“For Them It’s Different, They Make a Statement”

Ways of Dealing with the Past
Among the Post-Apartheid Generation
Afrikaners in Cape Town

Tommie Leisink

Master’s Thesis in Cultural Anthropology and Non-Western Sociology
August 20, 2012

Student number: 5651158
E-mail: tommieleisink@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof.dr. P.L. Geschiere
Evaluation: Dr. F.E. Guadeloupe / Dr. A. Gandhi
“For Them It’s Different, They Make a Statement”

Ways of Dealing with the Past Among the Post-Apartheid Generation Afrikaners in Cape Town

MA Thesis Tommie Leisink
Abstract

When in 1994 apartheid ended in South Africa, the social position of Afrikaners in the country changed radically. In the decades that followed a new generation that never (consciously) experienced apartheid had to find ways to deal with the stigma that rested on Afrikanerdom. In the music scene certain developments took place that were very important in this process. Especially the Afrikaans band Fokofpolisiekar, which nationally broke through in 2004, has been very influential. The members of the band confronted the conservative Afrikaans community and the rest of the nation with their position in society: Afrikaans, but not associated with apartheid. They opened a new debate about Afrikanerdom and paved the way for many other Afrikaans bands and artists to participate. In this thesis I look at the influence of the music scene on the way in which the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners deal with the past of Afrikanerdom, and draw two conclusions. The first is that the interpretation of the message of Fokofpolisiekar is place-bound and time-bound. In Bloemfontein, known as a conservative Afrikaans stronghold, I witnessed a discrepancy between the views of Fokofpolisiekar and its audience. Whereas Fokofpolisiekar had tried to move away from traditional values of Afrikanerdom, the audience in Bloemfontein, almost ten years after the break-through of the band, flirted with those traditional values. The second conclusion is that the influence of the music scene and the broader associated creative field on the processes of dealing with the past has become visible in the lives of young Afrikaners in Cape Town. A scene has emerged in which “creatives”, as they often call themselves, feel they can embrace certain aspects of Afrikanerdom without being associated with apartheid.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................... v

**Introduction** .................................................................................. 1
Expectations of the Field: Zef .......................................................... 1
Research Question, Population and Methodology ......................... 3
Theoretical Framework ...................................................................... 8
Outline............................................................................................... 14

1 **Facing the Past**............................................................................ 16
1994 – 2003: Alienation................................................................. 17
2003 – 2007: The Movement............................................................ 21
2007 – Now: The Wave is Breaking.................................................. 28
Conclusion................................................................................. 33

2 **Paradox of the Post-Apartheid Generation** .......................... 35
“Fokof Will Play the Shit out of That Rugby Match” ...................... 36
Different Time, Different Place .......................................................... 43
“Francois is Fokken Bellville” ........................................................... 45
Conclusion................................................................................. 48

3 **Being Tolerant or Being Tolerated?** ........................................ 50
Territorialization............................................................................ 52
Pride .............................................................................................. 55
Hypocrisy........................................................................................ 60
Tolerance....................................................................................... 64
Conclusion................................................................................. 67

4 **Conclusion** ............................................................................... 69
Post-Apartheid Melancholia............................................................... 69
Labeling the Network...................................................................... 72
Something New .............................................................................. 75
References..................................................................................... 77
Acknowledgements

First of all I want to thank all the people in Cape Town that let me into their lives and talked with me. Francois and his band, the people in The Shack and all the others that I encountered on my daily trips through the city, but most of all my two friends who in this thesis go by the pseudonyms Ryan and Leon. They were friendly and helpful from the beginning and I would not have been able to write this thesis without them. A lot of thanks go to all the others in South Africa with whom I discussed my research and who helped me find my way around, especially Roger van Wyk, Diane Coetzer, Gifford Peché, Wendy Verwey and my flat mates. I want to thank my supervisor Peter Geschiere, who showed interest in my research from the first moment, for helping me in all the stages of my master. Not only did he give me critical feedback and good ideas, I always walked out of his office full of optimism. I want to thank Peter Leisink, Anna Teske and Suzanne Faber for their comments on earlier drafts of this thesis. Lastly I cannot thank my parents enough for supporting me in so many ways during my entire study.
Introduction

Expectations of the field: Zef

Some months before I boarded the airplane to Cape Town for three months of field research about white Afrikaans youth I found a video online. It was called “Zef Side” and introduced me to a South African Hip-Hop Rave formation called Die Antwoord. It presented three people. One slim, tall man in his mid thirties with ill made gang tattoos all over his body, two golden teeth, a pair of Pink Floyd boxer shorts, a tank top with a huge Yin-Yang symbol on it and short hair that was shaven bald on the sides with a thin rat-like mullet at the back: Ninja. At his side was Yo-landi Visser, very small and in her late twenties, wearing few clothes that highlighted the curves of her body, but with a look in her eyes that told you not to mess with her. Her hair-do was the female variant of Ninja’s: bleached, short at the front and the sides and a mullet at the back. DJ Hi-Tek was the third member of Die Antwoord, a rather fat young man with an American Football jersey and a bandana depicting a marijuana leaf in his hair who did not say anything but just sat there.

