Kalahari festival[117] in the Southern Kalahari Desert and during the National youth day celebration programmes organised by the local Platfontein radio station. Access to performance spaces outside these "invented spaces" (Miraftab, 2006) of institutional events are limited and difficult. Frosty relationships with neighbouring communities (such as Galeshewe), and their music's use of indigenous languages that are spoken only in Platfontein limit potential audiences outside the township. This limitation is now being recognised and addressed, particularly in the work of new incoming rappers who mix English language in their rap songs. Such rappers dream of making money from invitation to gigs in the city and spaces outside Platfontein.

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[117] Here is the official website of the festival organisers: http://www.kdfest.com/.

Figure 4.7: Some members of the Blood Eye Gang performing during the National Youth Day programme organised by the SABC-owned XK FM in Platfontein.

Figure 4.8: Navigating masculine hip-hop spaces: The BIC on stage during the Kalahari Desert festival in 2013.

Source: XK FM (SABC) – gift to the author. 2013 ©

Hip-hop is seen by many of the artists as a sophisticated tool for self-representation. When asked of what he hopes to achieve with hip-hop, one artist says, "I just wanna push the Bushman culture forward with my hip-hop music". Although it is not clear what he means by "Bushman culture", it appears that asserting an unapologetic self-identity to the world "out there" is of utmost importance to the Platfontein youths. We have noted earlier that Bushman have been (mis)represented as contemporary

'primitives' by external observers. As such, hip-hop appears to have begun in the community out of a strongly felt need for the youths to give voice and vent their frustration against their marginality and against a political system which marginalises and fail to treat them as equal citizens. Jason, a member of the Blood Eye Gang who wrote and produced a song on bucket toilets, dilapidating RDP homes, and the inhuman conditions that Platfontein Bushmen are subjected to in their everyday lives, considers hip-hop as a platform to mobilise others within the township to speak out (Interview, August 2016).

When asked about what they perceived as their main source of influence, many of the Platfontein hip-hop artists named the internet. More than 90% regard the internet as the first and major influence on the hip-hop culture and "style". As earlier indicated, such access to internet is by proxy. The few individuals who have access to the internet via mobile phones, laptop and so on share information with those with no access. Although many of the Platfontein youth own social media accounts, they often have to depend of their friends in order to access these platforms. The internet is popular because it exposes the artists to contemporary global trends in the world of hip-hop but also as a marketing tool: it allows the artists to promote their music. For instance, Figure 4.9 is a Facebook update put up by a member of the DRAP JJ Stars in August 2014, promoting his group brand.

Figure 4.9: A screenshot of a participant's Facebook post illustrates how social media platforms such as Facebook is utilised by the Platfontein hip-hoppers

Source: Facebook (2014).

The second most significant source of influence on hip-hop appears to be digital satellite television. South African popular digital television service, DStv, is gaining in popularity in Platfontein. However, the widespread problem remains: access. DStv is not cheap, and owners of decoders are few. These few persons act as disseminators, change agents, and gatekeepers who begin and spread hip-hop trends within the township. As noted, the individuals with relatively unlimited access to the digital television and the internet belong to a privileged elite which whose status many young people aspire to. This elites dress well, eats well and speaks English better than most in the township. Hip-hop paraphernalia does not come cheap, and the quest to keep up appearances is expensive. The dominance of expensive popular culture and of a digital cultural industry dominated by English and the United States ensures, by default, the pre-eminence of US and global culture and languages. The dominance of English, for instance, has been criticised by some scholars, especially from the global South, for fostering real and perceived cultural imperialism and homogenisation of cultures. In Platfontein, many of the hip-hop artists, particularly those whose parents own DStv, even speak English language with the "American" accent. These artists report that DStv is most useful for getting the latest news on, and styles of, hip-hop. For instance, when asked where he gets his latest news on hip-hop, Mozz says in an American accent "I gat ma DStv and MTV" (interview, June 2017). It was fascinating

to observe that many !Xun and Khwe youth get exposed to global culture via popular entertainment media. This is the same source through which most youths interact with global trends. In this regard, !Xun and Khwe youths are no different to any other youth in any part of the globe.

