

“METHODOLOGIES OF ENGAGEMENT”: LOCATING ARCHIVES IN POST-  
APARTHEID MEMORY PRACTICES

by

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## **DEDICATION**

For Georgina Josias, Frederick Josias, Leslie Christian, and Myrtle Christian.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AABN	Anti-Apartheid Bewegung Nederland
ACTAG	Arts and Culture Task Group
ANC	African National Congress
BP	British Petroleum
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
KZA	Komitee Zuidelijk Afrika
NHRA	National Heritage Resources Act
NUM	New Unity Movement
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADET	South African Democracy Education Trust
SAHA	South African History Archive
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Agency
STHP	Sunday Times Heritage Project
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles

## ABSTRACT

### “Methodologies of Engagement”: Locating Archives in Post-Apartheid Memory Practices

Post-apartheid South Africa represents a period in which practices of collective memory were fundamentally reshaped in support of political transformation. In my dissertation, I examine archival thinking and practice through South African post-apartheid collective memory frameworks. I argue that the ways in which post-apartheid collective memories are mediated, plays a significant role in how archives are being re-created, shared, valued and understood in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing from memory studies scholarship that problematizes the collective representation of human experience, and from a body of critical archival literature that addresses the archival role in helping to shape and sustain often profoundly biased collective memories, I address the following research questions:

How are collective memories produced and transmitted into the public sphere?

How do these processes contribute to archival thinking and practice?

I have considered these research questions in light of a public valorization of memory in post-apartheid South Africa that was framed primarily in the discourses of nation building, reconciliation, historical justice, healing, reparations and unification.

My dissertation research is based on a multiple case study research design of three post-apartheid memory initiatives – the Digging Deeper Exhibition at the District Six Museum, the Sunday Times Heritage Project, and the South African Democracy

Education Trust. The case study methodology was comprised of conducting interviews with curators/producers in each of these sites, analyzing pertinent archival sources, and applying the methods of content analysis to newspaper reviews of each of the cases. The three case studies that I have examined have responded to representational concerns of who facilitates or mediates collective memories, what/who is being represented or excluded, what forums for representative-ness are being made available, and what resources are available to sustain these representations. The significance of this study is its contribution to understanding the implications for archives of a new network of collective memory mediating influences and intermediaries.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

In my dissertation, I examine archival thinking and practice through South African post-apartheid collective memory frameworks. I argue that the ways in which post-apartheid collective memories are mediated, plays a significant role in how archives are being re-created, shared, valued and understood in post-apartheid South Africa.

Drawing from memory studies scholarship that problematizes the collective representation of human experience, and from a body of critical archival literature that addresses the archival role in helping to shape and sustain often profoundly biased collective memories, I address the following research questions:

RQ1: How are collective memories produced and transmitted into the public sphere?

RQ2: How do these processes contribute to archival thinking and practice?

Post-apartheid South Africa, particularly the first ten years of democracy, represents a period in which the social value of archives and other cultural heritage institutions were intensely scrutinized, and new legislation was enacted to enable the institutionalization of what was once seen as counter memories under apartheid rule<sup>1</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> Verne Harris has written extensively on government-led policy making efforts to transform South African archives between 1990 and 1996. See: Harris, Verne (2007). "Redefining Archives in South Africa: Public Archives and Society in Transition, 1990 – 1996." In *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective*, by Verne Harris, 173-202. Chicago: Society of American Archivists.

recency of South Africa's political transition and ongoing efforts to re-structure apartheid-shaped collective memory frameworks makes South Africa a prime candidate for analyzing the processes by which collective memories are re-constructed and transmitted into the public domain. This transitional period that began in the early 1990s has illuminated "politics of memory" processes that have both concretized and sharpened analyses of the mediating roles of political contexts, ideologies, agents, and resources in stabilizing collective memory frameworks. These processes, in this particular period importantly also shed light on the utilization and validation of historical memories in contemporary political contexts, and challenges the binaries between individual and collective memories.

As restated in my conclusion, the 1996 – 2001 South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) sits at the center of national government-led efforts to publicly acknowledge memories of trauma under apartheid, and it was based on the critical need for people to find common ground for the health of South African society. Mahmood Mamdani notes that,

"South African blacks and whites ... have to live together in the aftermath of apartheid. Faced with identities inherited from the past, they must forge new and common identities" (Mamdani 2000, p.179).

As a model of "how private citizens, not experts, can engage the public past in order to make informed choices regarding the common good" Cheryl McEwan (2003) notes that the TRC is a model of "politically active collective memory" (McEwan 2003, p.744). This public valorization of memory was framed primarily in the discourses of nation building, reconciliation, historical justice, healing, reparations and unification (Asmal et al. 1996, Villa-Vicencio and Du Toit 2006). The sheer number of memory initiatives

before and after the TRC indicate the extent to which memory making came to be associated with supporting processes of peoples' healing, supporting reconciliation and realizing 'the rainbow nation', supporting processes of achieving more representative historical records, and supporting processes of reparation, though in some cases, it could be argued to have had converse effects. In particular, the TRC's mandate to address only issues of "gross human violations" resulted in criticism for its "unfinished business" (Bell and Ntsebeza 2001). As has been noted by Mamdani, "the TRC defined over 20,000 South Africans as the 'victims' of apartheid, leaving the vast majority in the proverbial cold" (2000, p.178). But the TRC also validated the roles of already existent, or it ignited the formation of other "politically active collective memory" projects. There are examples such as the Amazwi Abesifazane Memory Cloths Program in KwaZulu Natal, an art collective and venue for the making of a "postcolonial" oral history archive by women who experienced trauma and loss under apartheid (McEwan 2003). There is the Robben Island Museum Memories Archive project committed to documenting the experiences of political prisoners under apartheid. There is the Constitutional Hill Heritage Project set up to engage with and publicly acknowledge the experiences of former prisoners at the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg (Madikida et al. 2008). And there are projects such as the District Six Museum concerned with the structural violence that apartheid inflicted against people. My study focuses on three cases – 1. the Digging Deeper Exhibition of the District Six Museum, 2. the Sunday Times Heritage Project, and 3. the South African Democracy Education Trust Road to Democracy project.

In post-1990 South Africa, the frameworks in which memory institutions, including archives, have engaged with documenting and re-articulating the past are

overtly political. Apartheid impacted on every aspect of people's lives for forty-six years, and its colonial and pre-colonial genealogies extend back to more than three hundred years. Eighteen years after the fall of apartheid, South Africans are still dealing with the violent legacies of colonialism and apartheid. As such, questions on the public nature of memory are political questions that are shaped by history and by contemporary engagements with the notion of reparations for past injustices. Emphasizing a symbolic rather than monetary definition of reparations, the "politics of memory" is an inherent feature of my dissertation. As noted in an extensive range of examples in the memory studies literature, "politics of memory" interests probe the selective nature of memory as shaped and mediated by historical and contemporary political agendas. From an institutional perspective, two key issues emerge from the memory studies literature: "how focal events are recorded, commemorated and told and by what institutions", and the "flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity and capacity for variation and inclusion which such institutions of commemoration and transmission allow" (Feuchtwang 2000, p.66). I have located my dissertation in similar conceptual spaces.

In my dissertation, I have taken guidance from writings that underscore the need to study memory as collective processes of mediation. This approach to studying memory is explicit in the work of Feuchtwang (2000), Wertsch (2002), Olick (2007) and others. Olick argues for a "process-relational concept of memory" (2007, p.98) that addresses both the "media of memory" and "conceptualizes memory as mediation" (2007, p.98). Olick emphasizes that the mediation of memory is an active political construction. Wertsch (2002) has adopted a similar approach in the context of national memory construction in post-Soviet Russia. Using a mediational framework based on

sociocultural analysis, Wertsch (2002) argues that memory is mediated by context and schematic narratives that help to perpetuate, promote and sustain collective memories. He goes further to identify the roles of “active agents” who use textual or cultural resources (media) as mediational tools. The notion of memory as mediated process is complementary to, but less explicit in Halbwachs’ (1992) approach to memory in which he underscores that memory gains meaning as part of collective frameworks or social contexts including family, social class, religion and language (See also: Zerubavel 1995). As has also been noted by Radstone (2005), it is “the wider social and public spheres” that give memory meaning, and where memory is recognized or sometimes misrecognized. Two emphases on memory mediation are therefore noted for my dissertation: how memories are mediated by contexts, and shaped by social and intellectual frameworks; and, the mediation of memory by institutions, agents and resources.

I also consider how the archival literature and archivists have engaged with concepts and practices of collective memory, and how memory studies concepts have been utilized to contemplate the role of archives in society. Archival theories, institutions and practices are commonly and regularly evaluated by supporters and critics for enabling, and sometimes direct complicity, in shaping and helping to sustain biased collective memories (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998; Pohlandt-McCormick 2000; Brothman 2001; Harris 2002; Hedstrom 2002; Nesmith 2002; Schwartz and Cook 2002; Bastian 2003; Cox 2004). Reflecting on the social construction of archives, Nesmith (2002) argues that archives co-create and shape the knowledge in records (p.27), and that they are both products of mediation and mediating influences. Verne Harris (2002)

engages these issues in regard to South African archives, arguing that the ‘archival trace’ that reaches the public through archives are a mere ‘sliver’ of documentary proof of a given situation or event, implicitly implying that archives are products of social mediation. Most writings of archives and collective memory recognize that archives are social constructs that favor particular societal groups and interests. The need for more inclusive archival paradigms, framed by postmodernist and postcolonial theories, is evident in the dominant archival literature that argues for an approach framed by “hospitality to the other”. This notion of “hospitality” to the “other” is an important recognition that archival theory and practice has traditionally been skewed to accommodate dominant sectors and groupings in society, and has been less accommodative of anything outside of this realm. There is value then in Verne Harris’ (2002) assertion that the very nature of archival records is an expression of power. Borrowing from structuration theory, archives and archivists have had the means to engage in recursive processes “whereby they express themselves as actors ... and through their activities ... reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible” (Giddens 1984, p.2). In my dissertation, I focus on the implications for archives of a ‘new’ set of mediating influences as constructed by South Africa’s post-1990 context of political transformation, and in the practices of public memory initiatives designed to redress the historical imbalances imposed by apartheid. Primarily then, these mediating influences are based on counter-memories to apartheid, and democratic values of participation, representative-ness, representation and inclusion.

I have pursued a multiple qualitative case study research methodology, in which I selected three case studies as exemplary of South Africa’s post-apartheid memory

landscape. The cases represent different institutional configurations. The Digging Deeper Exhibition is the permanent exhibition at the District Six Museum in Cape Town, and it is an example of how community museums mediate the production and transmission of memories. The Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP) was developed in partnership between the Sunday Times national newspaper and the South African History Archive (SAHA). The project developed a series of site-based public memorials and produced a series of resources that were designed to deepen coverage of the memorials. The South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) *Road to Democracy Series* originated in the office of the Deputy President, later President Thabo Mbeki and was designed to produce a series of academic volumes on South Africa's liberation struggle. All of the cases were designed to influence public discourse. To address my research questions in reference to these three case studies, I also addressed a series of sub-questions: Who are the mediators and what are their roles? What processes are they employing to reach their goals? What drives these projects, and what are their intended and actual outcomes? To what extent is public reception and impact being addressed in project conceptualization and design? What are the significant contributions by and for archives?

I proceed further to develop an argument that the participatory approaches evident in the case studies enable multi-modal processes of communication between sources, producers and consumers of collective memories through various forms of social intervention and dialogue. While the landscape is and will remain a mediated one, there is value in assessing and understanding the methodologies that are being drawn upon and utilized towards more inclusive and representative collective memory outcomes.

I argue further that this context underscores the need for a shift in archival thinking and practice in which archives are evaluated beyond the traditional archival functions of acquisition, appraisal, preservation, access and use: for how they contribute to an evolving social dynamic that elevates participation and inclusivity, and for how archives continue to be re-shaped by social and political change. In regard to the latter, my main argument is that archives are not static institutions that exist in a social or political vacuum, but that they are compelled to respond to the imperatives of social and political change.

My dissertation is intended to contribute to a growing research agenda for the South African heritage sector, the topic of a recent publication by Harriet Deacon and others (2003) who underscore the need for focused research. For archival and memory studies scholarship more broadly, I wish to interrogate and extend notions of participation and inclusivity by drawing attention to how these are manifested in the production and transmission of collective memories. These underlying, often invisible processes are critical towards understanding the cultural and social significances of archives, and support Brien Brothman's (2001) argument that archives should be framed in terms of their cultural significance most particularly so at a time when new knowledge economies threaten to weaken this framework. My current research is also intended as a baseline for intended future research on memory production as a form of knowledge production, and on how previously marginalized voices contribute to new knowledge economies. In the belief that public policy needs to be fundamentally re-shaped to accommodate this dynamic, mediational roles and practices need to be better understood.

This introduction contextualizes my dissertation by providing an overview of the social and theoretical frameworks that underpin my research questions. Chapter 2 provides a window into an extensive body of literature in which different approaches to the study of memory are outlined, and relationships of archives to collective memory are explored in further depth both broadly and in regard to post-apartheid memory frameworks. In chapter 3, I detail the qualitative case study design upon which my dissertation is based by providing a rationale for the selection of individual case studies, and the research protocols applied for data collection and analysis. In chapters 4 to 6, I assess the dynamics of individual cases by analyzing the key characteristics of each case, their motivations and intentions, and I identify specific frameworks of mediation that have impacted on their work and that they have utilized to achieve their aims. In chapter 7, I provide a synthesis of the cases, and an analysis of my research questions in which analytic generalizations are extracted from the cases, and recommendations for future research are outlined.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I locate my dissertation in relation to expanding memory studies scholarship on collective memory and the politics of memory. I also look at how similar concerns have been articulated in archival writings, and relate the aforementioned issues to memory and archival interests in post-1990 South Africa.

#### 2.1 COLLECTIVE MEMORY

##### 2.1.1 What Is Collective Memory

As evidenced in a wide and interdisciplinary array of literature and conferences on the role of memory in society, the notion of *collective memory* has provided a venue for discussion and debate on how the past is constructed and reconstructed in present day society and what motivates such action. These theoretical probings have drawn attention to collective memory as both “concept” and “activity” (Zelizer 1995), ranging from purely theoretical interests in studying memory to how different contexts display active forms of remembering collectively. Wide disciplinary interests have also attracted wide-ranging interpretations, definitions, categorizations and interests. These add to the complexity of the field, and I note that the complexity of collective memory stems from the fact that it is an analytical tool that raises as many questions as answers, and that active forms of collective remembering cannot be studied apart from the wider contexts

that shape and inform them, and which active collective remembering is meant to influence. My views here are influenced by Halbwachs who in the contexts of family, religious, language and social class collectives argues that, “even at the moment of reproducing our past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu” (Halbwachs 1992, p.49). This being said, there does not appear to be one standard definition of collective memory. In recent memory discourses over the last twenty years, academics and practitioners have used the concept to describe anything that embodies the shared experiences of groups of people, most particularly in light of an ever expanding body of memory sources, modern political upheavals that contest and shape understandings of both past and present, and in recognition that memory has the capacity to both unify and divide societies. Almost a century ago, Halbwachs (1992) addressed how individuals remember in relation to their social and cultural realities, and rather than offer a single definition, proposed that all meaningful remembering takes place within one or more social frameworks that embody the memory of the collective. Language conventions, he argues, “constitute ... the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory” despite the fact that it does not deal well with complexity (Halbwachs 1992, p.45), leading to exclusion. By choosing to focus on four social frameworks of memory, Halbwachs demonstrates that each framework consists of different conditions. Religious practices and traditions, for example, possess similar and different traits to that of family memory and traditions (Halbwachs 1992, p.65), and the same is true for the relationship of both of these to the collective memory of a social class. Halbwachs’ analysis is premised on a simple fact, that no social frameworks of memory are individually or collectively homogenous. An important proposition made by

Halbwachs in the context of family, religious and social class memory is that there is more than one collective memory, and that “the [individual] memory of the same fact can be placed within many [different] frameworks [simultaneously]” (Halbwachs 1992, p.52). Similarly, Zerubavel (1995) uses the term “mnemonic communities” to describe the larger collectives within which individual remembering occurs, and to which it contributes. In addition to family memory, he also cites examples of the workplace, ethnic group and nation, emphasizing their roles in contributing to “mnemonic socialization”, and therefore influencing the way the past is remembered (Zerubavel 1995, p.286). Zerubavel makes a connection between conceptual and active forms of collective memory using the notion of “mnemonic transitivity” enacted through sites of collective memory such as poetry, legends, documents, stories, photo albums and archaeological ruins (Zerubavel 1995, p.291) emphasizing here the transmission of memory through different memory genres. In my dissertation, I acknowledge that the social frameworks that Halbwachs speaks of, in a South African context, are inherently political frameworks as shaped by the realities and legacies of apartheid South Africa, and by the overt political agendas that drove the democratic transition from the early 1990s.

Anthropologists Wertsch and Roediger (2008) observe that, “perhaps the only generally agreed-upon feature is that collective memory is a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared (Wertsch and Roediger 2008, p.318). Definitions of the term become even more evasive in light of its interchangeable use and sometimes blurry distinctions with terms such as social memory, public memory, cultural memory, popular memory, historical memory, living memory, narrative memory, official memory,

public history, lived experience, national heritage, collective remembrance, and collective remembering, amongst other terms (Zelizer 1995, Coombes 2003, Myszal 2003, Piggott 2005). In some instances, the choice of terms reflects particular interests or tensions in terms of how collective memory is referenced and used. Wertsch and Roediger (2008) prefer to use the term *collective remembering*, arguing that memory construction is an active and contested process, as opposed to notions of stability that *collective memory* connotes. Susan Crane writes that both collective memory and historical memory are forms of “historical consciousness” (Crane 1997 p.1373), defined further by Amos Funkenstein as a “developed and organized form” of collective memory (Crane 1997, p.1373). Collective memory, Crane argues “is located not in sites but in individuals. All narratives, all sites, all texts remain objects until they are ‘read’ or referred to by individuals thinking historically” (Crane 1997, p.1381). Others such as Gedi and Elam (1996) have further problematized the relationship between personal and collective memory, viewing collective memory with skepticism, labeling it as myth and equating it with “social stereotypes”, and arguing that if it is to be used at all, its use can only ever be justified metaphorically (Gedi and Elam 1996, p.34). In particular, Gedi and Elam take issue with Halbwachs’ analysis of collective memory, arguing that Halbwachs does not provide adequate explanation for how collective memories are formed, and that “all ‘collective’ terms are problematic ... because they are conceived as having capacities that are in fact actualized only on an individual level ...” Gedi and Elam 1996, p.34). They believe that all memories are completely personal.

Fentress and Wickham (1992) use the term *social memory* as a metaphorical representation of “*collective consciousness*” or “*collective experience*” that, according to

the authors, can sometimes be verified by documentary sources (1992, p.26), acknowledging that social memory can take intangible or material forms, or both, depending on what is being referenced. And, providing explanation for the continuity and sometimes discontinuity of collective memory, Jan Assmann adopts and explains his use of the *cultural memory* concept. By noting its difference to a more general everyday *communicative memory*, Assmann defines cultural memory as “a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation” (Assmann 1995, p.126). Cultural memory, to Assmann, is a form of “objectivized culture” that includes “texts, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities, or even landscapes” (Assmann 1995, p. 128), in other words everyday memory that is mediated by institutions to achieve some form of “stability”. Kansteiner notes that these terminologies and the various explanations are the “vocabulary of memory studies” (Kansteiner 2002, p.181).

A useful working definition of social and collective memory that enables a way of engaging with the “vocabulary of memory studies”, or with several different streams of memory studies scholarship is evident in the work of Barbie Zelizer (1995). Writing with a communication studies slant Zelizer defines collective memory as follows:

“Used intermittently with terms like “social memory,” “popular memory,” “public memory,” and “cultural memory,” collective memory refers to recollections that are instantiated beyond the individual and by and for the collective. Unlike personal memory, which refers to an individual’s ability to conserve information, the collective memory comprises recollections of the past that are determined and shaped by the group. By definition, collective memory thereby presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation. Remembering becomes implicated in a range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interactions as with the

simple act of recall. Its full understanding thus requires an appropriation of memory as social, cultural, and political action at its broadest level” (Zelizer 1995).

For the purposes of my dissertation, I have chosen to not attempt to define collective memory. Instead my approach is based on how memories “gain wider meaning” (Eyerman 2004) through social, cultural and political processes of production and transmission. Framed differently, my interest is in how memories are mediated in the public sphere through predominantly political frameworks, and the social consequences of memory mediation. This, I believe will shed further light on presently articulated definitions and approaches to collective memory. I also pursue a line of analysis that acknowledges not one, but many collective memories.

#### 2.1.2 Collective Memory Interests

Common interest in, and characterizations of the term can be refined thematically: its metaphorical and literal uses; debates about memory’s usefulness in serving the past or the present (Coser 1992, p.28); interchanging use and blurry distinctions with terms such as social memory, public memory, cultural memory, popular memory, historical memory, living memory, narrative memory, official memory, public history, lived experience, national heritage, collective remembering, collective remembrance, and collective consciousness (Zelizer 1995; See also Coombes 2003); the perspective that individual memory cannot be separated from collective memory and that all memory is evoked within a social context (Halbwachs 1992; See also Zelizer 1995); memory’s relationship to history (Cubitt 2007; Nora 1989; Wilkinson 1996; Zelizer 1995); questions and controversies on the authenticity of memory (Said 2000; Soyinka 2000); the politics of memory -- including how far back collective or group memory should go,

it's damaging and/or divisive aspects, and its role as a form of reparations for previously marginalized groups (Soyinka 2000); memory production and transmission as a process of mediation (Confino 1997; Olick 1999 & 2007; Kansteiner 2002; Wertsch 2002; Eyerman 2004); and, memory's relationship to issues of "identity, nationalism, power and authority" (Said 2000, p. 176). Embedded in these themes are questions that I address directly in my dissertation – how memories gain wider meaning in society (Eyerman 2004) through processes of memory mediation by political contexts, human agents, and the specific media forms that are used to convey memories.

### 2.1.3 The Politics of Memory

A component of the memory studies literature that addresses the "politics of memory" provides a useful lens for engaging with memory's mediating influences and active memory making processes. As is implicit in the term, "politics of memory" thinking is primarily concerned with the political uses of memory, and in some cases with the notion of "politicized memory" (Werbner 1998). These perspectives highlight the contested nature of memory, by focusing on controversial memory questions that emerge from particular social and political contexts. Misztal (2003) highlights three perspectives that frame politics of memory debates and thinking: presentist, popular, and dynamics of memory. These classifications generalize complex social and political processes, and therefore need to be assessed based on contextual conditions rather than broadly applied. Presentist memory has been associated with Hobsbawm and Ranger's "invention of tradition" perspective or the belief in a politics of memory based on contemporary political agendas, in which the selective nature of memory is deconstructed to determine the causes, agents and purposes of memory selection (Misztal 2003, p. 56). The most

common criticism of this approach is its tendency to imply that the past is entirely shaped by the present, rendering deterministic outcomes (Schwartz 1982, p. 376). Popular memory perspectives emphasize a grassroots approach to collective memory production, acknowledging the place and practice of oppositional or counter memories, as simultaneous processes to dominant constructions of the past (Mizstal 2003, p. 61). Finally, dynamics of memory approaches emphasize the negotiative aspects of remembering collectively particularly in transformational contexts where these negotiations have added meaning (Mizstal 2003, p. 71). A concern that sits above these different approaches is found in a marked emphasis in the memory studies literature on exclusion, and the need for more inclusive ways of constructing and producing memories that are important to society. Barry Schwartz therefore identifies three intellectual traditions that “shape the terms in which we debate collective memory”, based on multiculturalism, postmodernism, and hegemony theories. Acknowledging that not all scholars align themselves with these perspectives, and that “these issues do not exhaust the dimensions of the existing literature ... readers will find them arising time and again as they move through the present inquiries” (Schwartz 1996, p.277-278).

There are many cases that illuminate politics of memory concerns. The political pressure that led to the dismantling of the Enola Gay exhibit from the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum in 1995 is one such case (Said 2000) that is not solely about what gets remembered, but also how memory is represented and mainstreamed into public consciousness. These same issues of content, representation and mainstreaming present contentious and uncomfortable realities in regard to the role of Islam and African complicity in the Transatlantic slave trade (Soyinka 2000, p. 28), leading Soyinka to

conclude that memory can be both a triumph and a burden, a triumph in the sense that “preservation [of memory] is itself an act of reparation [or justice],” and a burden in the sense that memory can be damaging and divisive (pp. 31-33). Soyinka notes that collective or social memory can play a damaging role, as in the case of its depersonalization of individual experience in the Rwandan genocide, making reference to the often-divisive nature of monetary or non-monetary claims for reparation.

In the setting up of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the US, there was also a process of lengthy negotiations that addressed the highly divisive questions of what form the memorial should take, the influence of contemporary American politics, the inclusion of survivor and witness testimonies, the architectural design of the memorial, and who would be included as the key stakeholders (Rabinbach 1997).

In another kind of case that highlights the practices and politics of institutionalizing collective memory at national and regional levels, Hamada (2003) provides a comparative analysis of three Japanese middle-school history textbooks and one from the People’s Republic of China in terms of their narration of past events. She concludes that this process of constructing national memories through text-book production was strongly underpinned by political ideologies that served “to both voice and silence” (p. 144). This became evident in language usage, representations of colonizer and colonized and subsequent narratives of heroes and villains, varying levels of detail, the extent to which conflicting accounts of events are presented, and the “linear temporal model” (p. 136) or sequential structure along which the narratives are constructed.

Osiel (1997) draws on the experiences of Germany, Japan, France, Israel and Argentina, and the impact of the criminal trials of former repressive regimes on collective memory formation, noting successful outcomes for collective memory as a result of the public attention that such trials attract (p. 2). However, as a deterministic effort that uses the law to influence collective memory, he provides several words of caution, including: a subjugation of the rights of individuals that would go along with elevating the notion of “social solidarity”; a de-historicization of the past causing a disjuncture in continuity between past, present and future; a need for more confessions than people are willing to give; an undermining of the spontaneity of collective memory, and; the idea that the deliberate shaping of collective memory being undertaken is hidden from the public audience (pp. 7-8). These perspectives go to the heart of Said’s (2000) argument that the role of “the invention of tradition” is a complicating factor in memory development as,

“it is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way. Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful” (p. 179).

Richard Werbner (1998) has engaged with questions of “politicized memory” in African post-colonial contexts, a less common theme in Western scholarship on memory. Werbner emphasizes a public practice dimension of memory that demands a “right of recountability ... the right, especially in the face of state violence and oppression, to make a citizen’s memory known and acknowledged in the public sphere” (Werbner 1998, p.1). This public practice dimension of memory finds some synergy with that of memory as a form of reparations for previously marginalized groups (Soyinka, 2000). But beyond the reparative dimensions of social memory, Werbner and the collection of essays in *Memory and the Postcolony* draw attention to the notion of “unsettled memory” (1998,

p.3) that surfaces in societies which are in a perpetual state of civil war, thus leaving no room for symbolic reparations. Arguing that presentist notions of memory “reduces memory to an artifact of the here and now, as if it were merely a backwards construction after the fact”, Werbner rejects the arguments made by Halbwachs, and advocates for an historical approach to the study of memory (Werbner 1998, p.2), and for “a constant focus on politicised memory ... [that is,] on continuing struggles whose outcome is yet to be decided, struggles in which the political cannot be meaningfully studied apart from the moral” (Werbner 1998, p.15).

#### 2.1.4 The Mediation of Memory

The mediative aspects of memory are a thread in the memory studies literature. The shared, negotiated, dialogic, contextually-framed, politically-motivated, identity-forming, selective, generational, narrative, story-telling, and representational aspects of collective memory all confirm that processes of mediation are at work in collective memory formation. Wertsch (2002) and others emphasize the role of human agents by, arguing that “to be human is to use the “cultural tools”, or mediational means, that are provided by a particular sociocultural setting” (2002, p.11), emphasizing the roles and utilization of certain “semiotic means provided by cultural, historical, and institutional contexts” (Wertsch and Roediger 2008, p.322). There is synergy here with Jeffrey Olick’s proposal for a “process-relational concept of memory (Olick 2007, p.98) that addresses both the “media of memory” and “conceptualizes memory as mediation” (Olick 2007, p.98). In this regard, Olick writes that,

“Some media produce permanence, others repetition, some constant change; some unify collectivities, others mark off particular fractions; some strive for supremacy (e.g. some versions of academic historiography) whereas others celebrate multiplicity. Remembering as the

mediation of past and present changes with context, technology and epoch. Which pasts are remembered is thus only one question next to the more basic one of what remembering is and does” (Olick 2007, p.99).

By not implying a reduction in the role of “human agents”, the main issue at hand here is how collective memories “gain wider meaning” (Eyerman 2004, p.162) through the active deployment of available memory forms in a given time and context. For Wertsch and Roediger (2008), such acknowledgement highlights the fundamental differences between individual and collective processes of remembering, and thus “what makes collective memory collective is the fact that members of a group share a similar set of cultural tools, especially narrative forms, when understanding the past” (Wertsch and Roediger 2008, p.324).

Confino notes that the “history of memory” field tends to isolate memories rather than place them in relation to each other, and to broader society (Confino 1996, p.1389-1390). In an analysis of Aby Warburg’s “history of mentality” approach, and specifically Warburg’s problematizing of what is evidence, Confino highlights the notion that the past is socially mediated, that to understand the meanings of past representations “we must examine intermediaries” (Confino 1996, p.1391). Kansteiner (2002) argues that collective memories are always socially mediated: “All memories, even the memories of eyewitnesses, only assume collective relevance when they are structured, represented, and used in a social setting. As a result, the means of representation that facilitate this process provide the best information about the evolution of collective memories, especially as we try to reconstruct them after the fact” (Kansteiner 2002, p.190).

These assertions surface three ways of thinking about memory and mediation: memory as shaped by the tools of media and technologies, and vice versa; the roles of

human ‘intermediaries’ and institutions; and a model for analyzing memory that takes account of both human actions and their usage of certain cultural forms.

#### 2.1.5 Memory and History

The relationships between memory and history has been problematized in terms of what should be regarded as “legitimate evidence” of the past, particularly in light of memory’s “reconstruction after the fact”. Nora (1989) articulates the main contours of these debates, stating that, “at the heart of history is a critical discourse that is antithetical to spontaneous memory” (Nora 1989, p. 9). Nora notes further that “memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past” (Nora 1989, p.8). The emphasis here is on memory’s ‘fluidity’ or ‘continuity’ as opposed to fixed representations of history. However, as noted by Glassberg (1996), these debates are not confined to memory versus history debates, but have been contentious issues within the history discipline itself, as notions of public history versus traditional history have been problematized. And as Radstone and Hodgkin note, in some non-Western societies, cultural traditions render the divide between memory and history as irrelevant (2003, p.6). A common memory studies contention that “evidence is everywhere” (Wilkinson 1996, p.80-81) therefore comes into sharp conflict with the perceived objectivity and textuality of history. Cubitt (2007) has highlighted three kinds of history-memory relationship: the role of memory in the historical process; memory as an object of historical study; and, the relationship between memory and history as forms of knowledge (Cubitt 2007, pp.3-4). Zelizer points out that traditional historians see memory as a challenge to history’s authority, while others have been open

to “a more complex relationship” between the two acknowledging that it “can be complementary, identical, oppositional or antithetical at different times” (1995, p.332).

Fentress and Wickham are critical of an approach to memory as an object of historical study, suggesting that this may result in the devaluation of memory as a source of knowledge (1992, p.8). And Wilkinson undertakes a thorough investigation of the relationship between history, memory and evidence, highlighting two contrasting views of evidence. The first relies strongly on textual materials and represents the traditional approach by historians, and the second expanded view operates from the premise that “evidence is everywhere” (Wilkinson, 1996, 80-81). Wilkinson references Nora’s ‘sites of memory’ as indicative that sources of evidence are expanding.

#### 2.1.6 Memory and Methodology

One of the foremost criticisms of collective memory studies is that it is methodologically unsound (Confino 1996, Kansteiner 2002). Confino iterates that these problems of methodology are in large part the result of the kinds of predictable research questions and outcomes that dominate collective memory studies. Rather than pay attention to how collective memories are publicly received, or to how representations of memory are connected with social experiences, there is a tendency to contribute to the already fragmentary nature of memory studies by studying collective memory as isolated topics of inquiry resulting in minimal contributions to collective memory scholarship (Confino 1996, p.1387). Kansteiner (2002) reflects on similar concerns. Like Confino (1996) he draws attention to the lack of attention to public reception in the memory studies literature, calling on scholars to adopt the methods of communication and media studies in this regard. Another reason for the methodological confusion, according to

Kansteiner (2002) is in consequence to the lack of clear distinction between individual and collective memory, an issue that he argues, remains unresolved in the memory studies literature (Kansteiner 2002, p.180).

#### 2.1.7 Summation

The memory studies literature demonstrates that there are many things that can be said about collective memory. The topic has been debated, deconstructed, and given multiple meanings over at least the past 20-plus years. This is quite evident in politically-transforming environments where a “singular” view of collective memory that tends towards the creation of “a stifling homogenous nationhood” no longer holds sway (Asmal and Roberts 1996, p. 9).

As an area of scholarly inquiry, collective memory has attracted a number of definitions and perspectives, some vague and others particularly focused on the realities of certain historical episodes. Elizabeth Jelin (2003) names these as analytical and concrete perspectives on collective memory, and similarly Barbie Zelizer (1995) views collective memory as both a concept and an activity. Using conceptual understandings of collective memory, as well as approaches reflected in social practice, I am concerned with what some have termed as a “politics of memory”, and with this, the acknowledgement that each society produces many collective memories with “no one single interpretation of the past” (Jelin 2003, p.xviii). Scholarly work in this area provides a framework of streams of thought that can be used as a starting point for assessing the making and use of collective memories in specific contexts. These specific contexts also further enrich existing literature, providing for comparisons within and across time and

geography, and providing testing sites for the relevance and parameters of scholarly discourse.

Conceptually, collective memory is primarily evident in group or collective representations of human experience. These representations can take the form of institutions such as museums, libraries and archives that engage with social experience. Collective representations could also be found in one or more collections of records, photographs, biographical texts, recorded sound and so forth. There is a difference then between the intangible concept of collective memory, and the physical representations or ‘memory traces’ of social experiences. Collective representations can embody many collective memories. If and how these memories are sustained, and to what end, is an important issue in the context of my dissertation research.

## 2.2 ARCHIVAL PERSPECTIVES ON COLLECTIVE MEMORY

### 2.2.1 Overview

Archival contributions to memory studies scholarship have been expressed in theoretical and practical terms in a growing sub-field of archives literature. There are many angles that one could take to look at the relevance and application of collective memory concerns for archives. Kenneth Foote’s (1990) and Richard Cox’s (1993) early writings on the topic provide direction on the placement of archives in collective memory, as well as the space that collective memory occupies in archives. The writers are clear on the connections between the two, but Cox expresses reservations on the kind of engagement with “public memory” that is possible for archives in their everyday work. Foote, importantly, underscored the need for institutionalized forms of memory as a

means of communicating issues of survival to future generations, and in doing so expressed the idea that archives are more than mere metaphorical representations of collective memory. Cox (1993) engaged the concept of public memory as an important component of archival outreach, while cautioning archivists of the instability of public memory and therefore its limited usefulness in everyday archival practice. Two decades later, these issues are still being discussed in archives with the important hindsight of Foote and Cox's early writings, and further interpretations in similar conceptual spaces by Terry Cook, Brien Brothman, Verne Harris, Tom Nesmith, Margaret Hedstrom, Barbara Craig, Laura Millar, Eric Ketelaar, Joan Schwarz, Jeannette Bastian, Fran Blouin, and Michael Piggott, to name a few.

At the same time, the boom in memory studies scholarship over the last twenty years has afforded archivists the opportunity to revisit the issues and questions raised in earlier archival writings, with additional perspectives drawn from across disciplines, most particularly that of history, political science, sociology, social psychology, geography, literature, communication studies and the visual arts.

The relevance of collective memory concerns for archives, and vice versa, has most often been addressed indirectly in articulations of the relationships between archives, records and power. Postmodern analyses in which the former is addressed underscore the power of archives over collective memory (Cook and Schwarz 2002; See also: Brown and Davis-Brown 1998; Cook 2000 & 2001; Nesmith 2002; Burton 2005). Cook and Schwarz write that,

“Archives – as records – wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity, over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies. And ultimately, in the pursuit of their professional responsibilities, archivists – as keepers

of archives – wield power over those very records central to memory and identity formation through active management of records before they came to archives, their appraisal and selection as archives, and afterwards their constantly evolving description, preservation and use” (2002, p. 2).

Postcolonial framings of archives, concerned with practices of exclusion in traditional archives, and that advocate for reconsideration of the nature of archives, have also helped to make visible the memory-power tensions in archives. Very recently, Jeannette Bastian’s “experimental” paper on archives and “cultural performances” in the context of the US Virgin Islands makes the argument that “if archives are to truly capture the essence of our global society and remain relevant in a post-colonial world, then archivists must actively pursue the records of the many marginalized and often unrecognized communities within that society.” In this context, Bastian views festivals as a “living cultural archive” that helps to perpetuate collective memory (2009, p. 115).

A prominent theme in postmodern and postcolonial writings of archives and power is Jacques Derrida’s notion of “hospitality to the other”. Exploring the dimensions of “hospitality to the other” in archival contexts represents an explicit acknowledgement that archival thinking and practice has long been skewed to prioritize dominant sectors and groupings in society, and less accommodative of anything outside of this realm. There is value then in Verne Harris’ (2002) assertion that the very nature of archival records is an expression of power. Yet the notion of “hospitality to the other” also provides a significant indicator of the origins of this archival discourse, and that critical thinking on archives has emerged within the dominant stream itself rather than from sectors and groupings that have been marginalized or excluded from the traditional archive.

Issues and debates that align with, and enrich memory studies scholarship by providing further nuance have been analytically and concretely expressed in archives. Traditional archives work with forms of memory that are documented, despite the fact that a large part of society's memory is located elsewhere. These relationships of power are therefore most evident, and most often assessed in terms of "politics of memory" processes, termed by some as the "politics of archives". Many writers have drawn attention to deliberate, sometimes-unorthodox methods of filtering what is ultimately transferred to archives, and what Eric Ketelaar references as "archivalization" (2002). Verne Harris (2002), writing from experiences in South Africa, argues that what reaches the public are a mere "sliver" of documentary proof of a given process or event. Reflecting on archival roles and values, Hedstrom (2002) regards archives as powerful "interfaces" between archival evidence and users (2002, p.22), that make decisions "about what to keep, how to represent archival documents and collections, how to design systems for access, and who to admit or exclude from interactions with archives" (2002, p.26). These are just a few examples from a broader archival literature in which archives have been critically evaluated for their roles in "consciously (or unconsciously)" (Cox 1993, p.123), that is strategically or non-strategically, promoting memory formation for political ends. From 'outside' of archives, Michel-Rolph Trouillot names archives as one of four phenomena that unequally shape historical scholarship, noting that archival selection processes impose "constraints on debatability" (1995, 52) by the power that archives have and use to decide on what constitutes credible archival sources and is worthy of preservation. These expressions are relevant and justified when considering the memory-power dynamics evident in recent and historical cases.

## 2.2.2 Cases Cited in the Literature

A range of cases cited in archival and related scholarship provide perceptions and interests on what collective memory processes do for archives, and vice versa.

In some instances, such as the case of the Khmer Rouge Archives in Cambodia, the archives are the only formal source and ‘intermediary’ between physical evidence and the public, housing and keeping alive the memory of Khmer Rouge atrocities through “inscribing and creating memory by providing a space for the voices of survivors to be heard, the names and photos of victims to be recorded, the tribunal to be publicized, and the younger generation of Cambodians to be educated” (Caswell 2010, p.38).

On the other hand, the archival context of the U.S. Virgin Islands is characterized most poignantly by the absence of formal documentary records that had been relocated to the U.S. and Danish National Archives at the end of their respective periods of colonial domination. Jeannette Bastian (2003) looks at the reconstruction of collective memory and its implications for archives, through cultural and commemorative events. Noting the context-specific nature of the memory-archives relationship, that included – 1. the value assigned to oral traditions in the cultural life of the islands, and 2. the lack of access to official archival records – Bastian highlights the ability of cultural events to generate new records that record the events, as well as the ability of these events to create a framework for memory (2003, p.54). Along the same trajectory, but taken a step further, Bastian (2009) conducted exploratory research on carnivals as community archives of performance, or as cultural archives, in which she looked at the possibility of credentializing performances as archival records, by looking at specific archival criteria that would provide archival legitimacy.

Others, in different social, cultural and political contexts, have looked at how records that document marginalized groups have been ‘processed’ and made available using traditional archival principles and practices (Maliniemi 2009). Still further work has focused on the ways that technology can be used to promote online ‘communities’.