I thought that what I had found was a group of lower working class Afrikaners that came from the suburbs of Cape Town. Bothasig, which was the particular suburb in which the video was shot, was a social renting neighborhood that had been constructed during apartheid in order to accommodate the working class. In general the Northern suburbs were inhabited by Afrikaners whereas the somewhat wealthier Southern suburbs lodged predominantly English South Africans. But there was something strange about them, they did not at all correlate with my image of the typical suburban Afrikaner that I had in mind. Ninja said: “DJ Hi-Tek makes (...) like next level beats and basically like, I got some serious like, gangster skill you know on the mark”. Though he came from a white Afrikaner suburban background
he talked with a heavy colored Afrikaans accent and claimed to be gangster, a characteristic that you would expect to find in the Cape Flats, an area that was designated for the colored and black community during apartheid and still remained like that today to a large extent. I found it an interesting point of departure, for certainly this indicated a radically different identity among a new generation of Afrikaners.

They called the style or the subculture that they belonged to “Zef”. They were young people of lower class background that had not experienced apartheid, or at least not consciously, and were not bound by categorizations of the old regime. They moved beyond and across boundaries of race, culture, language and the geographical borders that had been constructed along those categories. I found it fascinating how all these different influences could blend into one life-style so smoothly. But the more I knew about this collective, the more confused I became. I learned that Ninja was actually not Afrikaans but an English South African from Johannesburg whose real name was Watkin Tudor Jones. He had been in several other collectives with completely different images. Though Yolandi Visser was Afrikaans she did not come from Bothasig either, but from a small village in the Eastern Cape. DJ Hi-Tek only operated behind the scenes; the young man in the clip was in reality somebody else who had nothing to do with Die Antwoord. Though they presented Zef as a phenomenon that had naturally developed in South Africa, it was really an identity that they had consciously invented themselves. I wanted to know how this Zef life-style influenced the lives of the young Afrikaners, and into what direction the new Afrikaner identity was developing.

But when I arrived I was surprised and disappointed to find out that Die Antwoord was by far not as popular in Cape Town as they were in the United States and Europe. They were a typical case of “love it or hate it”. Many people knew them, some really liked them, but a lot of people criticized them heavily. I understood this was the case everywhere in South Africa, though they were slightly more appreciated in Johannesburg. The reason for the heavy critique was partly the shocking nature of their image – with nudity, obscenity and an enormous amount of swear words – but mostly their ideology. Two videos that they posted on their personal website summarize the aspects of their ideology that people did not agree with.

In one of them Ninja sat on a bed and talked into the camera, expressing his manager’s concerns about the reception of a new song. He was afraid that people in the United States would not appreciate it because of the repeated use of the word ‘faggot’. ‘Ninja wanted “to set the record straight once and for all” and explained why people should not be offended. “Here in South Africa,” he said, “people aren’t so pumped up about the use of certain words. For
instance in South Africa a white guy will say to a black guy: ‘Yo wassup\(^1\) my nigger’ and the black guy will be like: ‘Eey wassup my nigger’ and no one freaks out or anything. That’s why they say South Africa is the rainbow nation. Because you get different people of different colors or sexual style or whatever, and we’re all coming together as one”. He put his hands together and intertwined his fingers while saying these last words. In another video Ninja commented on Zef and the South African society: “In the past you ask someone from the overseas ‘what’s the first word comes to mind when you think of South Africa’ they go: ‘apartheid’. But now, we’re in the fucking future now and you ask fucking people from the overseas, ‘what’s the fucking first word when you think of South Africa’, you know the fucking deal what they’re gonna say: ‘Zef’, you know”.

In these clips Die Antwoord pretends that the South African rainbow nation lives together in harmony and that there are no tensions between different races and sexualities. But whereas some interpreted Die Antwoord’s perception of the reality around them as artistic freedom or an attempt to build bridges between different peoples and cultures, most people regarded their style as fake, opportunistic and as a cultural and economical exploitation of colored and black (thus disadvantaged) people by white (thus advantaged) people. I went to Cape Town to look for a new Afrikaner identity, but I soon realized that I would not find one clear new identity. Die Antwoord literally claimed that they were “in the future”, but it seemed as though people were not ready to be in the future. Most people disagreed with the way in which Die Antwoord dealt with, ignored or even benefited from the fundamental problems of society\(^2\). I changed my research objective. Instead of looking for a new Afrikaner identity, I decided I would look for the way in which young Afrikaners deal with the past, still focusing on the role that music played in this process.

**Research Question, Population and Methodology**

I was disappointed that I did not find what I had expected, since I had been preparing myself for several months. I had become fascinated by a phenomenon that turned out not to exist to the extent I had expected it to. The good thing, however, was that my new research subject

\(^1\) ‘Wassup’ is slang derived from ‘what is up’.

\(^2\) The image and content of Die Antwoord is much more complicated than I make it seem here, but I do not have the space to elaborate on that in this thesis. There are many points of view about their purpose and their actions. Ninja and Yo-landi Visser claim their music should not be analyzed intellectually but should just be experienced (Coetzer 2012: 40). Some people argue that what they say in different songs and videos is contradictory, so by drawing a conclusion from only two video’s I run the risk of being criticized for making an unnuanced argument.
appeared to be quite relevant among young Afrikaners in Cape Town. Not only were many dealing with the issue of the past, these issues played a very important role in the local and national music scene as well. During my preparations I had stumbled upon another band, but had not realized how enormously popular they were in South Africa. They were a punk-rock band called Fokofpolisiekar that sang in Afrikaans. They were from Cape Town and via a series of contacts that started with a colleague of mine at the Tropical Theater in Amsterdam, I contacted their manager. During the process of getting in touch with the band I started to understand how popular they were. Many of the young Afrikaners that I met were fan, and so it came that I had found a new focus.