The agents of change spoken about above seem to be the conduit that disperses the latest and newest trends in Platfontein. I observed that if X, a Platfontein artist who watches Kendrick Lamar on MTV Base, starts to dress, act and sing like Lamar, many youths who have no access to MTV Base aspire to dress, act and sing like X. These youths take X's style as credible because they know that he is tuned into the latest trends via a cable connection to DStv. For instance, a few youths I spoke to claim to have been influenced by some of these "connected" individuals, particularly from the DRAP JJ star music group. For instance, Belson Kajanga says "Andre [a member of the DRAP JJ Stars] brought me up in the rap game. I look up to him and respect him a lot" (interview, June 2014). Some like Jona Marinda state that they learned to produce hip-hop beats when a family member visited the community from Cape Town. Apparently some of the !Xun and Khwe are presently in Cape Town, where they are employed by museums and other tourist organisations as tour guides. When such individuals visit Platfontein, they are expected to bring with them a valuable store of new knowledge about the world "out there". These individuals in turn influence their relatives in the township.

Interestingly, despite the existence of a well-funded and full-time community radio station (XK FM) that broadcasts to the whole community, none of the Platfontein hip-hoppers claim it as an influence. One reason for this might be that XK FM focuses its programming more to suit the conservative adult segment of the population. As Andre says, "the older people listen to XK, we are way past that level" (interview, June 2014). Although the radio station contributed to the hip-hop in the early years, this is no longer the case. It is no longer cool to listen to XK FM among the youths. The suggestion that XK FM is for old people reflects a generational divide in terms of taste in Platfontein. The divide, interestingly, is sharpened by cable television and social media.

One aspect of the generational divide in Platfontein is reflected in language. Hip-hop and contact with global culture appear to have significantly affected Platfontein's traditional base of San languages, Khwedam and !Xûntali. The global hegemony of

American English in mainstream hip-hop music has altered the way youth regard what is "cool" versus what they consider as old and backward. Hip-hop, in this case, is seen not only as a way to learn English but for the youths to fit in with other global youths. Indeed, some studies have linked the mastery of language to music cultures. It is believed that both go hand in hand and both require a higher level of executive control. In this regard, music is seen as a good and a cognitive resource for learning a second language (see Patel *et al*., 2007; Milovanov *et al.,* 2011). There is a general sentiment especially amongst Platfontein youth that the local languages are under threat of domination by other languages, but for some this may be a small price to pay for the rewards of inclusion and global citizenship. This launches us back into the language debate started by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) in the 20th century. Are African languages under threat from globalisation?

Older commentators such as Mr Moshe Mahundu consider Platfontein indigenous languages to be the last identity marker of the people. However, he argues that the San languages in general are gradually being lost as a result of technological acculturation and media spaces dominated by Afrikaans and English:

> When you see two young people communicating in our language here, you will observe that after about the third word, they will insert Afrikaans and English. I fear that we going to be like the Griquas – whose only language is Afrikaans. The Griquas were also San people, who lost their language. The more we lose these words from our language, the more of our cultural identity is lost. Our language is one of the most important identities we have today. This is why I am in support of the creation of the Khwe language dictionary which can be used in school (Moshe, interview, August 2016).

Khwedam and !Xûntali are gradually being replaced by Afrikaans and English words. For instance, I noted that there is no Khwedam word for "thank you"; the Khwe people had substituted it for "dankie" – an Afrikaans word for "thank you". Upon enquiry with the older people I was informed that the Khwedam word once existed, but its usage had long since been discontinued. Mr. Niklas Shiwara, an older man of about 60, opines that for the San languages to be sustained in Platfontein, young people must use them as part of their daily social interaction as well as in their music. He says:

If Brenda Fassie and many South African musicians have succeeded singing in their local language, the Platfontein hip-hop guys should do the same. In fact, avoid the use of the English language and foreign accents. They can emulate the American style, but not the language (Niklas, interview, August 2016).

These views suggest that an important aspect of life at Platfontein is survival of the community and preservation of its cultural apparatus. The language debate in Platfontein is a reflection of the fear that the community's survival is under threat, and that such a threat is mirrored in the youth's preference for English in their musical productions. Interestingly, despite the apparent generational divide, the older members of the community appear to be unanimous in believing that the youths are the future of Platfontein. The contestation appears to be on the direction towards that future. The older generations desire to channel youth identity into "acceptable" directions, but the youths themselves want to choose their own paths. This conflict has exacerbated the sense of existential crisis around hip-hop in Platfontein.