There are also several examples of attempts to distort historical scholarship and collective memory processes through the mass destruction of archival records. A key case in point is the intentional and systematic destruction of a suspected 44 metric tons of documents between 1990 and 1994 in South Africa, from just one apartheid government agency (Bell and Ntsebeza 2001, p.7; Harris 2002, p.64). Earlier cases of records destruction also became evident in the burning of the Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC) state archives in 1908 under the orders of Belgian King Leopold II (Wallace 2006). At least 240,000 individual detainees case files that documented human rights abuses in British detention camps during the Kenyan Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s, met the same fate (Wallace 2006).

Access to archival records has also been denied, and in some cases hidden. Valderhaug (2011) writes of the lack of evidence, and in some cases denied access to archival records that would help to prove the reparative claims of Norwegian ‘war children’. Another example cited by Wallace is that of the records of the 1904 Commission of Enquiry into Belgian King Leopold II’s actions in the DRC, reportedly held in a closed section of the Belgian State Archives until they were made public in the 1980s (Wallace 2006).

Tensions have also been evident in the weighting of written versus oral sources of memory, since evidentiary value is considered more typical for primary source

documents that have been through processes of archival appraisal. In an article that examines the compatibilities and incompatibilities of written and oral sources, Austen (2001) examines the Transatlantic Slave Trade dataset located at the DuBois Institute in light of oral accounts of the slave trade as it relates to slave trafficking from Gorée Island, Senegal and Douala, Cameroon. Even though the collection at the DuBois Institute has been an integral source to several research projects on the slave trade, and represents an official account, the primary tension between written and oral accounts appear to be between the “political economy” and “moral economy” of the slave trade, with oral traditions providing more insights on the latter and text-based official sources providing more on the former (Austen 2001, p.236). Goodall, writing of the legacies of information control in colonial Australia and how it has impacted memory formation, notes that oral histories “revealed events which had never been recorded at all or which has left documentary traces which could not be interpreted without oral accounts” (Goodall 1997, p.79). In another case that is highly relevant, but that does not make direct reference to any form of memory construction, Kluchin researched eugenic practices in the United States between 1960 and 1984, contemplating what it means “to recover a voice or story” when the records were not created by those who were directly affected (2007, p.132). Kluchin notes that all of the sources -- which included medical records, court cases, trial transcripts, depositions, legal dockets and newspaper articles – “had to be read with full knowledge of their limits” (2007, p.139).

Verne Harris (2002) writes of the impact of apartheid practices on “social memory” development in South Africa, noting the limitations of a biased archival record, “systemic barriers” to access, and the high value placed on oral testimonies at the end of

apartheid especially in light of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission process.

The aforementioned cases clearly demonstrate different archival interests in collective or social memory. They also very pertinently demonstrate archival concerns about the partiality of archival records, and how these concerns unfold in particular contexts.

### 2.2.3 Analytical Lenses

Archival scholarship on collective memory is most often based upon the premise that archives are socially constructed (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998, Burton 2005, Cook 2000, Ketelaar 1999, Nesmith 2002, Piggott 2005, Schwartz and Cook 2002, Van Maanen and Pentland 1994). Communication scholar Barbie Zelizer (1995) has written that new approaches to memory studies “have made the past a product of our collective memory, rather than the other way around.” This not only implies that collective memory is socially constructed in the present, but provides an explanation for “why one construction [of memory] has more staying power than its rivals” and why memories are constructed “in a particular way at a particular time” (p. 333). Brien Brothman (2001) makes a similar case for archives, arguing that analyzing the past in a memory framework opens up a space in archival work for connecting the past to the present. Brothman writes,

“Under our description, the past will emerge as an integral constituent of an existential present. If successfully argued, this claim will pave the way towards a conception of archival records and archival practice that positions both of them closer to contemporary social and organizational concerns and interests” (Brothman 2001, p.50).

Peter Fritzsche proposes such a bidirectional framework in the context of West German history, writing that, “if most conceptions of the archive emphasize how the archive has shaped history, I want to examine how German history has shaped the archive” (Fritzsche 2005, p.16).

In reflections on the social construction of archives, Nesmith (2002) calls for the problematization of the archival process for complicity in shaping and sustaining biased social memories through processes of archival mediation. Describing the value of postmodernism as “a changing intellectual place” for archives, Nesmith writes that postmodernist thought “helps us to see that contrary to the conventional idea that archivists simply receive and house vast quantities of records, which merely reflect society, they actually co-create and shape the knowledge in records, and thus help form society’s memory” (p. 27) by providing a “context of interpretation” (p.32). Similarly, others have addressed the “politics of archives” as underlying currents in the technical and practical features of archives, arguing for the existence of an ideological “sub-politics [which] is the normal professional practice of archivists” (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998, p.30).

Ketelaar’s (1999) coining of the term “archivalization” draws from the same intellectual tradition, with a specific concern about records retention choices that precede and shape archiving. And, Terry Cook (2000) reflects on the socially constructed nature of archival texts and its ability to recursively influence social behavior, arguing that,

“no text is an innocent by-product of administrative or personal action, but rather a constructed product ... although that conscious construction may be so transformed into unconscious patterns of social behaviour ... that links to its constructed nature have become quite hidden” (Cook 2000 p.25).

In other instances, archives are assessed as social constructs, by their assembly after the fact (Burton 2005; Piggott 2005; Van Maanen and Pentland 1994). Burton (2005) writes that,

“... archives do not simply arrive or emerge fully formed; nor are they innocent of struggles for power in either their creation or interpretive applications ... all archives come into being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural, and socioeconomic pressures ...” (p. 6).

Piggott acknowledges that the content of *some* records are reconstructed after the event considering the role of archives both as agents and as resources (Piggott 2005, p.307) in memory making.

Different ways of thinking about archives have emerged from countries undergoing political transformation. In South Africa, Premesh Lalu (2008) asserts that “the archive that is underway is not defined entirely by the contents of its collection but by the shape it gives to the idea of community, to a democratic public sphere” (p.164). Beverly Butler’s (2009) readings of “archival memory” in a Palestinian context adopts an expanded view of archives that goes beyond traditional forms of archival institutionalization, based on different perspectives, identities and locations that characterize Palestinian identities. With attention to social, political and historical contexts, Butler looks at how Palestinians are creating a “just archival domain” that is evident in a “heritage paradigm” that takes account of other memory-producing agents in society, at individual and collective levels. Butler argues further for an “archival imagination” that is committed to “human well-being”.

#### 2.2.4 Summation

Authors have steadily increased their attention to the impact of archives on collective memory, and vice versa, in the archives literature. Two ways of thinking

feature prominently in writings that make connections between archives and collective memory. Cox (2004) notes that archives have been considered as “symbolic way station[s] on the road to collective memory” (Cox 2004, p.234) in writings that consider the contributions of formal archival processes such as appraisal, arrangement, description and outreach. Viewing the relationship between archives and collective memory differently, collective memory discourses and practices have also been assessed as frameworks for theorizing archives and have, and in some cases, helped to illuminate the potential for more people-centered and inclusive approaches to archives.

Archival scholarship on collective memory is most often based upon the premise that archives are socially constructed (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998, Burton 2005, Cook 2000, Ketelaar 1999, Nesmith 2002, Piggott 2005, Schwartz and Cook 2002, Van Maanen and Pentland 1994). The cases cited draw further attention to the nature of this social construction as based on archival methodologies of exclusion.

I argue therefore for an archival approach that takes its ideological lead from the social, political and cultural formations that have traditionally been underserved by archives. More importantly, there need not be just one way of thinking about and practicing archives. I argue for *an* approach, not *the* approach, in which understandings of archives are broadened to create enabling, affirming and inclusive environments that are informed by historical and contemporary contexts. Similarly to what Asmal and Roberts (1996, p.9) have noted about collective memory, a singular view of archives no longer holds sway.

### 2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEMORY AND ARCHIVES LANDSCAPE

South African post-apartheid memory frameworks provide a lens for contemplating the ‘social constructedness’ of collective memories, and the social and political dimensions of archives. It does so by illuminating the configuration of these issues in an environment where the pace of and commitment to re-constructing collective memories are being pushed by social and political transformation. Representing an instance in which historical collective memory frameworks were completely overturned to support a rapidly changing political climate, and address the wrongs of apartheid injustices, South Africa is an extreme example of collective memory construction and re-construction that pushes traditional boundaries. This context illuminates, concretizes, and gives meaning to intangible issues that are hard to grasp. A combination of factors have helped to develop institutional visions of more inclusive and people-centered memory practices, including but not limited to a symbiotic relationship between academic reflexivity, practice-based contributions to a new memory landscape, and larger social and political commitments to historical and transformative justice evident in processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, policy development and legislative change.

Academic contributions to the study of memory are particularly evident in writings on South African historiography that outline academic participation in “popular history making” (Callinicos 1991, Odendaal 1991, Witz 1991). These academic contributions took place within particular political contexts - the intensification of anti-apartheid and anti-capitalist struggles in the 1970s and 1980s (Odendaal 1991), and the South African education crisis of the 1980s (Callinicos 1991). Issues that have emerged

in the memory studies literature as key in the debate between memory and history, feature centrally in these historiographical discourses. The South African academic environment referenced here, demonstrates challenges to traditional history from within the history discipline itself (Glassberg 1996), in the form of people's history or public history, and covers many of the same debates that have been labeled as history versus memory debates. These writings also draw attention to "history from below" modes of production in which "ordinary people [are empowered] to become producers of their own history" (Witz 1991, p.370). Moving beyond this brief summation of a trend in South African historiography, to the post-1990 environment, I also note that Leslie Witz and Ciraj Rassool (2008) have identified four major shifts that took place in the 1990s. They argue that – 1. historical methodologies were subjected to "intense critique" in recognition that traditional archives as primary sources contain "pre-existing historiographies", and oral histories were elevated not only as sources but as sites of cultural production, 2. the production of visual histories was being considered as "fundamental components" in historical production, 3. the expertise of academic historians were being challenged by "different set[s] of knowledge" in the public domain, and 4. the genre of history was being challenged by "new types of histories" that eroded boundaries between fiction and history and thus "brought history into sharper focus" (Witz and Rassool 2007, p.7-8). Wilkinson's (1996) assertion then that "evidence is everywhere" (pp. 80-81) takes on elevated meanings in the South African environment where there are large gaps in written records, and where the valorization of indigenous oral traditions and cultures as memory forms have necessitated a rethinking of 'official' notions of evidence and authenticity. I argue that these academic contributions have

profoundly impacted South African heritage policy and practice, and that this is most evident in the extent to which many of the individuals who shaped this early academic landscape have played leading roles in policy development, and some continue to have dual responsibilities as leading members of South African heritage institutions.

Other more recently expressed memory concerns relate to the issue of narrative as a tool of memory: how and by whom post-apartheid narratives are authored; the place of the personal in collective narratives; and the place of the local in national narratives. In Garuba's (2007) analysis, narratives help to build and sustain collective memories, and in some instances serve as "generic memory template[s]" that give coherence to multiple memories. To support his arguments, Garuba raises questions and expresses unease on the roles of former political prisoner tour guides on Robben Island by firstly problematizing the dialect between individual and collective memories.

"Between the hegemony of the narrative of the anti-apartheid struggle and the role of Robben Island in it, on the one hand, and the discursive economy of the heritage industry and global tourism on the other, is there a space for the truly personal lives and subjectivities of the ex-prisoner tour guides to emerge in their narratives and memories of their time on the island? In short, can personal, private memories be produced and narrated against the grain of the public, collective memory in this instance? One way of posing this question is to ask if the tour guides do have personal memories and narratives that are capable of resisting discursive appropriation or capture by the dominant narratives? If they do have such memories, can these be narrated and under what conditions? And if they don't have such personal memories that can be articulated in narrative, why don't they?" (Garuba 2007, p.132).

Baines (2005) highlights similar concerns, arguing that "triumphalist liberation narratives" have subsumed personal experiences and memories in representations of New Brighton Township in official discourse. He argues specifically that,

"The public memory of New Brighton's past privileges the experiences of political activists over those of ordinary people. The stories of their

everyday lives have been subsumed by the triumphalism of struggle history. As the liberation struggle becomes the dominant narrative of our national history, the stories of smaller communities are subordinated to this master narrative. So New Brighton is remembered as a “site of resistance” and “a stronghold of the ANC”. This is typified in reminiscences published in books, journals, web sites and local newspapers that lionize both living and deceased “heroes of the struggle” who happened to have lived in the township. And this will, no doubt, provide the template for the fashioning of New Brighton’s public history when it comes to be written and displayed in the Red Location Cultural Museum [in New Brighton]” (Baines 2005, p.257).

In revisiting the “history from below” mode of historical production as espoused by the Wits History Workshop, Nieftagodien (2010) argues that post-apartheid memory frameworks produced negative consequences for the production of local histories, that is, the validation of ordinary peoples’ stories. According to Nieftagodien,

“The changed political situation in the country had a significant effect on the production of history, especially of public history, which since the early 1990s has concentrated mainly on the production of grand national(ist) narratives, motivated by the dual and interlocking objectives of uncovering and recording the histories of the black majority and of liberation movements in particular” (Nieftagodien 2010, p.47-48).

By problematizing the relationship between local and national narratives, the author argues that history was being used as a way “to justify the current regimes of power” (Nieftagodien 2010, p. 48). Another view of this is that dominant state produced narratives “have not been uncontested”, and that local initiatives particularly community museums “have begun to push beyond these dominant narrations” (Rassool 2000, p.1).

Policy-based perspectives on post-apartheid memory have given more focused attention to the transformation of South Africa’s social memory institutions, with notable contributions from academic ‘experts’ and from practitioners. The early 1990s marked the beginnings of this movement towards national transformation, which sought to

redefine the nature of existing legacy institutions, and to establish new South African legacy projects through new national policies and legislation. These processes were widely consultative, and framed by the ANC-initiated Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). A key development that helped to lay the groundwork and provide direction during this early period of political transition was the ANC-initiated Culture and Development Conference held in Johannesburg from April 25 to May 1 1993. The objective of the conference was to develop guidelines for new policy development in the area of arts and culture, dealing with areas such as performing arts, community art, language, national monuments, museums, archives and national symbols (Looking Forward Looking Backwards 1995). In 1993, the ANC's archives sub-committee of its Commission on Museums, Monuments and Heraldry issued a report on the state of archives in South Africa, aimed at democratization of the archives field. Amongst a series of radical recommendations, it called for "a national, co-operative collections policy" managed by the then State Archives Service, and for the promotion of people's history programmes as co-operative ventures of the archives service and other cultural heritage organizations, under the overall coordination of a national heritage council (Dominy 1993, p. 74). Harris sheds further light on how these changes impacted the archival establishment, writing of the process of "redefining archives in South Africa" with specific reference to public archives in the period between the legalization of political organizations in 1990 and the passing of a new National Archives of South Africa Act in 1996 (Harris 2007). He specifically addresses the challenges and dilemmas, and resultant "transformation discourse[s]" facing the State Archives Service as they changed its shape from an institution working within the red-tape of the apartheid bureaucracy to its role as

a National Archives of South Africa in a democratic system of government. According to Harris, the final report of the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) an initiative of the then Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, “provided the conceptual framework intended to inform the drafting of new archival legislation” (1996, p.14), and was followed by the establishment of a Consultative Forum for Archival Management and Legislation led by the State Archives Service, that drafted a new National Archives of South Africa Bill (Harris 1996, p.14). Specifically, ACTAG and related processes led to new national laws for archives, museums and libraries, and the articulation of a long-term vision for a shared national heritage. The new legislation also made provision for private records, as well as aspects of living and intangible heritage, in a manner not undertaken in South Africa in the past, aimed specifically at acknowledging and addressing the gaps in apartheid’s official records. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996) and the National Heritage Resources Act (1999), in combination, embody much of the early thinking on transformation in the archives and heritage sector, with the NHRA giving more direct acknowledgement to indigenous knowledge, the protection of private archives not covered in the national archives law, and objects with cultural value.

As early as 1991, within a year of the legalization of political organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), new institutions with an explicit agenda to mainstream previously marginalized histories and cultures began to emerge. Organizations such as the South African History Archive, the Mayibuye Center for History and Culture in South Africa, the District Six Museum, and the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Center emerged from around the late 1980s /

early 1990s, and by their very emergence, countered an arts, culture and heritage landscape that for decades had been dominated by apartheid legacy institutions. These projects generated and gained great momentum from around the late 1980s, and particularly through the decade of the 1990s. This period, one could say, represents an explosion into archival consciousness of the ideas of a popular history movement that had begun amongst activist academics in the late 1970s, and which strengthened through the 1980s. The merging of the South African History Archive with the former Zimbabwe-based Popular History Trust, in 1990, is an exemplary story in this regard. Similarly, the 1986-established UWC Peoples History Project was an important precursor to the formation of the Mayibuye Center for History and Culture in South Africa, in 1991. The District Six Museum beginnings are rooted in similar values in a different kind of community activism, in organizations such as the Friends of District Six Committee and the Hands Off District Six Campaign (Rassool 2001). Other post-apartheid institutions such as the Robben Island Museum, Freedom Park, the Constitution Hill Heritage Project, and the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue, have all established archival projects that not only play a collecting role, but also engage with communities through the recording of oral testimonies and dialog programs. Through their public programs they connect individuals and communities with a wide range of ‘memory traces’ such as documents, photographs, sound recordings, moving images, visual art, and sites of significance. Older institutions such as the National Archives and many public museums have been guided by new discourses and policy agendas for heritage development and have undertaken significant transformation projects. The 1996 - 2001 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), with a different statutory and institutional

framework to the aforementioned, has often been described as the most direct national government driven memory process to record and acknowledge gross human rights violations under apartheid. Built on oral testimonies of victims and perpetrators of human rights violations under apartheid, the TRC highlighted the work of memory in healing and nation-building (Minkley and Rassool 1998; Christie 2000; Buur 2002; Coombes 2003).

In recent years, and most visibly through the work and reflections on practice conducted by the District Six<sup>2</sup> Museum in Cape Town, there has been more focused attention on methodological approaches to collective (or social) memory development. Rassool (2008) writes, “the spaces of the Museum have been filled with argumentation and debate about cultural expression, social history and political life in the District, about local history and national pasts, and how best to reflect these in the work of the Museum” (p. 71). With reference to the work of the District Six Museum, Lalu (2008) makes a compelling statement on how the ‘politics of memory’ is providing different and sometimes new ways for thinking about archives, and the placement of archives in society:

“Perhaps, we have learnt through the Museum that the very process of recalling community is to involve oneself in refiguring the archive. This connection, however, needs to be much more self-conscious in the work of the museum. The archive that is underway is not defined entirely by the contents of its collection but by the shape it gives to the idea of community, to a democratic public sphere. This is the idea of a community at loose ends, open to new ways of existing, casting aside apartheid categories and creating productive and meaningful ideas of difference and identity. Unlike the archive of the state, which produces prepackaged communities with labels and postal addresses, the Museum inaugurates the concept of the archive that envisages the meaning of a post-apartheid

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<sup>2</sup> Under apartheid laws, District Six was declared a ‘whites only’ area in 1966. This resulted in about 60,000 people being moved from their homes to the outskirts of the city of Cape Town. See Layne 2008.

community through the remnants of one that apartheid destroyed. But this notion of the archive is tied to the work of the Museum and is, indeed, the work of the Museum. The Museum gives meaning to the suggestion by the historian Michel de Certeau...that the transformation of archivistic activity is the beginning of a new history ...” (2008, pp. 164-165).

A prominent feature of the ‘new’ memory landscape in South Africa has been the blurring of traditional boundaries between archives, museums, and less institutional memory projects. A unitary feature has been the profiling of histories and memories that would not have seen the light of day under apartheid, many of which were completely shaped by apartheid. As noted by McEwan (2003), “the question of who has the power to make, record and interpret history is an important one in contemporary South Africa and one that informs current attempts to build collective memory” (McEwan 2003, p.742).

In a case that highlights the bias of apartheid’s social memory institutions, Helena Pohlandt-McCormick (2000) engaged the South African State Archives Service at the end of apartheid. Using archival sources available at the State Archives to reconstruct the memories of the 1976 Soweto student uprisings, as well as oral history interviews conducted by her in the early 1990s with participants and those directly affected, Pohlandt-McCormick noted that the official memories of Soweto 1976 were characterized by the political agendas of the apartheid government, showing how “the repressive, authoritarian context of apartheid South Africa produced collective memories shaped around large silences and lies, sometimes obstructing the ability of individuals to place themselves in history” (p. 24). Through the 1977 Cillie Commission of Enquiry<sup>3</sup>, “in some cases, even the most factual of information was exploited by the spokesmen of the government to prove the criminal and delinquent behavior of those whom it had

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<sup>3</sup> The Cillie Commission was set up to investigate the 1976 student uprisings in South Africa. See Cillie 1977.

killed” (Pohlandt-McCormick 2000, p. 32). Extracts from the Cillie Commission records demonstrate this, raising the issue of biased content representation in legacy institutions such as the National Archives, and a need for voices that were not heard under apartheid.

There are several cases in which new approaches to memory and archives become evident. For example, from the early to mid-1990s, an Oral History of Exiles Project initiated by the university-based Mayibuye Center for History and Culture in South Africa, recorded more than 200 interviews with South Africans who were exiled under apartheid. The interviews provide powerful personal accounts of life in exile, and contribute, perhaps, to a “collective consciousness” (Fentress and Wickham 1992, p. 26) around the issues that surface in these interviews. At roughly the same time, the Mayibuye Center partnered with the South African Museum, until then still a replica of what it had been under apartheid, to produce an exhibition called *Esiqithini*. The focus of the exhibition was political imprisonment on Robben Island, profiling personal stories, notebooks, and belongings which had never been publicly displayed before. The exhibition drew primarily from what came to be known as the “Apple Box Archives” housed at the Mayibuye Center. The “Apple Box Archives” was so named, since “prisoners were usually released carrying their possessions in cardboard boxes, often apple boxes” (Odendaal 2001, p. 24). Later in the 1990s, the Robben Island Museum actively created an archive through reference groups that it held with former political prisoners. These reference groups in fact were a component of a bigger Memories Archive Project that included: the development of a database of former prisoners; recorded interviews with former prisoners, their family members, and prison warders; expanding, documenting and conducting detailed research on the museum’s material

culture collections; and, the development of a text-based archive, mainly from the perspective of prisoners, about their experiences of, and the road that lead them to Robben Island. In other research-related efforts, the Museum also conducted detailed research on the site of Robben Island, and its various uses in the past, towards the adoption of an Integrated Conservation Management Plan that would inform the Museum's engagement with the site of Robben Island, its engagement with the former political prisoner community, other stakeholders, and the public. It is no surprise then that Shearing and Kempa (2004) refer to the museum as "a museum of hope".

There has also been an increasing emphasis on memory forms outside of traditional print-based media. Madikida et al. (2008) focus on the significance of oral histories and expression through art at the site of the former Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg, as well as the dialogic processes via which memories were developed. These dialogues took the form of "lekgotlas" or "nonhierarchical dialogue ... in the form of a public gathering to decide on matters of group or social importance" (p. 19).

Madikida et al. write that,

"Many former prisoners had never considered using drawing as a means of recording and unearthing memory. Some were apprehensive about participating in this activity because they feared a lack of talent and ability. But as the process went along, the participants realized that the drawing process could be an effective way to understand the past for themselves as individuals, as well as for the group; the push and pull of lines on a paper stimulated debate and facilitated memory. The drawings have become valuable recordings that increased our understanding of buildings that have disappeared, patterns of punishment and humiliation in the prisons, as well as other deeply complex tissues of memory whose recall gives dignity to the past" (p. 21).

However, the authors also note that “many [political prisoners] were reluctant to dredge up their extremely painful memories. Some refused to participate because of the horror of their experiences”(p. 20).

Addressing the extent to which stories of South African women were excluded from mainstream memory projects, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, McEwan (2003) describes the Amazwi Abesifazane Memory Cloths Program, run by an organization called CreateSA in the KwaZulu-Natal province. In this program, women expressed themselves through crafts alongside a related oral history program. McEwan notes that “[h]ere, the concept of memory represents more than individual experience and stands for collective social and economic experience ...” (p. 747). From a 2001 media interview, McEwan quotes from one of the project organizers:

“Through the creation of memory cloths, we are drawing on the collective experience of women who have known loss. Through the process of creation they will hopefully reach some level of catharsis through which they can grow both spiritually, emotionally and financially. This is a necessary, albeit humble, attempt to begin to transform the oral archive into a more formal record of South African history” (p. 747).

These are just a few examples of many that underscore very different models and priorities from the apartheid ‘legacy’ institutions. Foremost is that the work of memory is underpinned by an ethos with a marked emphasis on healing and nation-building that is “part of the processes of forging a democratic society” (Jelin 2003, p. xvii). Minkley and Rassool (1998) have noted the emergence of “a particular conception of individual and collective memory in South African historiography” in which “collective memory is seen as the collective meanings that belong to the political field, while individual memory is also seen to be primarily part of this field as it makes sense of historical details in direct relation to political legitimacy” (p. 99).

As evidenced in all of these examples, South Africa's changing memory landscape encompassed the wide acknowledgement of significant gaps in the written record as a result of apartheid practices, and a foregrounding of practices that were overlooked by apartheid's official archival systems.

Given this context, the question of what collective memory is, has received less priority than what the notion of collective memory does and what it has the potential to do. Among other attributes, Zelizer (1995) notes that collective memory is useable. In South Africa, this has been demonstrated to be the case over time. Collective memory frameworks have served as tools of manipulation that helped to reinforce apartheid ideology, as a "strategy of unification" (Coombes 2003) towards a non-racial democracy or 'rainbow nation,' as a framework for healing, and as a potentially divisive mechanism as a result of competing interpretations.

These circumstances also centralize the relationship between individual and group memory, whether through personal testimonies that are part of larger documentation processes, or through dialogue. Here again, the question of what collective memory notions do, can be good or bad. As noted by Soyinka, collective memory can sometimes play a damaging role in depersonalizing individual experience.

In many ways too, though not entirely, one could look at post-apartheid archives as being "reconstructed after the fact" (Burton 2005). This immediately calls attention to a multitude of issues raised in the collective memory literature, particularly on the "partiality" of memory, and of archives, and on the possibility of a different kind of hegemony. Therefore, concerns with memory methodologies that serve to account for the whys and hows of memory work, and propagated by institutions such as the District Six

Museum, is emerging as a particularly critical feature of the post-apartheid South African memory landscape. It is important here to note the creation of archives that is taking place outside of traditional models of archival institutions.

Over at least the last sixteen years in South Africa, new institutions and less formal projects have set out to recover evidence in which the experiences of those marginalized under apartheid are prioritized, fed into stable frameworks such as museums, archives and libraries, and made available to the public. These initiatives have been supported through government-funded legacy projects, state funding for transformation in institutions with apartheid origins, international donor support for both government and non-government initiatives, as well as through private sector support.

All of these initiatives, from national to local, give credence to Asmal and Roberts' (1996) assertions on collective memory as a process of "sustained remembrance and debate" and as a process of historical accountability that involves "academic controversy, political debate, media revelations, processes of proof and of disproof" (pp. 9-10), all of which result in public attention. It is also these kinds of debates and practices that have pioneered the development of even newer memory projects that have added a relevance to the work of archives that was absent under apartheid.

Political and social transformation in South Africa enabled an important "founding moment" (Spillman 1998) for archives and other institutions working with collective and social memories. In addition to the emphasis on transforming the country's existing official structures and legislation, new institutions and evolving practice-based and academic discourses continue to redefine the domains of memory, archives and heritage. In all of this, the role, place and processes of collective memory and archiving

has been enlarged to address issues of content representation in more representative institutions, a changing legal framework, memory development in the interests of reparations, healing, social justice and national reconciliation, and an increasing emphasis on the development of local histories. The ways in which the archives-memory relationship is articulated in South Africa is grounded in particular historical realities and transformation moments.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 OVERVIEW**

My dissertation research is configured along the lines of a qualitative case study design that is both “exploratory” and “descriptive” (Yin 2009), and that is “instrumental” (Baxter and Jack 2008) in the sense that it helps to illuminate the processes by which memories are produced and transmitted into the public realm. It enables a reflection on archival thinking and practice within this context. My research meets the condition of being exploratory in that there is “no clear single set of outcomes” (Baxter and Jack 2008, p.548), and it is descriptive in the extent to which the cases are described in their “real-life context[s]” (Baxter and Jack 2008, p.548). I have interpreted the “instrumental” nature of my case study research by virtue of the fact that my analysis of three case studies “provides insight into an issue”, fulfilling a “supportive role” (Baxter and Jack 2008, p.548) in understanding the processes of memory production and transmission, and how these processes position archives within broader sectoral and societal frameworks. I have deliberately chosen to pursue an analysis of three cases that are exemplary of civil-society-based, private sector-sponsored, and national government-initiated memory projects, in my belief that each of the cases, separately and holistically, enable a more nuanced understanding of contemporary memory discourses, evolving methodologies of

memory practice, and that they are able to demonstrate the implications of their practices and approaches for archival thinking and practice.

### 3.2 THE CASE STUDY METHOD

Case study methods are prominent in fields of study that value connections between specific events or phenomena and their broader contexts. Robert Yin (2009) notes that case studies have been used widely, in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, education, and community planning (p.4). There are two components to Yin's (2009) definition of case studies: defining the *case study scope*, and defining the *case study process of inquiry*. In regard to its scope, he notes that a "case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2009, p.18). This component of Yin's definition sets case studies apart from other methods of inquiry. It differs from experimental methods, because case studies have no concern for "control of behavioral events" (Yin 2009, p.8). Furthermore the explanatory power of "how" and "why" research questions distinguish the case study from methods such as surveys and archival analysis. In its focus on contemporary events, the case study differs from historical methods.

The second part of Yin's (2009) definition, that is, the case study as a process of inquiry, highlights the ability of case studies to "cope with more variables of interest than data points", and therefore the ability of case studies to analyze complex phenomena. Direct spin-offs of this approach are the case study's reliance on "multiple sources of

evidence” leading to data triangulation, and an ability to benefit from existing “theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (p.18). Combinations of these three factors further distinguish the case study from other methods of inquiry.

The value of case study research is also expressed by Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack (2008) who note that case studies provide the means to explore phenomena through multiple rather than single lenses, in so doing enabling a depth of understanding of the phenomena being studied (p.544). They draw attention to the “constructivist paradigm” that underpins case study research, and the recognition that reality is socially constructed (Baxter and Jack 2008, p.545).

For my dissertation research, the case study method has afforded the opportunity to understand the inner workings of specific and exemplary initiatives that help to define and give meaning to South Africa’s complex social memory landscape. It also provides a wealth of data for reflecting on the placement of archives within this landscape, and their socially constructed nature.

### 3.3 UNITS OF ANALYSIS

With three case studies as my units of analysis, my dissertation research can be further characterized as a multiple case study (Yin 2009), or as a collective case study (Stake 1995). An alternative to this case study approach presented itself in the form of a single case study design consisting of three “within-case cases” (Gerring 2007, p.30). Since choosing the latter approach would impose a single context on the three cases under study, and therefore limit my analysis, I opted for a multiple or collective case

study design in which I was able to take account of similar and different contextual conditions across the three cases under study.

### *3.3.1 The Digging Deeper Exhibition At The District Six Museum*

Digging Deeper is the title of a permanent exhibition, launched in September 2000, at the District Six Museum in Cape Town. After five years of the District Six Museum's existence, the development of the exhibition was motivated by an imperative "to 'dig deeper' into the museum's collections, processes, and meanings" (<http://www.districtsix.co.za/frames.htm>). Importantly, Digging Deeper is comprised of both physical elements on display inside the District Six Museum and processes of community participation in the life of the exhibition. Aesthetically, the exhibition consists of interwoven visual, audio and textual components designed to educate and engage the general public. Museum visitors have ranged in category, most notably including high school students, international tourist contingents, and former residents. The exhibition has been described as "the pivotal resource for public education about District Six ... and forced removals" (District Six Museum Annual Report 2007/8, p.3), and continues to look for ways in which specific aspects of the exhibition will "stimulate ongoing interpretation and dialogue" (District Six Museum 2007/8 Annual Report, p.13). The museum has formally aligned itself with the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience as an important framing structure and mechanism of institutional accountability for an independent museum. This alignment demonstrates a commitment to locating the museum's existence within the District Six community's historical context, and to a programmatic agenda that connects historical to present contexts, and vice versa. A compelling, important, and pertinent example is the

museum's support of statutory processes of land reclamation in the area once known as District Six (Rassool 2006, p.14).

In many ways, the Digging Deeper exhibition reflects these underlying values of inclusivity, participation, and the meanings of these processes in everyday life. As an active endeavor of memory production and transmission in post-apartheid South Africa, the Digging Deeper project helps to illuminate both analytical and concrete perspectives on memory production, transmission and reception, and contributions to archival thinking and practice.

### *3.3.2 The Sunday Times Heritage Project*

The Sunday Times Heritage Project originated with the Sunday Times national newspaper, beginning in 2006. To celebrate the newspaper's centennial, the project took the form of commemorative activities in which 31 street memorials were installed on selected sites over a two year period from the project's initial inception. While the project conceptualization and overall direction emanated with the Sunday Times, it took on a different life when the Sunday Times entered into partnership with the South African History Archive (SAHA), a Johannesburg-based non-profit organization well known for its archival programs of documenting marginalized histories, educational outreach, and testing the parameters of access to information in archival contexts. In addition then to the initially planned 40 street memorials, SAHA's involvement, with the financial backing of the Atlantic Philanthropies donor agency, formalized a dissemination campaign in which a series of radio programs, interactive media, publications, and high school educational programs were developed along the themes of the street memorials

and widely distributed. The thematic content of the memorials and their complementary ‘products’ demonstrates interpretations of the past that are based on a mix of old and new sources of evidence. The processes of making the memorials and its complementary content is based largely on relationships between sources, producers and consumers of memories, as well as on the relationships and tensions between the project’s institutional partners in either delivering project content or in creating avenues for the inclusion of identified project participants and the broader public.

### *3.3.3 The South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) - Road To Democracy Project*

The South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) - Road to Democracy Project originated in the office of the South African Presidency in 2000 with an expressed intention to address a clear lack of historical sources on the South African liberation struggle in the period from 1960 to 1994, most particularly from the perspectives of South African and international anti-apartheid liberation struggle participants. These concerns “about the paucity of historical material on the arduous and complex road to South Africa’s peaceful political settlement after decades of violent conflict” ([http://www.sadet.co.za/about\\_us.html#4](http://www.sadet.co.za/about_us.html#4)), have thus far led to the production of four academic volumes. Volume 1 covers the 1960 – 1970 period, volume 2 covers 1970 – 1980, volume 3 deals with international solidarity, and the 4<sup>th</sup> provides individual accounts of South Africans covering the period between 1950 – 1970. A further two volumes are forthcoming ([http://www.sadet.co.za/road\\_democracy.html](http://www.sadet.co.za/road_democracy.html)). SADET has accomplished its work to date under the oversight of a high level Board of Trustees comprising “politicians, businessmen, veteran activists and academics”, the work of “six

regional research teams”, an editorial committee made up of representatives from the research teams, as well as the setting up of strategic institutional partnerships ([http://www.sadet.co.za/about\\_us.html](http://www.sadet.co.za/about_us.html)). Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it can be considered as the largest government-backed initiative to institutionalize histories of South Africa’s liberation struggle. Using a mix of historical sources, but with a notable methodological emphasis on the creation and use of oral testimonies, SADET provides a means for understanding an explicitly top-down approach to memory production and transmission in both origins and form.

### 3.4 SELECTION OF CASES

Almost two decades since the fall of apartheid, legacies of information control continue to skew South Africa’s historical record. While official archival, memory and knowledge production systems have been spectacles of intense scrutiny and debate through public participatory legislative change ushered in by the 1994 democratic transition in South Africa, organizations and projects at national and local levels provide more detailed insight on the nature of everyday practice, and characterize a social memory landscape that continues to evolve in its meanings to both the scholarly community and the public. The three case studies which form the nucleus of my analysis have in different ways paid close attention to ‘redressing historical imbalances imposed by apartheid’: the Digging Deeper Exhibition at the District Six Museum (2000); the Sunday Times Heritage Project (2006 – 2008); and, the South African Democracy Education Trust (2000 - ).

Three central criteria informed my selection of the above-mentioned cases. Drawing from Miles and Huberman's typology of qualitative sampling strategies, stratified random sampling, the political importance of each case, and the recognition of each as critical cases provided the rationale for my selection (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.28).

*Stratified purposeful selection*

My selection of cases is framed most particularly by the discourses of the South African "heritage sector". This term itself is acknowledged in national legislation such as the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996) and the National Heritage Resources Act (1999). It is commonly accepted in reference to both institutional and non-institutional forms of social memory production, use, and commemorative activities, across platforms of archives, museums, libraries, non-institutional local memory projects, and other forms of public history and memory production.

Furthermore, the "heritage sector" is seen to encompass initiatives that originate across the platforms of national government, civil society, and the private sector. As a means to developing a deeper understanding of this dynamic and broad social memory landscape, I have applied *stratified purposeful selection* to my selection of cases. By paying attention to temporality, I have selected three exemplary cases that meet the following conditions:

- A civil society based initiative that has sustained itself through programmatic activities and donor funding (The District Six Museum, and its permanent exhibition *Digging Deeper*, 2000).

- A national government initiative that continues to function as a project trust with sponsorship from the private sector (The South African Democracy Education Trust Road to Democracy Project, 2000 - ongoing).
- A private sector initiative that evolved into a partnership with a non-profit organization and an international donor agency (The Sunday Times Heritage Project, 2006 - 2008).

In addition to these different case configurations, there are perceived similarities and differences in their memory genres of exhibitions, academic publications, and commemorative activities, and how the processes central to each of these genres contribute to archival thinking and practice.

#### *Politically Important Cases*

Politically important cases have been defined as those that represent “‘salient’ informants who may need to be included (or excluded) because they connect with politically sensitive issues anticipated in the analysis” (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.28). I selected each of my cases as politically important, based on the following criteria:

- The District Six Museum, noted in several publications as a model for community museums in South Africa and internationally, particularly through its formal alignment with the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience.
- The South African Democracy Education Trust – Road to Democracy Project as an unprecedented endeavor that originated at the center of national government in the offices of former President Thabo Mbeki, as a move towards institutionalizing

the history of South Africa's liberation struggle through the production of a series of academic volumes.

- The processes of the Sunday Times Heritage Project as important indicators of the role of the national media in social memory production, and of the value of heritage sector partnerships between the private sector and non-profit organizations.

In combination, these three selected cases by virtue of their different origins, institutional models and genres, afforded a depth and breadth of analysis that would not be theoretically generalizable if only a single case was being examined.

#### *Critical Cases*

Miles and Huberman highlight the significance of the critical case in that it “permits logical generalization and maximum application of information to other cases” (1994, p.28). As three initiatives that have been successfully sustained over defined time periods, the combination of these three cases provides a wealth of information to support my analysis. The process in which I identified the District Six Museum's Digging Deeper exhibition, the South African Democracy Education Trust – Road to Democracy Project, and the Sunday Times Heritage Project as critical cases therefore included the recognition of each as information rich cases. Preceding the finalization of these cases, I had a series of consultative meetings with several key individuals in the South African heritage sector in which I solicited feedback on my case selections.

### 3.5 RESEARCHER BIAS

I was introduced to archives and museums, and to the South African heritage sector more broadly, in 1992, as a work-study assistant at the University of the Western Cape-based Mayibuye Center for History and Culture in South Africa. This was an interesting and exciting time to be getting involved in South African heritage work. As Andre Odendaal, Director of the Mayibuye Center at that time so pertinently notes, under apartheid “people and organizations risked their lives to record the struggle against apartheid from within [South Africa], at a time when repression and censorship were rampant, and Mandela’s name scratched on a coffee cup could get you four years in jail” (Odendaal 2001, p.4). The country’s democratic transition, which had already begun at that time, provided a rare and privileged opportunity to surface text-based, visual and material cultures that were banned under apartheid. I viewed my employment at the Mayibuye Center firstly as a continuation of ‘the struggle’, which secondly aligned well with my field of study in library and information studies. Working with like-minded individuals, activists, experts and mentors, primarily ‘schooled’ in the fields of visual art, literature, and history, my interests in documenting and disseminating previously marginalized areas became both professional and personal endeavors. I continue to draw energy from this particular historical ‘moment’ that has profoundly influenced my approaches to social memory, history and heritage.