Fokofpolisiekar started out in 2003 as five men in their early twenties who came from Bellville, another northern suburb of Cape Town, even more Afrikaans than Bothasig. Instead of ignoring the problems that they were confronted with on a daily basis, they faced them and expressed the feelings of anger and frustration that were caused by these problems in their music. Their problems mostly concerned their own background, the conservative Afrikaner community. The members of Fokofpolisiekar found themselves in a situation in which they could not relate to the environment in which they grew up, but at the same time they felt they were not accepted by the rest of society because of the legacies of Afrikanerdom that stigmatized them, being Afrikaans as well. These problems turned out to be felt by a large part of the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners in South Africa, and within no-time they became immensely popular. My research question became:

How does the post-apartheid generation of Afrikaners in Cape Town deal with the legacies of Afrikanerdom and what is the role of the music scene in this process?

In the conceptualization of my research question I made a distinction between the producers and the consumers of music. One part of my research focused on the vision of the musicians and the way they expressed this vision in their music, the other part focused on the way in which the consumers of this music interpreted the music and implemented the vision of the musicians in their daily lives. I situated myself right were the producers and the consumers interacted with each other. The South African alternative music scene is relatively small and many famous musicians are easily approachable. As a result, there were places in Cape Town

---

3 I will use the word conservative often in this thesis to indicate a particular mentality. This is not without problems, for conservative can mean many things. I still use it because my informants used it all the time. It refers to ideologies behind the apartheid regime such as, “values of God-fearing Calvinism, (…) the importance of the nuclear family, heterosexuality and above all, the importance of whiteness” (Vestergaard 2001: 20-21).
which both producers and consumers of alternative Afrikaans music frequented. Many of them knew each other from high-school, church, sport clubs or just because they had lived in the same neighborhood. It was sometimes difficult to make the distinction between the two parties, since some of the consumers also made music and were in the process of becoming famous, thus becoming established producers.

Vestergaard, who conducted field research to Afrikaner identity in Cape Town in the late nineties, recognizes what he calls “alternative Afrikanerdom”, which can be found among young artists. According to him, “the ‘alternative Afrikaners’ today claim to be more a collection of individualists than a subculture as such” (2001: 34). It is not entirely clear who Vestergaard considers to be “alternative Afrikaners”, so I cannot tell with certainty to what extent his research population was comparable to mine. In any case I take a different stance and do not consider my informants “a collection of individualists”⁴. I will not speak of a fixed group, for the boundaries were too porous and the connections too dynamic. However, my informants associated themselves with the music scene to the extent that it played an important part in their sense of belonging. I therefore consider them in the first place as part of what I will call “the scene”. In the third chapter I will elaborate on the implications of belonging to this scene. In the conclusion I will pay more attention to the sociological characteristics of it.

The most important producer of music in my research was Fokofpolisiekar. The reason was partly the fact that they, as I mentioned before, dealt with the past of Afrikanerdom, a very relevant issue for many young Afrikaners. A second reason was their accessibility. Like almost my entire research population, they lived in or close to the city center of Cape Town and they were willing to participate in my research. But the most important reason was the fact that the influence of Fokofpolisiekar considerably surpassed any other Afrikaner band that dealt with the legacies of Afrikanerdom. This will become clear in the first chapter, in which I elaborate on the visions and the influence of the band. I will not mention many other bands in this thesis, because, as I will argue in the same chapter, all Afrikaner bands owe their existence to a large extent to Fokofpolisiekar and their popularity, Die Antwoord included.

The developments in the music scene as set in motion by Fokofpolisiekar went hand in hand with developments in the broader creative field in Cape Town. The consumers of the

⁴ My argumentation builds on the – sometimes referred to as revolutionary – events that took place in the middle of the past decade. The field research of Vestergaard took place in the late nineties, which could be an explanation for the different conclusions that we draw.
group consisted largely of people that had a creative occupation or study. Some examples of their occupations were (amateur) musicians, photographers, graphic designers, fashion designers, tattoo artists, music critics or music technicians. Some of them managed to live from their creative occupation, but there were plenty of others that did not. Those people had other jobs at the side which were often of temporary nature. For example, several of them had a job in a bar or in a shop. As these were often jobs with low qualifications the people in the scene did not have a lot of money most of the time. When necessary they helped each other in times of need by offering a place to stay, a ride, drinks or even the making of a tattoo, as I saw once. Many of them seemed content with their somewhat bohemian life-style and were proud of it, as it characterized their belonging to the scene.

There were also people who had studied something completely different, like computer science or advertisement (the latter was surprisingly popular among young Afrikaners) and made music for a hobby, yet often with the ambition to grow professional. Being creative was thus loosely defined, and the people that spent less time in creative activities could still be part of the scene, which received its image mostly from the people who did spent most of their time in creative activities. A majority of the scene was Afrikaans; the rest was mostly of English South African descent. My important informants were all Afrikaans, though I talked to and conducted a few interviews with English South Africans as well. Almost all of the people in the scene were white. Many of the Afrikaners came from Bellville, the suburb where Fokofpolisiekar came from as well. This, in combination with the fact that Fokofpolisiekar had indirectly had such an important role in the creation of the scene, meant that it was often considered an Afrikaner scene.