It is not just language that is perceived as a battleground for the survival of Platfontein cultures in the face of hip-hop driven modernity. The proliferation of hip-hop paraphernalia, particularly costume, has been contested. Although the traditional San dress known as !Xai has long been substituted with modern outfits, there is a general perception that hip-hop is behind the wearing of baggy jeans, worn in a sagging style, baseball caps, and designer sneakers (see Perullo, 2005). Mr. Tenda, an older man and the parent of a local hip-hop artist, remarked that it is an unfortunate situation the youths have found themselves in these days. "Whatever they see on the TV and in the video, they just copy, buy and wear them in the community." The aspiration to dress like hip-hop celebrities in Platfontein is problematic because of poverty and the high unemployment rate. For the less well off (which is to say, for most of the Platfontein youths), most of the funds spent on clothing would have been acquired from the government social grant package.

The sense of existential crisis is heightened by the fact that an adoption of hip-hop "culture" is also deemed to contribute to the high rate of sexual promiscuity (including sexual abuse) amongst Platfontein youth. Apparently, sexual promiscuity and sexual

abuse was virtually unknown in traditional San society (Le Roux, 1999). In Platfontein, many young people become parents at young age. An article on the Platfontein Bushmen which appeared in *City Press* in June 2005[118] titled "*Babies galore, poverty notwithstanding*" revealed how early marriages and child pregnancies caused an increase in population and poverty level among the people. In a statement that further expressed the generational divide, Mr. Niklas Shiwara believes that the "lack of respect" for sex is encouraged by the modern things that young people are exposed to. He says, "in the olden days we were taught to respect sex, we controlled our urges, but nowadays, even amongst us the adults, a man no longer leaves his wife alone with his friend, you know what will happened…" (Niklas, interview, August 2016). Of course, hip-hop has been criticised before for misogyny and for glorifying sex and violence via misogynistic messages and videos, which influence young listeners (see Armstrong, 2001; Adams & Fuller, 2006). Incidentally, South Africa is reported as having one of the highest rates of sexual violence in the world (Peterson *et al*., 2005). It sounds more like moral panic, however, to blame the "sexual activity" in Platfontein on hip-hop. The high rate of sexual activity is peculiar not only to Platfontein but is a trend in most of South Africa. It does appear to me, however, that the battle of the bodies of the youths is another aspect in which hip-hop has become a proxy.

Identity flow in Platfontein

This section is a discussion of how new identities permeate through the Platfontein community. A model is developed which shows how new phenomena are appropriated, which ultimately impacts identity and worldview in contemporary Platfontein township. Worldview is understood here as the knowledge at the disposal of an individual or community and the point of view projected on the world with reference to that knowledge (Glaz, 2017: 35). A model which illustrates the identity flow in Platfontein is developed below (see Figure 4.10)

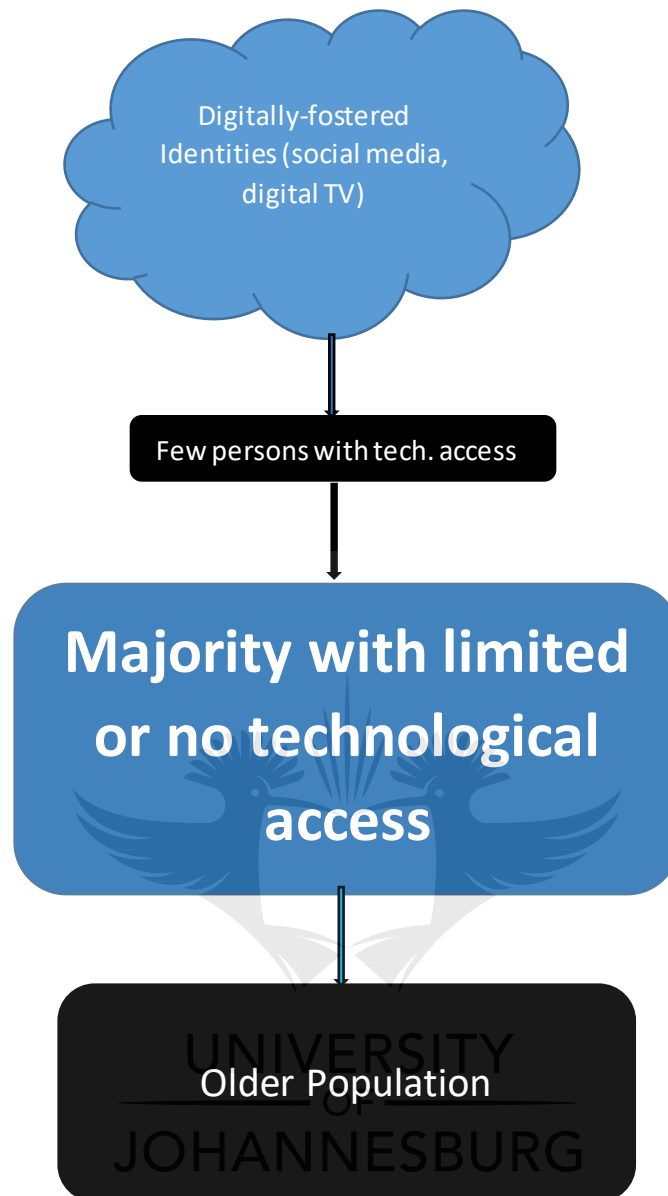[118] See 1.1.87/argief/berigte/citypress/2005/06/05/C1/22/02.html.