I continued to work with the Mayibuye collections for the next 11 years, holding different job portfolios, as an Art and Audiovisual Librarian, and as the Collections Manager responsible for an extensive documentary archive of historical papers, oral history and sound recordings, still and moving images, visual art, and so forth. I also

served on the UWC-Robben Island joint working group, a committee that was set up to ensure that the Mayibuye collections formally became part of the 'national estate' by the incorporation of the center into the national government-established Robben Island Museum in April 2000. I continued working for the Robben Island Museum until 2003, managing collections and archival projects at the University of the Western Cape and on Robben Island. In 2004, I took up a job as one of two people tasked with setting up a memory center to Nelson Mandela, that provided for further and sometimes higher levels of engagement in the South African sector of arts, culture, museums, archives and heritage. In my time at the Mayibuye Center, Robben Island Museum and the Nelson Mandela Foundation, I became acutely aware of the complexities of memory, particularly of working with the living memories of individuals and collectives who were directly affected by apartheid. I have also constantly contemplated the roles of archives, museum and heritage professionals -- many of my professional colleagues were struggle participants bringing vested interests into their careers.

Having taken on the role of a researcher in this context, my personal bias is self-evident. There is little doubt that I am influenced by the politics of South Africa's heritage sector, and by an understanding of archives, museums and heritage shaped by pre-1990 struggle imperatives, and post-1990 transformation discourse and practice, as I undertake my research. However, I do so equipped with research skills, and a research methodology in which I acknowledge and pay attention to minimizing biases. I also do this being acutely aware of the need for local South African-based analyses of its heritage contexts. This is by no means an indication that analyses originating elsewhere are not valuable, pertinent or useful. In the interests of moving forward a fledgling heritage

sector, additional local perspectives need to be explored, interrogated and taken into account.

As one way of minimizing bias, my case studies do not include any of the organizations that employed me, even though all of these organizations meet the criteria of critical and politically important cases. I have instead chosen to focus on organizations whose overall context as post-1990 initiatives is similar to those I was directly involved in, but which also surface very particular issues on complex processes of memory production and transmission, the role of archives, as well as how archives are understood in this context.

### 3.6 DATA COLLECTION

As is common for case study research, my dissertation research and its subsequent analysis are informed by multiple “variables of interest” or sources, that allow me to locate my research questions within everyday contexts. These sources include semi-structured interviews, archival primary source materials, and newspaper coverage.

#### 3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews with members of the production and curatorial teams

Semi-structured interviews are central to my research design. Through personal knowledge, and a process of consulting with key individuals with advanced knowledge of the South African archives, museum and heritage sectors, I was able to develop a list of key interview informants for each of my three cases. Profiles of the ten interview participants are included in Table 3.1.

Each of the participants was asked to engage with questions pertaining to their particular project. The semi-structured interview approach was particularly

accommodative of necessary variations in my interview protocol based on the project scope and methodology for each case. Semi-structured interviews provided a mechanism for ensuring that I was able to ask certain follow-up questions, in so doing minimizing the threat of important information being overlooked.

Table 3.1: Interview Participant Profiles

SITE	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS	INTERVIEWEE IDENTITY NUMBERS	INTERVIEWEE ROLES
District Six Museum	4	A1, A2, A3, A4	Exhibition curator
			A former museum director, archivist, and member of the exhibition curatorial team
			Member of the Board of Trustees, lead programs researcher, and member of the exhibition curatorial team
			Exhibition researcher
Sunday Times Heritage Project	3	B1, B2, B3	Active participant in the South African History Archive project team, and representative of the Wits History Workshop
			Former director of the South African History Archive, and Project Manager for the Sunday Times Heritage Project communications campaign
			Director of the South African History Archive
South African Democracy Education Trust	3	C1	Chairperson of the SADET Board of Trustees
		C2	Chief editor
		C3	Executive director who has also served in the capacity of senior researcher

A total of ten interviewees were therefore asked to engage with questions such as the following:

- Can you define the project and the role that you played in it?
- Can you talk about the motivations behind the Digging Deeper / Sunday Times Heritage Project / South African Democracy Education Trust project?
- How did you decide on the particular media formats that were used?
- What, in your view, are some of the major impacts of the project? What would you like its impact to be?
- Do you have a sense of how the project has been received by the public?
- Did the project have distribution strategies / mechanisms? What were they?
- What, and where were the major sources that you consulted?
- Did you have to find ways of verifying sources?
- How did the research and production processes engage with archival records and sources?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

(See Appendix 1 for the full interview protocol).

In my dissertation, the interview participants are referenced according to the interviewee identity numbers listed in Table 3.1. Interviewees numbered A1 to A4 are employees and associates of the District Six Museum. Interviewees numbered B1 to B3 are participants in the Sunday Times Heritage Project. Interviewees numbered C1 to C3 are participants in the South African Democracy Education Trust Road to Democracy project.

Since my research has received full University of Michigan Institutional Review Board exemption, I was not compelled to require interviewees to complete written consent forms. However, to fulfill the requirements of good research practice, this offer was made to each of the interviewees. Some interviewees, in fundamental disagreement with Western modes of analysis and research refused to sign consent forms, but were happy to provide recorded verbal consent. Others expressed no concern with signing interview consent forms.

### 3.6.2 Archival Primary Source Documents

Types and the amount of primary source data varied for each of my three case studies. As separate initiatives with separate reporting guidelines and processes, only two of my cases yielded pertinent archival primary source data.

In the case of the District Six Museum, primary source data took the form of a series of institutional documents: annual reports, conference proceedings, and other internally-produced documents such as the 2006 Conservation Management Plan. Additionally, I was given access to DVD recordings of focus groups that evaluated *Digging Deeper*. The recordings contain feedback on *Digging Deeper* from the perspectives of teachers, artists, donors, community activists and former residents, in separate focus groups.

For the Sunday Times Heritage Project, I accessed the Sunday Times Heritage Project collection, currently housed in the archival collections of the South African History Archive. Using the archival finding aid as my access point to the collection, I identified and accessed pertinent materials in the form of interview recordings and transcripts with the Sunday Times managers of the project; similar material for the art

company that oversaw the installation of memorials; and, records that document the project's conceptualization, deliverables, reports and evaluations.

For the South African Democracy Education Trust, I did not have the privilege of accessing detailed primary source documents. I relied primarily on interview data, newspaper reports, and reviews published in secondary sources. I also had the opportunity to conduct a follow-up interview with a leading member of the SADET project team.

### 3.6.3 Newspaper Coverage

As a means of finding sources, in addition to the interviews, that support an analysis of the projects' major impacts, newspaper stories were an invaluable source of data. Using the Lexis Nexis Academic database for accessing full-text news, I limited my search parameters to South African produced newspaper publications. Since Lexis Nexis covers all of the major South African newspapers, I was not compelled to broaden my research beyond Lexis Nexis. These newspaper sources allowed me to identify important indicators of public reception and impact.

## 3.7 SOURCE VALIDITY

As noted by Yin (2009), different kinds of case study evidence have inherent strengths and weakness. While I utilized a semi-structured interview protocol that provided opportunity for follow-up questions, my interview protocol was developed on a core set of questions that were presented to interviewees across the three cases. This helped to facilitate focused interviews. My interview questions also took account of an oft-noted weakness in semi-structured interviews, that is, the likelihood of respondent

reflexivity over time. To address these concerns, my interview questions included a mix of questions that encouraged reflexivity (such as project roles), and more direct process relational questions.

By utilizing available archival sources and newspaper reviews, I drew on multiple perspectives for each of the cases. While the inherent biases of archival sources lies in issues of partiality, the reasons for their inclusion in archival records, and in researcher selection, I took steps to minimize these biases by first familiarizing myself with the range of archival sources that were available to me, using institutional access systems in the case of the Sunday Times Heritage Project collection, and extensively foot note chasing the range of archival source materials cited in various District Six Museum publications.

I have viewed the newspaper sources as an additional source for triangulating case perspectives that emerge from the different sources. While there were several media genres, such as radio programs that were not accessed for this study, this would have fundamentally altered the scope of my study.

I have also used secondary literature as an additional source for data triangulation.

### 3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

All interviews were recorded directly onto a MAC computer, and transcribed using Transana software. Interviews were coded using the qualitative analysis software, TAM Analyzer, which enabled me to develop a codebook, identify coding patterns, produce code counts, and cluster codes together when deemed useful and necessary. I also produced memos on prominent codes, which were instrumental in reporting the data.

Miles and Huberman point to a coding approach that is “partway between a priori and inductive approaches” which “is not content specific, but points to the general domains in which codes can be developed inductively” (1994, 61). I adopted a similar approach to the coding of interview texts, developed from Bogden and Biklen’s (1992) coding accounting scheme that includes such factors as context, defining the situation, situational perspectives, perspectives on people and objects, processes, activities, events, strategies, social structures, and methods (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 62). In addition to developing inductive codes with attention to these specific domains, I also used free text coding so as to exclude the possibility of major analytical oversights.

I applied document analysis to the archival sources consulted. In so doing, I developed memos of both the textual and audio-visual sources consulted, in which I documented the themes that are pertinent to my research.

I utilized basic content analysis methods to analyze newspaper coverage for each of my cases. This analysis took account of which newspapers covered these projects, in which section, what was being communicated, and the extent to which these newspaper reports provide indicators of reception, dissemination, external contexts, public discourse, economic concerns, individual profiles, and whether the stories are positively or negatively disposed to the projects being addressed. Following Babbie’s (2004, p.314) definition of content analysis, I pay attention to “what” is being communicated, finding clues as to “why” it is being communicated, and while the “with what effect” question is less easily answerable, I examine how newspaper reporting might be able to at least partially support the latter.

### 3.9 VALIDITY

Yin (2009) demonstrates that two conditions of validity need to be met in case study research: construct validity and external validity (p.40-41). Since internal validity is applicable mostly to studies concerned with causal relationships, it is not needed for my research. I have addressed the issue of construct validity by pursuing a multiple or collective case study design. As noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), the value of multiple sampling is that similar and different cases are grounded in processes and contexts that “strengthen the precision, the validity and the stability of the findings” (p.29), following what Yin (2009) calls a replication strategy. This means that the generalizability of the findings are increased, while the method also enables a deep understanding of the “local conditions” that inform each case, leading to “more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations” (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.172). In addition to selecting multiple cases, my data collection also drew from multiple data sources that converge in my analysis. Finally, I found opportunities to discuss my case study reports with key informants with practical and academic experience of South Africa’s archives, museum, and heritage sectors.

Multiple cases, and its resultant replication strategy also help to fulfill the condition of external validity, providing “confidence to findings” (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.29). Three cases therefore increase the significance of “analytic generalization” (Yin 2009, p.43). The framing of these case studies by a social and collective memory theoretical framework also provide a sound basis for testing parameters within and across the selected cases, and therefore for achieving external validity. Finally, the ability of empirical research to contribute to existing theoretical discussions and debates is

acknowledged in my design and research rationale. Within my research context, this study provides rare opportunity “to fact check, to consult multiple sources, to go back to primary materials, and overcome whatever biases may affect the secondary literature” (Gerring, 2007, p.59).

### 3.10 RESEARCH DESIGN LIMITATIONS

There are inherent limitations in case study research, most particularly in the extent to which inferences can be drawn and applied to larger populations, and therefore in achieving external validity. However, as noted by Miles and Huberman, the most useful generalizations from case study research “are analytic, not ‘sample-to-population’” (1994, p.27). Yin further provides an in-depth discussion of the ability of case studies to “expand and generalize theories” (2009, p.15). Since this study’s research questions and analysis are not concerned with statistical frequency, but rather to explore, describe and illuminate, one of the central tensions of case study research is addressed.

This study is not designed to apply inferences to a larger universe of cases. It is exploratory and descriptive in nature, with the intention of conducting in-depth studies of a limited number of exemplary cases and developing more nuanced understandings of the uses and transmission of archival records in collective memory endeavors. The decision to pursue the case study method is therefore made on conceptual grounds. Factors that might mitigate the identified limitations in this study include the ability to “probe into details that would be impossible to delve into, let alone anticipate, in a standardized survey” (Gerring, 2007, 48).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DIGGING DEEPER EXHIBITION AT THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

##### 4.1.1 Forced Removals From District Six (1966 – 1982)

It is estimated that 60,000 people were forced to relocate from the area known as District Six in central Cape Town between February 1966 and 1982 after the area had been declared for whites only under one of apartheid's many draconian laws, the Group Areas Act of 1950. According to official apartheid era reports, the removals were to pave the way for an "urban renewal programme" begun in the early 1930s (Barnett 1994). As early as April 1940, headline reports in the Cape Argus newspaper read, "END OF DISTRICT SIX PLANNED ... £1 MILLION TO WIPE OUT DISTRICT SIX!" (Barnett 1994, p.164). While the destruction of District Six was planned and anticipated for more than two decades, the 1950 Group Areas Act institutionalized the apartheid city by zoning off land according to racial categories, resulting in the dispersal of District Six residents to racially segregated neighborhoods, in most cases underserved and on the furthest outskirts of the city. These removals were the focus of a sustained government effort that took place over a period of 14 years, perhaps one of the reasons why District Six remains in the consciousness of many Cape Town residents.

The destruction of the District Six community was not the only such incident under apartheid. The 1950 Group Areas Act together with other influx control legislation wreaked havoc on the lives of many South Africans, resulting in the violent and systematic displacement of an estimated 3.5 million black South Africans between 1960 and 1982. According to these studies undertaken by the Surplus People's Project, a further two million removals were being proposed through government policy at the time that this statistic was reported (Platzky and Walker 1985, p.372-373). Mamdani writes that,

“The South African Gulag was called forced removals. Between 1960 and 1982, an estimated 3.5 million people were forcibly removed, their communities shattered, their families dispossessed and their livelihoods destroyed. These were not inert outcomes of socio-economic processes, but outcomes of active violence by state agents. These 3.5 million victims comprise faceless communities, not individual activists. They constitute a social catastrophe, not just a political dilemma” (Mamdani 2000, p.180).

As opposed to the “urban renewal” framework that was used by the apartheid government to partly justify their actions, the term “forced removals” was adopted through the protest action of the broader South African anti-apartheid movement, and it has persisted through the work of organizations memorializing the apartheid era and resistance to the apartheid system. A widespread practice of the apartheid regime, forced removals resulted in many layers of destruction. There was physical destruction in the bulldozing of people's homes, schools, places of worship, and recreational facilities. For many, there was the emotional pain associated with significant loss, traumatic and life-changing events, that were violently imposed rather than chosen. The wide geographic dispersion of residents to what in many instances can be considered as ‘wastelands’ effectively curtailed freedom of movement to and from the city. One can further

understand this destruction and its associated trauma through an assessment of Johan Galtung's typology of direct and structural violence, where he notes that direct, structural and cultural violence violates "four classes of basic needs"— survival, well-being, identity and meaning, and freedom (1990, p.292). All of these effects of forced removals apply to the former residents of District Six.

#### 4.1.2 Memorializing District Six: The District Six Museum (1994 - )

The official inauguration of the District Six Museum took place in December 1994, at the site of the Buitenkant Street Methodist Church, in central Cape Town. 1994 was the year in which apartheid formally ended, and all South Africans were allowed to vote in a democratic election, for the first time ever. At the time, this newly changed political context supported the emergence of initiatives designed to redress apartheid's historical biases, and produce new versions of history as told from the perspectives of those who were oppressed under apartheid<sup>4</sup>. The District Six Museum has its genesis during this period.

The event that marked the launch of the District Six Museum was the culmination of community action spearheaded by civil society and community organizations, such as the Friends of District Six Committee, the Hands Off District Six Committee and the District Six Museum Foundation (Soudien 2001; Coombes 2003; Layne 2008). The resolution to establish a District Six memorial project had been made in 1988, at a

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<sup>4</sup> As early as 1991, within a year of the legalization of formerly banned political organizations, new institutions with an explicit agenda to mainstream previously marginalized histories and cultures began to emerge, and significant transformation initiatives were undertaken in apartheid legacy institutions. A key development that helped to provide direction during this early period of political transition was the ANC-initiated Culture and Development Conference held in Johannesburg from April 25 to May 1 1993 (*Looking Forward Looking Backwards*, 1995). At the time, these formations and initiatives were entering and, by their very existence, countering an arts and culture landscape that for decades had been dominated by apartheid-establishment institutions.

conference organized by the Hands Off District Six Committee. The conference was organized specifically to counter District Six redevelopment plans being proposed by the BP Petroleum Company with support from the Cape Town City Council (Soudien 2001, p.5).

In 1989, soon after the Hands Off District Six conference, the District Six Museum Foundation was established (Soudien 2001, p.5). The Foundation's work was closely tied into that of the Hands Off District Committee<sup>5</sup>, and it carefully laid the groundwork for the establishment of the District Six Museum. According to Terence Fredericks, an active member and Chairperson of the Museum Foundation at the time, "there was a pressing need to ensure that all plans by the authorities to redevelop the area of District Six were obstructed so that the abandoned, scarred slopes of Devil's Peak would be a 'living' reminder to all of what had happened there and elsewhere" (Fredericks 2001, p.13). He notes further,

"It was agreed that in order to relate the story of the District and convey the message, 'NEVER, NEVER, AGAIN', a very effective mechanism would be to establish a museum ... a place where the memory of what had happened could be kept alive, a place where the descendants of the removed community could be told the story of District Six" (Fredericks 2001, p.13-14).

Another active member of both the Hands Off District Six Committee and the District Six Museum Foundation, Lucien LeGrange, makes a point of connecting District Six political mobilization to larger anti-apartheid struggles, and notes that the energy and momentum that surrounded the establishment of the Museum was inspired by "the

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5 The District Six Museum Foundation was formed by the Hands Off District Six Committee, an organization formed in protest against plans by commercial business organizations and the Cape Town City Council to redevelop District Six, alongside a continuing apartheid system. See Rassool, C (2007). "Community Museums, Memory Politics, and Social Transformation in South Africa." In *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by Ivan Karp, Corinne Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto, 286-321. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

prevailing political situation”, which enabled “[a] collective spirit [that] was stimulated during the Hands Off District Six campaign and the period of heady protest politics [in the 1980s and early 1990s]” (LeGrange 2001, p.7).

As many former District Six residents and activists can attest to, the hosting of the Museum by the Central Methodist Church in Buitenkant Street, Cape Town, was in itself of major historical significance. The beginnings of the Central Methodist Church can be traced back to at least 1883, serving the District Six community both before and after District Six no longer existed, as the congregation continued to commute to the church after the removals had taken place ([http://www.cmm.org.za/?page\\_id=2](http://www.cmm.org.za/?page_id=2)). Valmont Layne (2008), a former museum director, remarks that,

“The [District Six Museum] Foundation felt that the Central Methodist Mission was a very appropriate space, as the church itself has a great history of social justice and was known during its years of operation as the “Freedom Church”. Many people have great memories of celebrating the abolition of slavery in the church, of a congregation of more than one thousand rising to their feet and weeping with joy on the anniversary of this triumph of social justice” (Layne 2008, p.57).

The site of the museum itself is therefore symbolically important for its continued presence in the lives of many former residents who retained their connections with the church, and for the deep layers of history that it embodies.

Functioning completely independently of government structures, the District Six Museum conceptualizes itself as a “historic site museum of conscience”. It is formally aligned with the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, which it draws from as a “support mechanism” and as contributory to a network of other sites of trauma in the world (Conservation Management Plan 2006, p.6). The resolution that emerged from the founding meeting of the Coalition, at which the District Six Museum

was represented, reads as follows:

“We hold in common the belief that it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and its contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting democratic and humanitarian values as a primary function” (Sevcenko and Russell-Ciardi 2008, p.10)

In addition to its traditional museum functions of promoting “scholarship, research, collection and museum aesthetics”, and by affirming its promotion of a “site of conscience” agenda, the District Six Museum has and continues to support post-apartheid processes of land restitution and reclamation<sup>6</sup>. It has done this through engagement with the civil society organization that was set up to represent former District Six residents in state land reclamation processes, the 1997-established District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust (Rassool 2006, p.14).

As noted by Rassool (2006), the District Six Museum inspires the notion of a community museum, with many local museums looking to it as a replicable model (Rassool 2006, p.10). Reflecting on the potential of the District Six Museum, as a community museum, to reshape heritage thinking and practice Rassool writes,

“It is necessary to evaluate the category of ‘community museum’, to understand the debates and disputes that have accompanied its inauguration as a cultural category in the growing museum field in South Africa and beyond, and to consider its varied intellectual and political genealogies. This also requires us to revisit the category of ‘community’, and the kinds of identity and identification that it strives for and asserts, and the ways that it has been appropriated in cultural claims and projects. These are important investigations so that the category becomes more than just a technical term for a museum genre as new local museums are created and features of the District Six Museum are replicated” (Rassool 2006, p.10-11).

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<sup>6</sup> The Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994 was established to begin a formal government process of compensation for people or communities who were dispossessed of their land under apartheid. Specifically, the law established a Land Claims Commission to investigate land claims, and a Land Claims Court to facilitate disputes.

Within its broader historical and contemporary heritage contexts, the notion of the District Six Museum as a community museum is not taken lightly. There are notable moments in the life of the District Six Museum that support its framing as a community museum concerned with contributing to ‘external’ democratic processes, and ‘internal’ participatory processes of museum practice.

The museum’s support of democratic processes is most evident in its relationship with the District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust. The September 2000 launch of *Digging Deeper* was followed soon after by a District Six “homecoming ceremony” in November 2000 marking a land claims process in which about 1700 family claims were verified. This event was the culmination of a land claims process for former District Six residents, made possible by a series of national land reform and restitution laws that came into effect from 1994 onwards. The December 1 2000 edition of the weekly *Mail and Guardian* reported that the District Six Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust,

“will reconfirm with the 1700 beneficiary families whether they want to return [to District Six] or accept financial compensation of R17 500. Those returning will receive an additional discretionary grant for the construction of new homes ... several meetings are scheduled with former residents to discuss the four or five different development models” (*Mail and Guardian*, December 1 2000).

In May 2005, a *Hands On District Six* conference was organized to assess, inspire, and chart a future for memory practices at the District Six Museum. There was wide representation at the conference, from key individuals in the South African museums and heritage sector, educators, artists, activists and citizens, as well as

representatives from other historic site museums of conscience<sup>7</sup>. In a keynote session on prominent debates in memorialization, human rights and heritage practice, Rassool notes that, “The issues have now become about how to insert issues of memory into the redevelopment process” and questions, “What forms should this take: mere inscription through plaques and markers? How can memory be incorporated into the very architecture of redevelopment? How should a redevelopment process address memories of painful pasts?” (Rassool 2007, pp. 34-35). An important acknowledgement during conference discussions was the need to plan for working with a different generation of museum audience who are not former District Six residents, but either their descendants or others who have an interest in the ongoing work of the museum (Reflections on the Conference 2007, p.25). These and other pertinent methodological questions raised at the conference provided a baseline for an internally-produced Conservation Management Plan in 2006, in which several of these issues were addressed further.

In July 2006, the District Six Museum submitted this Conservation Management Plan to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)<sup>8</sup>, in the Museum’s quest for recognition as a national heritage site under the provisions of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999. Following guidelines provided by SAHRA, the document attempts to integrate the many different aspects of museum memory practice and the values that inform these practices. Engagement with the District Six site through the museum’s memory programs is foregrounded in this document. The document also

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7 See Reflections on the Conference Hands On District Six: Landscapes of Post-colonial Memorialisation, Cape Town, 25 – 28 May 2005.

8 Established as a national heritage oversight body in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999, SAHRA’s responsibilities include the categorization, management, protection and conservation of national heritage resources, including moveable (objects) and immovable heritage resources (buildings and sites).

underscores the ethos/ philosophies/ community grounding that underlies all of the Museum's work, legal and ethical contextualizations, community contextualizations in which the Museum's alignments with more than one "community" become evident, community mobilization, participatory engagement, strategic partnerships, and rules of engagement (District Six: A National Heritage Site, 2006). There are two fundamental issues that emerge from my reading of the Conservation Management Plan. The first is recognition that there is no one-fix solution to memory practice, but that different memory sites present different issues, challenges, moments and possibilities. The second issue is a basic commitment to memory practices in the interests of social justice, through partnerships and "rules of engagement" that are inextricably bound up in larger processes of "land restitution and recovery", "site specific approaches to memorialization", and, "an engaged public" (District Six: A National Heritage Site 2006, p.13-14). Despite the fact that the conservation management plan was produced after the physical Digging Deeper exhibition was already in place, the values promoted in this document provide important indicators of the thought processes and underlying motivations of the Digging Deeper process, and it is therefore an important contributor to ways of thinking about the meanings of Digging Deeper.

The *Digging Deeper Exhibition* at the District Six Museum is therefore an important case for analysis in that it exemplifies the possibilities for community-based museums to enable and mediate public understandings of the past in ways that are accountable to the various communities served, and to broader national and international constituencies.

#### 4.1.3 The Digging Deeper Exhibition (2000)

Launched in September 2000, Digging Deeper is the District Six Museum's permanent exhibition. Emphasizing two main components to the Digging Deeper exhibition, interviewee A1 notes that in the case of the District Six Museum, "the end product is always an exhibition", but "exhibition making in ... [the Museum] is about democratizing a process" (A1).

Aesthetically, Digging Deeper is comprised of visual, audio and textual components. The exhibition's reliance on personal testimonies is evident in the display of oral history excerpts that are based on the life histories of former residents. Interviewees have confirmed this, and according to interviewee A3,

"... in a more humane way ... it interweaved whatever the source was ... whether it was a document, whether it was a card, ... it interweaved everything with oral memory and history" (A3).

There are aspects of the exhibition such as individual oral histories that emphasize the personal nature of memory. These oral histories sit alongside a 7 x 5 meter interactive floor map of District Six that evokes personal memories by encouraging former residents to mark their homes and other places of significance. A memory cloth that contains inscriptions from former residents, and messages of support from museum visitors creates further room for personal memories. Other ways of highlighting the personal include displays of material culture. In an installation of a typical 1950s District Six household, *Nomvuyo's Room*, visitors can listen to recorded interviews that include the personal story of Nomvuyo Ngcelwane on whose life story the installation is based. An art installation constructed from the personal items of former District Six resident and artist, Roderick Sauls is viewable in a display titled *Rod's Room*.

These platforms for personal recollections are contextualized by a textual and photograph-based District Six timeline, containing both curated text and interview excerpts. The intention of the timeline, according to Rassool and Thorne (2001) was to enable an “understanding of historical processes” by exhibiting “how knowledge of the past is formed and under what conditions” (Rassool and Thorne 2001, p.96). This approach is most evident in the life histories and reflections from personal interviews, as well as in the mix of sources and media utilized alongside the timeline. These are interspersed with timeline excerpts such as the following:

1901

Using health legislation, an outbreak of bubonic plague was a pretext for the removal of Africans from District Six and the Dockland barracks to a location at Uitvlugt. This was Cape Town’s first forced removal, and set the pattern for future residential segregation (Rassool and Prosalendis 2001, p.109)

1927

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Langa, built in terms of the 1923 Urban Areas Act, is officially opened. Its layout and design emphasise control and surveillance (Rassool and Prosalendis 2001, p.115).

1950

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Group Areas Act promulgated, threatening the existence of many ‘coloured’, ‘African’ and ‘Indian’ communities in Cape Town. Landowners neglect to maintain properties and the City Council cuts back on public infrastructure expenditure. Over the next two decades, the physical fabric of District Six declines (Rassool and Prosalendis 2001, p.125).

In addition to the timeline, there are components of the exhibition where personal and collective remembering converges. The exhibition includes a set of original District

Six street signs, donated to the museum for its opening in 1994 by a supervisor of the District Six demolition team (Prosalendis 2001). The street signs and the map are forms of mnemonic triggers, and as noted by McEachern (1998) it is a way of constructing collective memories not only by District Six ‘insiders’, but also by younger generations of South African visitors and international tourists. The map stimulates conversation, reflection and awareness, and as the exhibition’s physical centerpiece, the floor map is a simple and effective way of prompting engagement by ‘insiders’ and others. Based on similar concepts, a *Writers Floor* in the Memorial Hall at the back of the museum is the product of more formally managed collaboration between artists, writers, activists, former residents and museum curators. It is essentially an art installation that includes individual writings on tiles that were laid in the Memorial Hall (Parenzee 2000, p.5). The upper level of the museum provides social and cultural contexts to the components of the exhibition described above. These are based on themes of prominent phenomena and events that have strong cultural associations with District Six, including the annual Cape Minstrel Carnival and the re-creation of a typical District Six barber shop and hairdresser.

Another element of Digging Deeper is a large fresco mural called the “fresco wall”, and which according to Peggy Delport has been described as a “narrative fresco” that while open to further interpretation, embed the themes of “unfinishedness”, “return”, “voice and visibility” and “play and imagination” (Delport 2008, p.143).

A stated imperative to communicate an understanding of historical processes (A4) is therefore most visible in the mix of sources and media on display in the exhibition that provides the platform for many voices. The coupling of the timeline with sound installations, interview transcripts, newspaper reports, photographs, pedagogical texts, art

installations, the floor map, the memory cloth, and its location in the site of the Central Methodist Church, is a compelling indicator of historical processes at work that draw from and give credibility to many different sources. Jos Thorne, one of *Digging Deeper*'s curators, writes that,

“In *Digging Deeper* many small, individualised texts make claim (amongst other things) to a multitude of ‘voices’ contributing to the exhibition. The exhibition texts (written by curators) and interview extracts (from interviewees but modified by curators) were given similar weight, suggesting equality between the document and everyday experience” (Thorne 2005, p.145-146).

Throughout the museum, *Digging Deeper* is interspersed with temporary exhibits that reflect ongoing projects of the museum, making it difficult to distinguish *Digging Deeper* from some of the other museum displays. One such example is an exhibition of photographs on one of the surrounding walls to the floor map, sourced from the Van Kalker photographic collection (1937 – 2004) that was formally handed over to the museum in 2004. Historically, the Van Kalker portrait studios played a significant role in the culture of District Six, and in its current context the collection “forms an important part of community memory” (Bennett 2008, p.120), reminding viewers that District Six is not a faceless community. The exhibition itself is a talking point for former residents, and its close proximity to the floor map adds to an already strong sense of District Six and Cape Town community identity.

*Digging Deeper* also goes beyond the series of ‘installations’ that make up the physical exhibition. It has been further described as a process that informs ongoing museum practices of research, collecting, collections use, and interpretation. While the exhibition’s catalytic nature is not immediately evident in the exhibition itself, it is visible in the museum’s temporary exhibits and programs such as the *Van Kalker* project, the

*Huis Kombuis* project and a football exhibition called *Fields of Play*. The *Huis Kombuis* project was essentially a project of storytelling in a recreated context of “culinary rituals and other practices of home craft that [have] deep resonances and connections with the place of District Six ...” (Smith 2008, p.155). *Fields of Play*, on the other hand tells a story of District Six through the lens of football in District Six. There is also a growing museum archive of sound recordings, images, and transcripts based on the prioritized theme of music in District Six and the museum’s oral history programs, and institutional records in all media formats that document museum processes.

*Digging Deeper* is positioned as both a museum exhibition and a museum process in its official curatorial statement that reads as follows:

“The exhibition has attempted to 'dig deeper' into the museum's collections, processes, and meanings. *Digging Deeper* engages with the multiple ways in which the collections, resources and spaces of the museum are used, and expresses the central intention of the Museum to enquire into the pasts of South African society and the workings of memory. The documentary material, oral histories and themes of the exhibition emerge from the collections of the museum” (*A Guide to the District Six Museum and the Digging Deeper Exhibition*, 2000).

This statement also communicates that *Digging Deeper* is *a* story of *a* South African past, not only confined to District Six. In so doing, it emphasizes the plurality of memory, and situates *Digging Deeper* within broader political, social, and cultural contexts.

#### 4.2 DIGGING DEEPER MOTIVATIONS

According to a *Digging Deeper* co-curator, the exhibition was intended as a collective and sustained political statement against inhumanity, motivated by the need for healing and for a public response to the trauma of apartheid forced removals.

“I think it’s making a statement ... to the world ... and its repetitively stated on a cloth, and in people's testimonies, and other people who read into those stories, and other people who come in from all over the world ... about ... this, the act, that act that happened. And people can't, through democracy, you can't, it's not putting a plaster on it, and saying, oh here's democracy, you can vote, it's finish and *klaar*, it's over and done with. There's so much work to be done. So it is a statement against that kind of inhumanity towards another human being, and that's the important thing, you know, that's the important thing” (A1).

This statement has clear resonances with the museum's site of conscience agenda.

Beyond making a political statement, the exhibition was also based on desired social and political outcomes that contextualize the exhibition within broader South African transformation processes. In this regard, interviewee A2 made the point that,

“It, [the exhibition], was in the first instance a creative intervention in a social justice program to bring people back to District Six, and to support that agenda, and to talk about non-racialism and all the other things that the museum stands for” (A2).

A third interviewee builds upon these previous statements, noting that,

“... the exhibition is meant to deconstruct all sorts of things. It's meant to change the way we think about race, it's meant to change the way we think about the history of Cape Town and the history of South Africa. Sometimes it does that and sometimes it doesn't” (A4).

I have noted from these statements that key motivations for the Digging Deeper exhibition has been expressed by interviewees as “politics of memory” interests that are concerned with social justice outcomes for District Six residents on the one hand, and for the broader public on the other hand.

Another motivator for the Digging Deeper exhibition has been expressed in terms of representational issues that emerged from Digging Deeper's predecessor exhibition. Arising from the 6-year display of what was intended to be a temporary exhibit, critics

have highlighted the inadequate representation of a catastrophic historical event.

Interviewees summed up the criticisms as follows:

“There’s not enough about this group or that group, maybe it’s too colored some people said. Other people said, uh, you know, what about places like Bloemhof Flats that were within the District. There was more nuances in our story of District Six they wanted to see reflected” (A2).

“Streets ... ended up being in many ways ... making a colored museum. That was one of our chief criticisms that had gotten leveled at the museum, and in some ways those criticisms were right because if your focus is the removals pursuant to the 1966 declaration, then for sure your approach is going to be on the removals experience by colored people. But if your approach is the longer history of removals in District Six that began in 1901, then your focus is going to be much broader than that. So before the Digging Deeper exhibition, there was the danger that the question of 'where are the Africans' was a kind of an add on question. And it was not so much 'where are the Africans' but how do you approach these fields, removals, what are your questions. And so, I mean there was also a need to tell the story of removals without entering into a kind of a glorification and without romanticising District Six, and to be able to tell the history of District Six warts and all. To be able to reflect on the fact that people who lived in District Six weren't only victims ... and to think of them as more complex” (A4).

As a statement against inhumanity, a predetermined and valuable social justice narrative therefore motivates Digging Deeper. In response to the need to give focused attention to representational concerns, Digging Deeper dynamically responds to and engages with what is seen to be of value to the community.

## 4.3 FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIATION

### 4.3.1 Conceptual Underpinnings and Values

Digging Deeper as an exhibition and as museum process is strongly informed by the underlying value of non-racialism, and rooted in campaigns of the civic and anti-apartheid organizations that resisted the redevelopment of District Six in the late 1980s. These origins and its political and conceptual ideologies are central to informing the exhibition practices of Digging Deeper as a defining component of the District Six Museum. As noted by interviewee A1,

“... exhibition making ... in this museum is about democratizing a process. It’s only the end product of a process that happened. I mean, the process is amazing” (A1).

Early in my research on the Digging Deeper exhibition, I became aware of a tendency and rationale amongst museum curators to not separate the permanent exhibition from other museum processes. An exhibition curator notes that, conceptually,

“There is no real distinction between the museum and the exhibition. The exhibition is the Museum in action. It is the framework through which the public interfaces with the Museum. The objectives and strategies of the Museum are manifested and generated through the workings of the exhibition framework which is specifically constructed to perform these functions” (Thorne 2008, p.149).

Interviewee A1 described Digging Deeper in similar terms, emphasizing that the Digging Deeper exhibition practice is synonymous with museum memory practice.

“The title in fact suggests – it’s a working title, and it’s also become a part of our methodology. Digging Deeper suggests that we should be constantly digging and mining and ... extending the work of the museum. And its just a forum, I mean the whole concept of Digging Deeper, as a forum for that to actually happen” (A1).

This emphasis on democratic process is central to connecting the museum, via Digging Deeper, to broader social, political and cultural formations. It is clear here that Digging Deeper represents much more than the physical exhibition, that it is more than a simple story of a community displaced by apartheid laws, and more than just a fixed end product to be gazed upon by a museum audience. The underpinnings of Digging Deeper, as communicated by Peggy Delport (2001) and others is that Digging Deeper provides a “framework for interpretation” in which the design and aesthetic forms of the exhibition are meant to invite audience engagement, add new layers of story and meaning to the District Six story, and when appropriate, subvert others (Delport 2001, p.159). This seems to be a point of general consensus amongst those involved in the exhibition’s production. Such underpinnings have been articulated in many conference papers and publications, and in various ways in my interviews with museum staff. An exhibition co-curator notes that,

“... the Digging Deeper is a moment, that when you start digging, when you start delving a little further than the surface, now you inviting a whole new crowd on the scene ... people who've been involved in football for example, and you realize what forced removals [are] to the perspective of football again” (A1).

Emphasizing this open-ended process another member of the curatorial team noted that,

“... there was always incomplete elements [in Digging Deeper]. And its supposed to be an ongoing exhibition, that is not sort of fossilized ... something that you can, you know, you meant to be able to think of it as something ongoing and changing, and that people are meant to be able to add to all the time. And I don't know whether that ultimately worked, but I think that the Digging Deeper Exhibition is very beautiful ...” (A4).

This open-ended approach acknowledges multiple perspectives and experiences of District Six, and by providing a “forum” for engagement, the project of the museum provides a testing ground for “dynamics of memory” approaches to collective memory construction that validates both personal and collective experiences.

#### 4.3.2 Engaging with the Land Claims Process

The extent of the museum’s participation in the District Six land claims process was an issue of tension. The issue was not about the importance of the relationship. In fact one interviewee noted the beneficiary trust as the museum’s most important partner (A2). However, there was a lack of clear consensus on the museum’s role in the land reclamation process, as some of the same individuals were involved in both organizations (A4). This tension is communicated in the following statements:

“You know, some of the people are the same. And they wear two different hats, and sometimes they think it’s the same hat, that it’s one District Six problem that they addressing in different spaces” (A4).

“ ... it was very difficult to distinguish between the museum and the land claims process, ... because [ A ] and [B] were also members of the board of the Beneficiary Trust. And so, you know, often in the work of the museum, they wouldn’t ask the museum questions. There’d be a beautiful event [in the museum], marking for example, the unveiling of plans for the new houses. And there wouldn’t be someone in the museum to document the process, to be a kind of museum opportunity because nobody would think about it. So when [C] was appointed, it was like a breath of fresh air ...” (A4)

Two out of four interviewees associated with the District Six Museum acknowledged this tension. All of the interviewees drew boundaries between the Beneficiary Trust and the museum, but noted that the Beneficiary Trust was one of, if not the, most important partner of the museum. Despite these points of tension, the Beneficiary Trust shares

workspace with the museum, and an interviewee speaks of its current relationship as follows:

“... in some ways the museum sees itself as the cultural arm of the restitution process. So ... the museum realizes that it does not drive the restitution process ... that is driven elsewhere by the Beneficiary and Redevelopment Trust ... but the museum acts as a resource to them ... what the museum has done is make the argument for the land restitution process always to pay attention to the question of memory, so that there needs to be a space that reflects on District Six’s history. There needs to be a memorial park as part of the ... reorganization of the land in District Six ... [and] there’ll need to be a process of working with the returnees around questions of memory and consciousness” (A4).

This relationship and close physical proximity of the two entities provide a sense of the momentum and dynamic energies surrounding the production and consumption of *Digging Deeper*, and the relevance of the museum’s work to contemporary concerns. It is therefore fitting to engage the meanings of *Digging Deeper* with this external context in mind.

#### 4.3.3 Creating Participatory Methodologies

All of the interviewees emphasized the methodological significance of *Digging Deeper* as one that gave serious attention to how the production process could serve as a catalyst for participation and inclusion. Describing the significance and nature of this methodology, interviewee A4 stated that,

“It put in place a methodology of how, what you need to do in working closely with ... people in a collections project, and in an exhibitions production process that enables people to be a partner, and an author of what emerges. So they are not just being mined for what they have, but that you put in place a different ethics of production that provides a kind of relationship between a specialist and a non-specialist. So your community-ness requires expertise in order to be effective, but in a relationship with each other where the expertise is not a controlling one over the community” (A4).

As noted by interviewees A2 and A4, the need for one or several methodologies of memory practice became explicit as the museum became challenged to respond to concerns and criticisms about which stories were represented in the museum. This methodological focus had particular impact on processes of research, collecting and narrative development. In addition then to fairly standard elements of museum processes of collections and exhibitions production, community relationship building and interrogations of authorship and ownership were central to all of these processes.

It is with this kind of reality in mind, that one of the most important foregroundings of *Digging Deeper* is its focus on the life histories of former District Six residents through oral testimonies, music and other sound installations. The exhibition is built not entirely, but primarily, on oral testimonies. In addition to the tangible archive from which these testimonies were extracted, and to which it contributed, the museum facilitated a process of community engagement in the recording of these testimonies. This in turn was being influenced by processes that were happening in other spheres of democratic transition in South Africa, such as the recording of testimonies through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in support of healing and other objectives of national reconciliation (Layne and Rassool 2001, p.146). For many former residents, the interviews, reference groups, workshops and other events that were built on community participation, provided a platform that gave people a say in the District Six story.