Next to the people that were part of the scene I had about ten informants who were not part of it, and obviously a lot of conversations with people who I encountered in my daily non-research-related activities, who were in most cases not part of the scene either. Especially those ten informants were important as a control group. I compared the data that I gathered from the people within the scene with the data that I gathered from those people outside the scene in order to compare my findings and enable myself to analyze them validly. These people had a similar sociological profile, representing the same age categories, races, ethnicities and came from a similar economic background. Their occupation, study, the places that they frequented, the people that they spent time with and some of their interests – in short, all that characterized the scene – were different.
I labeled my research population the “post-apartheid generation”. Though apartheid is officially abolished for 18 years now, I defined the post-apartheid generation more broadly than just the people that were born after the political transition. I based it on the age in which people enter adolescence and start to think consciously about their own identity, and focused on people of the ages 15 to 33 (the latter being the age of the people who were 15 when apartheid was abolished). The difficulty is obviously that not everybody enters that stage at the same age. In the field though, this was never a very big problem. The oldest member of Fokofpolisiekar is now 34 years old, and like most of the people around that age, they strongly feel that they have nothing to do with the apartheid era. In the end, that was the most important criterion. The majority of my informants however were in between 23 and 30 years old.

Most of my data were gathered in semi-structured interviews that I conducted with my informants – producers and consumers of music within the scene and the people outside the scene – and conversations and observations that I made while doing participant observation. The main activity in the lives of the people in the scene, and especially within the context of social interaction among members of the scene, was spending time in The Shack, a bar close to the center of Cape Town, where they drank beers or Brandewyn en Coke (Brandy and Coke) and talked, dynamically reinforcing connections with (potential) members of the scene. The Shack was therefore the stage to much of my fieldwork. In addition to that we regularly assisted concerts of local and/or nationally famous artists (although none of Fokofpolisiekar, as they did not perform in Cape Town while I was there), some of which took place in the Mercury, a live venue next to The Shack. I did see Fokofpolisiekar perform outside Cape Town. I went with them on a seven day trip (11 including driving days) via Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria. On three of those days Fokofpolisiekar played a concert that I attended, and I spent time with them before and after the concerts.

In order to research the influence of the scene on the lives of the people in it, I wanted to make a comparison between two people, one of whom was part of the scene and one of whom was not. I therefore performed two case studies. Ryan van der Merwe was my informant who was part of the scene. My choice to focus on him was only logical to me. He had established a position right at the core of the scene. He knew an enormous amount of people, which meant that he could also reflect on other people’s stories and their position within the scene, which in turn provided me with a better understanding of his position in the

---

5 Already from 1990 on the transition to the first democratic elections started, including the release of Nelson Mandela from Robbeneiland where he had been imprisoned for 27 years.
scene. In addition to that his profile contained all the characteristics that most people’s profile only partly contained. He was Afrikaans and was raised in Bellville. Though with his 25 years he was younger than the members of Fokofpolisiekar, he had known them from high school, already before they became famous. He was the front man of a band that was doing quite well in Cape Town, and though he could not make a living from his musical activities yet he considered himself a musician. Lastly, but not unimportantly, Ryan liked to have me around and was tireless in inviting me to places, which made it possible for me to perform a case study on him.

It was more difficult to find an informant who well represented the people who were not part of the scene. The reason for this is that instead of looking for certain characteristics, I had to look for the absence of certain characteristics. The people who were not part of the scene were rather diverse in their interests, occupations etc. However, I decided that, since my research focus was on the scene, the alternative interests and activities of key informant outside the scene did not matter, as long as they were different from the people within the scene. My choice fell upon Leon Fourie for several reasons. First of all his economic situation resembled that of Ryan, which was the case for most of my non-scene informants, but not for all of them. Secondly, I had naturally gotten into a close relationship with Leon right from the start, and I noticed that he started feeling more comfortable to talk about the issues that I was interested in. As this was not always the case for the people outside the scene – which is in itself an interesting point that I will return to in my analysis – I felt that I should take this opportunity. Chapter three of this thesis will be based on a comparison between the case studies on Ryan and Leon.

*Theoretical Framework*

South Africa has for a long time been a case of interest worldwide, both in the academic and the journalistic field. Up until the abolition of apartheid it was an interesting case as the last of the former colonies with a white minority rule. Worldwide critical eyes focused on the developments in this situation that many had not expected to last for so long. After the abolition the attention remained, now focusing on the transitional process and the attempts to move on. The Truth and Reconciliation commission, new political dynamics, the upcoming black middle class or the black lower class stuck in the ghettos have been and are still being analyzed extensively. As for the white and especially the white Afrikaans communities, there have been publications and documentations but the majority of them portrayed the extreme
cases that do not fit in the ideal of the rainbow nation. They focused on phenomena such as the white farmers on the countryside who are being killed – possibly with racial motives, white poverty which is growing again supposedly due to a reversed apartheid policy or organizations such as the Afrikaner Weerstands Beweging (AWB) and the Orania movement which aim for an Afrikaner homeland (Vestergaard 2001: 32).

But there is little attention to the cases that do not represent extremes; the white Afrikaners that do not support apartheid, that try to blend in with the rest of society, trying to make a living in an urban environment. There have been some comparative studies of the socio-economic position of (young) whites with that of other races, but there has hardly been qualitative research that focused on the experiences of whites. Though the music scene as such has gained more attention in South Africa as well as abroad in the past years, the influence of the music scene on the young generation of whites is also relatively understudied, especially from an anthropological perspective. Perhaps the lean coverage is due to the dynamic and unique situation that has been created in this moment in time – 18 years, or one generation, after apartheid – and the rapid developments in the music scene.