Figure 4.10: A chart or model illustrating the flow of new identity and phenomena in the Platfontein township

The model reveals how young people in Platfontein who are at the forefront of the acculturation process encounter new phenomena through mostly digital channels and disperse this through the rest of the township. Like most African communities, youth bulge and generational transition is notable in Platfontein. The implication of this is that young people are at the apex of technological acculturation, which further exacerbates generational tensions and rifts as it has meant that the young people constitute the majority of the population and are in fact in a position of economic advantage.

A unique aspect of this model is the pivotal role of a few young people in Platfontein (belonging to the social class discussed in Chapter One), who have digital access as well as networks outside the Platfontein community. These are persons who by virtue of their exposure and higher socio-economic background become the gatekeepers who determine what permeates through the larger community. As earlier highlighted, the close-knit communal relations in Platfontein (amongst all, irrespective of class), allows identity and new cultural practice, style or phenomena to flow very quickly from these few young persons to other young people and to the older population respectively. The older populace remains generally reluctant and often critical the youth-led acculturation process in the indigenous township of Platfontein.

Conclusion

The chapter begins with extensive discussions of two salient concepts, youth and identity before analysing the multiple influences on contemporary Platfontein youth identity. Carol Markstrom's (2011) model of indigenous identity is the framework used to organise the various elements studied in relation to the exploration of Platfontein youth identity. We noted that Markstrom relied heavily on a quantitative approach to make sense of data from interviews. I, on the other hand, have used both interviews and participatory observation to understand both the Platfontein youth's articulation of self-identity as well as their performed identities.

At Markstrom's (2011) local level, most of the participants admitted that family and ancestry invariably determine their connection with indigenous identity or Bushmanness. However, the absence of indigenous cultural activities such as festivals, rituals, initiation ceremonies, storytelling, traditional healing practices, and spirituality and ceremony and other mythic structures historically associated with San group (as historically highlighted in the literature) has meant that the youth have very limited knowledge of a performed local culture and tradition.[119] Living together as a small unit in rurality has engendered the collective valorisation of a prelapsarian Bushman identity and a collective political agency. However, it was not so much their stated preferences that determined their identity as the structural determinants that

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[119] As earlier mentioned in the study, the only festival and local cultural events that take place according to my respondents is the Kalahari Festival, sponsored by European Union, which many agree is staged and lacks authenticity.

surrounded Platfontein. Poverty and lack, for instance, are important structural determinants of the direction in which youth identities flow. As I have argued, the youth in Platfontein are not so much youth as "surplus youth". As such, their identities are shaped by their determination to belong. However, the youth are met at every turn by stigma, leading to their sense of not being fully South African. They have tended to fall back on global culture, particularly hip-hop, which they access in fragmented, uneven form. The net result is a youth who are liminal, caught in between the past and the present, the indigenous and the national, and the local and the global. These uneven identities are the subject of this chapter.

At Markstrom's national level, the lack of identification with South African-ness was highlighted by the youths. Nevertheless, digital and social media have opened up spaces to keep up with national events and discourses. The social media space gives the Platfontein youth the opportunity to link up with other global youth cultures and phenomena. Global influences amongst the Platfontein youth are embodied in the performativity of the global hip-hop phenomenon. The youth utilise the flexible resource of hip-hop to innovatively construct a self-identity and negotiate the complex contradictions of globalisation. In other words, hip-hop is used as a resource for adaptation and youth involvement in determining their own destinies and futures in the face of adversity (Allen *et al.,* 2014). It allows the youth to "look back while moving forward". Hip-hop is in this chapter regarded as a classic example of a performed glocalised identity popular among the Platfontein youth. While hip-hop has influenced certain behaviour and characteristics such as drug abuse, deviancy, violence and violent language and so on, the culture is simultaneously localised to articulate the everyday struggle of the Platfontein youth.