One interviewee highlighted the need to deconstruct the methodology in the context of the *Digging Deeper* exhibition, noting that “methodology is perhaps an overused word at the museum” (A2). This statement led me to question what these statements about methodologies mean for museum projects and everyday practice? Some

interviewee comments shed further light on practices of community relationship building that were not confined to collecting stories, but that provided a venue for community members to become active in the process:

“... the methodology involves working quite closely with people in kind of reference groups and kind of ongoing work where the process of exhibition making very quickly becomes a collecting process in which people then bring their things in ...” (A4)

“... it’s the relationship that you build with people ... that’s what makes our museum different. It’s this continual relationship. People in the museum, you know what was so fascinating, even with the research, that’s what took us into another level of our ... relationships with our donors ... because we were taking an interest, and phoning and inviting ... and they saw what we were doing ...” (A1)

“... that Writers Floor is generated out of a process of collaboration with poets, and ex-residents and storytellers, and writers and artists. So you have a collaborative project ... so you building new things, generating new information” (A1)

The components of this methodology are therefore evident in an exhibition-making process that creates feedback mechanisms for broadening stakeholder participation.

Interviewee A1 described Digging Deeper as a methodology or framing process for all of the work undertaken by the museum, noting that the name in itself implies the need for, “constantly digging and mining and ... extending the work of the museum” (A1), that “[the] methodology is ongoing, and the exhibitions actually create a platform for that methodology to grow” (A1).

#### 4.3.4 Content Representation: Choosing Exhibition Themes

A curatorial committee that consisted of seven people drove the Digging Deeper project, and in the words of one committee member, it “went through quite a long process of planning and thinking through the Digger Deeper Exhibition” (A4). This committee

was further sub-divided into smaller teams, responsible for the exhibition's conceptual framework, and for research (A Guide to the District Six Museum and the Digging Deeper Exhibition). This curatorial team also produced the 'final' narrative for Digging Deeper, considered how excerpts from collected oral testimonies and sound recordings would be used in the exhibition, and factored in content contributions from museum reference groups, external archives, and other sources. A committee member acknowledged an editorial role played by the museum in producing the exhibition, referencing the dilemma of having the final say in the exhibition.

“So there's a issue of bias, there's a[n] issue of subjectivity, there's a[n] issue of objectivity, you know, how do you position yourself as a museum, how does the exhibition position itself? How are you going to take all of that information, because at the end of the day you have to edit it. You do edit it” (A1).

This process saw the identification of several themes that were not covered, or not given adequate coverage in Digging Deeper's predecessor exhibit. These themes influenced the final product in both content and form. According to one committee member,

“We worked with a number of themes ... I can't remember some of these names, but eventually we decided on the theme Digging Deeper which was about telling the District Six story with more complexity ... there was also a need to tell the story of removals without entering into a kind of a glorification and without romanticising District Six, and to be able to tell the history of District Six warts and all. To be able to reflect on the fact that people who lived in District Six weren't only victims ... and to think of them as more complex” (A4).

Content selection was further complicated by the time sensitivities of working with living memory, and most particularly by the need to capture the stories of a generation of ageing former residents. Articulating this tension in terms of themes that were not covered in Digging Deeper, an interviewee notes,

“I can list, easily list on my two hands – subjects that we haven’t covered. Whether it’s the carnival, or doctors in District Six, or education . . . , or labor, what kind of work people did, . . . song traditions that are dying out . . . You can take any of those and turn it into a major resource project, and you could get enormous wealth. So how much of that can you salvage, because once those people die its gone . . . versus getting young people to get the basic message about non-racialism, and living in a different . . . city . . . they’re both important. It’s a trade-off that needs to be made, and sometimes . . . at the moment, funding, it’s much easier to raise funds for education than for oral history . . .” (A2).

This statement provides a sense of the decisions that the curatorial committee was faced with. In addition to having to make trade-offs in terms of external audiences and participants in *Digging Deeper*, the reality of funding requirements and constraints in an independent, donor-funded organization was a critical factor.

The *Digging Deeper* process also raised questions about the exhibition’s geographic scope, and the feasibility of including other sites of forced removals in Cape Town. While references to other sites of forced removals are evident in the exhibition’s chronological and contextual timeline, the focus is primarily on District Six. An interviewee notes that, “it was felt that we needed to go back to the Methodist church building, the restored building, with a District Six exhibition” (A4). Other stories of forced removals are present in “a series of temporary exhibitions” (A4) that preceded *Digging Deeper*, a “Sea Point Tramway Road exhibition . . . and work on other parts of Cape Town” (A4).

Further selection debates, ultimately not addressed in *Digging Deeper*, raised questions about including narratives of people’s lives after they were forced to leave District Six.

“At one stage in the discussion about *Digging Deeper* there was a big debate, which the museum still hasn’t gotten to that point. We thought we were there . . . about whether we shouldn’t be talking to people about what

happened after District Six. You know people now live in Mitchells Plain, Hanover Park – why don't we tell that story rather than just District Six ... why's District Six so special ...” (A2).

This debate in particular is about connecting past to present, and raises a possible social justice curatorial focus on the continued poor social conditions of people who were moved from District Six. While this need has been acknowledged, the expectations of one community museum project are overwhelming.

Content selection emerged as one of the most challenging aspects of curating the exhibition. The need for careful attention to selection methods therefore became explicit as the museum became increasingly challenged to respond to concerns of which stories were profiled and represented in their public and exhibition programs, and how these selections were made. An important way in which the museum dealt with, and continues to deal with accounting for its decisions, is through different kinds of partnerships and collaborative projects. One such example is the “Writers Floor” component of *Digging Deeper*, “generated out of a process of collaboration with poets, and ex-residents and storytellers, and writers and artists” (A1).

Making decisions about what and how to select an exhibition's content raises questions in any museum setting. As noted by Soyinka (2000), Said (2000) and others, content representation is primarily influenced by political contexts. In this section, in addition to outlining the museum's approach and methodologies of selection, I have highlighted central selection issues that were considered and debated in the making of *Digging Deeper*.

#### 4.3.5 Working with Traumatic Memories

Interviewees involved in the exhibition raised several challenges of working with memories of trauma. For many ex-residents, engaging with the work of the District Six Museum is an emotional experience that often dredges up personal traumatic memories. Interviewee A3 provides a key perspective of working with trauma, and on the ability of the museum to contribute to healing processes.

“I’ve learned this more from people more than anything else, is that for them their stories are actually much more valuable than giving us a photograph. Sometimes they don’t have photographs, but for them it’s been about, it’s been about having a space to come and talk” (A3).

Another interviewee noted that it is difficult to assess the short and longer-term emotional impacts of the exhibition on those who come and go from the museum.

“It’s a serious thing, you know, I mean you go for therapy, and there’s a moment where you have to deal with issues. You have to come to terms with things, where you have to put it away and you have to look at it in a different light. Now I’m hoping that through the processes that we’re doing, and we don’t have any mechanisms in place to understand, you know what I mean, how do you gauge that point where people are, you know, moved on a little bit, where they **feel**, you know that they’ve moved **on**, because memory can also, there’s also that feeling, that thing about nostalgia where it traps you, you know. And when you come into a space and you keep seeing that same photograph of that Hanover Street, jarre [geez], then you ... transcend into that space immediately ... Its like the trauma hits you again. But you also wonder at which point people transcended into almost acceptance, and moved on” (A1).

Interviewee A3 also underscored the need for museum staff to not be intrusive when witnessing emotional scenes.

“People, they get really involved in the exhibition ... they get very involved ... at that moment if you’re an ex-resident, and you’re actually sort of reading something ... looking at a picture, something is happening that is ... not actually the museum’s business in a sense. On a very basic, emotional, human level, it’s not our business. That’s somebody’s memory that is actually being worked on, or something’s happening ...”(A3).

The acknowledgement of trauma and nostalgia has been present through all of the museum's work, but through Digging Deeper and other programs, the museum has been faced with the difficult questions of if and how to capture the emotions associated with this trauma. On the one hand there is a sense of the need to communicate some of the nuances of ex-resident experiences, and as noted by an interviewee, museum visitors are invited to express themselves on the memory cloth and the floor map.

“It is a very traumatic experience, there's loads of, there's years and years of all this stuff sitting there, and how do you archive that. Where do you put that? Where do you put emotion? It's like music you know, when you play it, it goes out there into the ... air. Now how do you capture that? So there was a whole thing around capturing, you know how do we capture this things ... that you can't touch, but you feel it. Its like music, you feel it, but you can't touch it. So ... the cloth came out of the thing that you can't touch, the map came out of the space you know ...” (A1).

The commitment to participation in the making of the exhibition therefore speaks to multiple exhibition purposes, not all of which were articulated at the conceptual outset. In addition to documenting and disseminating, involvement in the process has been acknowledged as an important form of catharsis. Trauma and healing are threads that are constantly present, as reported by members of the exhibition team. A report of a conversation between a museum staffer and a former resident goes like this:

“Mr [A], for example, you know ... you go visit him in his space, he's painting the same painting of [B] Street with this perspective of a street, a completely desolated isolated street, and in the distance there's Table Mountain and there's no people in the road. He repetitively paints the same moment, he's stuck in the same moment. And I asked him ... because trauma has a weird thing on you, and people do things in different ways to deal with it. So now his, one of his ways is ... he paints, but ... he's stuck in this moment. And I asked him, I said, Mr [A], why's there no people in the street. He says no, no, no, ... there is people. I said but I don't see this. He says no, no, if you look in the windows, there's all these ... little faces coming out of the curtains, they're peeping through the curtains. And he says, you know what, the people were so scared that they

went into their houses when they knew that they were gonna be ... moved" (A1).

The following response by a museum staff member to an overwhelmed ex-resident, adds another powerful personal dimension to the emotional residue of forced removals. This response was to "a man standing crying on the [District Six floor] map with his children looking on with dismay and embarrassment, with his wife urging him not to cry in front of the children" (McEachern 1998, p. 63)

"But I say, no you must cry. It is quite all right. And I will try to get the children aside and say to them it is all right for your father to cry. It was a terrible thing that happened to him. And maybe then they can understand why sometimes he is quiet or bad tempered. Or maybe he drinks too much. Because the children can't always understand just how his life has been changed by this" (McEachern 1998, p. 63)

The exhibition often generates this kind of emotional engagement, as many people for the first time begin to consider the magnitude of what had happened to them, in a context in the present where they are being recognized and validated for how history has affected them. McEachern (1998) notes that the District Six Museum's curatorial approach involves focusing on the structural violence inflicted against families, networks and communities, and not necessarily on issues of physical human rights abuse as in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (McEachern 1998, p.63). This is an important point to remain mindful of, in light of criticisms leveled against the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for its "unfinished business".

Outside of personal dimensions of trauma and healing for former residents, Ballantyne and Uzzell (1993) write about District Six as a case study of "hot interpretation". Building upon R.P. Abelson's 1963 usage of the term "hot cognitions" in reference to important social issues that have a strong emotional aspect, the authors coin

the term “hot interpretation” to describe an interpretive design in which the triggering of emotions ensures that memories of atrocities are kept within social consciousness (Ballantyne and Uzzell 1993, p.4). They conclude, from subsequent surveys at the District Six Museum that “visiting the District Six Museum is clearly a hot interpretive experience where displays elicit deep personal memories and emotions, especially on the part of ex-residents, as they recall the history and community spirit of the area” (Ballantyne 2003, p.281).

#### 4.3.6 Prioritizing the Contributions of Donors

While the exhibition was based on many sources, priority was given to museum contributors who shared their life histories and donated tangible memorabilia to the museum. An interviewee noted that:

“Our primary research elements are our contributors. They first and foremost, they are the artifacts, they are the encyclopedias of knowledge. They’re the reservoirs of memories and experiences” (A1).

Similarly, another interviewee pointed out that, “the donors are always respected” (A4).

The personal contributions of museum donors are important and necessary in light of official historical biases, and an official archival record of District Six that rarely address the moral dimensions of the District Six removals found in personal testimonies.

Historian Bill Nasson details the bias that is evident in existing District Six records – on the one hand there are newspapers and other publications that show District Six as a “merry community”, while medical health and census records on the other hand focus on desperate social conditions. Nasson argues that these two polar contrasts are the District Six images that have “settled in popular consciousness”, and that they are “distorted and false” (Nasson 1990, pp.47-49). Rassool also notes a pressing need for the District Six

Museum to “counteract a pervasive idea that had become almost settled truth, that the district had merely been a ‘slum’” (Rassool 2007, p.291). The exhibition therefore intentionally “layers” the testimonies of eyewitnesses over an existing historical record.

“So, on the one hand, you have information coming from the archive, but at the same time you're having these multiple voices that layer over the kind of historical information. So it ... creates dilemma also because what you say is your experience. Somebody else comes in, it's another experience. And then you have what's in the archive. So now what is correct, and what's factual ... but I think that's the process that we're in” (A1).

With former residents as the museum's most important research constituents, research and collecting efforts were also valued by the museum for its catalytic role in community relationship building.

“... the research, that's what took us into another level of our ... relationships with our donors ... because we were taking an interest, and phoning and inviting and they saw what we were doing ...” (A1)

Despite museum practices that demonstrate community participation in research and collecting, there is a strong sense of museum staff being overwhelmed at the extent of what would be needed to sustain this approach. Three tensions are evident. The first is that it is simply not possible to always have staff on hand to record new, often emotional, engagements with the exhibition by former residents, and the second is the unlikelihood of follow-up by the museum. Describing a typical first-time visit to the museum by a former resident, an interviewee remarks,

“If we are lucky, we are there, and we have a tape recorder. Or we give them a cup of tea and we make notes and so on. Or the person writes a message on the map and on the cloth. And they go away, and we take their details. But we never get back to that person, because its simply too much to do” (A2).

A third tension surfaces in how donations to the museum are managed.

“People want to see what they’ve given you, visible. They want to experience it. So they come there the next time and they’re terribly disappointed because their photo isn’t up, whatever it is. Its difficult” (A2).

While the museum has gone a long way towards prioritizing its donors, the sustainability of this approach remains in question.

#### 4.3.7 Meeting Public Demand and Mediating Public Impact

Despite the fact that the exhibition is currently in its eleventh year of display in the museum, it remains a focal point for audience engagement and interactivity. This audience has diversified beyond former District Six residents and interest groups to national and international tourists. I have observed that the most prominent visitors are organized school groups, national and international tourists, scholars, and former residents. Interviewee A2 noted a tension amongst curators in who the museum’s primary audiences are, and the ability of this tension to impact on museum practice.

“... the museum has also become a victim of its own success, tourists have taken over. And that in a sense corrupted, or threatens to corrupt what happens ... and that, I think its still an issue. Tour groups come in, and they come in thick and fast especially in high season ... a big problem because we then had to find other ways of – or more organized ways to deal with ex-residents – to accommodate and hold that agenda, and its difficult. I mean, at the best of times, even with a world of funding, it’s difficult to keep that going. Uh, cause it meant we had to have organized – I mean there was always this metaphor, we must bus in ex-residents so that they can come experience the museum” (A2).

In 2000, Ballantyne (2003, p.283) observed over a one week period that the museum’s most prominent visitors were international tourists (54%), former residents or visitors with close personal ties to District Six (7%), and the general South African public

(39%) made up predominantly of school groups (30%). Ballantyne reported increasing pressures on the District Six Museum to diversify its programs beyond a community museum focus, and that museum staff were well aware of these pressures and their implications (Ballantyne 2003, p.289). These pressures contradict the earlier rationale for Digging Deeper and District Six. As noted by an interviewee,

“When we put this museum together, it wasn't for an international audience. It wasn't for anybody else other than a community of people that suffered this trauma, and it was a statement. So it wasn't done with the intention of a particular target, well outside, of that target audience if you want to use that terminology ... and we don't do excessive marketing of this place at all. I mean it markets itself, which is quite interesting. But at the same time you know, we put this exhibition together, Digging Deeper, with the understanding that it is a catalyst, it is a catalyst for a range of other things, and some of them are not exhibition driven, they're program-driven, they are workshop driven, they are the other educational forms that sprout and emerge ...” (A1).

To solidify relationships with community constituents, and as early as 2001, the museum took steps to solicit feedback on Digging Deeper, by running a series of workshops with some of its core constituents: donors and former residents, educators, artists and researchers. Participants were asked to provide responses to what worked well in the Digging Deeper exhibition, and what did not. Former residents tended to focus on issues that they thought were deserving of more attention in the exhibition, while some of the museum staff present attempted to locate these concerns in museum processes by communicating that the exhibition is not the only aspect of the museum. Educators on the other hand tended to focus on how the exhibition could be made more meaningful for a younger generation with no physical connections to District Six.

While I am unaware of any attempts to document international tourist experience at the museum, international tourist websites such as [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) (accessed

October 2, 2012) are insightful. The site contained 168 visitor reviews that were overwhelmingly positive. Negative reviews (2.4%) tended to be based on a perceived information overload inside of the museum, and in the words of one reviewer, “no narrative flow”, while others felt that they could have read this information in a book. The average reviews (11.9%) typically described the museum as “worth a visit” with the main criticism being too much text, and a “jumbled narrative”. The positive reviewers (85.7%) typically described their museum experiences as personal and moving, and the content of the museum exhibits as “necessary knowledge” ([http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g312659-d310916-r141871469-District\\_Six\\_Museum-Cape\\_Town\\_Central\\_Western\\_Cape.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g312659-d310916-r141871469-District_Six_Museum-Cape_Town_Central_Western_Cape.html), accessed October 3, 2012).

It is evident then that the museum has made positive steps to evaluate the exhibition’s impact on its priority constituents. The extent to which this might be affected by a changing public consisting of international tourists and younger generations of South Africans remains to be assessed.

#### 4.4 ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

##### 4.4.1 The Exhibition As Documentation Strategy

Even though Digging Deeper did not begin with explicit intentions to create an archive, as the museum’s permanent exhibition feature, it played a central role in articulating the museum’s research and collection priorities. Interviewee A4 notes that,

“I think what’s interesting about archives in the District Six museum, is that its founding impetus is not an institutionalizing one, but the museum has had to try to be professional about its collections. And that’s one of the

advantages of the museum. You know, I mean it does work with notions of documentation of wanting to have collections that speak to the detail of everyday life ... and ... it's probably done more thinking about archiving in relation to oral history and in relation to photography more so than the documentary record of the museum" (A4).

The exhibition fulfilled its research and collecting functions by both drawing from existing archival collections and creating new archives through research for the exhibition. There was strong consensus amongst interviewees that in the District Six Museum, "exhibitions drive the collection process" (A1). An interviewee described this approach as one that demonstrates significant overlaps between creating the exhibition and creating an archive:

"Exhibitions drive the collection process, you know, it's through the exhibitions that we collect, not the other way around ... It's not, sometimes we have somebody coming in, and they would say, you know I've got this amazing photographic collection. So on the basis of that, you then do the research, and you do the exhibition. And we do it the other way round, and that's the harder way" (A1).

Speaking to the value of being a community-oriented initiative, with a specific exhibition-driven collecting process, one interviewee notes that,

"The one advantage is that it enables you to shift your focus into a locality in quite a detailed way. And you're able to kind of sharpen your focus and to collect all manner of ephemera associated with a place, and to collect in relation to an urban history... it also enables you to think about prior histories of collecting, because these collections don't enter the museum without in a sense being in prior collections. So if you take for example the records of a sports club. The records of a sports club are in the collection of a sports club. You know they are looked after, cared for, they have a purpose in an institution and later on they enter the museum" (A4).

These statements shed light on a form of documentation strategy in which the museum both draws from existing institutional collections that are external to the museum, and institutionalizes new primary source materials that emerge from museum interactions

with donors and oral history contributors. Another interviewee who further notes the difficulty of extricating internal archives development from the exhibitions development process acknowledges these two components to exhibition making.

“It became very much part of the museum’s own challenge about what is an archive. What part is an archive, and what part is an exhibition? We kind of threw the thing on its head, and the archive happens ... you know the memory cloth, all these things that were really in response, or rather they were part of a multidisciplinary response to the very inter-organic challenge that the museum posed” (A2).

This approach to collecting was further motivated by the practical difficulties of an institution that relies primarily on external funding to sustain itself, and therefore motivated by the need to work innovatively with limited resources.

“The museum is not a government-funded organization as it were. So that does create other implications. It does impact on how we do work and what becomes priority and what doesn't. And in that its also problematic, because we have to constantly tell ourselves ... we are responsible for our target audience, or our donors, our ex-residents, and their generations, that’s the people that we really responsible to, I mean that’s the way I understand it” (A1).

A key contribution of Digging Deeper to archival processes, as identified by museum staff, is that it provided a platform for creating an archive based on the narrative framework of the exhibition, without creating a situation where the museum’s reason for existence was being compromised.

“I think a lot of what Digging Deeper has ... allowed ... is [for us] to realize that even as a museum we don’t, and it took me a long time to understand this, we don’t actually collect actively as other archives or other places would do. We don’t say we’re going to collect every issue of this publication just because it was started in District Six, and it was based there. For us it’s more about projects that bring in material ... and those things assisting a workshop process, assisting an exhibitions process, [and] assisting the education process. So we don’t actively go out and look for things, which I think is the right attitude for a small museum, an independent museum ... because you’re sitting in a situation where, I

mean we're sitting with so many paper-based things for sports, artifacts all those things and it requires maintenance, it requires love in different ways and if you are focused more on doing sort of community-based work, it can, there is a danger of dragging it down" (A4).

As a documentation strategy, Digging Deeper facilitated an archival process. The cooperative network on which the documentation strategy continues to rely is not necessarily institutionally based. Instead it is based on a community network consisting of the museum, funding organizations, and former District Six residents.

#### 4.4.2 A Participatory Approach

The museum's participatory approach is premised on face-to-face interaction rather than participatory digital technologies. The Digging Deeper context has specific implications for the participatory creation of archives, and less so for facilitating formal user responses through appraisal, arrangement and description of the archive that has been created.

The museum's approach was based on recording previously unheard voices. As summed up by an interviewee the District Six story was well known by the time the District Six Museum was established, and participation in the Digging Deeper process was about "reclaiming a community's power to tell the story of District Six because there were many people telling the story" (A2). Through reference groups with former residents and activists, relationship building with museum contributors, donors and potential donors, and mobilizing community constituents around priority projects, a key component of building a District Six archive was based on feedback from "insiders". Unlike the archives of official structures that were created by apartheid government structures and include census and health reports, the creators of the archive in this

instance were the “objects” of the apartheid laws, those who were directly or indirectly affected by apartheid legislation. An interviewee highlighted the inadequacies of official archives to document the nuances of the District Six experience, underscoring the value of the District Six site, the museum displays, and the community orientations of the museums as important mnemonic triggers for participants.

“There was an opportunity to innovate, and to say if you want to mobilize people to reclaim District Six, maybe you should mobilize their memories of District Six. You can’t do that by going into a conventional archive where you sit at a desk and somebody brings you some papers, because that’s not how illiterate people or people who aren’t necessarily educated in the modalities of an archive ... it won’t appeal to them, it won’t connect with them. What will connect with people is seeing where they lived, and ... knowing, it’s because people in District Six created the archive, they knew what sparks their own imagination – as an insider. I think the notion of insider knowledge is very important, that it was District Sixers saying what are the things that appeal to District Sixers. All the stories from the oral history projects that had already been done and the stories that people carried with them were about people’s sense of the place, of how special it was ... of community, of how important community was. So I think that space, that museum space, even the church and the layering of meaning of that – having this architectural archive is already creating all these layers of meaning, and creating an experience for people to perform and to tell stories, and to reminisce ...” (A2)

These strategies of participation resulted in varying degrees of success. Museum staff provided examples of both success stories, as well as examples that reflect the practical difficulties of sustaining community relationships. Processes of museum curating were not always able to accommodate all personal contributions, resulting in disappointment on the part of donors.

“People want to see what they’ve given you visible. They want to experience it. So they come there the next time and they’re terribly disappointed because their photo isn’t up, whatever it is. It’s difficult” (A2).

In other examples, interviewees focused on the benefits of this participatory approach, most particularly its implications for attaching “credibility” and meaning to personal sources, and constructing networks of personal and community archives. One interview notes,

“So we have a whole lot of this community archive. When I talk about a community archive, I’m talking about [the archive] that sits with people. And it’s not only their stories now. It’s them actually becoming active in the process, you know ... they becoming curious about themselves in the story. They becoming curious about information around them, and how it sparks a research[er] and archivist in themselves. I must go to the library. I must go and phone Mr. So and So because he’s got this ... and so and so has got that. And so this network of ... the community archive that is there ... and that’s what we need them to take ownership of ... so that when you cite a source, you can cite a source from Mr. So and So ...” (A1).

One could argue that in the District Six Museum, the processes of creating the archive have been merged with the appraisal of the collections and the creation of collective frameworks, such as the map or football in District Six, for understanding and engaging with the collections. In addition to the sharing of stories and items of personal significance, community contributions to the exhibition themes were made through workshops and reference groups that informed the exhibition’s curatorship. In this way the exhibition served as the primary catalyst for harnessing multiple contributions based on the values assigned by “insiders”.

#### 4.4.3 Establishing Collecting Ethics and Practices

There were “moments” in the making of the Digging Deeper exhibition that underscored the need for formal collecting practices and guidelines that would inform future archival usage. These practices, according to interviewees, were influenced by the museum’s involvement in external heritage networks that demonstrated the value of

formal collecting practices, as well as on-site experiences that manifested in the day-to-day work of the museum. Underscoring this point, interviewee A4 stated that,

“In the early days of the museum, we didn't think of what kind of legal relationships are set up when a donation is made” (A4).

As part of its involvement in the Swedish African Museums Program, the museum found resonances with the Swedish SAMDOK, an organization concerned with making museum collecting meaningful for contemporary life and culture<sup>9</sup>. An interviewee notes that,

“... one of the things that SAMDOK makes you do, is that when you finish an exhibition, you have a complete record of everything in the making of that exhibition, in your archive. And then in the District Six Museum, we meant to have that” (A4).

The need for formal processes became apparent in the everyday work of the museum, and with oral histories being a central component of the museum's work since its inception, it became increasingly visible through the museum's continued engagements with oral histories. With funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the initiative to develop a District Six Museum sound archive was closely tied into the production of the Digging Deeper exhibition, and began 18 months before the formal exhibition opening. Interviewees have commented on the exhibition's specific role as a catalyst for setting up a formal sound and audiovisual archive. The need for professional management of oral histories, and later moving images, became clear.

“... out of the practice of the museum ... suddenly you realize that you've got these oral history recordings, but we could do nothing with it. And the

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<sup>9</sup> See *Connecting Collecting*, edited by Eva Fägerborg & Elin von Unge. Stockholm: SAMDOK/ Nordiska Museet, 2008.

other thing that drove it was that for the social historian the oral history was just a means of achieving a transcript, something that could be written. We wanted to take orality seriously, where you need a good quality recording ... and then eventually we also began to be offered ... old film footage ... so the sound archive project became an audiovisual archiving project” (A4).

Museum staff was also compelled to respond to more difficult issues that emerged from researcher access to documents outside of the exhibition context, and the reuse of oral history transcripts. An interviewee stated the following:

“I mean, nobody used to sign anything when things used to be handed over to the museum before. And these things just needed to be put on a much more professional footing, where everything needed a release form. And then also, we used to think that what a release form means is that everyone has the right to have access to a document or a photograph, and that is not the case. I mean we really had difficult situations where a body of oral history transcripts were kept on a researcher’s computer, and then some scholar got access to those transcripts and used them without the [permission of the] museum ... and all of a sudden you’re in a situation where, what are your rights and what are your obligations, and the paper’s already been submitted to a journal, and the journal says, but do you have the right to use this collection, because now we live in an era of rights and obligations and ethics statements ...” (A4).

From the perspectives of interviewees, Digging Deeper contributed to the professionalization of other museum programs, and coerced its staff into formalizing the museum’s archival, research, collections and oral history programs. Interviewee A4 describes this institutionalization as a process of “museumization”, and of thinking through what would constitute professional and ethical museum collecting practices.

“It became museumized, it means that it went through a professionalization process, in which suddenly the museum starts caring for collections, and you have to do that through museological tools, through the disciplinary knowledges of conservation. You know you have to, you can't take people's collections if you can't demonstrate how to look after it. You acquire a photographic collection. It means that you've got to take care of the collection. And so the museum has become a ... museum

in formal terms, ... that [also] comes out of the democratic movement, that comes out of the civics” (A4).

Despite several practices in support of a vibrant archival program, the formalization of a District Six archive has been met with ambiguity, and emerged as a process that invites as many challenges as possibilities. An interview summed up some of the key challenges as the lack of archival infrastructure, resources and archival expertise, but most significantly noted that an institutionalized archive would change the entire methodology of the District Six Museum project.

“I mean in the beginning it was, you know we didn't want to keep information in the sense of having an archive because we didn't have that infrastructure, and the minute you have an archive it changes a whole different perspective in terms of what you understand. I mean you become a custodian to the material and you need to be responsible ... it takes resources, it takes a different kind of mindset” (A1).

Another interviewee doubted the ability of the current museum institutional structure to formally accept an archival responsibility.

“So we don't actively go out and look for things, which I think is the right attitude for a small museum, an independent museum ... because you're sitting in a situation where, I mean we're sitting with so many paper-based things for sports, artifacts all those things and it requires maintenance, it requires love in different ways and if you are focused more on doing sort of community-based work, it can, there is a danger of dragging it down” (A2).

It is clear from these sentiments that the museum is struggling to articulate the responsibilities that it is willing and able to take on as an archival resource. Despite the museum's reluctance to formalize its archive, the demands of everyday practice, as demonstrate above, has issued a different call. In some cases, as in the case of land claims

records, statutory requirements<sup>10</sup> that place these within the jurisdiction of the public archive system make it easier to zone off professional responsibilities. In other cases, while the museum presents many pertinent opportunities for engaging with, creating, and thinking about the nature of archives, and what the District Six Archive could be, a big question is whether it will be fair to place the weight of maintaining an extensive District Six archive on a community-oriented donor funded institution.

#### 4.4.4 Relationships with the Formal Archival Establishment

A prominent gap that emerges from this kind of discussion concerns the museum's relationship with the land claims process. Despite the argument made within the museum for "the land restitution process always to pay attention to the question of memory, so that there needs to be a space that reflects on District Six's history", this is not always reflected or facilitated in the museum's work. The following statement adds some nuance to the dynamics of archiving land claims.

"... the claimant[s], the people who submitted their claims for land restitution had to go through an archival process also. It would have made a lot of sense if that happened as part of the museum's process, but the museum is not tied into – the museum is not part of a statutory system. So it does its own thing and the land restitution process does its own thing. I don't know what happened to that archive. I suspect that it's either in the land deeds office, or whatever that body is called. Um, so that's just by way of saying that the archive and the museum performs a slightly different function. It doesn't lend itself easily to kind of official mechanisms of memory retention that the state has facilitated ..." (A2).

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As such the records generated through these processes are public records subject to the provisions of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act of 1996.

This statement highlights parallel processes of archiving public records that were not part of museum processes, also alluded to by interviewee A4 who noted a distinction between “archives as records” and “archives as resources”.

#### 4.5 SUMMATION

Using the genre of a permanent exhibition, the District Six Museum has produced a narrative of forced removals from District Six, under apartheid. Three sub-components are evident in the making of this narrative – 1. the medium of exhibition and its attention to design and aesthetics, 2. the processes of making the exhibition through methodologies of inclusion, participation, research, selection, representation, and access, and, 3. the catalytic value of Digging Deeper for mobilizing additional interest in the museum’s work, for contributing to internal museum processes of archiving and ‘museumization’, and to external projects that emerge from engagement with Digging Deeper. Additionally, in its integrated Conservation Management Plan, the District Six Museum, emphasizes “site specific approaches to memorialization”, an important underlying feature in the work of the museum.

Digging Deeper’s aesthetic design and value rests on one important notion, that it is a “living exhibition” consisting of “living artifacts”. It is a living exhibition firstly in the sense of its representations of a living dispersed community of former residents, second, because of the different kinds of audience engagement that the exhibition design stimulates and facilitates, and third, because of its contributions to other museum programs such as education and collections development. The same principles apply to

the notion of “living artifacts” that stimulates “interaction from people who come and read it” (A1).

Digging Deeper consisted of research and collecting processes in which many different sources of information were consulted, assembled, and ultimately selected for inclusion in the exhibition. Collecting for Digging Deeper was conflated with research, with the conceptual frame of the exhibition as key to defining the focus of these efforts. In this way, research and collecting activities drew in a mix of primary and secondary sources as resources to inform the exhibition process. An exhibition curator provided a rationale for this mode of research and collecting practices, stating that “there are things that really really need intense research alongside collection and preservation” (A1), emphasizing that research needs were a top priority in the collecting process. This methodological focus helped to coherently pull together different aspects of the exhibition making process, most particularly in terms of how it went about its collecting efforts, and in creating the exhibition narratives.

In the context of Digging Deeper, participatory mechanisms facilitated forms of community ownership. As has been noted, there are many practical limitations to this kind of participatory approach, considering that the District Six community is a largely a scattered one, that certain components of the community were more mobilized and had more of an ability to participate than others, and for the kinds of expectations that this created within the community.

Ultimately, the District Six case positions the exhibition’s production and use as a catalyst for other museum programs that were central to mediating the District Six story, and to how this story was mediated to constituents and other external museum audiences.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SUNDAY TIMES HERITAGE PROJECT

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Sunday Times is reported to be one of South Africa's largest weekly national newspapers. According to recent statistics produced by the South African Audience Research Foundation, in 2009 the newspaper had an average weekly readership of 4 229 000 people. These numbers have been in steady decline, and by 2011 these numbers had dropped to 3 659 000 (<http://www.saarf.co.za/amps-readership/2011/Magazine%20&%20Newspaper%20Readership%20Jun11.pdf>, accessed December 1, 2012). MediaClubSouthAfrica.com reports that distribution networks for the Sunday Times extend across South Africa and beyond South African borders into Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland ([http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=73%3Apress&catid=36%3Amedia\\_bg&Itemid=54](http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73%3Apress&catid=36%3Amedia_bg&Itemid=54), accessed December 1, 2012). It is a subsidiary of Johannesburg Securities Exchange listed media and entertainment company, Avusa Limited, where a large part of South Africa's traditional, digital and entertainment media companies is concentrated (<http://www.avusa.co.za>). In celebration of its centenary in 2006, the Sunday Times initiated the "Sunday Times Heritage Project", which was initially conceptualized as a series of artist-commissioned memorials in four provinces of South Africa. The intention was to install 40 street memorials, in

honor of selected liberation struggle heroes and heroines, prominent sportspersons, prominent figures in popular culture, and in a few instances prominent events. The heritage project website reads as follows:

“To mark its 100th year of publication, the Sunday Times embarked on a project to erect a trail of memorials to some of the remarkable people and events that made our news century. We wanted to show how quickly news becomes history. We wanted to think in fresh, imaginative ways about our past, shared and separate, painful and proud. We wanted to add a stitch to the fabric of our streets and communities. The story of what happened starts here” (<http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/>, accessed on 10 February 2012)

Sunday Times publicity on the Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP) positions the project as one of ‘giving back’ to its’ readership, and as an expression of thanks for sustaining the newspaper over 100 years. The project therefore implicitly speaks to many of the political upheavals of this period, while aspects of it also pay attention to popular culture and sports. Keywords that emerge from articulations about the heritage project by those responsible for it are community, accessibility, ownership, and visibility. In a description of the project’s beginnings, project director Charlotte Bauer writes that,

“The great thing about the memorials is that they are all freely accessible and visible to the public. If our story site is a school, we install our memorial outside the gates. Several times we had to resist the temptation to place a memorial inside the gates at the invitation of the building owners themselves who were, if anything, more worried about vandalism than we were” (Bauer 2008).

Heritage scholars and critics have argued that in contemporary South African heritage discourse and practice, processes of public memorial making have been conceptualized, implemented and controlled by the state, in some cases in partnership with the private sector. Often cited examples include government managed legacy projects, such as Freedom Park, and the re-naming of streets and public stadiums after well-known

liberation struggle veterans (Coombes 2003, Baines 2007 & 2009, Marschall 2010a).

Mokwena and Segal (2006) emphasize this point in a report written for the Atlantic Philanthropies on the potential for a heritage sector collaboration with the Sunday Times on its memorial initiative, using it to justify the significance of the Sunday Times memorial project, and to contribute to the rationale for an innovative memorial communications campaign. In this lengthy report on the state of South Africa's heritage sector, the authors write that,

“Currently, the majority of memorialisation initiatives are initiated and driven by the government – both national and local. This can lead to a situation where memory and memorialisation become controlled and dictated by the state creating a narrow and restrictive vision of memorialisation. As the only provider of resources, the state will hold and exercise power in the representation of the past” (Mokwena and Segal 2006, p.18).

Marschall later emphasized the diversion of the Sunday Times Heritage Project from government-managed models and processes of memorialization, but note that “the Sunday Times did not position its project as countering, but rather as complementing, the public-sector efforts at memorializing the South African past” (Marschall 2010b, p.36). With reference to earlier comments made by the Sunday Times Heritage Project director, Marschall notes that the Sunday Times Heritage Project “clearly aimed to substitute the conventional monument's sense of weighty presence and self-conscious importance with one of lightness and even fun, albeit without being frivolous” (Marschall 2010b, p.43), and that “many Sunday Times memorials have been installed in townships and other neglected areas where such markers were not previously found” (Marschall 2010b, p.44).

In the bigger landscape of post-1990 memory practices in South Africa, the Sunday Times Heritage Project is different in the sense that it was initiated in the private

sector, with fixed monetary and staff investments over a fixed period of time. While the official Sunday Times centenary date was February 2006, it was expected that all memorials would be completed by December 2006. According to Sunday Times newspaper editor at the time, Mondli Makhanya, “we had been working on our national heritage project since late 2005 and had hoped to have installed our 40 memorials by the end of 2006, our centenary year” (<http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/article.aspx?id=570377>). This is not the way in which the project ultimately evolved. The first statue, that of popular South African musician Brenda Fassie, was unveiled on 9 March 2006 outside the Bassline Jazz Club in Johannesburg (Bauer 2008), and this process continued through 2007 and beyond. The installations of the memorials extended for at least two years from the initial project launch and the unveiling of the first memorial in 2006. The site of the 1961 All-in-Africa Conference at which Nelson Mandela delivered his last public speech prior to his arrest was one of the last memorial unveilings, and this took place in July 2008 (Bongani Mthethwa, Sunday Times July 20, 2008, p. 5).

Sabine Marschall (2010) pertinently notes that up until the initiation of the Sunday Times Heritage Project, the private sector had “been reluctant to invest in the process of memorialization and heritage more generally” (Marschall 2010, p.36). While there are notable exceptions, as in the case of the Robben Island Museum, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Freedom Park Trust and the South African Democracy Education Trust, a major difference in the case of the Sunday Times Heritage Project is that it was largely unsolicited by the heritage sector. It is a heritage project that originated with a national media carrier. Project records show that the Sunday Times ‘investment’

exceeded R7 million – R2 804 147 for the 2005/2006-budget year, and R4 387 488 for 2006/2007 (Mokwena and Segal 2008, p.13).

The roles of the Atlantic Philanthropies donor agency and the South African History Archive (SAHA) can be seen as an intervention in the trajectory of the Sunday Times Heritage Project, and a major catalytic influence on the ways in which the project evolved. Through sponsorship from the Atlantic Philanthropies, a complementary component of the Sunday Times Heritage Project was targeted at raising the profiles of the memorials through a range of dissemination strategies, aimed at promoting public dialogue, and connecting the project with contemporary heritage sector practices and discourses. The Atlantic Philanthropies grant was approved in June 2006, three months after the unveiling of the first Sunday Times memorial of the prominent musician Brenda Fassie. The grant confirmation letter to the director of the South African History Archive records the approval of R5,016,300 over a one year period, and clearly stipulates the purpose of the grant.

“The purpose of this grant is to develop strategies to communicate and disseminate information about past human rights abuses and anti-apartheid struggles, as a contribution to reconciliation through a collaboration with the Sunday Times Heritage Project” (McCrea 2006).

Interviewee B3 emphasizes further that the communications and dissemination aspect of the Sunday Times Heritage Project was initiated by The Atlantic Philanthropies, implying that memory and heritage was being utilized as a vehicle for promoting the reconciliation and human rights work of The Atlantic Philanthropies.