In order to understand the way in which the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners deals with the legacies of Afrikanerdom, these legacies must first be defined. In 2003 the Afrikaans historian Giliomee wrote the substantial and critically acclaimed biography “The Afrikaners”. It is mainly from this book that I have drawn four elements that I regard the pillars of Afrikaner identity as it has been constructed during the past century: land, language, religion and race. The history of Afrikaners is a relatively recent one. Only in the beginning of the past century did the Boers and urbanized non-English European settlers assimilate into what they started calling Afrikaners. They built forth on older Boer values and consciously constructed a shared identity in reaction to English oppression. The four pillars can be seen as a framework within which to understand the background of my research population. Jansen, who was assigned in 2000 as the first black dean at the University of Pretoria argues in his book about his experiences there, that if there is one people for whom communal identity plays an important role, it is the Afrikaners:

More than any other group, the Afrikaner child is a product of an intense set of closed circle interactions that establish and reinforce identity, memory, and knowledge of the past. This is still a culturally cohesive

---

6 Boer is the Afrikaans word for farmer. In the course of time the word became the ethnomical name for all non-British farmers of European descent, and has therefore been integrated into the English language. Since I write in English I will use the English plural: Boers, except when it is part of an Afrikaans word or sentence, in which case the plural is Boere.
formation of people bound together closely through ties of history, language, culture, and struggle. The lines of transmission for knowledge therefore run much more linearly than in any other social grouping, such as English-speaking white South Africans or any one of the black communities in the country (2009: 70).

In order to understand the heritage of Afrikaners that Jansen argues to be so strongly present in every generation, and from which I have defined the four pillars, it is important to know a little about their history.

The first Dutch settlers arrived in the Cape – where Cape Town is now situated – in 1652. The reason for their settlement was not to colonize the interior but to provide the passing ships of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) with fresh supplies on their way to Asia. But soon the burghers, as the settlers were called, wanted to be freed from the authorities of the VOC (Giliomee 2003: 1). In order to do so they expanded slowly from the Cape into the land. They encountered native tribes and it was extremely hard to survive in this wilderness. The isolated state in which they moved resulted in a lifestyle that started to resemble more and more that of the primitive tribes that they felt so superior to. When – due for the most part to the rise of Napoleon in France and his invading the Dutch Republic – the power of the VOC became less at the end of the 18th century, the British colonized the Cape permanently in 1806. As many burghers had disconnected themselves from the VOC and from Europe and stood alone, they were no match for the British Imperial forces.

Certain rules and regulations by the British resulted in a thorough discontent from the side of the burghers. Especially the gelykstelling (social leveling) of blacks with whites – even though it hardly changed anything in practice – went against their principles. A feeling of racial superiority was present at that time and it would continue to be so during apartheid. “In 1852 a trekker, Coenraad Scheepers, spoke for the great majority when he said: ‘[Whites] and blacks cannot live together, unless the black man is in a state of subjection to the white.’” (ibid: 181). The feeling of racial superiority was strongly rooted in their religious beliefs. The idea that they were the Chosen people was an important binding factor among the Boers. The connection between their religious belief and the feeling of racial superiority was clearly manifested in how they saw themselves “as an instrument in God’s hand to promote Christian civilization and to protect blacks from internecine murder, pillage and violence.” (ibid: 166).

From the 1830’s on they started to move out of the Cape in the Great Trek. A group of about 12,000 trekboere or trekkers (trek farmers who were later also simply called Boers)
migrated into the interior. As they were originally European settlers, the relationship with the land and thus their legitimization to be on it was not necessarily very logical, but during the Great Trek their relationship with the land became intense: "By the early 1840’s the trekkers were confident enough to express their right to colonize the interior. In 1842 the Natal Volksraad wrote: ‘we took possession of uninhabited tracts of country acquired by friendly treaties as well … as with our blood and treasure.’” (ibid: 166). Their blood was now in the land, a statement that expressed the bond between the people and the land on which their identity was established. The trekkers founded several Boer republics, of which the most important ones were Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State.

In 1886 the Boers found gold in Witwatersrand in Transvaal. For a short time they considered this a blessing: the long and extremely tough journey away from British authorities had paid off and finally their poor economic situation would improve. However, as soon as the British heard of it the luck of the Boers changed. Already before the discovery of gold the British had wanted to rule the areas of the Boer Republics for strategic reasons and the discovery of diamonds. Their attempt failed in the First Boer War. When gold was found they returned, this time better equipped and in larger numbers, in 1899, and the Second Boer War was fought. They wanted to install a British administration in the Boer Republics in order to benefit from the goldmines. Though most of the towns surrendered within a year, a group of bittereinders, Boers who fought until the bitter end, held strong until 1902. As a reaction, the British invented the institution of concentration camps where about 25.000 woman and children were imprisoned under terrible circumstances, until finally the last resistance broke and a treaty was signed that declared the peace between the Boers and the British.