A model of identity flow in Platfontein was developed. This model shows how young people with digital access have positioned themselves as gatekeepers of new cultures and phenomena in the township. Overall, in terms of cultural integrity, the Platfontein Bushmen (!Xun and Khwe San) youth recognise that times are changing, and cultural flows are amplified in a hypermodern global world. The older people in the indigenous township, who were previously viewed as reservoirs of traditional knowledge, feel that hip-hop driven modernity represents an existential threat. Broadly, however, they

accept the inevitability of youth-led changes and the centrality of young people in late modernity.

The problems of forging a cohesive identity are not merely generational. The youths themselves have a differentiated identity. While there have been efforts on the part of the youth to organise themselves internally within the township, such efforts have been hindered by lack of cohesion, cooperation and commitment from the youth. As Skambo recalls:

> I remember on 27th May (2016), we tried to organise a meeting. It was announced on radio that all young people should gather at the school premises not just to discuss the many issues affecting us as San but also to discuss the way forward. Low and behold, I found only one lady, which made us two. Then we waited and waited until about 30 minutes and only about five people came. We then had to postpone the meeting to the next week, but nobody pitched up (Skambo, interview, August 2016).

Skambo is an important participant because he is one of the few youths in Platfontein with external exposure and a slightly more cosmopolitan experience compared to the other youth who have never gone beyond the confines of Platfontein. He believes a forum and a platform exclusively for the Platfontein youth will go a long way in charting a way forward on the salient issues affecting them in the community, including how to maximise the few opportunities at their disposal.

Skambo, along with Jason, another well-travelled youth in Platfontein, believe that an organisation of young people in Platfontein will go a long way in reviving the local culture in a modern context and promoting pride in San culture through various ways. The idea of an organised Platfontein youth forum is similar to a regional Youth Summit in 2013 held in Namibia at which it was agreed that there must be organisation and need to raise national and international awareness about San identity and current reality', including:

a) Building capacity and raising awareness on issues of indigenous identity
b) Engaging in helping or participating in policy framework shaping
c) Advocating and lobbying for the health, cultural, educational, lifestyle of the San youth in particular

d) To protect San people's rights and interests

e) Strongly advocating for the policy establishment to observe climate change

f) Developing interesting activities to draw the attention of the San youth

g) Capacitate on Indigenousness, UN mechanisms, African Union and about other instruments available

h) Be exemplary in promoting indigeneity (Thomas, 2016: 290).

Through the San youth forum, the youths are encouraged to contribute to the economy to address the challenges of poverty and lack of education. The forum, according to Roe Thomas (2016), has inspired young people to take advantage of affirmative actions such as access to higher education and employment, as well as allocating syndicates for farming and other opportunities available to San people especially in Botswana. However, many obstructions of a structural nature stand in the way, making sustained coherent organisation difficulty. Identities thus tend to be the pastiche that Frederic Jameson speaks about, rather than a cohesive whole built on a coherent foundation.

Crystal Powell (2014: 75) maintains that "marginal spaces do not necessarily produce marginal people". Despite the marginality of the Platfontein youth within South Africa, they continue to find ways to express, represent and project themselves as a people *fully present* in modernity. This chapter therefore examines Platfontein youth identity both via individual adaptive tendencies and collective youth identities within the same setting. The chapter recognises, for instance, the differences in views of individuals who have ventured outside the community and the province and the majority which has lived virtually all their lives in the Platfontein township. Individuals such as Moss, by virtue of their higher socioeconomic background, have access to new media technology and serve as change agents, conduits, and gatekeepers for forging new cultural identities. It is through the few gatekeepers that trends, style and other new phenomena filter through to other youths in Platfontein (see Bodunrin 2016). Cultural relativity recognises that when globalisation's "homogenizing effects" intersect with once-unquestioned local cultural practice (Appadurai, 1996), certain acts of resistance through deliberate cultivation of cultural continuity, or directly, through organised efforts by youth will go a long way in sustaining and even preserving aspects of San culture and identity.