“... the initiation came from ... the Atlantic Philanthropies [which] commissioned sort of a profiling study which Lauren Segal conducted ... in which she looked at how they might be able to engage with a national heritage carrier ... or national paper, like the Sunday Times. And during the course of that research, I suppose, the idea for the project emerged, of

how Atlantic could support or work through [the] S[outh] A[frican] H[istory] A[rchive]. I already had a relationship with the South African History Archive, and this seemed a useful way of trying to gel ... a national project from a newspaper like the Sunday Times with a small N[on] G[overnmental] O[rganization]. So I mean it was brand new for both ... organizations, very,very different organizations ...” (B3).

Building upon the Sunday Times memorial installations on public sites in four provinces of South Africa, the communications campaign generated a series of tangible products such as radio programs, publications, and an interactive DVD-ROM. It also contributed research content to the project website maintained by the Sunday Times, and a special newspaper supplement that coincided with National Heritage Day on September 24, 2007. In less tangible ways it facilitated the creation of community histories via a schools oral history project, and the installation of a limited number of memorials in provinces that were not widely represented in the Sunday Times’ list of memorials.

## 5.2 PROJECT MOTIVATIONS

Official project documentation currently archived as the *Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection* (Accession number: AL3282) at the South African History Archive provides indicators of the motivations for the Sunday Times Heritage Project, from the perspectives of both project partners, the Sunday Times and the South African History Archive. Specifically, these include pre-project proposals, project reports, and interviews conducted as part of an extensive project evaluation commissioned by The Atlantic Philanthropies in 2008.

According to project records, the STHP in the first instance was spurred by the intention of the Sunday Times to mark its centennial in 2006, by “giving back” to the

people and communities that sustained the newspaper over 100 years. Editor of the Sunday Times at the time, Mondli Makhanya, positions the project as a journalistic memorial effort with implications for memorial making in heritage sector-initiated projects, rather than as a heritage sector-inspired project. Makhanya emphasizes that the main criterion for each of the memorials was its newsworthiness, and therefore the ability of each to provide meaningful talking points for its' observers. Some of Makhanya's statements on the STHP appear below, in which he attributes the project's inherent political dimensions to South Africa's recent political histories.

“... what we didn't want to do also was merely to put up statues. We wanted whatever memorials we put up to actually be alive, to tell a story and not just a political story, a story of broadly kind of sports, arts and obviously politics since we are a very much political society as South Africans. We have a political history. So that was the primary driving force behind us deciding to start these memorials” (Mondli Makhanya interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

“Basically we wanted to get into the situation where every town and village in the country had a memorial that said something happened in this town. We wanted to get to a situation where every South African wherever they are they should believe that their particular residential area, their particular village has a story to tell about the history of South Africa” (MM).

Despite the vision of a Sunday Times Heritage Project presence in “every town and village in the country”, the memorials were ultimately placed in four main provincial centers, namely Gauteng, the Western Cape Province, the Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal.

Sunday Times Heritage Project director, Charlotte Bauer, who was tasked by the Sunday Times editor to “dream up and drive a project to mark some of the newsmakers and news events that became history in public spaces in South Africa” (Charlotte Bauer

interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive)  
frames the project motivations in terms of public accessibility.

“... people like in a lot of other cities in the world can be standing waiting for a bus, grabbing a taxi and can look behind them and see a plaque ... and say, wow, something happened here a long time ago. Right where you are standing, some kind of history happened ... so the idea was to make the history come alive through anecdotal actions. On this day, in this year, something happened here. What was it? Why is it interesting? And that span many subjects ... from the arts, sports, politics, science, etc.”  
(Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

In addition then to marking the newspaper’s centennial, the particular form of memorial making was based on a public accessibility imperative where, as previously noted, the memorials would not be installed behind locked gates.

The accompanying Sunday Times branding to each of the memorials can be read as a mechanism by which the Sunday Times has inserted itself into South African history of the previous 100 years. This is not a stated intention of the Sunday Times. To the contrary, the project’s website notes that branding is used to provide links to additional resources, and as an accountability mechanism:

“Our branding on the plaques is discreet: this is not a ‘revenue driving’ exercise for the Sunday Times; it’s a self-funded “give back” project. The small logo on our plaques is there partly to direct visitors to our website and, as importantly, to announce that we are accountable for the choices we have made” (Bauer, <http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/article.aspx?id=570519>)

The February 2006 Atlantic Philanthropies-commissioned report on SAHA’s role in the Sunday Times Heritage Project positions Atlantic Philanthropies as an active mediating influence. Motivated by the agency’s belief in reconciliation and human rights, Atlantic Philanthropies issued terms of reference in which the report’s authors were

requested to provide the sponsorship rationale, produce well-defined objectives, “outline potential community involvement”, “create discourses for hidden histories”, “create an archival platform”, identify an institutional home for the project in a non-governmental organization, create non-monetary partnerships, particularly with the government Department of Education, and look at how Atlantic Philanthropies could contribute to already existing monetary investments in the project (Mokwena and Segal 2006, p.5).

This process informed SAHA’s articulations of its role and motivations for participation in the Sunday Times Heritage Project. It is captured in a mission statement that extends notions of reconciliation and human rights to a more specifically defined heritage sector context:

“SAHA will collaborate with the Sunday Times and other partners to engage South Africans with stories of our past. The project will become a catalyst for the process of healing and reconciliation as well as contribute to the building of a dynamic heritage sector” (SAHA’s Vision, Mission and Objectives for Its Collaboration with the Sunday Times Heritage Project).

The idea of facilitating public participation in the Sunday Times memorial process, and in this way making it meaningful to as broad a range of people as possible was therefore part of the early conceptualization of the communications campaign. Interviewee B1 notes that in the early conceptualization stages of the communications campaign, the project team talked about “somehow broadening it out and making it more grassroots-ish” and that the focus was on extending the Sunday Times Heritage Project “beyond those four provinces” that most of the Sunday Times memorials were located in (B1).

### 5.3 THE MEMORIALS

Twenty-seven out of thirty-one memorials profile individuals. Others commemorate political events and issues such as race classification, deaths in political detention during the apartheid era, and mass protests against apartheid. Table 5.1 provides a current listing.

As public art installations produced by different artists and commemorating different people or events, each of the memorials is different. The memorial of Cissie Gool, for instance, is a seating area of different sized bollards, each of which contains inscribed text that documents aspects of her political career (Segal and Holden 2008, p.63). The memorial of Brenda Fassie, on the other hand, is a life-sized bronze sculpture. The race classification memorial is a construction of two public benches, one marked for whites and the other for non-whites. The Lilian Ngoyi memorial is a sculpture of her sewing machine, made from recycled metal. All of the memorials are located in public spaces, and fully accessible to the public.

The building of the memorials was primarily the responsibility of the art management company, Art at Work, who was commissioned by the Sunday Times project team to identify artists, oversee the process of working with artists, and to oversee the production and installation of the memorials.

Table 5.3.1: List Of Sunday Times Memorials And Sites

	MEMORIAL	SITE
1	Olive Schreiner	Kalk Bay, Western Cape
2	Mohandas Gandhi	Fordsburg, Gauteng
3	Reverend Isaac Wauchope and the sinking of the SS Mendi	Cape Town, Western Cape
4	Enoch Mgijima and the Bulhoek Massacre	Queenstown, Eastern Cape
5	Nontetha Nkwenke	King William Town, Eastern Cape
6	Raymond Dart	Johannesburg, Gauteng
7	First Transafrica Flight	Cape Town, Western Cape
8	Albert Luthuli	Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
9	Bethuel Mkgosinyana and Orland Pirates Football Club	Soweto, Gauteng
10	Cissie Gool	Cape Town, Western Cape
11	Alan Paton	Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal
12	Race classification	Cape Town, Western Cape
13	Bessie Head	Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
14	Nelson Mandela's arrest at Howick	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal
15	Raymond Mhlaba	Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape
16	George Pemba	Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape
17	Duma Nokwe	Johannesburg, Gauteng
18	Lilian Ngoyi	Soweto, Johannesburg
19	Athol Fugard	Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape
20	John Vorster Square and Death in Detention	Johannesburg, Gauteng
21	Basil D'Oliveira	Cape Town, Western Cape
22	Happyboy Mgxaji	Mdantsane, Eastern Cape
23	Ingrid Jonker	Cape Town, Western Cape
24	Tsietsi Mashinini	Soweto, Gauteng
25	Brenda Fassie	Johannesburg, Gauteng
26	Ladysmith Black Mambazo	KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal
27	Archbishop Desmond Tutu	East London, Eastern Cape
28	Abdullah Ibrahim	Cape Town, Western Cape
29	The Purple March	Cape Town, Western Cape
30	Sunday Times Memorial Bench	Johannesburg, Cape Town
31	Nelson Mandela Memorial	Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

Lesley Perkes of Art at Work describes that there were different processes for each memorial, given the fact that each memorial was different, each was undertaken by a different artist, and each document a different story. According to Perkes,

“Some of the memorials have been made on the site, others and most of them in fact have been a combination of site work and work off site, either in factories like metal working factories or casting foundaries ...” (Lesley Perkes interview by Sharon Cort, Sunday Times Heritage Project collection, South African History Archive).

As is evident in the Table 5.1, 31 out of the planned 45 memorials were installed. Not all of the memorials have an explicit political focus, but all of the stories profiled by the memorials were impacted to greater or lesser degrees by South Africa’s apartheid context.

#### 5.4 REPACKAGING AND DISTRIBUTING THE MEMORIALS

The partnership between SAHA and the Sunday Times increased the visibility of the Sunday Times Heritage Project as a whole, and of individual memorials, by producing and distributing a series of stand-alone “products”, and by establishing local history projects in four provinces that were not represented in the Sunday Times’ list of memorial sites. From the outset, the Sunday Times organizers expressed that they wanted the memorials to be visible and accessible. As noted by Makhanya,

“One of the key rules was that they had to be publicly accessible to people. So we’ve tried as hard as we could to make sure that they were not behind walls and that basically everybody can go and see and read ... and obviously the fact that there is a story that goes with everything, that’s the other element” (Mondli Makhanya interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

SAHA's communications campaign extended these notions of visibility and accessibility by increasing and diversifying the project's audience beyond engagement with the physical memorials. Using traditional print-based, audio, and interactive media, the project produced a series of memory resources that were distributed in the media genres of radio, newspaper, publications, Internet and interactive DVD. The focus was on spreading the message of the memorials, and promoting public dialogue by supplementing the physical memorials with talking points on themes of reconciliation and heritage. The Sunday Times was not directly involved in how SAHA implemented the communications campaign. An interviewee notes that,

“We had some very specific projects, which again related to the monuments ... but we had a wide berth in terms of doing what we wanted to with the development of the content” (B3).

In addition to identified activities and outputs of the communications campaign, the campaign was also viewed as a way of reflecting on the collaborative nature of a project between the non-profit and private sectors to mediate public impact.

“... this is why I talk about dissemination strategy, and I think this is a generic problem for non governmental organizations, in particular, that they don't really put enough investment into [dissemination], where ... they make their products but then they don't think of where they can use them effectively, and get maximum value”(B3).

Specifically, the campaign's tangible outputs took the form of a series of radio programs, publications and online resources. Intangible deliverables primarily included the forms of grassroots community engagement and relationship building that occurred in conceptualizing and implementing a schools oral history program, and in derivative activities such as workshops with school educators and learners. SAHA's role in this process, as noted by a project member, can be seen as testing ground for which public

dissemination strategies and processes were most effective in the context of the Sunday Times Heritage Project, and as contributory to broader heritage sector practices and discourses on public engagement with memory.

“Almost all of these different interventions were little demonstrations of what could be done. So we saw it as part of a broader role that SAHA could and should be playing as a catalyst around issues rather than being the best at this or the best at that ... We can now show and demonstrate different ‘methodologies of engagement’ ... be experimental, be daring, be cutting edge ... and I think that was the unique and perhaps really exciting thing ... between this sort of little NGO that punches way above its weight and is a little bit controversial, working with an institution like the Sunday Times, but with a set of core characters, an issue, some of which had profile but some of which didn’t have profile” (B3).

Another way of thinking about the communications campaign aspect of the Sunday Times Heritage Project is that it helped to situate the memorial process locally by providing avenues for more people to participate in and contribute to different aspects of memory making. Along these lines, an interviewee stated that the role of the SAHA team was, “about somehow broadening it out and making it more grassroots-ish in some way” (B1).

The Sunday Times’ direct involvement in this repackaging effort was limited to its continuing content contributions and maintenance of the project website that it had launched as an “online museum” in the early phases of the project, and its production of a special heritage supplement to the main newspaper in September 2007.

Table 5.2 provides a full list of the complementary products that were produced as part of the communications campaign.

Table 5.4.1: Resources Produced for the Communications Campaign of the Sunday Times Heritage Project

	TITLE	GENRE
1	Lilian Ngoyi	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
2	The Langa March	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
3	John Vorster Square	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
4	Orlando Pirates	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
5	Race Classification	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
6	Nontetha Nkwenkwe	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
7	Purple March of 1989	Radio documentary (Full length + short feature)
8	Abdullah Ibrahim	Radio documentary (Short feature)
9	Athol Fugard	Radio documentary (Short feature)
10	Happyboy Mgxaji	Radio documentary (Short feature)
11	Raymond Mhlaba	Radio documentary (Short feature)
12	Nontetha Nkwenkwe	Radio documentary (Short feature)
13	Bulhoek Massacre	Radio documentary (Short feature)
14	Cissie Gool	Radio documentary (Short feature)
15	Ingrid Jonker	Radio documentary (Short feature)
16	John Vorster Square  (An interactive DVD on deaths in political detention at John Vorster Square police station)	DVD-ROM
17	Great Lives, Pivotal Moments	Book
18	Voices From Our Past	Education guide
20	Sunday Times Heritage Supplement	Newspaper supplement
21	Preparatory workshop	Educator workshop
22	Community reference groups	Barberton; Bethel; Kroonstad

## 5.5 FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIATION

### 5.5.1 Choosing Memorial Themes And Sites

The selection of events and individuals that were given coverage in the project was primarily a Sunday Times affair. As noted by project director Charlotte Bauer,

“We selected the stories for our own sort of journalistic criteria – how to make history rock and roll, why is it juicy, why is it exciting – because we’re going to tell you it in a racy pacy, short and sharp, anecdotal, newspaper style” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

The types of selection decisions that were made included who and what to memorialize, where and in what specific locations, and by which artist. For each of its initially proposed memorials, of which it is stated that there were many (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive), selection was informed by baseline research that helped to boost the case for particular memorials, and to filter out those that were infeasible. Responding to questions about the selection of the memorials in terms of both content and location, project director Charlotte Bauer notes that several criteria were considered, and that,

“some [potential memorials] got the chop for very practical reasons, like the story of the Ellis Park tragedy<sup>11</sup>. After exploring the possibility of building a memorial at Ellis Park, we discovered the stadium was earmarked to be extensively renovated for [the] 2010 [soccer world cup], meaning our little memorial would probably have been rubbed” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

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<sup>11</sup> In 2001 a stampede at the Ellis Park football stadium resulted in more than 40 deaths. The crowds were there to witness the soccer match between two Soweto-based football teams, Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs. The Soweto-derby, as the clash between these teams is also known, is a major highlight of the South African football calendar. This event was devastating to the South African football fraternity, and to many South Africans.

Another example of an infeasible site was for that of a planned memorial for Steve Biko.

Bauer notes that,

“One of the stories we had to walk away from, we wanted to tell a story of Steve Biko’s interrogation in room 619 in Port Elizabeth in police custody and we actually went to look at the building and it was just a slum, really, sort of broken windows, it was under a freeway ... so I mean that just wasn’t going to be a site where the thing would hold up. So we had to be partly practical as well. So everything had to come together, or not coming together were artistic, technical, bureaucratic, political and financial [factors]” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

Responding to a question about whether the memorials were chosen because of the individuals OR the associated context of events that inspired the memorials, Bauer notes that no particular rules guided selection in this regard.

“... in different cases it happened differently. You think it would be great to tell a story about Mohandas Gandhi who spent 20 ... formative years politically in South Africa. So in that case we started with Gandhi and there were many, many [associated] stories, so it was a matter of which story and we only had to choose one to make history very alive and very simple and accessible for the most possible peoples. So twenty or thirty stories, and you sort of fine tune it ... we said ... let’s find a story that happened in the city preferably where people drive and walk and live. So that happened variously, sometimes we start with the place, sometimes we would start with an event” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

With regard to memorials that were very different from the politically motivated Gandhi case, Bauer makes reference to the memorial of the first trans Africa Atlantic flight from London to Cape Town in 1920. Bauer notes that,

“Its not a political story. Quintin Brand and Pierre van Ryneveld have no particular immediate community who kind of worship at the shrine of them on Sundays ... but we thought it was sort of like a really pacy news story” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

These examples demonstrate how the memorials were chosen and justified. It is clear that the newsworthiness of particular stories was a significant determining factor. Citing particular memorials, both Makhanya and Bauer state that selections of memorial sites were guided by thorough and invaluable research looking to find something “unique”.

“Lots and lots of stories were researched and thrown out because there wasn’t anything that was particularly unique. For instance, we wanted to tell a story of Lilian Ngoyi and the [1956] Women’s March. You could easily have done something in Pretoria, we could have done something else ... but in the course of researching the story we discovered that throughout those years she was banished alone. Her best friend was her sewing machine. And therefore that’s the story we wanted to tell. And so the memorial that is outside her house is a sewing machine, and every single piece that we have done actually has this very unique thing, a jam within a story” (Mondli Makhanya interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

Instead of going the fairly obvious route of erecting a memorial in Pretoria to draw attention to the 1956 Womens March for which Lilian Ngoyi was a leading figure, it was decided to profile a site that would draw attention to Lilian Ngoyi’s banishment. The memorial was erected outside her home in Soweto, Johannesburg.

The arts management company, Artists at Work, oversaw an artist selection process, as well as the physical construction of the memorials. Based on the Sunday Times research summaries for particular memorials, Artists at Work was tasked with,

“... fitting the stories to artists who were available, who had some track records in making public art, and who ideally had some emotional or intellectual recall with the story that they were being asked to realize, and who could work within timeframes, budget and criterion to make the pieces ... (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

The Sunday Times also claims to have gone through processes of community consultation, where such consultation was seen to be appropriate. Interviews and project

reports indicate a mix of extensive consultation, and non-existent or inadequate consultation. An example of inadequate consultation surfaces with regard to the Olive Schreiner memorial in Kalk Bay, Cape Town. Olive Schreiner was a writer and women's rights activist in early 20<sup>th</sup> century South Africa. According to Bauer (2007), "far less well known was her participation in the movement to give women the vote" (p.36). The choice of Kalk Bay, Cape Town as the Schreiner memorial site was linked to its significance as a frequent venue for meetings of the Women's Enfranchisement League (Segal and Holden 2008, p.9). Bauer notes that,

"Of all the people we consulted around that story we somehow overlooked the Kalk Bay Ratepayers Association<sup>12</sup>. And so our piece went up, allegedly before they were aware of it, and they are to this day trying to take it down ... we didn't know that they didn't want it, until they got it, and now they don't want it, and there are moves as we speak to help get the Schreiner memorial removed" (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

Emerging from this section is a complex mix of issues that informed the selection and development of the memorials. Guided by the political, social and cultural relevance of particular stories that had strong potential for attracting the public imagination, the project took account of practical concerns, the support of "stakeholders", and the "appropriateness" of the chosen site (Charlotte Bauer interviewed by Josef Talotta, Sunday Times, September 24 2006). Deeper analysis, as demonstrated above, reveals that important concerns and stakeholders were sometimes overlooked, as in the case of the Olive Schreiner memorial. However, subsequent selections using these criteria formed the baseline for the evolution of the Sunday Times Heritage Project over at least the following two years.

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<sup>12</sup> An association representing the interests of homeowners in Kalk Bay.

### 5.5.2 Finding Common Ground: The Partnership Between The Sunday Times And The South African History Archive

The partnership between the Sunday Times and SAHA emerged after the Sunday Times had already engaged with researching and selecting its memorial themes and sites. At this time Sunday Times project staff and Artists at Work were already involved in the construction and installation of the memorials, and it is reported that the initial high level support from the Sunday Times editorial management was waning. According to Bauer, this added to the “complexity” of the partnership between the Sunday Times and SAHA.

“During the course, my project had a lot of resources changed ... there was huge excitement in the first few months ... [but] it changed over time, and by the time it was a year and a half, I had lost an administrator, project manager (I got a part-time replacement), and all the researchers were gone. By the time SAHA was getting in, it was just me left and our wonderful service providers were putting up the memorials. It became very difficult. Resources were withdrawn, and literally three weeks after budgets were signed off, the budget was cut by 25 percent, and then I was told to cut it by 50 percent” (Bauer, as quoted in the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project Evaluation, p.8).

This statement is indicative of an asymmetrical partnership, and shows that while the Sunday Times was winding down on its centennial project, the SAHA team was gearing up to implement their vision of the Sunday Times Heritage Project. While this may have decreased the potentials of the partnership, there is no question that SAHA’s involvement extended the longevity of the Sunday Times Heritage Project by “broadening it out” (B1), by deepening the content for selected memorials, and by initiating the production of a series of complementary resources over a two year period. As noted by Lauren Segal,

“We were going to do an extension on the stories they had chosen for the memorials, and we were going to do those multi-media products essentially independently, but with the cooperation of Sunday Times. Their biggest role and promise to us was distribution and access and communication” (SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project Evaluation).

SAHA entered the partnership bound by its contractual obligations to Atlantic Philanthropies. It was therefore compelled to work through a series of partnership difficulties with the Sunday Times. To this end, one of two “request requirements” highlighted in the grant cover letter from Atlantic Philanthropies references the signing of a legally binding agreement between SAHA and the Sunday Times in which the commitments of both SAHA and the Sunday Times are detailed.

Interviewees expressed both frustration and their perceptions of the significance of the project partnership. The selectiveness of the SAHA team, or perceived lower quality engagement with some memorials, comes across as an issue of discontent for the Sunday Times. From the Sunday Times perspective, Bauer expresses this tension, noting that excellent research was produced for some of the memorial themes while,

“On the other hand, there were other packages that I was disappointed with ... SAHA was less capable, maybe disinterested or less bothered, or there was [a] personal agenda [in relation to] the later stories - for example all the non-political stories. So I was terribly disappointed in the archive package that they delivered on Orlando Pirates and and Bethuel Mokgosinyana, the founder. Obviously it wasn't anything that anyone there was particularly specialised or interested in. That should have been the easier one: it's current, the characters are still living, there must be a million match reports, fantastic photographs – and we got very little” (Bauer, as quoted in the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project Evaluation, p.24).

The fact that SAHA was more equipped to deal with overtly political stories reflects both organizational strengths and weaknesses, and reveals a flaw in the “history from below” approaches that were espoused by many in the project team. However, more than one interviewee drew attention to project limitations, most notably the need to spread the approximately R5 million budget over a wide range of project components. One SAHA interviewee notes that more could have been done to deepen the coverage of certain

memorials, such as Brenda Fassie, and that the “interviewing was never done ... sufficiently,[or] systematically ...” and hints at limited expertise in the project based on the values of historical production rather than journalistic criteria (B1). Another SAHA team member, in relation to archive research, admits that,

“In retrospect ... it was thin, it was weak, it wasn’t systematic, there wasn’t quality control ... we should have been thinking ... much more carefully about archiving. [The question is] uh, could we really do detailed archival research in this context with the resources that we had available ... there’s a mixed response to that, and I think with some issues we got lucky ...” (B3).

Further tensions can be ascribed to the many asymmetries between a small non-governmental organization on the other hand, and a large-corporate stock exchange listed media subsidiary on the other hand. One SAHA-aligned interviewee notes that they were “dealing with a corporate and commercial entity who is looking at bottom line all the time on everything” (B3), bottom line in this instance meaning commercial profit. In a self-critical approach to what worked well and what didn’t, the same interviewee makes a statement that,

“... you can’t rely on intentions and good intentions and so forth ... I think that’s perhaps one of the problems that we have in the NGO sector is that we are fairly flabby about some of that stuff. And quite clearly, in the commercial sector, if you don’t lock it down, dot the i’s, cross the t’s, you’re not gonna get these things. So we may have had some unrealistic expectations about what the Sunday Times would bring to this in terms of its, what we would envisage as its corporate social responsibility, you know that it would make sense for it to help distribute more of these things, or to subsidize X, Y and Z” (B3)

SAHA’s non-profit culture on the other hand is reflected in the example of the coffee table book *Great Lives Pivotal Moments*, where it chose to forego royalty

payments and to opt instead for 150 free copies from the publisher (Memorandum of Agreement between Jacana Media and the South African History Archive).

Another issue of dissatisfaction emerged in relation to how the Sunday Times dealt with the surplus material that SAHA had planned to distribute in its communications campaign.

“... we had something like 10 000 surplus copies, or 15 000 surplus copies of this supplement, maybe even more. And I’d made an arrangement that they would be distributed through to the schools through the [Sunday Times] Avusa network. And because they weren’t picked up by a courier ... it literally didn’t wait for 3 hours, they pulped the entire [surplus], so that none of those went to the schools ... you wouldn’t pulp that, you’d pick up the phone to say well where is your guy ... but they just went ahead and pulped all of that stuff” (B3).

SAHA also had the expectation that the Sunday Times would tap into its own service networks to support the communications campaign. However this expectation was often not met, as noted by an interviewee.

“ ... for example ... Struik publishers who were attached to the Sunday Times weren’t the ones who could offer us any kind of deal on making the publication. We went to Jacana [Media] ... to do it. You would think that they would want first bite on a coffee table book profiling their monuments ... and the stories behind their monuments, but commercial considerations overtake everything else. They didn’t see the value of that in terms of profiling the Sunday Times. So they saw the heritage side of things I suppose as perhaps part of their corporate social responsibility, paying back as opposed to the potential commercial value that they could get from profile and so forth” (B3).

The nature of the partnership between the Sunday Times and SAHA also threatened to alter relationships with third parties, particularly the South African Broadcasting Corporation. In SAHA’s negotiations to broadcast the series of radio documentaries via SABC radio, the status of the Sunday Times as a commercial initiative

led the SABC to expect that the Sunday Times would pay them for airtime (B3). This ultimately did not happen but arose as an unexpected issue for the communications team.

Two examples illustrate commercial branding concerns that emerged as the project unfolded. The heritage project website, and a printed newspaper supplement were two major items of Sunday Times publicity on the Sunday Times Heritage Project, and the two project components that both the Sunday Times and SAHA actively contributed to. Two independent evaluators note the devaluation of SAHA's role through prominent Sunday Times branding and limited coverage to SAHA (Evaluation of the SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project, Appendix 4, Heritage Specialist Reports). In solicited feedback, Professor John Wright of the University of KwaZulu Natal responded that "the supplement comes across as mainly a Sunday Times product" (Evaluation of the SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project 2007). Similarly, Chantal Kissoon of the South African Human Rights Commission notes the absence of contextual information in the supplement about the project and its partners.

"Read in the context of an individual piece this may be adequate but viewed as a whole, a brief but specialized information excerpt on each of the partners, their contribution, objectives, resources and their own collaborative work/commissions in the development and execution of the project would have significantly enhanced 'brand identity' and an understanding of the context of the project. Mention is made of these issues, but these references are interspersed in the content of the various articles throughout the supplement" (Evaluation of the SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project 2007, p.102).

A prominent member of the project team also notes that,

"we had to fight tooth and nail about things like getting SAHA profiled on their website and all these kinds of things, and ... there was a certain amount of tension between a corporate entity and an NGO. We had obviously had very different values. We had very different approaches to things. But by and large I suppose it sort of worked out ..." (B3).

Similar concerns are raised in relation to the project website, and Wright notes that “there is actually very little on SAHA” (Evaluation of the SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project, Appendix 4, Heritage Specialist Reports, p.93).

It is evident from these kinds of concerns that the project agreement between SAHA and the Sunday Times overlooked certain accountability aspects. The base line here appears to be that the heritage project was a Sunday Times-owned project, and that it was reluctant to compromise its business values in the interests of maintaining a partnership with an NGO. This power dynamic also surfaced in the Sunday Times approach to community consultation in which it was very clear that the Sunday Times team were the decision makers. As noted by Bauer in regard to the latter,

“So we would be in the nicest way possible telling them what we are going to do, not asking them. So once they had given us their blessings for the idea we didn’t really give them the freedom to sort of say, well that’s quite a nice concept, but I’m not quite sure ... because it would just become an endless and self-defeating process. And again, for instance, everybody in [the] immediate communities understood that, and they were very accommodative” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

The tensions or partnership asymmetries described above, are constructively acknowledged by one member of the SAHA project team, who notes the differences between a journalistic memory initiative and a memory project implemented by historians.

“I guess we were more interested in deepening the account than the Sunday Times were ... you know they weren’t and they’re not historians, they journalists and they’ve got a particular kind of ... to my mind they’re looking at particular kind of color, they’re looking for certain excitement, they’re not very good at any kind of explanation. And we were conversely looking for explanations, not color ... riveting episodes, we were looking for some explanation. So I think between us we didn’t do a bad job ... those tensions were necessary ...” (B1).

Another participant described the project as “an experiment in profit and non-profit partnerships in heritage” (B2), noting the potential opportunities and setbacks of this approach, and that the South African commercial sector should take more responsibility for heritage funding in South Africa that is so often “coming from internationals” (B2).

An important lesson from the partnership concerns the need for clarity from the outset, on “project outputs and respective responsibilities” (B2). Evidently, there were several partnership roles, as illustrated above, that were overlooked in the conceptualization phases of the partnership between SAHA and the Sunday Times, including the implications of SAHA’s monetary investments into existing Sunday Times initiatives such as the project website, and its once off newspaper heritage supplement.

### 5.5.3 Securing Community And Other Stakeholder Support

Forging relationships with community members and other stakeholders was a common feature in the making of each of the memorials. While memorial selection, representation and location were decided on by the Sunday Times based on the preliminary research of project staff, a different kind of community and stakeholder engagement was attached to making the memorials meaningful to the individuals being commemorated if still living, their family members or close friends, and the communities in which the memorials were to be placed.

Project members consulted with individuals being commemorated, or with immediate family, and this typically involved the checking of the Sunday Times’ research briefs or checking the memorial profiles for accuracy. This was not a permission-seeking process (Mantombe Makhubele interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive). According to Bauer, outside

stakeholders were not given “the option to go any further with determining what the artworks or the memorial might look like” (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

In instances where some level of stakeholder permission was deemed to be essential, methods of consultation were determined by the conditions associated with each memorial or with each planned memorial site. In an interview, Makhubele explains that this often resulted in the Sunday Times securing approval from municipal managers who informed their community constituents.

“... if you go through the community first, its gonna be a nightmare you know. People are going to say, no we don't want it blue, we think it should be green ... because everyone wants to feel that they are important. So it's always better to start with the municipal manager, get his buy in, then he will trickle it down. By the time you go and erect it, and when people ask you why are you here, you just show them the document to say we have permission to do this” (Mantombe Makhubele interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

In the case of the Nelson Mandela memorial in Howick Pietermaritzburg, ward councilor approval led to the involvement of different community agencies, including the road agency and the traffic department. Makhubele describes a site meeting with representation from both of these agencies that were there respectively in attendance to discuss the construction of a viewing platform, and appropriate road signage.

In other examples, more complex issues of consultation that resulted in the delayed installation of some memorials are highlighted. In regard to the memorial of South African marathon runner, Bruce Fordyce, the project stalled because the proposed site of the Durban City Hall is a national heritage site protected by national heritage laws. The Sunday Times was therefore asked to illustrate that the memorial would firstly not become an obstruction in the city center, and secondly to seek permission from the

provincial heritage agency, Amafa. Furthermore, the Sunday Times needed to issue a formal commitment to maintaining the memorial. According to Makhubele,

“With putting up a memorial on a national heritage site you need to tell them how you going to maintain the artwork, what if something happens, so you need to give your commitments in terms of that, and also you can never take it down. If it falls down, you have to re-erect it ...” (Mantombi Makhubele interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

The Sunday Times clearly demonstrates a business approach to community and stakeholder participation predominantly focused on an end result, as compared with heritage sector concerns of building and sustaining community relationships. In some cases, as with the Bruce Fordyce memorial, the extent of consultation and commitment required was unanticipated. It was also clear that community interactions were based on decisions that had already been made, and represented just one step in the process of realizing an end goal.

#### 5.5.4 Mobilizing Expertise For The Communications Campaign

SAHA’s involvement in the Sunday Times Heritage Project increased the involvement of other stakeholders. In addition to its partnership with the Sunday Times, SAHA initiated another level of partnerships with ‘experts’, by co-opting organizations such as the Wits History Workshop into the project. The Wits History Workshop has a long track record of engaging with radical, “history from below” ways of producing community histories that dates back to 1977. According to an interviewee,

“We had a sort of formal relationship with them to inform the research process, so they would help identify potential areas to find research and so forth” (B3).

SAHA also drew on the services and expertise of other organizations such as Doxa Productions, Jacana Media, independent consultants, and the South African Broadcasting Corporation. To this effect, an interviewee makes the point that,

“... we have long-standing ongoing relationships with a crew of consultants and practitioners that we would pull in on a project like that. So, I mean its all essentially down to funding ... for example, we partnered, um, on the Sunday Times Heritage Project very successfully with the History Workshop of course, which is affiliated with the University of Witwatersrand History Department ... Another, particularly with the schools project, oral history project that we did” (B2).

Project records located at SAHA also provide a sense of the terms of reference for partnering with, or subcontracting work to organizations such as Jacana Media for publishing and Doxa Productions for producing interactive video. This mobilization of resources and expertise increased the capacity of the communications campaign to deliver on its mandate.

A team of researchers, deployed from organizations such as the Wits History Workshop, the South African History Archive and others, accessed the archives of mainly Gauteng-based institutions. In terms of still image research, an interviewee noted that, “we were limited because some of ... the best sources are commercial sources, and they’re expensive” (B3). In terms of the value that SAHA was able to contribute to the research process, there is an acknowledgement of both strengths and limitations:

“You know certain things we had an inside track on, so [Archbishop] Tutu and the Truth Commission ... [and] we had inside tracks on access to certain documents and those kinds of things ... but you know SAHA didn’t have any experience of dealing with older history, so ... I’m not sure what value the institution brought to investigate ... [Mohandas] Gandhi ... I mean it was down to individuals finding stuff of course ... and with a different set of researchers you might have had a completely different configuration of issues that were brought to the table. But the point of the project though was to, I suppose, open people’s eyes to different aspects of the history” (B3).

### 5.5.5 Working with Educators And Learners: Facilitating High School Oral History Programs

A major component of the project's repackaging and dissemination strategy was directed at schools, in many cases, building on networks and expertise in oral history methodologies that had already been established. Through project partners such as the Wits History workshop, the project was able to capitalize on its strengths.

As noted by an interviewee, the rationale for a schools oral history project was based on an identified need for a "community memorial aspect" to the Sunday Times memorial processes (B3). This "community memorial aspect" can be seen as a catalyst for creating awareness of and engagement with the Sunday Times memorials and its related content, for skills development at educator and school learner levels in creating oral histories, and for encouraging participation in the making of local histories. Under the direction of SAHA and the Wits History Workshop, the schools oral history project was implemented in "eight schools located in four South African towns", amongst grade 11 and 12 educators and learners (The Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection guide, p.1). Providing a simple definition, an interviewee notes that school learners,

"... identified and developed memorials as part of that project. And ... we structured ... history workshops with secondary educators through the Gauteng Department of Education, initially through their Race and Values Directorate" (B2).

The SAHA team deliberately chose to work with high schools in the Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Free State provinces of South Africa. These provinces were not represented in the Sunday Times memorial list, and the idea for a project involving grades 11 and 12 high school educators and learners was "to go to the sort of less privileged and less profiled provinces" (B1). Echoing the "reconciliation" motives

outlined in early project documentation, an interviewee emphasizes that the high schools project was intended to stimulate dialogue amongst divided racial groups, and notes that,

“By that stage ... very clearly ... the dialogue across racial boundaries had broken down ... what had started off very promisingly in 1990 had completely collapsed, people weren't talking to each other ... if they talked to each other they were guarded ... across racial lines, and so that kind of conversation ... we thought a good place might be the schools ... so that was part of the social and political rationale” (B1).

Paying attention to representation rather than inclusion, the project team selected high schools in communities where they believed they could make an impact, by promoting “reconciliation between learners who would not ordinarily come into contact with each other in the course of their daily lives” (The SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project report, p.16). In some cases, as with Kroonstad in the Free State province, existing networks and relationships, particularly of the Wits History Workshop, were used to set up the school programs (B1). Schools with different racial compositions were selected as representative of the apartheid-assigned racial categories of African, Indian, Colored, and White (B1). This, the organizers believed, would help to promote meaningful conversations in planned workshops for participants from different schools, different races, and different community backgrounds. Speaking to this point, an interviewee noted that,

“What we wanted to do was to have a kind of workshop at the end of it where all of the schools, or representatives, people who had been doing these projects in the schools ... would present their projects to each other. Now obviously they'd probably be racially grounded in a certain way ... reflect their own background” (B1).

The methodology for the schools oral history project was based on a number of steps. These included: establishing contact with schools and within communities; face to face

meetings; archival research on the identified communities; filtering of archival research into several possible community themes; final selection of themes by school educators; a weekend seminar for school educators in oral history methodologies; and, community oral history projects. However, this methodology was often complicated by factors that the project staff had little control of, and that required interventions. Reflecting on the kinds of interventions that became necessary, an interviewee reports that,

“... some of the schools were a nightmare basically ... some of the teachers we brought up [to Johannesburg] for the workshops, they just disappeared ... they went to another school ... or something or other, or nothing happened. Now you know if the headmaster wasn't actively supporting you as well, they get transferred from that class to another class at no notice ... so that was difficult. Those were the real difficulties” (B1).

It is clear then that there were practical difficulties in implementing a school oral history programs. As an interview respondent noted, the status of history education in schools was problematic, and at least one school earmarked for inclusion did not have history in their curriculum. However, there are also several validating reports of the enthusiasm that the oral history programs inspired in participating schools, as well as of the strengthening of relationships with the national Ministry of Education. An interviewee made the point that,

“I think we've made a significant contribution to the potential for schools to deal with oral history work. I do think ... that's been a really important contribution, that the relationship with the Race and Values Directorate in the Ministry of Education on this was very valuable. They got very excited by this thing” (B3).

In addition, many people were involved in the making of the schools oral history project: the SAHA management team; the Wits History Workshop; a team of educational consultants who produced an educator guide; graduate student researchers who conducted

archival research, secured copyright clearances, and were key point people with the selected schools; the school learners and educators themselves; provincial archives; and, interviewees in the respective communities.

While the schools oral history component was difficult to manage because of constraints within the schools and communities themselves, it was able to demonstrate successful short-term outcomes. At the same time it underscored several factors for considering direct partnerships between the heritage and education sectors, and the benefits of heritage sector investments in education. It is clear that the project provided the means and resources to enable the making of local histories in specifically selected communities. What remains in question, though, is the extent to which the project was able to re-ignite waning interest in history at high school levels. An interviewee notes that a key recommendation from the Sunday Times Heritage Project evaluation identified the need for strengthened relations and work with the national Department of Education.

“How can we replicate this model? And the only way you can replicate anything with education is to work with the Department of Education, which I mean comes with its own set of challenges” (B2).

A strong case for education investments by the heritage sector is therefore made and demonstrated through the schools oral history project.

## 5.5.6 Producing Resources and Tools

### 5.5.6.1 *Radio Programs*

Radio programs accounted for 75% of the memory resources that were produced. Of this number 47% have been produced as both full-length and short feature documentaries. The remaining 28% were produced as short feature documentaries only, with running times of under five minutes. Why radio? The final project report highlights

the ability of radio programs to keep the project within the realm of the national media, specifying that,

“... an audio history series would ideally maintain the sharply defined ‘news’ focus of the Sunday Times Heritage Project thus ensuring a strong story-driven approach that makes for compelling radio” (The SAHA Sunday Times Heritage Project Report, January – December 2007, p.4).

The decision to pursue the production of a radio series was also framed by SAHA’s contractual obligations to Atlantic Philanthropies. As noted previously, one of the two request requirements highlighted in the grant approval letter from the Atlantic Philanthropies to SAHA called for a formal agreement between SAHA and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (Letter from Colin McCrea to Piers Pigou. June 30, 2006). This formal agreement was to ensure national media coverage outside of the Sunday Times partnership. A series of radio programs aired on the South African Broadcasting Corporation’s SAfm radio station between August and October 2007, part of a campaign to observe National Heritage Day on September 24<sup>th</sup>. As noted by an interviewee,

“... we had the radio series that we put together which ended up being 7 half hour documentaries, and then a series of three to five minutes of vignettes, and we then made a deal with the S[outh] A[frican] B[roadcasting] C[orporation] to broadcast those during Heritage Month, which we did ... based on the heritage trail, that was based on old archive and interviews. And building those I would say into radio documentaries ...” (B3)

In terms of the content of the radio programs, they

“include recordings of interviews with the central character being commemorated as well as friends, associates, relatives and colleagues. Where relevant, the documentaries include archival sound from the SABC Archives and other sources ... [and] ... where possible interviews were done “on site” – at a place relevant to the central focus of the story” (The Sunday Times Heritage Project Report, January – December 2007, p.5).