In the years after the Second Boer War the gold mines flourished and the industry became the biggest in the world, responsible for almost a third of the world production. Within no time Johannesburg popped out of the ground. Due to the enormous economic boost that the area got from the growing mining industry, the farming practices of the Boers became less and less lucrative. As a result they moved to Johannesburg in large numbers where they had to compete with the extremely cheap labor of the black community. A new and rapidly growing phenomenon appeared: that of the poor whites. The Boers had the treatment of the concentration camps in the Second Boer War fresh in mind, and together with the humiliation of their economic status due to English rule this created a trauma that influenced the developments in the years to come. The haunting image of poor whites was something they wanted to forget and never experience again.
The Boers were descendents of mostly Dutch settlers, but there was a significant amount of French Hugonants, Germans and Flemish among them, as well as a small group of other European settlers. Up until that point they had never established a shared identity and they realized that the “economic, cultural and social backwardness could only be overcome by their developing their own identity (…) as a community”. This belief was only reinforced by the structural attempt of the British to Anglicize them. The separation between whites “waged mainly along language lines” and Afrikaans became one of the most important carriers of the new Afrikaner identity (the term Afrikaner had replaced the term Boer, which was no longer really used as the people that carried it had mostly lost their profession after the large scale urbanization). In it, language complemented older values such as “an adherence to the Reformed faith, an insistence on racial exclusivity, and a rejection of gelykstelling or social leveling” (ibid: 356).

In 1910 the former Boer Republics were united with the Cape Colony in the Union of South Africa. The parliament was elected by whites and the majority of Afrikaners over the British resulted in the ruling of the predominantly Afrikaans South Africa Party (SAP). But in 1914 General Hertzog broke away from the SAP and founded the National Party, an exclusively Afrikaner party (ibid: 356). Now that an Afrikaans identity was uniting the Afrikaans majority they stood strong as a people in the political field. In 1948 the National Party rose to power. Apartheid, a system of demographic segregation was designed, and land was divided over people according to their race and color. White people inhabited the agriculturally rich lands and the better areas in the city that lodged the economic capital. Colored and Black people had to be confined to the agriculturally poorer land and the areas without economic opportunities.

The official argumentation for apartheid was articulated as “separate development” of races “in which each could maintain its cultural distinctiveness, exercise political rights and acquire wealth and education separately from one another” (Posel 1987: 125). But even though some people tried to hold on to this argumentation the reality was different: Afrikaners had been confronted with the poor white phenomenon and out of fear of the extinction of their culture and the social leveling with blacks they created a system to control them, keep them away from them and keep the white race pure. In addition to strict territorial segregation of races the regime held a firm control over the white population. The Christian nationalist morals and values, manifested most importantly by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) had an important role in this process. As such the belief system that was once the major binding
factor among the Boers remained an important institution in the establishment of Afrikaner identity during apartheid.

This short historical context should explain my choice for the four pillars of Afrikanerdom. These four pillars have been my framework while conducting research and have turned out to be useful in answering my questions. They will return in the rest of this thesis as a framework to which I will compare my ethnographic data. As I was constructing the argument of this thesis, I started recognizing certain important themes in my data that were strongly related to the four pillars that I distinguished. I related land to territorialization, language to pride, religion to hypocrisy and race to tolerance. Those themes are already an indication of the role that the four pillars play in the lives of the post-apartheid generation. In the third chapter I will structure my argument along those themes and analyze the role that the four pillars play in the lives of my informants. From there I will generalize my analysis and make an argument about the way in which the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners in Cape Town deal with their past.

With my thesis I want to participate in the debate about identity and belonging. In the conclusion I will support my analysis with the work of two theorists in order to translate my two main arguments to a larger level which is less specifically applied to the Capetonian or even South African case. The first argument focuses on the way in which young Afrikaners relate to old values and conceptions of Afrikanerdom. I compare this process to Gilroy’s concept of “Postcolonial Melancholia” (2001: 162). Gilroy argues for the case of Britain that a melancholic sentiment about the decline of the once politically and economically powerful British Empire stands in the way of a successful multicultural society. This subtle but stubborn feeling is manifested in many aspects of daily life: “Heroic tales of danger, fraternity and enhanced self-understanding are everywhere as comedy, tragedy, sport, news and politics.” (ibid: 154). On a larger conceptual level Gilroy recognizes this process in other postcolonial states too. The situation in South Africa is different in the sense that Afrikaners are not the majority in a postcolonial state; they have always been a minority but have now lost political power too, leaving them in a precarious situation. Yet, I believe that the social process that Gilroy analyzes is applicable in my research and I will reflect on his thought in my conclusion to argue in what way Afrikanerdom is still an entity of belonging and identity for the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners.

The other argument that I make will be about the way in which young Afrikaners in Cape Town try to negotiate their Afrikanerdom to gain a different position in society. I will support my analysis of new processes community building with the theoretical concept of
“lichte gemeenschappen” (communities lite) (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp 2004: 15-16). Duyvendak and Hurenkamp, in cooperation with several authors, challenge the idea of individualization by looking at new ways in which people form groups to which they belong. Focusing on the Netherlands they analyze how people are to lesser extents connected to established communities such as the church or sport clubs. They argue that this does not necessarily mean that people have become more individualized but that networks are established through different, often more dynamic common interests.

Moving away from an Afrikaans suburb, as most of my informants did, means in most cases moving out of a close community of family, church and sports connections. ‘Out in the city’, in cosmopolitan and mixed Cape Town, these connections fade. New groups that I saw emerging were to lesser extents fixed but where rather based on weak ties (ibid: 219): common interests, shared activities and unscheduled get-togethers in particular places. I will speak of a scene in this thesis, but I will argue that the boundaries of this scene are hard to draw. It is not a matter of membership but of being with the right people in the right places. The frequency of these ‘meetings’ and the shared interests that are manifested there have created a definite awareness among the people who are or who are not part of this scene. Though not always using the same words the people in it often mention the bond that they feel exists. So do people who are not part of it, like one of my informants who remarked what has become the title of this thesis.