The various strands of their urban Indigeneity discussed in this chapter may not entire relate to the realities of other indigenous San youths. Platfontein youth, for instance, appear to be "more modern" compared to youth from other Bushman communities in South Africa such as the ≠Khomani Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, whose livelihood depends on indigenous tourism and the performance of traditional Bushman identity to gain an income and combat poverty (see Tomaselli, 2012). Nevertheless, this study provides possibilities to see how identity can be forged and negotiated by indigenous youth in a 21st century complicated by globalisation and hybrid cultures.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

What does it mean to be an indigenous youth in South Africa today? The study has sought to address three research questions, namely:

1. How is indigeneity constructed and expressed by selected !Xun and Khwe youth?

2. How are !Xun and Khwe identities constructed and negotiated?

3. What does citizenship (i.e., Indigenous and being South African) mean to !Xun and Khwe youth?

Using what may be termed a "decolonised methodology" (which includes participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups), filtered through the lens of subculture theory, the thesis examined the interrelated concepts of Indigeneity, identity and citizenship to understand how the !Xun and Khwe youth of Platfontein negotiate identity in present day South Africa in the context of late modernity. Throughout this thesis, it is evident that there is an ongoing shift in the indigenous landscape in Platfontein, and the youth population is positioned at the fore-front of changes taking place. The flow of new media technology has enabled the youths to develop new and varied strategies of agency, expression and resilience while negotiating the contradictions, precarity and uncertainties of late-modern life in South Africa. Access to digital technology has allowed Indigenous youths to become cultural interpreters and reporters of the complex issues of contemporary native life in a more bottom-up approach. It has also allowed them to glide across previously assumed boundaries: in the areas of Indigeneity (culture), citizenship (collective socio-political integration) and in terms of their subjective and collective identities via "virtual and real means".

The study showed how youth identity at Platfontein is formed and shaped by local rural, urban and global contexts. Although the youth exist in a largely rural peri-urban space, this space is transformed by the increasing knowledge they have about the world beyond their rurality. They are constantly seeking global youth culture, phenomena and trends as a way to legitimise their belonging to a broader global citizenship. This citizenship is always a mix of local and global, San and South African, traditional and hip-hop. It appears that contemporary indigenous youth imagine

themselves in relation to the popular "Bushman" Indigeneity discourse but seek to negotiate control of the narratives about them that circulate in the public sphere. This negotiation is done partly through digital platforms available to them such as Facebook. Rather than exist in the status quo of the indigenous discourse fostered by external forces, the youth undergo a constant metamorphosis as they seek to position themselves as authors and owners of their culture and narrative. The global youth cultural phenomenon of hip-hop is localised and transformed within the local Platfontein context. The Platfontein hip-hop embodies the popular identity amongst the contemporary Platfontein youth – a mix of local and global.

Citizenship (South Africanness) is also examined via Carol Markstrom's national level of analysis. The analysis shows the complex positioning of the Platfontein Bushmen within contemporary South Africa. Despite the general perception of ethnocentrism and ethnic favoritism, the study shows some hidden layers of national identification among the Platfontein youths. In terms of indigeneity, it was observed that the contemporary indigenous youth imagine themselves in relation to the popular "Bushman" indigeneity discourse but seek to control the narratives about them in the public sphere. This is similarly done through the digital platforms available to them such as Facebook and other alternative forms of expression such as hip-hop. Rather than exist in the status quo of the indigenous discourse fostered by external forces (with vested interests), the youth morph their indigeneity, and try to position themselves as authors and owners of their culture and narrative.

Theoretically, the study applies the subculture theory (the Cultural Studies paradigm), which has been roundly criticised as being inadequate for contemporary youth analysis. Critics and proponents of a post-subcultural approach insist that the contemporary youth landscape is hyper-individualistic and there are no longer ideological motivations for young people to form and sustain subcultural groups. However, these prior debates, criticisms and counter-criticisms have visibly obscured or ignored African societies. The present study has shown the applicability of the subculture theory within the African indigenous context of modernising and socially fluid societies such as Platfontein, where young people rely on subcultural groups as a means of negotiating a highly fragmented and complex hypermodernity. The theoretical tenet of class was used to explain the positioning of a few young people

from wealthier families, who are central in the Platfontein subculture. My conclusion on class is that "class" does factor significantly in subcultural analysis in homogenous rural communities and societies where access to vital acculturative technologies is limited. In the modern mainstream society, social class or economic status may be insignificant since virtually everyone has access to new media technologies, which are vital sources of popular culture and styles. While contributing to the discourse on urban indigeneity in late-modern South Africa, the thesis also shows the extent to which the concepts of identity, indigeneity and citizenship are intertwined in the contemporary indigenous discourse in (South) Africa.

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