One of the major oversights and limitations of the radio series is also a concern relating to the dissemination project as a whole, that English was the dominant language of production, in a country where English medium radio station “SAFM has an average listenership of half a million compared to [the isiZulu medium radio station] iKhwezi [FM] which is five million” (B3). This issue is explicitly acknowledged in project reports and the final project evaluation as one that profoundly influenced the ability of the project to extend its reach. Chantal Kisson of the South African Human Rights Commission, in a contribution to the final project evaluation notes that,

“statistics indicate that radio in SA is still the most widely used means of acquiring information by the majority of South Africans, especially in rural areas. The accessibility of the information shared would also have been increased had the information been provided in other official languages” (Draft Evaluation Report, February 2008).

Despite the specific limitations identified here, the radio programs drew in a number of participants who were directly involved with or affected by the people and events being memorialized. At this level, the project clearly demonstrates a commitment to inclusive processes of documenting and sharing what remains largely undocumented in official records.

#### *5.5.6.2 Between Life and Death: An Interactive DVD-ROM*

The production of a DVD-ROM about deaths in political detention at John Vorster Square Police Station in central Johannesburg drew in the participation of former political detainees, family, lawyers, individuals who were active in detainee support groups such as the Detainees Parents Support Committee, former warders and former security police. Former detainees and members of the security forces were taken back to

John Vorster Square to relate their experiences. Expressing the significance of the John Vorster Square project, the final project report states that,

“The history of this sinister prison has never been written or recorded in any form and we believed as a team that the story was very important to research and preserve” (SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project Final Report, 2008).

The DVD facilitates a virtual experience of John Vorster Square, using a three-dimensional production format combined with interviews and other archival material. An interviewee remarks that,

“... it’s not something you just put in and watch. You’ve got to move with it. You’ve got to navigate around the building, you’ve got to press on the interviews or the archival material ... it gave an unprecedented opportunity to go inside a place that most people will never go inside ... to hear the stories of people first hand, talking about their experiences in those cells, taking them back to the cells, taking cops back ... to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors of the security police, doing profiles of those deaths in custody ...” (B3).

The eyewitness accounts provided through the interviews were able to supplement a dearth of available information about John Vorster Square. An interview respondent noted that the status of security police records remain in question, and is widely thought to have been included in the sustained destruction of apartheid era records from the late 1960s onwards, and the mass destruction of government records in the early 1990s.

Those records that do exist, the interviewee notes, remain difficult to access (B3).

“We needed to look at some stuff from the state archives if you could get stuff out of the state archives relating to the deaths in custody in particular” (B3).

Oral history interviews therefore provided the content upon which the traumatic history of John Vorster Square was reconstructed, and as noted by one interviewee, “that takes it

so far beyond the original idea of just simply having a memorial” (B2). Interviewees noted both the difficulty of the DVDs content, and the innovativeness of the medium.

“As a[n] exercise in looking at a tool that can deal with temporal and spatial issues ..., and allows the user to navigate, I think it’s quite revolutionary ... “ (B3).

The documentary film production and interactive design company, Doxa Productions, was commissioned by SAHA to produce the DVD. The agreement between the two organizations included a clause giving SAHA final approval of the DVD and its final content (Memorandum of Agreement entered into between the South African History Archives and Doxa 2007).

Since the DVD is available only through limited distribution points, and therefore has limited accessibility, it was not available to the general Sunday Times readership and the public in the same way as other derivative products. In this regard an interviewee notes that,

“... I don’t think that it was either effectively picked up on by the Sunday Times or by SAHA ... but we did manage to get a good distribution, or relatively good distribution. But I think that largely that we should have had a much better dissemination strategy ... we used up to a point the vehicle of the Sunday Times and its link with Avusa ... its education arm. But I think a lot more could have been done with that” (B3).

This statement is reflective of a more general concern about dissemination strategies, applicable in varying degrees to all of the outcomes of the communications campaign of the STHP. A project interviewee noted that since heritage work “wasn’t mainstreamed into the broader thinking of the [Sunday Times] paper” (B3), there were no guarantees about how the partnership could benefit distribution. Reflecting on some examples that might have been beneficial, the same interviewee notes that,

“ ... so all of those things should have been locked down [at the beginning]. So we should have been promised that over a two year period we would get [to write] 15 articles [for the newspaper] or whatever. We should have space, we should have done that, a lot more of that kind of stuff” (B3).

The DVD in fact was distributed to very particular audiences, one such audience being theatregoers to a musical performance of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings at Johannesburg’s Market Theatre in 2008. As is noted, this implies that it is highly likely that a supportive audience would have received the DVD:

“... and so two shows at the Market Theatre, and we packaged, we did a[n] ... exhibition at the Market Theatre of ... of shots from inside John Vorster Square ... and we handed out to everyone who attended free of charge, a very nice little gifty thing of the John Vorster Square DVD and the radio MP3 CD. [There is] no idea whether that was used or how it was used or whether it simply went on to people’s shelves ... you know it was an audience that we knew that would respond to those issues and would have an interest in those issues, but again whether it’s simply like so many of these products, they end up on the shelves of the converted anyway ...” (B3).

#### *5.5.6.3 Voices of our Past: Educator Guides*

Based on educator workshops with representation from the eight schools involved in this program, the project produced a teaching guide to accompany the series of radio programs that had been produced. After a series of workshops with educators, the guidebook was produced in response to an identified need for oral history teaching aids by workshop facilitators and educators. This project was endorsed by the national government Department of Education (The Sunday Times/ SAHA Heritage Project Report, p.17), which used it as a resource for its’ annual national oral history competition. A project participant noted that,

“... inside SAHA, we all have our little favorite bits of the products that came out of it, but I think that’s one of the things we’re most proud of ...

because it's a long-term investment which can hopefully keep paying back for the foreseeable future, it's a very useful guidebook" (B3).

#### *5.5.6.4 An 'Online Museum': The Heritage Project Website*

The STHP website was launched in the early stages of the project, and overseen directly by the Sunday Times. The site was re-launched with new content in October 2008, after the project had formally ended. All of the 'products', except for a few such as the John Vorster Square DVD-ROM are available online. Currently, it provides "quick links" to detailed information on 25 of the memorials, archival photographs and artwork galleries, audio clips, video clips, and interactive timelines. These contain biographical information about each of the memorials, primary source materials, and information about the artists (Sunday Times Heritage Project: A Quick Guide to Our Website, <http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/article.aspx?id=570518>, accessed 4 May 2012). The website was initially conceptualized as an online museum that would extend the reach of the memorials. SAHA's main role was in developing website content, as is evident in much of the website's multimedia content, in the archival stories, and in the lesson plans for educators. This being said, the website remains semi-functional due to a number of inactive or error producing links, particularly affecting the availability of multimedia resources on the site. Project staff, particularly those concerned with its continuity at the South African History Archive, are aware of these problems, attributing many of these technical difficulties as symptomatic of working with a national newspaper carrier that sees the project as done.

An interviewee notes that most staff of the original Sunday Times project staff have left the newspaper or have moved on to other projects (B2). For the Sunday Times therefore, this was a fixed project with clearly defined parameters of time, space and

budget. Beyond their initial significant investment in the construction of the memorials, the newspaper did not concern itself with mechanisms to address issues arising post the construction of the memorials. The latter task became and still is the domain of the South African History Archive, which has expressed a commitment to the dissemination of the materials, and to finding ways of “rolling out” the range of products as educational resources for high school learners. Particularly acknowledging the “digital divide” issues that are still reality in many regions of South Africa, SAHA undertook to ensure that all of the “products” are available on removable media in the form of books, compact discs, digital video discs, as well as through the broadcast media of radio and television.

Some of the interviewees were particularly critical of the site’s structure, which in several respects can be seen as a promotional tool for the Sunday Times that foregrounds their desire to ‘give back’.

“... the architecture is incredibly difficult, and from my perspective I can’t strictly speaking fathom who they thought the audience was going to be. Because if you look at the top level of the website, it’s all very editorial, Sunday Times, this is our vision for the project which isn’t actually what you need at the top level of a website. Whereas if you think of it from an educator’s point of view, you would definitely raise the level of the memorials, and the lesson plans so that it was much more evident ... you know you can do so much more about structuring for an education website, and I think they missed an opportunity in terms of packaging the incredibly rich material there, so that it would be useable into the future, because the people who primarily are going to use that kind of site are going to be learners and educators ...” (B2).

As a long-term resource, the fact that the website remains in private hands seriously limits its ability for reference and educational purposes. This clearly illustrates differences in and tensions in the practices between two very different organizations, one that is fully profit-making and the other non-profit and civil society based. Bound up in

the institutional arrangements of the Sunday Times newspaper, the website has become static.

#### *5.5.6.5 The Heritage Newspaper Supplement*

The production of a heritage newspaper supplement to the Sunday Times weekly newspaper coincided with National Heritage Day in 2007. Produced as a joint venture between the Sunday Times and SAHA, concerns were later expressed by interviews about a newspaper supplement as an effective dissemination strategy, given the limited longevity of a newspaper supplement.

Noting the asymmetry between production of tangible outputs and their actual usage or reception, or perhaps a tension between intended and actual usage, an interviewee notes the following:

“And I think product-wise we were able to produce a reasonable amount of material but I still have questions in my mind as to whether we effectively utilized that stuff. But I don’t know if I have unrealistic expectations about that as well ... you know if you produce a supplement in a newspaper, I see what I do in newspapers, they pile up and they get thrown away or recycled, or whatever. We didn’t produce something that people would want to follow up and keep ... you know that probably just got thrown away en-masse ... as opposed to someone would want to keep that” (B3).

#### *5.5.6.6 Great Lives, Pivotal Moments*

The book, *Great Lives Pivotal Moments*, was authored by Lauren Segal and Paul Holden, and published by Jacana Media in 2008. It takes the form of a series of ‘portraits’, of 24 memorials. These portraits include biographical information derived from interviews, archives and published literature, historic stills, images of archival

documents, information and photographs of the physical memorials, and information about the artists.

#### 5.5.7 Mediating Impact

In my analysis, I did not set out to evaluate or measure the impact of the Sunday Times Heritage Project. I am otherwise interested in the extent to which the project organizers thought about possible impacts of their initiative, the ways in which impact considerations were built into the initial project design, specific activities that were undertaken to assess project impact and where applicable, summaries of the results of these activities. A project interviewee pertinently notes that, “it is always difficult for us to know about public reception” (B2). Since the Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP) was informed by several distinct but interrelated sub-components, it is necessary to assess each separately in terms of its audience reach and impact. While this is beyond the scope of my dissertation, and calls for a longitudinal research design, it is possible to determine the extent to which project participants were thinking about reception and impact in the initial project design, in reflecting on the project, as well as highlight specific steps that were taken towards a more nuanced understanding of impact and reception. Highlighting the essential role of *time* in understanding impact and reception, and with specific reference to the physical memorials, Lesley Perkes notes that,

“... the scale is in the volume of the memorials. There’s so many all happening at a very very short space of time actually over a few years, and they spread out over such a large area, and you talking about a different kind of scale, and I think those issues are so complex really in terms of our sector that we not really gonna know the answers to what we are saying until people have lived with these memorials for longer ...” (Lesley Perkes interviewed by Sharon Cort, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection).

Different levels of impact emerge from my analysis of the project, some of which were unanticipated. One level of impact is on the individuals or surviving family members of individuals who were being memorialized in the project, particularly when personal and painful memories were evoked. Project director Charlotte Bauer notes that,

“... even as a journalist, and as a reporter I have often found in the beginning my surprise where even knocking at the door of a family who have just experienced a terrible tragedy or loss, nine out of ten people want to let you in because they need to talk about it, and they need their story or their pain to somewhere be publicly acknowledged. And almost without exceptions the families in these stories were whole hearted and I think it was very generous of them because we didn't really given them the option to go any further with determining what the artworks or the memorial might look like” (Interview with Charlotte Bauer, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

Several preliminary indicators of impact are expressed in interviews and project documentation. Sunday Times newspaper editor, Mondli Makhanya, for example notes the importance of the Sunday Times Heritage Project as an intervention in the South African heritage sector, and therefore as a catalyst for a different approach to monument production that is not solely about putting up a statue:

“I think a major contribution of this project is that it had actually got the cultural community, heritage community and government as well to start thinking differently about memorializing our history, start thinking differently about monuments and I don't think it's something that would change immediately but I think as we go forward the era of the static monument may be something that will become the past” (Mondli Makhanya interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive).

There was general consensus amongst interviewees of educational inroads made, and the extent to which the project enabled and solidified relationships with important educational partners.

“I think we've made a significant contribution to the potential for schools to deal with oral history work. I do think that's been a really important

contribution, that the relationship with the Race and Values Directorate in the Ministry of Education on this was very valuable. They got very excited by this thing” (B3).

Several of the interviewees also note that the content generated through archival research and interviews, and in the final products themselves, were a major accomplishment of the Sunday Times Heritage Project, despite the fact that feedback thus far has been largely anecdotal.

“I do think the radio doccies [documentaries] were ... as I said I’ve had anecdotal feedback about how they loved, people loved aspects of those documentaries, and I think that it’s something that the S[outh] A[frican] B[roadcasting] C[orporation] can draw on every year or every 5 years, and they can pull out you know the documentary on *The Purple Shall Govern*, you remember ... and getting the guy who did that being interviewed ... The 1960s P[an] A[fricanist] C[ongress] march with Philip Kgosana and interviewing Philip on his farm outside Pretoria ... so you know there were some really nice [content] ... so I thought those, personally, were great and I imagine for anyone listening to them ... who wanted to engage with them ... but I don’t know who listened to them and that’s, that’s what I find quite sad, but we did try and make sure that they also got distributed ... into cultural heritage places ... and we tried to get some to schools ...” (B3).

Segal and Mokwena report that in 2005, the Sunday Times and its related websites were receiving “on average a combined 3.3 million page impressions and 240 063 unique users per month ... there are 43 000 readers subscribed to the weekly Sunday Times online newsletter, 5 500 subscribers to the weekly Sowetan Online newsletter and 2 000 subscribers to the Reporter newsletter, which are used for promoting content and services”, and that the Sunday Times online audience is increasing rapidly (2006, p.11).

As part of its reporting requirements to the Atlantic Philanthropies, the South African History Archive went to great lengths to evaluate the communications campaign of the project, including its reception by specific audiences. Despite the fact that members of the Sunday Times project team were consulted and interviewed for the

evaluation, this was specifically a SAHA effort in which each aspect of the communications campaign was evaluated separately. It solicited the services of an independent agency, Helene Perold and Associates, to perform the evaluation between September and December 2007 (Evaluation Report, 2008). Five distinct components are assessed in the evaluation report: “the effectiveness of the collaboration” between SAHA and the Sunday Times; “contribution to innovation in the heritage sector”; “assessment of the discourse about the past”; and, “the SAHA Schools Project” (Draft Evaluation Report, February 2008). The evaluation protocols and instruments on which the report is based includes: interviews and focus groups with members of the Sunday Times and SAHA project teams, as well as with high school educators and learners; a quiz administered to schools; the report of a content and discourse analysis conducted by the Media Monitoring Group; and reports from “heritage specialists” (Draft Evaluation Report, February 2008).

In a commissioned analysis of the Sunday Times/ SAHA Heritage Project, Jabulani Sithole (2007) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg talks about the potential impacts of different aspects of the communication campaign – the Orlando Pirates documentary, the Race Classification documentary, the John Vorster Square documentary, and the project website. Addressing the general nature of the project as a whole, Sithole stresses the project’s ability to ‘deepen discourse of the past’ through the balanced selection of a wide range of memorials that are reflective of the “divided and yet linked” (Sithole 2007, p.6) nature of South African experiences. Memorials dedicated, for example, to four prominent women in South African political history and culture, from different class and racial backgrounds – Olive Schreiner, Cissie Gool,

Lillian Ngoyi, and Ingrid Jonker – have the potential to stimulate conversation, taking account of similar but different perspectives framed by the same repressive political system. Despite the fact that Sithole’s assessment of impact is based largely on anecdotal evidence, and on personal perceptions informed by his active involvement in the heritage and academic sectors, it helps to provide the weight of academic credibility to the project’s communications campaign.

Speaking specifically of the Heritage Supplement produced in September 2007, Prof. John Wright provides a somewhat different view of potential audience impact, noting that the supplement “widen[s] discourse about the past, but does little to deepen it” (Evaluation of the Sunday Times Heritage Project 2007, p.89). The rationale here is that “the deepening of discourses about the past will not happen without addressing of the politics of how these discourses are made in the present” (Evaluation of the Sunday Times Heritage Project 2007, p.89).

Speaking more generally about the intended impact of the project, an interviewee described the project’s most important role as that of promoting social cohesion towards reconciliation:

“... this is glue, this is all glue for a conversation which underpins reconciliation in this country, and we haven’t had that ... this notion that there’s been reconciliation in this country hasn’t been a conversation about our respective pasts. So this is an important contribution ... to starting that off around some areas. But I don’t want to overstate our impact, and that’s why I think that our role must be evaluated for it’s catalytical value more than anything else” (B3).

Given therefore the reconciliatory agenda and a complex external context of how recent traumatic and violent episodes are remembered in the public sphere, impact is perhaps an evasive concept. Expressing this complexity, an interviewee notes that:

“... there are professors of memory at Yale and various places like that, that look at countries that have undergone these kinds of transitions from violent conflictual pasts ... they go through what they call the memory gap which is a period of anywhere between 15 and 20 years, depending on the conflicts, but it’s around those ... generations who simply consciously disengage from their immediate history, and one only comes back to it later on. You could argue that some of the processes that we’re engaged in are really long-term investment processes ...” (B3).

Newspaper reports between 2006 and 2010 provide an overwhelming sense of vandalism as one of the critical consequences to the production of the memorials. While the exact motives and causes of this vandalism are currently unknown, there has been much speculation in media reports. In June 2009 *Business Day* reported that “South African public sculpture has been hard hit by vandalism and theft”, and that “many of the public sculptures installed as part of the nationwide Sunday Times Heritage Project ... have been vandalised, stolen or defaced”. Commenting further on the social context in which these problems have occurred, the same article notes that South Africa is “a country where the raw materials are more valued by some citizens than the aesthetics of the artwork” (Alex Dodd, *Business Day* 20 June 2009, accessed on LexisNexis January 3, 2011).

#### 5.5.8 Media Monitoring

As part of its systematic efforts to understand what was being communicated to the public about the Sunday Times Heritage Project, a media monitoring component was included in the final project evaluation conducted by Helene Perold and Associates in 2007. As with the remainder of the evaluation, media monitoring was conducted over a limited time period, between 29 January 2006 and 30 September 2007. It included a content and discourse analysis of the initial project website that was re-launched in

October 2007, and 151 print articles that appeared in the Sunday Times (Evaluation of the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project, Appendix 3, p.67). A key finding of the media monitoring report was that “the Heritage Project contributed substantially to increasing the amount of coverage on heritage” (Evaluation of the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project, Appendix 3, p.74) in the national media. Quantifying this finding, it is reported that 48% of coverage dealt with the event being commemorated, 17% was on the commissioned artworks or artists, opinion pieces accounted for 18%, analysis of relevance in the present accounted for 3%, and general heritage coverage that was unrelated to the Sunday Times Heritage Project amounted to 19%. While these findings are significant, the impact of an increased heritage focus in the national media remains untested.

Despite the fact that SAHA’s primary goal for the communications campaign was to contribute to reconciliation, the media reports provide little sense of the extent to which this may or may not have been accomplished. 8% of the articles dealt explicitly with reconciliation, but there is no sense of what this might be attributed to, particularly since the reports contain limited reference to SAHA (Evaluation of the SAHA/Sunday Times Heritage Project, Appendix 3, p.71).

According to the final evaluation report, the key messages communicated in the web and print media were:

- Reconciliation: 3%
- Commemorate the past: 39%
- Contribute to an active understanding of the past: 10%
- The impact of past heroes and villains on South Africa: 23%

- Reaching a large audience: 10%
- Telling less well known stories: 9%
- Other key messages: 6%

In my own analysis of media coverage between 2006 and 2010, I noted that the 45 articles produced by a LexisNexis search emerged as articles that had been published in the Sunday Times group of newspapers, except for one, a review of the book *Great Lives, Pivotal Moments* as published in the Cape Times of 23 January 2009. 25 of the reports were produced in 2007, at the peak of the Sunday Times memorial process, nine were produced in 2006, 10 were published in 2009, and 1 was published in 2010.

## 5.6 ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

### 5.6.1 Archival Possibilities and Challenges

Given the uniqueness of the STHP model in South African heritage contexts, the project can be thought of as a test site for connecting archives to the social and vice versa. Reflecting on the role of the South African History Archive, a project interviewee remarks,

“... you know what’s so attractive for me about SAHA is this notion that it has this mandate to challenge official versions of history ... and to get under the skin of these things. And this is, this makes a lot of traditionalists in the archival world, historians and so forth, extremely uncomfortable ... because it requires an engagement with the politics of archive as well, which many people in the sector are not prepared to engage on” (B3).

Despite the different dimensions of archives that emerge from my analysis of the STHP, not all of the project team members were ready to declare the project's archival engagements as a major success. In the opinion of a leading project team member,

“... you know, in retrospect again, it was thin, it was weak, it wasn't systematic, there wasn't quality control. Again all of these things, in retrospect, we should have been thinking about much more carefully about archiving, how we were gonna archive that, how we were gonna access the archive that had already been generated by the Sunday Times, and pull that together ... [and] could we really do detailed archival research in this context with the resources that we had available” (B3).

This statement suggests that the full potential of the project's archival impacts were not reached mainly as a result of ineffective planning, and a lack of prioritization in relation to the scope of what would be needed for an effective archival intervention.

More than one project team member alludes to incongruities in the respective approaches of the Sunday Times and SAHA to historical research, as partly informing of less than adequate archival contributions and roles. These incongruities or tensions were understood as necessary and inevitable by most in the project team, but also managed to cause a great deal of frustration. A team member remarks,

“... so I think and I guess we were more interested in deepening the account than the Sunday Times were ... you know they weren't and they're not historians, they journalists and they've got a particular kind of ... to my mind they're looking at particular kind of color, they're looking for certain excitement, they're not very good at any kind of explanation. And we were conversely looking for explanations, not color ... [or] riveting episodes, we were looking for some explanation. So I think between us we didn't do a bad job ... those tensions were necessary ...” (B1)

Another team member was highly critical of the content contributions made by the Sunday Times to the project as a whole:

“The Sunday Times around content really brought very little to the table. That was my sense, is that they'd done some of their own preliminary research but they certainly weren't opening the door to their own archive.

I mean their own archives are pretty badly organized as far as I can make out. And so they didn't really use those very effectively. And I think that they didn't really have much of a vision about what this was about" (B3).

By the sheer involvement of the South African History Archive (SAHA) as a major partner in the heritage project's communication campaign, there is an overwhelming sense that archives, and archival issues, were central considerations in the conceptualization and delivery of at least some of the project outputs. This is evident in the Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP) collection of 30 archival boxes that has been formally integrated into the archival holdings of SAHA. As is evident in the finding aid, the collection provides a detailed record of the processes of setting up and implementing the STHP. The collection is also an institutional home that provides access to archival records that surfaced and were generated in the process of researching particular memorials.

#### 5.6.2 Identifying and Filling Gaps in Official Archival Records

In the South African heritage sector, there is general consensus on large gaps in South Africa's archival record. While these gaps are virtually impossible to quantify, they have been acknowledged in national laws such as the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996, as amended)<sup>13</sup>, the National Heritage Resources Act (1999)<sup>14</sup>, and the Cultural Laws Amendment Act (2000)<sup>15</sup>, amongst others. Deacon et al. (2002) also provide details on the state of South Africa's heritage sector, including archives, in a publication on behalf of the Human Sciences Research Council.

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<sup>13</sup> National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act (Number 43 of 1996), as amended by the Cultural Laws Amendment Act (Number 36 of 2001)

<sup>14</sup> National Heritage Resources Act (Number 25 of 1999)

<sup>15</sup> Cultural Institutions Act (Number 119 of 1998)

Archival processes of research and interpretation for the Sunday Times Heritage project were based on partnerships involving archivists, researchers, and historians. An historian working on the project describes the process of identifying and filling gaps in written records via interview material (B1), as well as processes of verifying archival sources by “investigating the purpose of the document being there in the first place”, so as to be able to “critically appraise it” and “decode it” (B1). The same interviewee notes that,

“On some of the figures, there was very little in the archives ... there was very little documentary materials, it just wasn't there, it wasn't the kind of thing that gets captured in the archives” (B1).

This statement is reflective of a broader heritage sector concern on the status of personal archives, and how they are configured within public archive systems. An interviewee noted that “[since] the Sunday Times was commemorating individuals ... you really had to go searching for that ... or else you had to interview” (B1). Examples cited here included records on Eastern Cape prophetess, Nontetha Nkwenkwe and popular musician Brenda Fassie for whom very little could be found in existing archival records. Recently this problem was highlighted in a *Mail and Guardian* article that drew attention to the fact that most personal literary archives have been transferred to institutions outside of South Africa including the archive of Athol Fugard (<http://mg.co.za/article/2012-09-21-00-how-to-keep-sas-literary-treasures-in-the-country>). In acknowledgement of archival gaps pertaining to the themes that were being researched, a combination of archival research and interviewing therefore formed the foundations of the memorial research process. In the words of a project team member,

“Well, it was archives and interviewing. Basically we went to the archives for newspapers, and we interviewed. And we got very rich stuff” (B1).

One interviewee notes that much of the archival research for the project took place in one province, despite the fact that the project was of a national scale. Primarily then, archival research was “Gauteng-focused”, and engaged most meaningfully with archival collections at “[Wits] Historical Papers ... and the SAHA collections, and then beyond that to a certain extent” (B3). This Gauteng-centric approach to research, and the extent to which it may have impacted upon interpretations, probably represents one of the most significant weaknesses of the project. It would appear that the critical question related to the project team’s ability to “do detailed archival research in this context with the resources ... [that were] available” (B3). However, it also suggests that archival research on the Sunday Times Heritage Project was not as exhaustive as it could or should have been, and not as exhaustive as is often claimed. Finally it underscores the inherent weaknesses, and limited usability of fragmented archives, and the need for more focused archival documentation strategies that transcend regional and sometimes national boundaries.

### 5.6.3 Releasing Archives

Interviewees report that the communications campaign succeeded in securing the release of previously classified documents by using access to information laws. The examples cited include government records pertaining to John Vorster Square from the Directorate of Security Legislation (B3), as well as personal files in the national archives for which access permissions were needed from relatives.

### 5.6.4 Creating Archives

The archive that emerged from the heritage project is a mix of institutional and historical records. The institutional records comprise detailed records of how the project

unfolded, from the Sunday Times' processes of memorial selection and research briefs, to SAHA's engagement with school educators and learners in their community memorial projects. Oral history interviews were generated specifically to support the production of the series of radio documentaries. Oral history participants were therefore targeted for their ability to shed light on specific people and events: race classification, the purple march in Cape Town, the 1960 PAC march in Cape Town, Nontetha Nkwenkwe, Ingrid Jonker, Abdullah Ibrahim, Tsietsi Mashinini, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and Orlando Pirates. In the case of the DVD-ROM on John Vorster Square police station, interviews were conducted with former political detainees, legal representatives of detainees, members of the Detainees Parents Support Committee, and members of the security police (SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project report 2008). In regard to the Schools Oral History project, the finding aid to the Sunday Times Heritage Project collection at the South African History Archive lists different series' of interviews conducted in Polokwane (Limpopo Province), Kroonstad (Free State Province), Bethal (Mpumalanga Province), and Barberton (Mpumalanga Province) that help to construct the local histories of these particular communities. Importantly, the records that document the process of constructing the Sunday Times Heritage Project are themselves archival. These would include planning meetings, correspondence and reports, as well as recordings of community consultations that helped to shape how specific project components evolved and who was earmarked to be interviewed in specific communities.

With the exception of the schools oral history project, selection of themes to be documented was given specific direction by the Sunday Times' selection of themes or people to be commemorated in the memorials. In this way, the Sunday Times contributed

to an archival process in which it was not directly involved in, but certainly helped to shape.

#### 5.6.5 An Approach to Archival Outreach

In the final project report to the Atlantic Philanthropies on behalf of the South African History Archive (SAHA), Lauren Segal reports on several “unique finds” of archival material in existing university archives, government archives, private archives, family archives and personal collections. The Sunday Times Heritage Project (STHP) therefore provided and seized the opportunity to profile archival materials that had rarely, if ever, been profiled in the public sphere. Several examples are cited in the final report, including: institutional records at the Johannesburg Bar Association that document perceptions of whether Duma Nokwe had the ‘right’ to be admitted to the Johannesburg Bar; rarely accessed personal correspondence at the Wits Historical Papers Archive, between Lilian Ngoyi and her international correspondents Belinda and Donald Allan, written during the period of her house arrest and banishment to Soweto; security police surveillance files that reach the public only in rare instances, this time about Lilian Ngoyi; and, personal papers and memorabilia of Philip Kgosana who led an historic Pan Africanist Congress march from Langa to central Cape Town in 1960 (SAHA / Sunday Times Heritage Project report 2008). Given quite an extensive research process undertaken by the SAHA project team, these are just a few examples that explicitly foreground the transmission of rarely accessed archival records into public discourse, under the auspices of the public dissemination campaign of the STHP. Importantly, these included archives that were not sourced from institutions, such as the Philip Kgosana personal collection.

The medium of English radio was central to archival outreach, as is evident in the seven full-length programs that were produced, and eight shorter radio features.

The Schools Oral History Project also provided a venue for the community to construct its own archives, using oral histories. This kind of engagement with archives took place in schools where this would otherwise have been unlikely for reasons that range from limited resources, limited skills, very little or no incentives, declining interest in history as a school subject, and limited ability and motivations to connect with schools outside of ‘jurisdictional’ boundaries. An interviewee emphasizes that these processes also influenced SAHA’s approach to educational outreach, resulting in workshops about how to use primary source materials in the classroom that extended beyond the Sunday Times Heritage Project.

“Out of this ... the sense that we needed to think about other points of intervention with education became apparent, and primary sources ... how do you work with primary sources in the classroom. And ... we developed other resources apart from, outside of the Sunday Times Heritage Project that look at primary resources ... [and] we pulled in things like the radio documentaries ... and then started offering primary source workshops. And the interesting thing about the radio documentaries is that they are low cost resources to distribute, they can be used in almost any environment as long as you got a CD player” (B2).

Glancing at SAHA’s history, it is clear that the organization has worked with school learners at different levels in the past, through projects such as “SAHA in the Classroom” that produced a series of high school learner guides. Educational outreach has therefore been a key component of SAHA’s work, historically. However, the Schools Oral History component of the Sunday Times Heritage Project is unprecedented for a small archival NGO such as SAHA in many ways, most particularly in the extent to which it paid attention to process concerns, transcended provincial boundaries, actively

engaged community members in selecting community participants and themes, and as a well-resourced project that was able to pay attention to project continuity over a predetermined time period, and most likely into the future using the products and guides that were generated as part of the Sunday Times Heritage Project.

An interviewee notes that a major prerequisite to successful outreach in schools was based on establishing strong relationships with the national Department of Education. With the idea that the Sunday Times schools oral history project model would be replicated in other schools, the interviewee notes that, “the only way you can replicate anything within education is to work with the Department of Education, which I mean comes with its own set of challenges” (B2). A similar approach was adopted through setting up working relationships, and in some cases formal partnerships with organizations that would strengthen the reach, impact and continuity of the project. One such organization is Shikaya, an NGO that develops educational resources for teachers and learners, on the themes of reconciliation and human rights (B2).

## 5.7 SUMMATION

The Sunday Times Heritage Project offers important insights on how public memorials can be used as a way of commemorating people and events. It also demonstrates formal processes of memory mediation, and the atypical association of a national media carrier and a non-governmental organization in mediating memories for a public audience. A third dimension of the Sunday Times Heritage Project is its creation of long-term archival records often where such records did not exist, and its extensive

engagements with existing archives, that helps to substantiate how archives serve and can be served by larger processes of public memory production and recovery.

Despite the partnership difficulties between the Sunday Times and SAHA, a heritage partnership of this nature is unprecedented in South Africa, and the project was able to maintain its functionality with defined areas of responsibility, and a common nationalistic commitment to the project's success. From the Sunday Times' perspective, as part of its centenary celebrations, selected memorial themes were intended to "elicit pain and pride" (Charlotte Bauer interview, Sunday Times Heritage Project Collection, South African History Archive) in South African heritage. SAHA, on the other hand, was the vehicle for promoting the reconciliation and human rights interests of Atlantic Philanthropies. It looked to add value to the Sunday Times Heritage Project by increasing and diversifying its audience, and by implementing different models of community engagement. Importantly, SAHA engaged with the project as heritage practitioners rather than as journalists, and the project in itself allowed for testing the parameters of heritage discourse in the public realm. With different organizational motives on the part of the Sunday Times and SAHA, the partnership was designed as a mediational effort aimed at making significant inroads into public engagement with memory and heritage.

Rather than focus on one particular methodology, the project employed a range of working methodologies for a wide range of outputs and outcomes. One could analyze the project methodologies in terms of its conceptualization, processes of consultation, its research, and its implementation of more specific project components. In all four of the aforementioned areas, with a few notable exceptions, there were explicit divisions of responsibility between the Sunday Times and the SAHA team.

Through processes of research, the dissemination campaign therefore added a depth to the series of memorials that were installed by the Sunday Times and Art at Work. Furthermore this research was curated into the public sphere. The communications media of choice, rather than the traditional institutional frameworks of museums and exhibitions, used the everyday media of radio, Internet, printed publications, and face-to-face interaction with educators and learners.

The considerations raised by the Sunday Times Heritage Project are especially important when understood in the light of a particular social context that is still deeply shaped by apartheid's legacies. There have been many concerns about the outcomes of South Africa's 1996 – 2001 Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebeza, for example, while not denying the important inroads of the TRC in many areas, note that the TRC "often obscured more than it revealed" (Bell and Ntsebeza 2001, p.1), and foreground three cases that are exemplary of the TRC's "unfinished business". McEwan (2003) writes about gender-based exclusions from the TRC and alternative modes of expression in a KwaZulu-Natal based memory cloths program. Many South African archival and heritage projects aim or claim to fulfill a reconciliatory agenda, but this is hardly measurable in a country that continues to see the ebbs and flows of political and economic turmoil, and that continues to feel the burdens of apartheid's legacies. The relevance and importance of the Sunday Times Heritage Project and its related communications campaign that was fueled by the reconciliatory agenda of Atlantic Philanthropies, needs to be assessed and understood with this background in mind.

**CHAPTER 6**  
**THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRACY EDUCATION TRUST**  
**ROAD TO DEMOCRACY SERIES**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET) Road to Democracy Project originated in President Thabo Mbeki's office, and was formally launched on the 21 March 2001 marking the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre<sup>16</sup>. Initial planning on the SADET project goes back to concerns raised by Thabo Mbeki when he was still the Deputy President in 1998, and subsequent discussions amongst early participants about finding ways to remedy a serious lack of historical material about the long and difficult political struggles that led to South Africa's democratic transition in 1994. There was a lack of publicly available resources, in the words of Thabo Mbeki, on the "arduous and complex road to South Africa's peaceful political settlement after decades of violent conflict" (Preface to volume 1). Mbeki also noted that the timing of the SADET Road to Democracy Project afforded an opportunity for participation by those who directly experienced the events and issues recorded:

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<sup>16</sup> On 21 March 1960 police opened fire on a peaceful anti-pass law protest outside the Sharpeville police station, killing 69 demonstrators. Two people were killed in an anti-pass law march on the same day in Langa, Cape Town. These massacres were followed by the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress ten days later, and the declaration of a state of emergency in which all anti government political activity was repressed, resulting in widespread imprisonment of activists and forced political exile for many. The killings at Sharpeville and Langa marked a turning point. Both the ANC and the PAC resorted to an armed struggle and formed military wings, and these organizations were to legally surface in South Africa again almost 30 years later in February 1990.

“Written so soon after the period of its focus, this series will have the advantage also of recording the voices of some of those who were the makers of history. Those who made the history must thus have the opportunity to participate in the process of recording that history in words, and interpret it as they see it” (Mbeki 2004, p.xi).

SADET has been explicitly characterized as one based on “the collective memories and views of veterans of the [liberation] struggle”, noting that “the voices and/or experiences of ‘ordinary’ people ... come much closer to the ‘truth’ than history books that lack their voices ...” (Preface to volume 1, p.xix). This characterization captures the relationships of power that validate memory versus history tensions in South Africa as tensions informed by apartheid-shaped historical production and that remain deeply embedded in institutional frameworks of memory and history.

The launch of SADET followed soon after South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission process ended. Outside of the TRC, SADET can be considered as the most extensive formal government intervention, largely outside of the public eye, to institutionalize histories of South Africa’s liberation struggle covering the period from 1960 – 1994. The TRC process therefore provides an important contemporary external context to the work of SADET, a context in which significant components of the TRC archives were closed off to public scrutiny, and debates ensued in the national media on the ‘unconstitutional’ nature of the government’s handling of 34 boxes of sensitive TRC materials<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, as reflected in accounts of the TRC amnesty process, amnesty applications from the ANC and aligned organizations far outnumbered the applications of other political groupings. Of the total number of

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17 As reported by Terry Bell in the Mail and Guardian of 28 June 2002, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development removed 34 boxes and two folders of documents from the Truth and Reconciliation Offices in 1999, after the documents had been identified as sensitive by the TRC CEO at the time.

amnesty applications submitted, the ANC numbered 60.6% in comparison with the apartheid state of 17.8%, and the Inkatha Freedom Party's 6.6% (Foster et al. 2005, p.14). This situation implies an overwhelming bias and threat of the ability of the TRC archive to equate the just war of the liberation movement with apartheid state repression. SADET's academic research and production outputs, by filling a contextual void of the struggles and nuances that ultimately led to the TRC, provides clarity and analysis that is not readily available in the TRC archive. SADET therefore provides invaluable context to the painful testimonies and perspectives offered at the TRC hearings. The preface to volume 1 of *South Africans Telling Their Stories* notes that the personal accounts provided in this volume,

“flesh out so many witness accounts of gross human rights violations told under the auspices of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while providing a sense of the irrepressible nature of the human spirit that fuelled human resolve to triumph over exploitation and repression” (*South Africans Telling Their Stories*, p.vi).

In a similar vein, an interviewee, while addressing the major impacts of the SADET project notes that,

“scholars ... would have to have recourse to the Road to Democracy in South Africa ... and I think this ... will continue to have a profound impact in the future” (C1).

The project's work to date has been accomplished through funding from the private sector, and under the oversight of a high level Board of Trustees comprising “politicians, businessmen, veteran activists and academics”, the work of “six regional research teams”, an editorial committee made up of representatives from the research teams, as well as the setting up of strategic institutional partnerships

([http://www.sadet.co.za/about\\_us.html](http://www.sadet.co.za/about_us.html)). The project was therefore backed at a high level to support the delivery of its objectives. SADET's mission statement reads as follows:

“SADET's mission was, and is to examine and analyse events leading to the negotiated settlement and democracy in South Africa with a focus on:

- the events leading to the banning of the liberation movements;
- the various strategies and tactics adopted in pursuit of the democratic struggle;
- the events leading to the adoption of the negotiation strategy; and
- the dynamics underpinning the negotiation process between 1990 and 1994” (Houston 2010, p.4).

## 6.2 THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY SERIES

Initial plans for SADET were to, over a two-year period, produce five volumes covering 1960 – 1994. The project evolved beyond these initial plans, and is currently in its 12<sup>th</sup> year and final stages of existence. Four volumes have already been published, and a further two are forthcoming. Volume 1 covers the 1960 – 1970 period, volume 2 covers 1970 – 1980, volume 3 deals with international solidarity and consists of two separate volumes, and volume 4 covers the 1980 – 1990 decade. A sub-series titled *South Africans Telling Their Stories* has produced one volume of selected oral history transcripts that cover 1950 – 1970. SADET's current focus is a volume on the contributions of African countries to South Africa's liberation struggle, and another on the 1990 -1996 national democratic transition. Furthermore, the organization has expressed the will to publish additional volumes of eyewitness and participant testimony, consisting of selections of oral history transcripts, as recorded in volume 1 of *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, as well as a popular history series that would appeal to school groups.