Outline

The first chapter of this thesis will be a reflection on the influence of Fokofpolisiekar on the social and cultural climate for the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners. My decision to look at the role of music in the way this generation deals with the past is not random. Though it is hard to say exactly how far the influence of the music scene on the position of young Afrikaners in society reaches, it is safe to say that it has had a significant part in the developments of the past 18 years. Since Fokofpolisiekar is probably the most influential band in the scene, I use the milestones in their trajectory to distinguish the different periods within these 18 years. The first period is from 1994 till 2003: the time in between the abolition of apartheid and the formation of the band. The second period is from 2003 till 2007, the year in which Fokofpolisiekar broke up. The third period is from 2007 until now. I argue that this period demarcates the time in which the impact of Fokofpolisiekar became clear. Several Afrikaner bands or solo artists broke through. Fokofpolisiekar reunited in this
period too, but only to perform concerts; they did not make new music anymore. In this chapter I argue that Fokofpolisiekar has paved the way for a debate about Afrikanerdom that takes place in the national music scene.

In the second chapter I start with an ethnographic description of one of the shows of Fokofpolisiekar that I attended in Bloemfontein. This event made me realize that there is a rather big gap between the visions of the members of Fokofpolisiekar and their audience nowadays, at least in Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein is about a thousand kilometers away from Cape Town and, among my informants, notorious for its rather old fashioned mindset. But it is also a result of the time-gap between the moment in which the music was made and the moment in which it was performed. Because of the debate that Fokofpolisiekar had started, certain issues that they addressed in their songs were being dealt with or even solved at the time of my research. The frustration and anger in their songs were therefore picked up by their audience, but directed towards other issues. Instead of fighting for recognition of their place in society, the youngsters in Bloemfontein simply directed their frustration and anger towards “the other”. As a result the event became somewhat of a celebration of their Afrikanerdom. I saw similarities between the people in Bloemfontein and my informants in Cape Town and I recognized a paradox: my informants in Cape Town also used the scene in order to embrace certain elements of Afrikanerdom and had become somewhat excluding towards others, even though Fokofpolisiekar had originally moved away from a particular kind of Afrikanerdom.

In the last chapter I will elaborate on this paradox. I will look at the role of land, language, religion and race in the lives of two of my informants, one who is part of the scene and one who is not. It will become clear that they think about and deal with these topics in different ways, and that this difference is to a large extent a result of (not) belonging to the scene. Ryan, who is part of the scene, uses the image of the scene in order to explain his own views on things. Since Fokofpolisiekar and other bands that followed in their footsteps made such strong statements about issues concerning Afrikanerdom, the people in the scene can use these statements to express their own views. Therefore they feel more comfortable talking about those issues and expressing aspects of Afrikanerdom. Leon on the other hand does not associate with the scene and feels that if he talks about Afrikanerdom or expresses aspects of it, it is directly related to the Afrikaners as a people in general, which often has negative connotations. He is therefore much more nuanced and less confident about his being Afrikaans. South Africa is a country of extremities in which statements thrive well, they can make a difference.
Apartheid was abolished 46 years after it had emerged. Preparations for this abolition had been made in the last four years up to till transition, and it was not a very big surprise when the ANC won the first democratic elections of South Africa in 1994. The consequences of this occurrence, both direct and indirect, were less predictable. Many South Africans expected total chaos and for days people hoarded provisions in order to prepare for the worst case scenario. Fortunately enough the transition was much smoother than those people had expected (Beall et al 2005: 681-682). But though there was relatively little racial violence in the direct aftermath of the elections, the social status of especially Afrikaners dropped almost instantly after the transition. Almost overnight Afrikaners, those responsible for years of dominance over and terror against black and colored people, became the figurative black sheep of the country (Van der Merwe 2010: 213).

The political, economic, social and cultural climate that was created by these developments forms the background against which a band like Fokofpolisiekar could – or, as many people argue, was bound to – arise. This chapter will sketch this recent historical context. I will start with the general conception of Afrikanerdom in South Africa and the influence of it on the lives of Afrikaners. This is necessary in order to understand the position of the young people that grew up in those post-apartheid years. Among them were the members of Fokofpolisiekar, and it was the frustration with the context in which they grew up that can be held responsible for the formation of their band. In the second part I will focus on the band by looking at how they dealt with their frustration, thus analyzing their vision on society in general and their own background in particular. In the last part I look at the influences of the band on the conception of Afrikanerdom and the position of Afrikaners in South Africa.
In this chapter I will quote from several interviews that I conducted with artists. They are all artists that have followed in the footsteps of Fokofpolisiekar in the Afrikaans music scene. I will position them in the broader music scene later in the chapter, but, for the sake of the structure, may not have introduced them yet when I quote them. In addition to those interviews I will refer to two sources that both tell the story of Fokofpolisiekar. One is a documentary called “Fokofpolisiekar: Forgive Them For They Know Not What They Do” by Bryan Little which appeared in 2009. The other is a book called “Biografie van ’n Bende: Die Storie van Fokofpolisiekar” from 2009 by Annie Klopper.