### 6.3 PROJECT MOTIVATIONS

Leading members of the SADET team have emphasized the importance and impetus of SADET as a *memory preservation project*, profiling “the story of the people who made unbelievable sacrifices, so that people ... will understand the tribulations that were experienced” (C2). Drawing on personal experiences of exile, the same interviewee provided the following remarks:

“... people think of exile as being glamorous but it’s really [not] ... both my parents died and I couldn't attend their funerals ... it’s too heart wrenching when you think about it, especially when you really don't know whether you'll ever come back to South Africa or not ... and what amazed me ... is the perserverance of some of these fellows like Chris [Hani]. Nothing would deter them from the mission to get back to the country ... Basil February from Cape Town, brilliant student ... and I used to have long talks ... and I remember one thing that he said ... ‘you know nobody will know where my grave will be’, and for sure ... he was killed, and therefore nobody knows where his grave is ... so it was those types of people whose memory was now preserved” (C2).

The importance of capturing and preserving the memories of liberation struggle activists and cadres has been viewed with additional urgency, owing to constant threats of memory loss, tied to a perception in the SADET leadership that South African universities were not doing enough to mitigate against the effects and legacies of a biased historical record in which black South Africans were overwhelmingly viewed as “objects of analysis” rather than agents and makers of history (C3).

“...some of the stalwarts and veterans were passing away. Remember, most of them were in their seventies. They were either from internal exile at Robben Island, or from external exile, and their memories were fading. Therefore we didn't want the same story again ... that we are blacks and we rely on orality and oral tradition, that we use the oral tradition as the archive. So we store our stories and our memory ... but we do have tools in terms of writing our stories. So we have to do that, create that archive. And its not going to be definitive but at least we doing something about

[it]. Because a person takes a story with him to the graveyard if we stick to the orality story in terms of our intellectual tradition” (C3).

These statements position SADET as much more than an ordinary academic production project that ‘gives voice’ to formally marginalized voices. Rather, SADET is given credence by the political ideologies of the liberation movement, and it is promoted by post-1990 political and social contexts in South Africa that are based on widespread transformation agendas. SADET is furthermore informed by contemporary politics of memory issues that have been debated widely in South Africa’s post-1990 heritage sector. These issues, as they relate to SADET, have typically been about the nature of authorship or ‘who owns memory’, the need for a sustainable memory platform for liberation struggle participants or ‘institutionalizing memory’, formal mechanisms for preserving difficult and painful memories or practicing an ‘ethics of memory’, the threat of memories being lost if not recorded timeously or ‘preserving memory’, and filling a contextual void through nuanced and personal accounts of South Africa’s liberation struggle.

## 6.4 FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIATION

### 6.4.1 A Platform For Authorship

All of the interview respondents raised the issue of authorship as a determining factor in how memory is represented and shaped in the SADET project. These concerns demonstrate sensitivities on the part of the SADET organizers to the subjectivity of memory, and to memory’s vulnerability to manipulation based on whose voices are given

credence in historical records. According to one respondent, Thabo Mbeki had partly noted this in early thinking on the SADET project.

“We ourselves here in South Africa were not reflecting upon our own very rich history, traditions, culture of resistance, whereas others who were not so directly involved in the struggle itself were writing. Now whether that was good writing or bad writings wasn't the issue. The question was that he, [Thabo Mbeki], raised this matter to say it's better if we ourselves try to reflect upon this ...” (C1).

These concerns influenced how the SADET project was conceptualized and implemented, resulting in a mobilization of local knowledge and expertise amongst potential contributors whose voices have historically been silenced in South Africa. In this way, the project was meant to impact on traditional South African historiography, and not simply on the making of new historical content. The context and consciousness that informed the project's engagement with questions of authorship is discussed in a book chapter written by SADET's chief editor in 2007. Professor Bernhard Magubane describes the state of South African historiography in which black South Africans have historically been “invisible to history” (2007, p.252) both as contributors and as agents. Magubane details the extent to which these phenomena have persisted over time, despite the emergence of liberal and radical historical discourses. Magubane argues that both of these streams have, since at least 1969, ignored “the national question” of race, and that they have “revealed a gross misunderstanding of the African reality and especially the nature of the Africans' struggles” (Magubane 2007, p.274). This, according to Magubane, has resulted in ‘misunderstandings’ and significant absences in publications such as the *Oxford History of South Africa* (1969)<sup>18</sup>, *A History of South Africa* (1990)<sup>19</sup>, and the work

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18 Wilson, Monica and Leonard Thompson (1969). *The Oxford History of South Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

of ‘radical’ academics<sup>20</sup> by their elevation of social class above pervasive racial dynamics. The relevance for SADET of these heated politics of memory exchanges is confirmed in the following statement:

“You know, they dismiss African Nationalism per se, because of the formation of the trade union movement and so forth, but then when COSATU and other trade union movements decided to ally themselves with the ANC, they really were at a loss, and it’s only recently that I’ve seen an article by Bozzoli, because after 1994 they went into hibernation, because after what happened in 1994 they never really expected that the ANC would triumph ... I simply could not understand how a serious intellectual could ignore the national question in South Africa ... [sigh]” (C2).

The SADET project demonstrates two approaches to broadening authorship of its *Road to Democracy* series. Political events and life histories were recorded in a SADET oral history project in which liberation struggle activists were the key contributors. The SADET research methodology, according to Houston (2010) was primarily oral histories, and this enabled history participants to become history authors through the launch of an unplanned Road to Democracy series titled “South Africans Telling Their Stories”. As reported by an interviewee,

“In the course of our discussions, and our discussions with other people and my discussions with Thabo Mbeki, and as a consequence of all the interviews that were done with activists from all political parties, we decided to have a special volume on South Africans Telling Their Stories. So it’s actually published in two volumes” (C1).

The first and only published volume to date contains 59 chapters of edited interviews with participants, and covers the 1950 – 1970 period. A second volume is expected. Less clear is what kinds of selection criteria were applied by SADET’s editorial committee to

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<sup>19</sup> Thompson, Leonard (1990). *A History of South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Magubane makes particular reference to progenitors of the Wits History Workshop, Belinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius.

the inclusion of interviews, and to the editing of individual interviews. According to the preface to this volume, selection criteria took account of the coherence of the storyline, “human interest elements”, the extent of detail provided in the stories, and the prioritization of “first-hand accounts” (South African Democracy Education Trust 2008, p.xi-xii). An interviewee and editorial board member noted that,

“It has some weaknesses in there. I do think myself, or put it another way, if we had more time ... and had given the editors more time, they could have done a much better job of editing it. But it’s the only place where you can go to for some information about a few hundred activists in the movement. And I think that’s quite a remarkable contribution” (C1).

In total, SADET conducted approximately 1100 oral history interviews, and copies of these recordings have been earmarked for transfer to the National Archives and the Freedom Park Pan African Archives (C2, C3). The collection of testimonies from liberation struggle activists was modeled along similar lines to the US-based *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936 – 1938*<sup>21</sup>. According to its website,

“[The slave narratives contain] more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery ... collected in the 1930s ... and assembled ... as the seventeen-volume *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*” (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>, accessed July 12 2012).

Despite concerns about the reliability of many of the slave memories, the interviews have contributed to research projects focused on “reconstructing the history of slavery” (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snintro12.html>). An interviewee drew parallels

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<sup>21</sup> The Federal Writers Project recorded the slave narratives between 1936 and 1938. The recordings take the form of approximately 2300 life stories of former slaves in the US. These are first-hand testimonies that are housed at the Library of Congress together with a photograph collection. and includes the life stories of around 2300 former slaves. These testimonies are permanently housed at the Library of Congress (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snabout.html>, accessed August 7 2012).

with SADET's interviewing process by drawing particular attention to the political climate of the 1960s in South Africa as one that seriously limited the ability of people and organizations to document political activity in any meaningful way.

“If it were not for my being in the [United] States when the ex-slave narratives were published, I would not have thought of the type of methodology that we used. And it seemed ... it was the most opportune time ... in 2000, to actually interview those cadres of the ANC and PAC and NUM ... who left from 1960 onwards ... to go overseas ...” (C2).

“Instead of just making it one book, we thought that we could interview, especially the generation of the early [19]60s, because the liberation movement was banned in 1960 ... some of them were getting quite old and they were dying ... so we approached the ANC, if they could write us an introductory letter to some of these cadres of the ANC ... and the PAC ... to interview” (C2).

There were many instances then, where “the sole source of memory is the memory of those who were present” (Houston 2010, p.12). The prioritization of oral histories resulted in the first volume's use of around 200 interviews, about 180 in volume two, and about 290 in volume 4 (Houston 2010, p.11). In an unstated parallel with the slave narratives project, SADET's editorial team acknowledged the ‘problems of memory’ in the preface to volume 1.

“We cannot, of course, ignore major weaknesses in tape-recorder and spontaneous oral histories. Our subjects had to cast their minds back to events that took place in the early 1960s. There is no question that there were lapses of memory and therefore many inaccuracies. In some cases, these were corrected by interviewing others who participated in the same events, such as the Wankie campaign. We augmented personal accounts by using archival material to support the arguments of the interviewees. Any inaccuracies will not, on the whole, invalidate the stories or the sacrifices of the foot soldiers that constitute the bulk of this volume” (Preface to volume 1, p.xix – xx)

Another less widely acknowledged statement is implicit in the concerns raised by Thabo Mbeki in SADET's formative processes. There are strong sentiments that the

writers of the SADET volumes were earmarked for inclusion based on i) direct experiences as liberation struggle activists or cadres; (ii) their credibility as academics; and (iii) their status as “black intellectuals”. SADET’s authorship criteria was intended to provide a platform for black intellectuals that would challenge and impact the status quo of South African historical production. The concerns here also reflect those raised by Magubane (2007) in which he notes that the contributions of black South Africans have been invisible to history. One interviewee stated that,

“As black intellectuals because we are in the majority in terms of the authors ... we [are] about 95% ... in that sense it’s a platform, and intellectually we’ve made our mark ... The book reviews and newspaper release[s], and ... the international solidarity volumes therefore spread our target audience to involve ... other places throughout the world ... All you need to do is to check the index, and when you see the names, it has never happened that the majority of the names are black” (C3).

SADET’s authorship strategies, to varying degrees, therefore span the concepts of voice, representation, participation and inclusivity. They deployed strategies that reduced the visibility of boundaries between memory sources and memory producers, and ultimately provide justification for the project to make claims of shared authorship. SADET’s attention to authorship speaks to broader mediational and political concerns about who was being empowered to craft SADET’s liberation narratives, and how these would be presented to readers and researchers.

#### 6.4.2 Mobilizing Expertise

There were different hierarchical levels at which expertise was mobilized for the SADET project. The project took shape under the leadership of Dr. Essop Pahad who served as assistant to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki (1994 – 1999) and later Minister in the Office of the Presidency (1999 – 2008). In these early stages, SADET’s leadership

also included Dr. Yvonne Muthien and Dr. Vincent Maphai of the Human Sciences Research Council, and Seth Phalatse<sup>22</sup> from the private sector. As noted by an interviewee, the project needed “somebody who had some ... experience in raising funds ... and who was very sympathetic and very interested in the project”, and this role was played by Seth Phalatse. As leading members of South Africa’s statutory research agency, the Human Sciences Research Council, Drs. Muthien and Maphai were co-opted on the basis of struggle credentials, academic and fund-raising experience. Before the project was formally constituted, this core group attended to the two key questions of, (i) how such a project would be sustained financially, and, (ii) the project’s institutional configuration under a thoughtfully selected project board. It was also at this stage that draft proposals for the inclusion of historical content were prepared and shown to Thabo Mbeki (C1). Private sector funding was pursued and obtained with the support and weight of deputy president Thabo Mbeki’s office, resulting in two-year funding commitments from Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN) and the Nedcor financial group. There was an implicit understanding that government financial support for SADET was not feasible and that any such move would be in violation of public trust in the President’s office.

“... they can't take money from the state coffers, because that's not the core function of the state, or of the President. So what the President did was to ask Pahad to fundraise, and Yvonne [Muthien] ... to fundraise from the private sector, which they managed to do” (C3).

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<sup>22</sup> Phalatse is currently a director at BMW South Africa, and as noted in a Bloomberg Business Week profile (<http://investing.businessweek.com/research/stocks/people/person.asp?personId=36440246&ticker=IFL:L N&previousCapId=875202&previousTitle=MURRAY%20%26%20ROBERTS%20HOLDINGS>, accessed July 16, 2012), serves amongst other business portfolios as Chairman of the Institute for Global Dialogue, Marconi Communications South Africa, Global Eagle Strategic Alliances and Da Vinci Holdings. Mr. Phalatse is also the Non Executive Chairman of African Access Holdings, and has been Non-executive director of International Ferro Metals Limited. He also holds several other business portfolios.

In the second priority of constituting a project board, SADET's initiators gave consideration to potential board members who, (i) would be instrumental in supporting the project's financial sustainability, and (ii) were respected members of the African National Congress who were well-grounded in South Africa's liberation history and who would be able to assemble support and secure the participation of key struggle activists, particularly lesser-known Umkhonto We Sizwe<sup>23</sup> recruits. The board included "representatives from MTN who together with Seth Phalatse formed the finance committee", and ANC veterans General Andrew Masondo and Isaac Makopo who were instrumental in securing the participation of rank and file Umkhonto we Sizwe members (C1). Isaac Makopo was able to contribute detailed participant knowledge to the SADET process, having been part of a large contingency of Umkhonto we Sizwe recruits that had left South Africa in 1962 (Ndlovu 2004, p.419). A similar influence on SADET is noted for General Andrew Masondo who became active in the ANC in 1960 and by 1962 was given the responsibility to set up units for the ANC's armed wing (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, as published in *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, volume 1). Commenting specifically on Isaac Makopo's role in the board of trustees, an interviewee stated that,

"In terms of the board, one of the persons on the board was an ANC veteran because of the problem that you couldn't access veterans. They had to gain your trust before, because apparently so many people were making a killing out of their stories and they didn't know what was happening, what was going on. So he, Isaac Makopo, he did play a role in terms of access" (C3).

Minister Lindiwe Sisulu was another prominent African National Congress member on the first SADET board. Sisulu's political biography includes having served as an

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<sup>23</sup> Umkhonto we Sizwe was the armed wing of the African National Congress, launched on 16 December 1961. Translated into English, it means Spear of the Nation.

Umkhonto we Sizwe intelligence expert after joining the military wing in the late 1970s.

An interviewee remarked on the rationale and benefits of Sisulu's involvement as a board member:

“And we've brought on Lindiwe because she herself was an activist, she herself was an historian, she herself was very interested in the work that we were doing ... we thought that she has the capacity to make a serious contribution ...” (C1).

The high level involvement of influential ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe veterans was therefore an essential contribution to framing the project within historical contexts for which little formal documentation existed, identifying interview participants, and convincing struggle participants of the need to participate. Initially, SADET's board included: Dr Essop Pahad as Minister in the President's Office, Dr Yvonne Muthien, Dr Vincent Maphai, Mr Seth Phalatse, Dr Ivan May of Nedbank, Mr Jacques Sellschop of MTN, Mr Isaac Makopo, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, Professor Bernhard Magubane and General Andrew Masondo (Houston 2010, p.4). An interviewee pointed out that private sector involvement in the SADET project, and their inclusion on the Board of Trustees was purely on a financial basis, and that the funders steered clear of the content advisory roles played by other board members:

“... they straight business, sit in the board as funders, make it a point there's audits, money is used correctly ... [ensure] what we need in terms of resources is accessible to us. In terms of content, even during board meetings, they say it, that we don't know what you're talking about guys” (Interview with Sifiso Ndlovu).

Subsequent members of the SADET board included Selby Baqwa (Nedcor), Meshack Khosa (MTN), Nkateko Nyoka (MTN), Eddie Maloka of the Africa Institute of South Africa, and ANC veteran Joe Matthews.

Following the constitution of the SADET's first Board of Trustees, core staff members such as Professor Bernhard Magubane, Dr. Gregory Houston, and Dr. Sifiso Ndlovu were recruited to the project. An interviewee described this process:

“... after discussions amongst ourselves, amongst the Board members ... we then took on Professor Ben Magubane. At that time Ben Magubane was with the Human Sciences Research Council, where Yvonne [Muthien] was also working. But I knew Ben for many years before that. And obviously Mbeki knew Ben very well too. So we brought Ben on to head the project, and that I think was a very good thing, because one, Ben was already highly respected in the academic world, amongst South African academics also, [and], knew and understood the history and politics of South Africa very well. Then we brought on Greg Houston ... that was after I had discussions with the Human Sciences Research Council and they seconded Greg to the project ... they then brought on Sifiso who is now heading the SADET project ... the board had felt it was very difficult to ask Ben to both manage and administer SADET, as well as be the chief editor ... after a while we ... agreed ... [to] ask Greg to take on the administrative and management part ... as the time developed ... we realized that this project is much larger than we envisaged” (C1).

Interviewee respondents emphasized the collaborative nature of SADET's work, and a methodological process that promoted inclusivity based on a series of South African and international partnerships. SADET also tapped into the existing research infrastructure/s of organizations with demonstrable research expertise, including the Africa Institute of South Africa and the South African Human Sciences Research Council<sup>24</sup>. The partnerships described here resulted directly in the co-option of SADET's core staff members. One interviewee described the process of his recruitment to the SADET project on the understanding that he would join a team that would “record our past [memories] ... [and] collect our oral histories which will eventually become an archive that will inform ... the broader democracy in South Africa” (C3).

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<sup>24</sup> The Human Sciences Research Council is the statutory research agency in South Africa.

Describing the genesis of SADET's research methodologies, an interviewee stated that,

“We decided to form ... regional team[s]. We went to the Wits History Workshop to see if they would be interested in participating ... we went to the University of Cape Town ... and of course the archive of the ANC, at [the] University of Western Cape. And then from there ... [we] flew to [the University of] Fort Hare, [and] they also agreed to participate. And of course they have the archives of both the ANC and the PAC. And then from there we flew to Durban, Durban-Westville and the University of KwaZulu-Natal ... and then we went to [the University of] Venda, and then to the University of the North. So we formed these teams ...” (C2).

Another interviewee noted that the decision to form research teams across the country was motivated by the magnitude of SADET's initial mandate, that is, to conduct oral histories, and produce four academic volumes over a two-year period based on extensive archival and other research (C3). This approach saw the signing of the first formal contract with the Africa Institute of South Africa in September 2000, as well as the formalization of research contracts with organizations and teams that included the Human Sciences Research Council, the Wits History Workshop, the Steve Biko Foundation, and researchers from the Robben Island Museum, the Universities of the Western Cape, Cape Town, Fort Hare, Free State, North West, Port Elizabeth, Rhodes, and Transkei (Houston 2010, p.6). According to interviewee C2,

“We formed these teams ... and we explained what the project was about, but mostly what was important for us was to carry out interviews with veterans of the struggle. So we expected each team to apply for a grant of about R250 000 ... and then people applied ... they wrote their proposals ... [and] we started the interview process. I think we did some, close to 1000, which are now going to be stored at the National Archive, but also Freedom Park wants to store the interviews. And we decided that our interviews, unlike the interviews that were done by the ANC when some of these veterans came back, were going to be of unlimited duration because we wanted the full story. So that a person like Eric Mtshali who was among the first to leave the country with O[liver] R[eginald] [Tambo]

... was interviewed ... and I think ... the last time they had done 25 hours ...” (C2).

International participants were recruited to the project on the basis of their detailed knowledge and experiences of international or ‘country’ campaigns against apartheid. At the United Nations, for example, the former chairperson of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, Enuga Reddy, led the research and writing effort. Peter Limb, former anti-apartheid campaigner in Australia, led the research and writing for Australia and New Zealand. In the former Soviet Union, Vladimir Shubin, a long-time ANC associate, took the research lead. Similarly in the US, William Minter, author of the book *No Easy Victories*, got involved as a writer and participant. The same is true for the anti-apartheid movements of other countries (C3).

All SADET participants had vested political interests in the project’s success. This is evident in the constitution of the SADET trustees, its editorial board, core staff, and the research/writing teams contracted to SADET.

#### 6.4.3 Academic Credibility

As a scholarly endeavor designed to impact on the South African academic community, SADET recognized the necessity of academic credibility for the project’s longer-term institutionalization. One interviewee notes that,

“... I don’t think that we imagined when we started that it was going to be your best seller. I think we understood that this is a very specific type of work, and a very specific type of contribution ...” (C1)

There was consensus amongst interviewees of SADET as a project based on academic rigor, one able to “stand the scrutiny of academics”, and one that “went beyond

just the repetition of political rhetoric” (C1). One interviewee commented on the benefits of SADET’s association with two leading South African academic publishers, Zebra Press and Unisa Press.

“For us, that’s where we want to find ourselves, because it simply means that wherever we published [it] is refereed. It’s unlike having our own press and just publishing whatever ... it’s refereed, and all the authors have got to take into consideration all the comments that are raised by the blind referees ...” (C3).

#### 6.4.4 National Government Support

National government involvement in the SADET project has been carefully worded to reflect a government support role rather than a representational role. The project’s origins at the seat of national government literally introduces a memory-power dynamic, especially in light of broader politics of memory theories on the manipulation of memory to meet dominant interests in society. SADET’s emphasis on a support rather than representational role by national government, and the shaping of SADET as counter memory to apartheid representations, helps to diffuse some of these tensions.

More importantly, the importance assigned to national government backing has been rationalized in terms of three factors upon which the project’s short to medium term sustainability has relied on: finances, participation incentives, and publicity.

One interviewee notes that SADET’s status as a “presidential project” increased the likelihood of project funding, and provided the ability for the project to raise funds with the full endorsement of the President, despite the fact that no finances were allocated from the President’s office.

“There is no government representation because from the beginning we were very clear that representation wouldn’t be either from government or the ANC because that could have from the beginning cast this work,

amongst certain groups, in a bad light ... it was ... a presidential project because you needed that in order to raise funds” (C1).

“Fortunately we were able to use the person and the office of the Deputy President, later the President, Mbeki, to continue with the funding, because he would then also discuss with the funders the importance of this project, and that’s how they’ve continued the funding” (C1).

SADET’s presidential project status also increased the likelihood of participation from interviewees and writers. An interviewee states,

“It was both a presidential project because you needed that in order to raise funds, but you needed that in order to encourage people to be interviewed, and to encourage others to write for it ... so we were able then to use the name and the standing of Thabo Mbeki to encourage people to become more involved in this thing” (C1).

It is insightful to note further that 42% of SADET media reports between 1998 and 2012 references SADET in their political profiles of key government officials, as well as their involvement in SADET’s public events.

#### 6.4.5 Content Representation

The key content representation issue that emerged from the SADET process was its totalizing claim to be representing the liberation struggle. The concern was therefore about the extent to which content representation would be influenced by the political ideologies of SADET’s leadership, leading to exclusion and in some cases what has been argued as unwarranted inclusion. In regard to the latter, one critic has argued that too much credit has been given to organizations such as the National Union of South African Students, the National Committee of Liberation, and the African Resistance Movement, writing that “the pen can place relatively minor groups on the center stage of history” (Thomas 2011, p.2).

Despite its claims of being widely representative the origins of the SADET project, the constitution of its Board of Trustees, and the handpicked selections of core staff demonstrate an overwhelming ANC bias. These issues have resulted in widespread criticism of SADET. Speaking to this point, and in response to arguments that SADET represents a “post-apartheid patriotic history” (Legassick 2008) an interviewee stated the following:

“In one sense all history is patriotic history, if you go by the dictionary definition of what patriotic is. So that’s not a problem. The issue is can SADET be criticized that it had a very definite party political bias. This is the issue. Perhaps because of my presence and Lindi[we]’s presence and Masondo’s presence and Isaac Makopo’s presence, and even though Joe Matthews had left the ANC, he still always regarded himself as an ANC and communist, um that it would be possible to say” (C1).

This response is in acknowledgement of strong grounds for the accusation of an ANC bias, or the bias of particular political tendencies in the ANC. The same respondent goes further to dispel accusations of bias,

“I think ... [the team] ... bent over backwards to try to make sure that they dealt with the authors and the chapters in a way in which reduced, if not eliminated the possible charge of being biased in favor of the ANC ... my own view is that quite clearly, I don’t know how you can write a history of South Africa without paying due credit to the role and place of the ANC in that struggle, to the role and place of the trade union movement, and obviously the trade union movement – there’s SACTU, COSATU [that] was formed by the ANC and the SACP” (C1).

“But I mean I think in the end, it doesn't warrant that criticism because the breadth of the articles, and the depth of some of them, and the volume or the numbers of people who wrote, and some of them either coming from either no political tendency, or some from other political tendencies, like Martin Legassick and them, they come from a very hostile, which I think hostile to the ANC tendency. Uh, ANC as a movement. Uh, that in the end I don't think they can sustain ... [their arguments]” (C1).

On the one hand, these statements underscore the importance of historical memory in recording and sustaining the past by drawing attention to the ANC's leading role in the liberation struggle. On the other hand they also reflect that perceptions of political manipulation are based on who is making these arguments and what their particular interpretive frameworks are.

In SADET's day-to-day work, the key representational questions included: Which time periods, events, and organizations would be profiled? Who would research and write the volume chapters? Who would be interviewed as part of the SADET oral history project? To what extent would the interviews be used to contribute to individual volumes? Which interview transcripts would be published?

Interviewee respondents provided a rationale for the 1960 – 1996 chronology on which the volumes are based. 1960 is widely recognized as a turning point in the South African liberation struggle as the year in which state repression of political resistance took a particularly violent turn when 69 peaceful demonstrators were killed at Sharpeville, and organized political resistance was forced into exile. 1996 as the end point for the SADET volumes holds two formative moments in South African political history, the passing of a democratic constitution, and the beginning of a five-year long Truth and Reconciliation Commission process.

Interviewees drew attention to the infeasibility of the chronological approach to some of SADET's themes. Faced with the massive extent of international solidarity against apartheid, a decision was made to publish two separate volumes on the theme of international solidarity, and a separate volume on African support.

“We also then in the course of our work came to the conclusion that we could not just integrate international solidarity into each of the volumes,

because the volumes are quite chronological as you will have noticed. So we then decided that we should have a special volume on international solidarity. That means getting people throughout the world, from the anti-apartheid movement, and others involved, to write about why and how they got involved in the anti-apartheid movement” (C1).

“But we felt from the beginning that because we are in Africa, we’re an African country, and Africa played, or many countries in Africa played a very prominent role in assisting us, that we should have a special volume on African solidarity, which we’re working on right now. So you can see how, uh, it just, the breadth of the work has increased” (C1).

One interviewee described a ‘hands-off’ approach by the project’s board after recruiting writers whom they knew would not necessarily push an ANC viewpoint. The same interviewee acknowledged that there were instances in which contested historiographical issues led to the editorial board’s intervention, but with such exceptions there was limited interference in authorship.

“[We decided] we will bring in people who are, who will write, who will not necessarily be sympathetic to us ...” (C1).

“Essentially we also agreed that the people who write the articles will not be subject to any form of censorship, but obviously those of us who did it, the editors, there are areas in which historiography is difficult to determine. People sometimes forget things, people sometimes write things that may or may not be true, but we always respected the integrity of many of the authors. And there are a number of authors actually who wrote, who I don’t agree with, I still don’t agree with, still don’t agree with politically, but they were asked to write ... and they wrote. And I think this has enriched SADET. So that ... it was not a government thing, it was [not] an ANC thing, but obviously the ANC will [feature] most prominently because the ANC was the leading organization ...” (C1).

Another interviewee provided the rationale for the first volume’s extensive reliance on oral interviews, relating this rationale to the volume’s focus on a largely undocumented historical era, the early 1960s in which key political organizations were banned, political leaders were sent to prison, or were forced into exile.

“... we thought that we could interview, especially the generation of the early 60s, because the liberation movement was banned in 1960, and then Mandela had left the country, and then MK had been formed in 1961, and APLA had also been formed” (C2).

There were two approaches to recording oral histories. The life history approach (C2) according to an interviewee was based on the following rationale:

“And we decided that our interviews, unlike the interviews that were done by the ANC when some of these veterans came back, were going to be of unlimited duration because we wanted the full story. So that a person like Eric Mtshali who was among the first to leave the country with OR [Tambo] ... was interviewed by Jabulani, and I think ... the last time [I heard] they had done 25 hours ...” (C2).

A second approach to recording oral histories was based on particular political themes or events (C2). The life history approach supported SADET’s decision to publish oral histories in a separate series of volumes, *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, since “the interview material collected in the first phase of the project could not all be used in the first volume” (Houston 2010, p.5).

#### 6.4.6 Contestations and Debates

It is no secret that SADET, at the time of its establishment, was particularly critical of how the academy was dealing with documenting liberation history. This dissatisfaction is expressed in interviews that point out the need for struggle participants to be writing their own histories, and who explicitly state that despite the series of new post-apartheid memory initiatives in the early 1990s, the same gaps remained, and no constructive challenge to apartheid historical and social memory frameworks had emerged. One interviewee had the following to say:

“... about eight to ten years after the democracy ... one would have expected that South African universities, because that’s their core

function, they would have began a project that recorded our memories, particularly [the memories of] those who were in the forefront of the struggle for national liberation, particularly black people, precisely because in terms of history their voices are not there ... they are not even a subject of the narrative. If you check the index[es] in the major publications of the history of South Africans, the names that are there, Mandela and them, don't have voices. They are just objects of analysis. And secondly, in terms of authorships, black intellectuals did not write that history. So you would have expected that probably six or so years after our liberation there would have been major projects instituted by our universities to do that" (C3).

These kinds of sentiments have prompted reaction in academic circles, leading to academic reviews in which SADET claims of "new evidence" is assessed, the extent to which it includes interpretations of the apartheid state is problematized, and content selection and representation issues are raised. These reviews of SADET have been mixed. Recently, Cornelius Thomas (2011) accused SADET of producing "sloppy work", calling attention to a lack of coverage of liberation movement failures, an over-reliance on untested personal testimonies in SADET's first volume, and lost opportunities for recording security establishment perspectives for the first volume. Unlike Drew (2007) who questioned the omission of organizations such as the National Liberation Front, In an earlier review of volume 1, Tom Lodge concludes that "the chapters contain a mass of fresh detail, particularly as a consequence of the testimony offered to the researchers by veteran activists", and that "the new evidence should indeed prompt interpretative shifts from earlier scholarship about anti-apartheid movements in the 1960s" (Lodge 2004, p.278). At this early stage, Lodge also criticized the lack of attention to newly accessible state sources of information such as records of the apartheid security establishments, implying that there was a lost opportunity for dialogue between different historical sources. Houston's (2010) response to the latter commonly voiced criticism, is that

SADET like all processes of history and memory recovery in South Africa, has been impacted by the mass destruction of security establishment records as reported by the TRC. Despite these issues, Lodge's reviews are overwhelmingly positive, and in a subsequent review to volume 2, he notes that "the wider exploitation of official archival material and police evidence is a major strength of this volume compared to its predecessor in the SADET project" (Lodge 2008, p.160). Drew's review of volume 1 is also overwhelmingly positive, commending the SADET researchers for a "wide-ranging, well-researched, and engaged survey of political activity in 1960s South Africa, challenging the view that this was a decade of political quiescence" (Drew 2007, p.164), but questions the "male bias" that is evident in the content. In an H-Net review in 2006, Saul Dubow commends SADET for its first volume, and above all for providing a framing for "many of the tough historical questions which have yet to be asked" (2006, p.2).

One of the biggest SADET issues and challenges to date arose in regard to two chapters published in its second volume on the 1970 – 1980 period. In particular there was discontent on SADET's editorial process, and on the placement of two co-authored chapters. The chapters in question appeared as chapters five and six in volume 2 of the Road to Democracy series. Chapter five, *The Revival of the Labour Movement, 1970 – 1980* was co-authored by Jabulani Sithole and Sifiso Ndlovu. Chapter six, *White Workers and the Revival of the Workers' Movement* was co-authored by Dave Hemson, Martin Legassick and Nicole Ulrich. A SADET respondent noted the main issues that sparked disagreement,

"... the question was which chapter should precede which chapter in the volume. And I said that ... logically the SACTU chapter that was written

by Sifiso [Ndlovu] and [Jabulani] Sithole should come first. And then there was also the question of the role of white intellectuals at the University of Natal, and ... in Cape Town ... [of] who should really hold the prominent position. Intellectually of course they were wonderful in terms of helping ... the workers at Coronation Brick and Tile, but they didn't start the strike at that time ... they were not on the assembly line ... but then there was also the question of the role of SACTU, whether SACTU had died on the vine, or whether they were still relevant. In fact you'll find that in the interviews, especially that were carried out by Sithole in Natal ... SACTU was very much alive" (C2).

Martin Legassick presents a different take on the editorial handling of the two chapters in question, writing that the "debate culminated in a unilateral decision by Professor Magubane to retitle the chapter", and that "the original title, "The revival of the workers' movement", was changed to 'White activists and the revival of the workers' movement'", emphasizing a "racialisation of the title" (Legassick 2008, p.240). In Legassick's view the chapter that he co-authored with Hemson and Ulrich "raised the issues of [the] political independence of the working class from nationalist orthodoxy" (Legassick 2008, p.241), issues that surface time and again in contemporary South African politics, and that are grounded in political ideologies. Legassick himself had been suspended and subsequently expelled from the ANC in the 1970s (Legassick 2008, p.240), and in this regard one interviewee notes Legassick's association with "a very hostile ... to the ANC tendency" (C1). As tensions increased about what appeared to be a heavy-handed editorial move, and what Legassick termed as "manipulation of the historical record" (2008, p.241), additional members of the academy were drawn into the debate through heated exchanges in South African historical journals, and articles supporting the position of one or other side. Legassick published an article in the widely circulated South African academic journal *Kronos* in November 2008 in which he criticizes the SADET editorial process in regard to its handling of the two chapters, provides a synopsis of the content,

and how the content was interpreted by the authors. Jabulani Sithole (2009) responded in a subsequent edition of *Kronos* in which he provides support for the arguments made in his and Ndlovu's chapter about the role and significance of the South African Congress of Trade Unions during this period, highlights key sources that informed his and Ndlovu's interpretation, and in which he places Legassick in an ideological category of "commentators [who] use history to mobilise support for their rigidly held ideological positions and to wage current political struggles under the pretext of advancing academic arguments" (Sithole 2009, p.222). While the final Road to Democracy volume does not reflect the controversies that were sparked by the two chapters, these issues remain unresolved, and highlight the impact of mediation on interpretation. It also calls attention to unresolved politics and contestations of memory.

Similar interpretive and representational issues arose from a chapter on the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement in one of two volumes on international solidarity. With two main organizations having operated in the Netherlands in support of the anti-apartheid struggle, the Anti-Apartheid Beweging Nederland (AABN), and the Komite Zuidelike Afrika (KZA), the chapter is based on the analysis of Sietse Bosgra of the KZA, and has been publically contested for distorting facts about the AABN aligned organization, Boycott Outspan Action (Du Plessis). Both the content and the authoring of this chapter have been placed in question. An interviewee noted the authorship tensions that emerged from the Dutch case:

"... the other guy ... was saying to us, I'm South African why are you asking a foreigner to write a chapter for us, but when we asked them they were not forthcoming, which is the case with this project ..." (C3).

In an attempt to publicize these debates, SADET has published details of both of the above-mentioned cases on its website (<http://sadet.co.za/blogletters.html>), but the tensions persist and remain unresolved.

## 6.5 MEDIATING IMPACT

Noting *The Road to Democracy* series as “a very specific type of work, and a very specific type of contribution” for a scholarly audience, an interviewee noted the infeasibility of considering SADET’s impact on the general public until “popular versions” of the series are produced (C1). This infeasibility is also evident in the extent to which the news media reported on the work of SADET. Of the 33 reports that emerged from a search for SADET on Lexis Nexis for the period 1998 to the present, only 6 dealt substantively with the themes and new forms of historical discourse that surface in the SADET productions. In some cases, these reports were linked to particular commemorative holidays such as Heroes Day on December 16th and Youth Day on June 16<sup>th</sup>. In other instances, SADET was used as a source, for engaging with contemporary politics in Zimbabwe, for urging unity in the wake of an upcoming ANC conference, and for highlighting the socio-economic difficulties of liberation struggle veterans and the work of a special government unit to administer special pensions. These reports were overwhelmingly about contemporary political and social concerns, rather than the memories that were mobilized as part of the SADET project. The rest of the media reports contain fleeting references to SADET in the form of reports of SADET launches (5/33), SADET as a note in the political and professional profiles of individuals who were active in SADET (14/33), SADET as a note in President Zuma’s schedule (5/33),

press reviews (1/33), and award nominations (2/33). With this limited focus on the *Road to Democracy* series in the national print media, there are limited grounds for assessing the extent to which there is public knowledge of SADET's work, and for assessing the effectiveness of the communication channel used to convey this information. Interviewee reports on the infeasibility of assessing SADET's public impact are therefore confirmed. Interviewees were able to provide their personal reflections on the project's potential impacts, as well as identify specific steps that were taken to assist in mediating rather than measuring impact. While these personal reflections remain untested assumptions, they provide important variables for future assessment.

There was broad consensus that the historical content generated would have a major impact in the future, through the project's distribution of "unknown" or lesser-known historical content and perspectives into the public domain.

"I think it's beginning to be used more and more ... The volumes are thick, and so, ... I think what's going to happen and what has already happened is that people with different interests will read specific parts of it. Nobody is going to read it from cover to cover ... but they will read those parts that interest them most. That's the first thing. Secondly, obviously future, present, past scholars still are doing work on the history of South Africa. I mean certainly, future-wise, would have to have recourse to the *Road to Democracy* in South Africa. I would think anybody can now write anything about the history of South Africa, certainly the resistance movement, without recourse to at least consulting the *Road to Democracy* in South Africa, and I think this as I said earlier is going to be an enduring ... legacy that we, those of use who are on the Board, incidentally, I've been the chair of the Board from the very beginning, um, will continue to have a profound impact in the future" (C1).

In further emphasis on the importance of the content, another interviewee notes,

"We ... interviewed, for instance, we interviewed PW Botha, we interviewed Pik Botha, the funniest guy you have ever met, we interviewed De Klerk, we interviewed Du Plessis. You know it was very exciting to interview these people ... and them telling you that they really

had no choice but to negotiate with the ANC ... how most of the time ... they were really trying to counter the ANC strategy especially after 1978 ... [be]cause you'll remember that the ANC in 1979 sent a delegation ... to Vietnam ... and when I was writing my chapters for instance, I just found that ... very, very helpful” (C2)

The following statement highlights the project’s longer-term intentions to enable transformation in the South African education curriculum.

“So it, its really required reading, in my view, in schools in South Africa, because the Road to Democracy in South Africa is the only substantial history of South Africa, covering politics, the economics, the social, the cultural, the religious part, all of it, looking at the involvement and contribution of the trade union movement, looking at the involvement and contribution of women to the struggle, looking at the contribution of Indians and Coloreds to the struggle. So in the end we’ve come out with I think a historical record that’s gonna be very difficult for anybody else to surpass” (C1).

The project made particular efforts to ensure wide distribution, at least for volumes 1 and 2 to high schools in South Africa. With reference to a specific private sector partnership with the De Beers Mining Corporation, and a partnership with the public sector-initiated South African History Project, an interviewee reported that,

“They bought copies for all the high schools in South Africa, so it means, a bestseller in South Africa is 5000, and I think they bought about 8000 for volume 2, and distributed it throughout the country ... we distributed the books in schools and in all the major libraries throughout the country” (C3).

The same interviewee notes that the private sector played a central role in keeping project overheads low, and therefore ensuring wider distribution.

“Getting it out [to the public], that’s why we go to the private sector. Private sector sponsors, and then distributes ... and then *South Africans Telling Their Stories* has been selling well, they are thick, and the advantage is they are sponsored by [the South African Post Office] ... that’s why they are cheap ... an equivalent book is expensive, but ... we

get free paper [from SAPPI]. So for a book which is close to 1000 pages, you get it at the same price as the book which is about 290 pages” (C3).

SADET’s potential impact has also been expressed in terms of the intention to create an institutionalized, long-term resource that will be available through South Africa’s national archival system. A key interview respondent stated that,

“Long, long after we have left these shores and departed to wherever you go, this work of SADET is going to remain. So yes, I feel very proud of my own involvement. I feel that every single minute that I’ve given to SADET has been worthwhile and it has been a specific privilege to work with all of the people on the board, including those that have now left us ...” (C1).

## 6.6 ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS

SADET’s production processes both created archives, and included an extensive engagement with archives that re-surfaced publicly in South Africa’s post-apartheid context. The latter included archives that were created and formerly controlled by the apartheid dispensation, records that re-surfaced from the liberation movement after the legalization of the ANC and PAC in 1990, and archives located in international countries.

### 6.6.1 Thinking about Access to Liberation Archives in the National Archival System

An interviewee noted that a conscious decision was made to bypass the signing of oral history consent forms to ensure unrestricted access to the interviews at the National Archives. Rather than impose limitations on archival access and usage, the interviews took place on the understanding that “the story has to be known” and that the signing of restrictive legal documents run contrary to the purpose of SADET (C3). The same interviewee notes that there are recorded instances in which interviewers were asked not

to publish components of interviews. SADET's response has been to place the onus on current or future researchers of the collection.

“If you are an ethical person, even if you are a future researcher, when you reach that section you have to take this decision. And then after that, anything goes. In most cases it might be connected with people who are still alive” (C3).

This situation emerges in regard to sensitive content, including disciplinary issues.

While the implications of SADET's approach remain untested in an archival access context, SADET's decision to foreground the ethical rather than legal dimensions of access to the oral history interviews is a significant move that is not necessarily supported by protection of personal information legislation unless exemption is granted. This is an important case for further observation, particularly so if the interviews are to be placed in a national public institution that is governed by specific legal frameworks.

Through the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (1996), the National Archives has demonstrated a commitment to collect and preserve private records with “enduring archival value”, and its' recent prioritization of a national oral history program supports this commitment. The extent to which collecting private records has been accomplished is beyond the scope of my dissertation. However, important questions can be raised as to whether such efforts will lead to deeper fragmentation of liberation archives, as has already been noted, and quite possibly a duplication of efforts.

#### 6.6.2 Picking up the Pieces: The Fragmented Status of Liberation Archives

Depending on individual chapters and themes, SADET researchers accessed archives that had rarely been used as part of a systematic historical production effort, or as part of attempts to reconstruct liberation struggle narratives, or as part of attempts to

fill known or unknown gaps in discourse/s on South Africa's liberation struggle. Drawing from personal and institutional archival sources in many geographic locations, and guided by the themes covered in each of the SADET volumes, the project drew attention to the fragmented nature of liberation archives. An interviewee implied that this fragmentation coupled with a lack of adequate access aids lend itself to the adoption of simplistic versions of historical events (C3).

“Sometimes I would read what people have written, but [given my research on the SADET project] I would know [that] they missed these things ... [for example] an original letter from Tambo which he wrote to [X] ... which talks about [X] ... [would be missed]” (C3).

Detailed research on liberation archives of the ANC and the PAC at the Mayibuye Archives and at the University of Fort Hare Archives in many cases revealed the nuances of particular events, or served to confirm or disconfirm oral accounts of the same events. An interviewee remarks,

“Everything that is ... [at Mayibuye Archives], and everything that Fort Hare has, I think for me that's our future in trying to understand the liberation movements ... and ... so then in terms of the oral history when I record whoever I'm recording whether they talking about ethnicity, so called tribalism within the movement, then ok ... yes [I remember] I saw that at Mayibuye ... there's a document there that I collected [which can confirm these issues]” (C3).

Country chapters for two special SADET volumes on international ' against apartheid provide access points to archives held in foreign countries. Amongst other things, they draw attention to a network of personal and institutional archives that are located outside of South Africa. An interviewee notes that,

“And when ... [researchers] read these in terms of the international solidarity, they'll know where the archives are. So it's up to them now to dig deeper” (C3).

Other liberation archive collections, as demonstrated by SADET's research processes were spread across the apartheid security establishment archives (records that had been confiscated by apartheid security agents), and records that remained in the personal possession of individuals, and records held in foreign countries.

### 6.6.3 Creating an Archive of Oral Histories

One of SADET's most tangible contributions to archiving South Africa's liberation struggle is approximately 1100 recordings in its oral history project. The interviews served as source materials, they supplement the *Road to Democracy* volumes, and contribute to a longer-term memory preservation program. In many cases, the oral history recordings surfaced events that were unknown to SADET researchers, subsequently verified in newspaper sources, court records and other apartheid era documentation (Houston 2010). Two objectives for the SADET Oral History Project are emphasized. As its primary objective, the project encourages South Africans to "tell their stories – not only as passive spectators or victims and perpetrators, but also as actors and makers of history in their own right ... giving a sense of what it *felt* like to live through identified periods" (Preface to *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, volume 1, p.vi). A second objective of the SADET Oral History Project is "to provide complementary reading material to [the] academic volumes" (Preface to *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, volume 1, p.vi).

The recording of new oral histories were a priority for the SADET project, and the first interviews took place soon after the organization had formalized contracts with its regional research teams. An interviewee states that after the research teams were formed,

“... we invited them to visit us at SADET offices in Pretoria. And we explained what the project was about, but mostly what was important for us was to carry out interviews with veterans of the struggle. So we expected each team to apply for a grant of about [R]250 000, really not much money, but it was cash in hand. And then people applied, they wrote their proposals. So we started the interview process ...” (C2).

The interviews were based upon an identification and selection process, in which “each research team identified cadres of the ANC and PAC in their region”, and “older ANC members in London” were interviewed (C2). These interviews were recorded on the understanding that they would be openly accessible in archives after completion of the SADET project.

The interviews cover four “central themes” of the SADET project: the Sharpeville killings and apartheid state repression in the aftermath of Sharpeville; the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s and its culmination in the Soweto Uprisings of 1976; the formation of the United Democratic Front in the early 1980s, culminating in the release of political prisoners and the legalization of formally banned political organizations by 1990; and the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks that began in 1991 and led directly to the first democratic elections in 1994 (Preface to *South Africans Telling Their Stories*, p. ix-xi). Many of the SADET oral histories took the form of life history recordings, rather than just prompting interviewees to speak about specific periods or events. Magubane notes that,

“unlike the interviews that were done by the ANC when some of these veterans came back, [ours] were going to be of unlimited duration because we wanted the full story. So that a person like Eric Mtshali who was among the first to leave the country with OR ... was interviewed ... the last time [I know of] they had done 25 hours ...”(Magubane interview).

#### 6.6.4 The Importance of Newspaper Archives

Despite the fact that one component of SADET's activities was the creation of archives "after the fact", in most instances many years after the event, the motivation to capture events in the context/s of historical political conditions is evident in the project's wide use of newspaper archives.

"You know, the archives [are] very interesting. I found that the Wits [Historical Papers] Archive is absolutely fascinating. I mean for instance, their newspaper records, and then of course the Institute for Race Relations as well, especially the newspaper collection. Because you just never know until you actually go through the newspaper column, what was actually happening. And of course the best one is the [Institute for Contemporary History press cutting collection at the] University of the Free State ... it's absolutely fascinating, and they will get you anything ... and we used them a lot in our project" (C2).

Newspaper reports provided critical information about events for which no other systematized archival documentation had been recorded, as well as information about the conditions under which these newspaper reports were originally produced. There were several instances in which the perspectives of individual chapter contributions were shaped by the author's memory of experience, and newspaper reports served as valuable sources for validating contested memories of personal experience. Using the example of the 1976 Soweto student uprisings that is recognized by many as a "moment" or "turning point" in South African history (C3), an interviewee described that, by law, only black journalists were permitted to enter Soweto during that period. Many of the journalists, were employed by *The World* newspaper, and authoritative reports on the demonstrations were most often published in *The World* (C3). The newspaper was widely regarded as an alternative source of political reporting, and this led to its eventual banning under apartheid laws in October 1977. The *South African History Online* website reports that,

“When the Soweto uprising had occurred ... it was the journalists from The World who supplied the reports that went onto the front pages of most major local and international newspapers. This was because at the time the big Johannesburg dailies such as *The Star* and the *Rand Daily Mail* had few black journalists” (South African History Online, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/percy-peter-qoboza>, accessed October 15, 2012).

This informed the author’s decision to “focus on the World” (C3) and to note that without such sources,

“The dominant narratives would have probably become the historical truth at the expense of memories of young students ... in terms of student movement[s] as a social movement, it simply means that we were not homogenous ... but in terms of the existing analysis, it was like we were homogenous” (C3).

By accessing the archives of the newspaper at Wits University, the author found grounds to support his personal memories, ‘discovering’ in fact that,

“The uprisings themselves were not spontaneous. They didn’t begin on June 16<sup>th</sup> 76 as some of the analysis says. By February [of that year], The World is covering this issue, and we went on strike formally on 17 May 1976. Actually, there is even a photograph of the schoolyard and our [school] principal ... it’s covering the issues but by then no one knew that events would turn to what they became ... [I’ve included this] for the reader to make up their mind” (C3).

Another interviewee emphasized the value of news reports that were produced by the liberation movement as key sources of information and context for the SADET project.

“When I was in the [United] States I used to subscribe to the ANC Newsbriefing ... you know, I had a whole collection of ANC Newsbriefings from 1970 which I donated to SADET. And it became very, very useful in terms of giving you week by week, day by day [accounts] of what was happening ... as they unfolded” (C2).

“I was a very faithful reader of *Sechaba* from my days as a student at UCLA ... Mzana, who died ... wrote a brilliant essay about ... how in

most countries that are in sub-tropics was used to hide guerillas ... very well though out essay. And when I was writing my chapters, for instance, I just found that ... very, very helpful” (C2).

The engagement with newspaper collections from both the apartheid establishment and liberation organizations surfaced events and issues that are not widely known in contemporary South Africa. Liberation organizations, for example, report on an ANC delegation to Vietnam in 1979 that is said to have “shook the [apartheid] Nationalist Party to its’ foundation” (C2). Newspaper collections also drew attention to events and themes that would benefit from future archival research. For archives, this serious engagement with apartheid-era newspaper sources underscores both a silencing of the struggle through popular media of the apartheid establishment, and an illumination of the historical contexts in which political ‘events’ took place. Engagement with the alternative, struggle press provides the prospects to both counter apartheid state narratives, and serve as a platform for building and validating the oral narratives privileged in post-apartheid memory projects.

#### 6.6.5 Loss of Archives

An important theme that emerges from the project interviews is that of the role of formal archival structures in sustaining loss of memory. Language as a key mediating influence is noted, in terms of documenting and recording archives, as well as the language/s in which archives are made accessible. Highlighting cultural contexts that influence interviewing processes, an interviewee notes that as mediators,

“... you have to ask different questions differently. And we’ve lost a lot through that ... particularly when we focus on what we may think are mundane lives of our people ... but it would have been nice to capture

them in their own languages. So I think that's where we are missing ... ”  
(C3).

The SADET project also confirmed a widely held heritage sector understanding that “oral traditions are not systematically collected in archives” (C3) despite the fact that oral traditions as national heritage are provided for in post-apartheid heritage legislation.

“We are closing down, and we've hardly scratched the surface, and remember, we starting from 1960 – 1996, we had lives we had stories, we had lives before 1960, we had lives after 1996, let alone that our precolonial history, our oral traditions are not systematically collected in archives ...” (C3).

In addition then to closing some of the gaps in archival documentation, the project therefore helped to identify and, in the latter case, confirm remaining archival gaps.

## 6.7 SUMMATION

As a post-apartheid endeavor that originated in the president's office, and received the weight of national government and presidential support, SADET's history writing initiative is unprecedented in South Africa. It is also unprecedented in terms of scale, as compared with more individualized forms of historical production evident in the writing of autobiographies and events of the apartheid era. Considered in relation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the SADET process helped to deepen and provide historical context to the individual and organizational testimonies heard through the TRC. In addition then to being a memory-making process of its own, it also overlapped with, and provided additional layers for analyzing what was being transmitted into the public domain through other social and political processes. The SADET project can therefore be regarded as both mediated and mediator.

With a research methodology based primarily on oral histories, individual memories were profiled as key sources in processes of producing histories. And as noted in some of the academic reviews of individual volumes, and in interviewee reflections, there were both strengths and weaknesses in this approach. The major strength was in the extent to which history authorship was being extended to people who participated in the events being recorded. The major weakness, according to Houston (2010) was “lacunae in recollections” as a result of trauma. Both strengths and weaknesses surfaced in different recollections of the same events. Oral histories were however not the only sources of memory. Contributions to chapter volumes were also based on archives of the liberation movements, archives that had not previously been accessed to produce a comprehensive historical account of SADET’s themes and periods of focus. While state sources also played a key role in SADET’s volumes, there has been criticism for inadequate use of state sources. Nevertheless it is clear that SADET was based on an inclusive paradigm of historical production, that not only tapped into previously untapped sources, but also generated new memory sources that have the potential to fundamentally alter how researchers engage with questions on South Africa’s liberation struggle.

The success of the SADET project was based on trust. To this end, members of the SADET board included ANC veterans who played an important role in securing the participation of rank and file ANC members. An interviewee also explains that, having lived in exile and having known many ANC members during that time boosted the willingness of potential interviewees to participate.

“I had met alot of these fellows in Zambia, from 1967 onwards, especially the group of the Luthuli Brigade that was led by Chris Hani ... so we thought that we should begin with that generation. Some of them were getting quite old and they were dying ... so we approached the ANC, if

they could write us an introductory letter to some of these cadres of the ANC ... and the PAC ... to interview. Fortunately having been in Lusaka I really had no problem, I mean they all knew me” (C2).

It is also evident that historical liberation movement debates have taken root in the SADET project, particularly in relation to the two contested chapters in volume 2 of the series, and the ensuing debates in academic publications. Liberation movement theories on relationships between race and class, and their centrality to the struggle have continued to produce disagreement. From a purely collective memory perspective, these debates give credence to assertions that there is more than one collective memory of the same event, and that no memories are collectively or individually homogenous. These disagreements will remain, and SADET provided the opportunity for contestation of which version would triumph in an institutionalization project of note.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION**

#### 7.1 OVERVIEW

In my dissertation research, I set out to examine how memories of the social, political and cultural are produced and transmitted into the public sphere, with specific reference to South Africa's post-apartheid context. My key finding is that memory production and transmission are not simple linear progressions and are not based on one directional relationships between sources, producers and consumers with memory as the commodity. Rather, my analysis of three South African case studies demonstrates dynamic, multi-modal relationships between, 1. the people whose memories are being recorded, 2. sources of memory in the form of documentary evidence, or first-person accounts, 3. producers or mediators of memory, and 4. the receiving public. The relevance of these categories, and their overlaps, are determined by the social and political conditions in which memories are being engaged.

I also set out to examine the role of archives in each of my selected cases, and considered differently, the contributions of each case to ways of thinking about archives. I conclude that while none of the cases began with explicit archival intentions, archives featured centrally in the realization of these projects. Each of the projects also underscore ways of thinking about and valuing archives that centralize concerns which have mostly

been at the periphery of formal archives. In the remainder of my conclusion, I provide further depth to these findings.

## 7.2 THE PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF POST-APARTHEID MEMORY

### 7.2.1 Context

In answering the question of how collective memories are produced and transmitted in post-apartheid South Africa, I argue that post-apartheid South Africa provided broad frameworks of mediation in which personal and collective experiences could be made meaningful in the public realm. When apartheid ended, key practical dimensions of memory were based on the need to redress historical imbalances by creating a memory landscape that gave adequate recognition to people who were deliberately excluded from the historical record. Mediated by the priorities of the rapidly shifting political context, memory was therefore utilized as a support mechanism for building a new society, and its active manifestations were evident in the public sphere in initiatives with ambitious agendas to document the histories of the liberation movements and mainstream cultures that apartheid attempted to suppress. This period also saw the emergence of a South African ‘heritage sector’ through a network of people and institutions with overlapping interests in recording apartheid’s dire impacts rather than uphold its classifications and legacies. International donor agencies were instrumental in these memory ‘recovery’ initiatives, as were activist academics and returnees from political exile. A 1993 ANC-led conference on arts and culture policy helped to define immediate and longer-term priorities for people and institutions working within this realm, leading directly to the establishment of committees and commissions to deliberate

on policy and legislative changes. By 1999, at the end of the first five-year term of the new democracy, there were new laws for archives, museums and heritage resources, and further legislative changes were imminent. A series of new government-managed legacy projects had been put in place, and apartheid legacy institutions had been institutionally reconfigured. During this time the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in terms of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995, and its ensuing five-year process publicly acknowledged the physical and emotional traumas of gross human rights violations under apartheid from the perspectives of ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’. As a model of “politically active collective memory” (McEwan 2003), the TRC has promoted citizen engagement with memory – 1. as a national forum for public engagement with approximately 20,000 personal testimonies of gross human rights violations under apartheid, 2. as a result of widespread and extended public attention that the TRC attracted, and, 3. as a result of academic and public criticism for what it excluded.

I argue that the series of institutional, legislative and policy changes, combined with the TRC process have had profound implications for memory discourses and practice in South Africa, and have added several layers of complexity to how memories are publicly represented, and by whom. In particular, by the predominance of personal testimonies, the TRC centralized the relationship/s between individual and collective memory, and unfolded as a necessary and emotional ‘reconstruction after the fact’ (Burton 2005). My dissertation underscores that the processes of public acknowledgement and validation that were seen in the TRC have not solely been the domains of national government-led initiatives. Memory initiatives in varying degrees of

scale and intention have provided different venues for people to recount their experiences of the apartheid era, and in so doing have illuminated the process relational aspects of memory that Olick (2007) and Confino (1997) write about.

A perhaps distinguishing feature of post-apartheid memory is that the boundaries between concepts of memory and counter-memory have been narrowed, and in some instances erased as memory making has surfaced above ground into a favorable environment that not only acknowledged personal experiences but began looking at how people might be compensated through special pensions processes and the like. What has been referenced in memory studies literature as counter memory or as oppositional memory, and identified as such in relation to apartheid era contexts, has been moved from the periphery to the center. This complicates the often drawn binaries between memory and counter memory, and typical theoretical associations of memory with power, and counter memory with subjugation. While SADET's *Road to Democracy* series, for instance, overturns apartheid discourse on South Africa's liberation struggle, it was able to take advantage of its initial status as a presidential project through full utilization of the frameworks and tools of power at its disposal. This renders an atypical association of counter memory with power. In regard to SADET, the interplay between memory and counter memory becomes more evident within liberation discourse itself. One example is the different interpretations of Soweto 1976 that the SADET project draws attention to, based either on participant or eyewitness accounts on the one hand, and theoretical interpretations on the other hand. Though not in so many words, the District Six Museum firmly positions itself as a counter memory initiative that mediates many voices in its exhibition making processes, and while representing a community that

was destroyed by apartheid, it no longer represents a marginalized story. Rather, critics have argued that the stories of other forced removals under apartheid have been subjugated through the successes of the District Six Museum project. The Sunday Times Heritage Project based much of its memorial selection and research on ‘newsworthy’ stories for public consumption, and integrates both apartheid era records and new memory sources in its dissemination campaign. With reference to the three cases covered in my dissertation, these tensions are elevated and take on deeper meanings through the influence of political ideologies.

I have sketched here a social and political context that developed an agenda for public memory making in post-apartheid South Africa, by mediating institutional responses to how memory is represented and mainstreamed into the public sphere. The processes inherent in each of the cases that I have examined in my dissertation contribute to an understanding of how these representational concerns have been dealt with in everyday practice.

To further address the research question of how collective memories are produced and transmitted into the public sphere, I proceed further to examine the methodologies of memory engagement and representation that I found in the cases. These practices, I believe show the making of shared experiences, and the making of common ground based on focused facilitation by memory institutions, individual and collective contributions, archival sources, and tools of memory, that afford the projects their collective status.

## 7.2.2 Methodologies of Engagement

### 7.2.2.1 *Relationships of Trust*

My analysis of the three cases underscores that issues of trust were instrumental, in settings where one of the few participation incentives to contribute personal stories was based on the reputations of “intermediaries”. In the case of the District Six Museum, I have documented active community mobilization networks that began in the 1980s, consistent reification of the social justice mission of the District Six Museum, and relationship building with community constituents as key contributory factors to establishing trust with community participants and donors. Interviewee A1s statement that “it’s the relationship that you build with people, that’s what makes our museum different ...”, and interviewee A4s observation that “sometimes people just need a place to come and talk” are important trust indicators. Interviewee A3s statement that “the donors are always respected” further reflects this dynamic engagement between the museum and its key constituents.

In the case of the Sunday Times Heritage Project, I have observed that SAHA and the Wits History Workshop took responsibility for recording personal testimonies as part of the research phases of the product-based resources that were made. In combination, both of these organizations have extended track records of expertise in working with personal and oral testimonies, and in the case of SAHA, solid relationships that underlie its archival development and freedom of information programs.

SADET, on the other hand, gave careful consideration to the constitution of its project board, who its core staff members would be, and entrusted interview responsibility to appropriate research teams. To illustrate this point, a senior member of

the project team, C2, was requested to be present in interviews with liberation struggle veterans and high-ranking officials of the apartheid government (C2). Interviewees C1 and C3 also emphasized the roles of board members in communicating a sense of the importance of participation to struggle veterans. They also emphasized SADET's presidential project status as a key participation incentive.

These issues of trust underscore the 'living memory' components of the projects. They have been contemplated in theories of memory, most particularly as a result of perceived discontinuities between those who experienced the events being recorded, public representations of recorded events or experiences (Confino 1997, Kansteiner 2002, Garuba 2007), and the ways in which collective memories are produced and by whom (Olick 1999, Feuchtwang 2000).

#### *7.2.2.2 Collaborative Production*

While the differences in the configuration, conceptualization and ideological underpinnings for each of my cases are clear, there is overlap in the extent to which they explore the utilization of collaborative production models and how these models can be implemented in exhibition-making, public memorial production and academic production endeavors. In addition to the widespread use of oral history methods, and the surfacing of 'hidden voices and stories', I note that the cases demonstrate concern with production methods and associated public impact models. With specific reference to *Digging Deeper*, these concerns are evident in the centrality of community consultations to research and collecting, content representation, and in the steps taken towards evaluating the exhibition's impact on targeted community constituents. In regard to the latter, the

feedback elicited through separate museum workshops with educators, artists, researchers, and donors were instrumental. This commitment is also given meaning in the museum's Conservation Management Plan in which one of the museum's "rules of engagement" is based on the idea of "an engaged public".

Moves to foster community collaboration are also visible in the SAHA-facilitated communications campaign of the Sunday Times Heritage Project. Team representatives from SAHA and the Wits History Workshop played leading roles in developing models for the production of community histories via high school educators and learners in eight schools. These models comprised of consulting official archival records to determine relevant themes for presentation to community reference groups in which the final themes were selected. The project also produced oral history training guides, and high school educators and learners received training in oral history methods. In contrast to apartheid era community history initiatives, these had the full sanction of provincial and national government education departments. On an institutional level, expertise was sourced from a host of organizations.

SADET, having identified its thematic and chronological foci at an early stage of the project, proceeded with a methodological route in which country wide research teams with representatives from all of the major universities undertook the research and writing for the volumes. The project also drew in selected international participants who were qualified to contribute country-based chapters on international solidarity against apartheid. This diverse authorship of chapter volumes underscores a collaborative approach.

I argue here that the projects were conceptualized to include as many intermediaries as possible, through the positioning of the project as facilitative rather selectively owned.

### *7.2.2.3 Producing Narratives*

All of the cases examined in my dissertation have dealt with the central question of narratives as frameworks for remembering, and as tools for memory representation. Garuba's (2007) assertion that "it is narratives that give voice to the artifacts that museums display" (p.129), and Wertsch's (2002) theoretical probing of narratives as "cultural tools" that can be both referential and dialogic, have guided my analysis of narrative production in the three cases.

In the District Six Museum Digging Deeper context, narratives of the memory of forced removals and displacement provide a venue for more specific memory practices. While the known association of District Six with forced removals provides an overarching narrative template, and a context for remembering, the museum's prioritization of many different perspectives means that some of its exhibition components do not tell a direct story of forced removals. Instead, there are aspects of the exhibition that place emphasis on the historical, social and cultural conditions in which forced removals occurred (such as living conditions and religious faith) and the social and cultural networks that forced removals destroyed. I note here the production of collective memories in reference to a wider narrative of forced removals. Collective memory production in the District Six Museum is therefore framed by and in reference to a known historical event for which the social, political and cultural impacts have been

inadequately documented by apartheid era records. It deepens coverage of this historical event by providing the venue for processes of collective memory making in relation to forced removals, that involves museum curators, researchers, and a network of community constituents. While forced removals can be considered as a ‘schematic narrative template’, or as a ‘generic memory template’, the exhibition process and design represents a diversion from guided narrative processes as is evident in the facilitation of community reference groups, the mix of personal and collective stories in the exhibition, and the series of evaluative exhibition focus groups held within a year of the Digging Deeper opening to the public. Noted here is an ongoing dialogue between different museum constituents and resources.

The Sunday Times Heritage Project engages with narratives of public heritage as a vehicle for reconciliation by drawing in a series of individual or sub-narratives intended to stimulate public dialogue and memories of specific periods. The installation of individual street memorials in the Sunday Times Heritage Project produces and profiles a series of newsworthy sub-narratives, predominantly based on life histories. These sub-narratives are deepened by a series of stand-alone informational ‘products’ and resources, the focus of a targeted production and dissemination campaign managed by the South African History Archive, that complement the street memorials. This involved the making and distribution of selected “products”, deepening the content by recording first-hand oral testimonies and through archival research, and by facilitating engagement in processes of memorial making with identified audiences. In its community memorial component, SAHA proposed a series of possible themes to the communities-in-focus, and

based on community support for particular themes, facilitated the production of community narratives.

The South African Democracy Education Trust chronicles the demise of apartheid through the actions of the organizations and “foot soldiers” that were part of South Africa’s resistance movement over a thirty-year period. While prioritizing the contributions of eyewitnesses, SADET demonstrates a less open-ended approach to producing narratives. Compared with an exhibitions framework, the possibilities are constrained by the format and stability of the medium of academic publications. Despite ‘limitations’ in how personal testimonies impacted on this narrative, they did so in ways that are unprecedented in South African memory making and historiography. The extent to which the publications engaged with personal testimonies is significant, as is evident in the first volume’s use of around 200 interviews, about 180 in volume two, and about 290 in volume four (Houston 2010, p.11). It is also true that SADET’s attention to academic rigor meant that the individual chapter narratives drew in a wide range of sources, where possible, that included primary documents from many different archives, theses and dissertations, court records, newspapers and periodicals, and other secondary source publications. This meant that personal narratives were valued alongside a wide range of other memory sources. The production of a separate volume of personal testimonies based on the life histories of participants also helps to extend narrative authorship, and acknowledge individual experiences, trauma and contributions within a ‘defeating apartheid’ framework. One also needs to consider the structure of the liberation movement in this kind of narrative analysis as a structure based on collective not individual struggles, and as a key shaping influence for the ways that stories of liberation

are told and re-told. SADET's overarching narrative framework of defeating apartheid has remained firmly in place throughout, but the production of six rather than the four volumes that were originally intended, a separate series on *South Africans Telling Their Stories* and current work on a series of popular history resources intended for high school learners indicates the project's willingness to expand its interpretations within the boundedness of an already broad narrative framework.

These are the specific patterns along which narratives for each of the cases have been developed and produced. The overarching frameworks of forced removals, reconciliation, and defeating apartheid align with the "schematic narrative templates" that in Wertsch's (2002) analysis provide the overarching criteria in which collective memory as "mediated action" would occur and sub-narratives would be produced.

Wertsch's (2002) identification of referential and dialogic narratives, and his notion of "schematic narrative templates" imply a top-down approach to narrative production. There are aspects of each of my cases that lend merit to Wertsch's (2002) analysis, particularly when the cases are considered in terms of their external contexts and the interests and/or political ideologies that inform the cases. I argue here that institutional structures are inherently top-down. I have observed that the cases I have looked at have utilized their abilities to facilitate or "provide a platform" for participation in narrative and memory production, and thus enhance the representational credibility of the projects.

The questions of which narratives are produced, by whom, and at what societal levels are questions that linger uncomfortably in South Africa's post-1990 memory landscape. Witz and Rassool (2008) call this a "politics of production", that "effectively

decentres the expertise of historians in the academy” (p.11). This decentering is evident in the valorization of “new” memory genres, and the possibilities for production that these genres promote.

#### *7.2.3.2 Mediating Impact*

Specific methods and mechanisms are employed by each of the projects for achieving their intended outcomes. While not assessing impact as such, these methods and mechanisms shed light on specific activities that informed participation, representation, representativeness, and public engagement. In the case of the District Six Museum, I have noted that the museum’s primary constituents are its donors, and that the Digging Deeper Exhibition in particular was designed based on donor feedback and support, and as a platform for former residents to participate in the creation and narration of the District Six story. By creating a physical community hub that contains many traces of meaning and significance, the museum has therefore mobilized interest and participation.

In the Sunday Times Heritage Project, the memorials and its’ derivative products extend over much wider content areas, geographic areas and time coverage. As a project with a limited institutional lifespan, the project’s center is not as evident as in the case of the District Six Museum. Instead, the project engaged with many relevant interest groups in many different localities. The resources produced by SAHA provide possibilities for extending engagement with the Sunday Times memorials.

The South African Democracy Education Trust with its primary academic sector concerns was designed to impact on the academy, and in combination with its

methodological focus on struggle participants, it took steps to meet academic peer review and publishing criteria.

### 7.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARCHIVAL THINKING AND PRACTICE

Based on my analysis of the cases, it is apparent that different archival genres created in different contexts contributed to, but were not the only features in the making of the projects. Archives primarily served as sources. As institutions, archives fulfilled a service role. Not surprisingly, given the dire state of a profession that has not clearly re-articulated its role in the post-apartheid memory landscape, the “transformation of archivistic activity” (Lalu 2008) underway in the cases has not been adequately engaged with by archival institutions. In the remainder of this section, I identify some “archival” themes along which this engagement could proceed.

#### 7.3.1 Participatory Archives

In recent years, archivists have engaged with the concept of “participatory archives” in different ways and in different contexts. All of these approaches offer theoretical and practical insights on the potential of archival institutions to extend its social reach by providing platforms for users and contributors. Huvila (2008) discusses user participation in two digital repositories, looking at how embedded digital technologies can enable an active collaboration between users, content experts and archivists in the creation and management of digital archives. Similarly, Flinn (2010) looks at the processes of “collaborative production” that can be applied to promote online

archival ‘communities of practice’. Flinn notes that despite the problems of participatory methodologies, particularly as manifested in selection decisions,

“ [that] the arguments for considering these methods seriously as means of systematically capturing diverse and divergent views, particularly in relation to specific collections, and perhaps with regard to potential application in an online environment, should not be dismissed” (Flinn 2010, p.47).

Archival users are at the center of Huvila’s work, while Flinn not only emphasizes the capturing of “different community responses to ... digitized materials” through the UK-based *Moving Here* project, but incorporates archival contributors into the focus of such an approach (Flinn 2010, p.47). Shilton and Srinivasan (2007) discuss the concept of participatory archival appraisal and how this might inform the development of representative collections by involving communities in the appraisal, arrangement and description of archives through facilitated community discussions on which collections are most valuable, the origins and nature of authorship, and the physical ordering of archival materials (2007, p.98).

Each of the cases offers extensive insight on the three elements in the participatory archiving process modeled by Shilton and Srinivasan (2007): appraisal, provenance, and ordering. The appraisal process, according to the authors, is a process of discussion based on community involvement that addresses value to the community, the nature of a record, and identifies narratives to be preserved. Provenance includes a process of reaching consensus on authorship and creation, and why and how the records were created. Ordering addresses the creation of an organizational model, how records are interrelated, and how relationships can be described.

Aspects of this model resonate strongly with the Digging Deeper exhibition-making context in which the facilitated reference groups with community constituents

and the prioritization of donor contributions helped to identify areas of value, exposed the value of non-traditional records, and helped to shape the museum's narratives.

Additionally all of the cases provide a broad but productive lens for understanding why and how records were created, understanding processes of authorship and creation, and understanding the relationships between records. The attention given to these issues in the making of the exhibition, memorials, and academic volumes is a plus for archival institutionalization of the tangible outputs that emerged, and provides the potential for a solid base for archives to work from in sustaining the networks of people that were mobilized in the creation of these projects, and in supplementing their collections. In agreement with Huvila (2008) and Flinn (2010), this should not exclude the possibilities of using digital technologies.

### 7.3.2 Documentation Strategies

In archives literature, documentation strategy is associated with acquisition strategy, and systematized forms of archival appraisal (Booms 1987, p.72). However, as noted further by Booms the need for archival selection based on systematized appraisal techniques emerged from a situation where “the volume of material with the potential of forming part of the documentary heritage began to exceed the limits of what could be physically incorporated into that documentary heritage” (Booms 1987, p.74). In other words, there was overabundance. Notably, Booms' focus is on public records, and by elevating history as an empirical discipline, the author declines the relevance of archival selection based on future research and informational value. Helen Samuels (1991) has extended the concept of “documentation strategy” as a tool for archival selection, writing that it is a plan “launched by an individual or institution to remedy the poor

documentation for a specific sector of society (Samuels 1991, p.126). In addition to including archives that are outside of public record systems, Samuels is also of the belief that,

“the institution that launches the effort need not be an archival repository, and the prime mover does not have to be an archivist”, and could include “creators (legislators, ministers, scientists, administrators), users (historical researchers, lawyers, architects), and custodians of the records (archivists, librarians, museum staff” (Samuels 1991, p.126).

There are elements of the Digging Deeper exhibition, STHP and SADET that align with this documentation strategy approach. Instead of responding to over-abundance, the documentation decisions made in each of the cases are premised by the need to include the perspectives of people who were historically excluded from accounts in apartheid-era records, a situation in which public records demonstrate a deliberate bias. The oral histories and personal archives that have been captured cover significant gaps in archival records of the same periods, people and events. For instance, in the case of SADET, interviewees highlighted the 1960s period as one in which political activity and repression seriously affected the ability of the liberation movement to systematically record its political activity. Quite simply, this would have been done at high risk with dire consequences.

These considerations make the documentation strategy a valuable concept for thinking about further engagement with and by established archival institutions. Specifically it provides a framework for dealing with known and identified gaps, and the fragmented status of post-apartheid archives.

### 7.3.3 Considering Community Archives Within The Framework Of The National Archival System

Each of the cases covered in my dissertation are representations of archival activity that is taking place outside of formal archival systems. And as noted by an interviewee in the District Six Museum, the “founding impetus for archives was not an institutionalizing one” (A4). Archival responsibilities in these contexts are therefore in question, and have been based on individual institutional choices. In light of the primary motivations for each of the projects – redressing historical imbalances, social justice, supporting external democratic processes such as land claims, new forms and new actors in historical production, influencing public discourse, promoting reconciliation – I would argue that each of the cases have an archival responsibility to either engage with the official archival establishment, or take full responsibility for developing an archive outside of this framework. Both of these approaches are evident in the work of SAHA. The District Six Museum, through processes of creating and displaying its permanent exhibition, *Digging Deeper*, created an archival account of the District Six story that is not comprehensively documented in official archival records. The STHP went through similar processes in the production of its radio program series. SADET created an oral history archive earmarked for transfer to the National Archives. Each of the cases separately and in combination have therefore gone a long way towards reducing the current bias of official archival records, and mechanisms for its inclusion in the national archival system, as well as the responsibilities of independent heritage projects, need to be better understood and acted upon.

## 7.4 SUMMATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In my dissertation I have underscored that representational concerns are central to the production, use, and transmission of collective memories. These representational concerns raise the questions of who facilitates or mediates collective memories, what/who is being represented or excluded, what platforms for representative-ness are being made available, and what resources are available to sustain these representations. I note that these questions have been elevated in the context of social and political transformation in post-apartheid South Africa, and by the engagement with recent lived experiences that memory production in post-apartheid South Africa calls for. The three case studies examined in my dissertation have responded to these concerns. I note that in varying degrees, and influenced by the genre of transmission, they have instituted practices based on trust, collaborative production models, they have engaged with the complexities of collective narrative production, and highlighted the need for more focused public impact studies. These practices have demonstrated profound implications for the creation and recovery of archives in post-apartheid South Africa, influenced research and interpretation of official archives, and necessitate a reconceptualization of what constitutes credible archival sources.

My dissertation acknowledges but does not delve further into the affective magnitude of memories of peoples' experiences under apartheid. This, I believe, raises significant questions on how traumatic memories are captured, represented, archived and interpreted in processes of memory reconstruction and recovery. Can trauma be institutionalized, and are there particular circumstances that should govern institutional access? These questions I would argue are pertinent for records of the TRC, the personal

testimonies of political imprisonment, and series' of other personal testimonies that reflect on painful experiences.

I am also interested in a related research trajectory of how the three cases that I have examined in my dissertation go beyond the relationships between memory sources, producers and consumers. While a number of impact indicators have been identified in this study, theoretical interpretations of memory making and representation will benefit from focused evaluations of impact on identified target audiences and the public. This, I believe, will address questions of the ability of collective memories to persist over time.

Finally, the literature will benefit further from theoretical frameworks that interrogate the ability of archives to respond to mediated memory representation, and archival representations as one in a series of memory representations.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Protocol for Semi-Structured Interviews

The questions below were intended to serve as guidelines for interviews. There were variations based on the nature of the project.

- 1) Can you describe the project and the role that you played in it?
- 2) Can you talk about the motivations behind this particular production?
  - (i) How was the production influenced by broader social-cultural-political conditions?
  - (ii) Who were the major sponsors?
  - (iii) How would you characterize the outcomes envisaged for your work?
  - (iv) What influenced your choice of media?
- 3) What, in your view, are some of the major impacts of the project? What would you like its impact to be in the foreseeable future?
- 4) Can you outline the different steps in the production process, and what these entailed?
- 5) Do you have a sense of how the project has been received by the public / its intended audiences so far?
  - (i) Did it give rise to a particular form/s of public engagement?
  - (ii) Are there particular activities surrounding its public reception that you would like to talk about?
  - (iii) How was it received in the media?
  - (iv) Can you think of examples of positive and negative media reviews, or instances in which there has been discussion of the issues raised in the project?
- 6) Who were the main target audiences?
  - (i) Can you estimate the audience size?
  - (ii) How diverse do you perceive the audience to be (geography, age, other demographic factors)?
- 7) What kind of distribution strategy / strategies were used (short, medium, and longer-term)?
  - (i) Would you say that the distribution mechanisms encouraged interaction and engagement by audiences?
  - (ii) Did you enter into any partnerships that might support wider dissemination and impact?
  - (iii) Are there other reasons that motivated you to establish partnerships?
- 8) Were any derivative works produced off of your main production, for example, educational usage? If so, was this envisaged as part of your distribution strategy?
- 9) Is there a production website, and if so, do you have information about the number of website hits, or any other kind of analysis of web usage?
- 10) What were the major sources of research used for the production?

- (i) Did you experience any limitations in accessing / using particular kinds of sources? If so, can you explain?
- 11) How did the project engage the use of archival records?
- (i) Which archives and archival collections contributed to your research?
  - (ii) How were they used in the final production?
  - (iii) What influenced your selection of archival materials?
  - (iv) Did you view these archival sources as authoritative?
  - (v) Or did you have to find ways of verifying the information contained in archival sources?
  - (vi) Based on the previous two questions, did you have to re-interpret archival sources? If so, can you describe the process for doing this?
- 12) To what extent did the project create an archive?
- (i) What is its current status, and what is envisaged for its long-term management and preservation?
  - (ii) Are there issues that might restrict its accessibility and use in the future?
  - (iii) Do you think that there might be any particular expectations from those who contributed to the archive?
  - (iv) How will the project's institutional records be managed in the future?
- 13) Is there anything else that you would like to add?

## Appendix 2: Interviewee Consent Form

### Consent to Participate in a Research Project (Interview)

#### **Draft Title: Archives and Social Memory in Post-1990 South Africa**

Principal Investigator: Anthea Josias, PhD Candidate, School of Information, University of Michigan  
Faculty Adviser: Margaret Hedstrom, Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan

This research is aimed at understanding processes of memory-making in post-1990 South Africa, their implications for archives, and the ways in which such processes help to re-conceptualize the nature of archives.

If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will take the form of an interview ranging between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview will include a series of questions on: motivations for your work; public reception; distribution; derivative works; research sources; and, the archival dimensions of your project. Additional clarification may be sought from you via telephone or email.

The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed. Although research results will be published in my dissertation and subsequent research projects, you will not be identified in any papers or reports without your explicit permission. Please check the appropriate box below to indicate whether you consent to having your name included in my dissertation and subsequent research reports emanating from the interview.

- Please exclude my name from the dissertation and subsequent research projects.
- I have no objections to the inclusion of my name in the dissertation and subsequent research projects.

Interviewees will get no direct benefits from this research. It is anticipated that this research will contribute to an understanding of the current status of social memory development in South Africa, the placement of archives in a bigger social landscape, and to emerging research streams in the South African heritage sector.

All of your information and interview responses will be kept securely by the researcher, and will not be made available for any other purposes except for those specified in this agreement. Data recordings and notes will not be identifiable by personal names.

No risks are foreseen as a result of your participation in the study.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refrain from answering certain questions. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early, all data collected from you will be destroyed and omitted from my dissertation and any subsequent research.

#### **Contact information**

If you have questions about this research, you may contact: Anthea Josias, School of Information, University of Michigan, 105 S.State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Tel: +734-355-6323; Email: [antheaj@umich.edu](mailto:antheaj@umich.edu), OR, Professor Margaret Hedstrom, School of Information, University of Michigan, 105 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Tel: +734-647-3582; Email: [hedstrom@umich.edu](mailto:hedstrom@umich.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences, 540 E Liberty, Ste 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, (734) 936-0933 [or toll free, (866) 936-0933], [irbhsbs@umich.edu](mailto:irbhsbs@umich.edu).

#### **Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in this study that will be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Information) in the University of Michigan. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records.

*I agree to participate in the study.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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