Afrikaners were always a minority in South Africa. With about 3 million of them in an estimated national population of about 50 million, they had only been able to obtain an economic and social advantage over the black and colored part of the population because of the apartheid regime. Their strong position was embedded in the national economic system, and it took policies such as the BEE to establish economic reform in the years that followed. But despite those policies the economic capital of Afrikaners is still relatively big today. Their social status on the other hand was rather tightly connected to their political status, and it joined apartheid in its downfall (Vestergaard 2001: 19). Afrikaners are often indignant about the fact that their role in apartheid is exaggerated in relation to that of the English speaking white South Africans. But whether fair or not, it was the Afrikaners and their cultural habits who were held responsible by the rest of the country once apartheid was no longer there.

This occurrence did not have the same effect on all people. If the different ways Afrikaners dealt with their newly obtained social status can be positioned in a continuum, two ways are of importance to my argument. Though they are not the extremes of the continuum, they represent the different sides of it and they could be employed by one person in different circumstances. One was the denial of Afrikanerdem. This probably happened mostly among people that were confronted with non-Afrikaners on a daily basis, perhaps even people who did not really see other Afrikaners at all. The other was embracement of Afrikanerdem. Afrikaners that lived among other Afrikaners and were not usually confronted by people of other races or ethnicities had lesser necessity to pretend not be Afrikaans.

The arguably biggest indications of the unpopularity of Afrikaners were the farmer murders that have happened in rather big numbers since the end of apartheid. Though it is not
actually proven that the murders were committed for reasons that involve race (Breytenbach 2004: 61) – the fact that they are usually rich people living in desolated places could be a reason in itself – the phenomenon was often used as an argument that since the political transition in 1994 white people are in the same disadvantaged position that black people were in before the transition, and that apartheid had not been abolished but simply reversed. For some these statistics supported an agenda, as in the case of the AWB, founded by late Eugene Terre’Blanche and fighting for an independent state in which white supremacy could be celebrated.

But the fear that was caused by these statistics made other people hide in their shell. Especially for people who might have been against apartheid all along, the step to stand up for Afrikanerdom in times when it was so heavily criticized was big and unwanted. They were either too scared to be honest about it or felt ashamed that they were Afrikaans. This resulted in a significant group of Afrikaans people that simply lied to those around them about their ethnicity and background, pretending to be English speaking White South Africans instead of Afrikaners. For example, Yo-Landi Visser of Die Antwoord recalls: “I was embarrassed to tell people I was Afrikaans. English people used to be so racist against us. (…) When I moved to Cape Town when I was 18, I was fully Afrikaans but (…) I would just tell everyone I met that I was English.” (Coetzer 2012: 46).

Other Afrikaners, living in neighborhoods, suburbs or villages that were Afrikaans oriented did not have to face disrespect so regularly for who they were. They could speak their own language with the people around them and were only indirectly confronted with the degradation of Afrikanerd in South Africa. What’s more, the fact that they were living in a place where they were surrounded by other Afrikaners indicated the fact that they did not bear a lot of grudge for Afrikanerdom in the first place. As I argued in the introduction, Afrikaners are traditionally a very proud people. This pride is still largely present among a lot of Afrikaners, and manifested more explicitly among those who are part of larger Afrikaner communities. For those people the end of apartheid meant a blow to their pride as Afrikaners. The sudden lack of several certainties that were provided by a government that represented them made them hold on to those things that they still had even stronger. This process that often occurs when an entity is endangered resulted in, for example, the passionate debate

---

7 An account of a person that suffered from a great deal of ‘white guilt’ can be found in the autobiography of Rian Malan, descendent of D.F. Malan, one of the architects of apartheid (Malan 1990).
about the language Afrikaans and whether or not it should be taught at universities, a debate that is still going on today.

Those two attitudes towards the changes that occurred concerning the Afrikaans community roughly represent the conflict that many young Afrikaners were dealing with in the years after apartheid. Stuck between two truths they felt themselves alienated from their own country. On the one side there was their direct (suburban) environment that promoted Afrikaner values. The strong emphasis on family created a close network with a lot of social control and gossip. If you did something that was not in line with the ethics and morals of your direct environment, people would know. In an interview with the band aKING front man Laudo Liebenberg told me that “Afrikaners do not like it when you stick your head out of the masses”, and by doing so you could count on repercussions from your parents, school or church. While the apartheid regime had managed to keep certain global values out and dominate the moral standard (Norval 1996: 300), the post-apartheid era offered an influx of different and rather modern values. Many of those young people that were exposed to those values experienced the Christian and conservative Afrikaner environment as claustrophobic and dishonest, something that I will elaborate on later.

But while they felt that they could not identify with their direct background, the rest of the country did associate them with this Afrikaner community. And whereas the community itself interpreted Afrikanerdom as a positive thing, the rest of society did not. I noted that the social status of Afrikaners dropped virtually overnight after apartheid, and it was this social status that the young generation was associated with too, for they were part of the same community as those who were held responsible for apartheid. If the negative association was a bad thing, what made it worse was the fact that they could not even relate to it at all. After all, they had never really experienced apartheid. In one of my informant’s words: “we were all children when that happened, we didn’t have anything to do with it!” From two sides people put a label on them, neither of which they could relate to. One party wanted them to be good Afrikaners, which the other party condemned. In the earlier mentioned interview with the members of aKING one of them complements my other informant’s frustration: “So it was difficult to explain where we stood, it was sort of limbo.” They fell in between and had the feeling they were not accepted for who they were: Afrikaners, but without any responsibility for apartheid. Society did not have a place for them and they felt a strong sense of alienation.

---

8 This is a hot topic that is being debated at the moment in fields ranging from academics to television to literature and more. There is a large group of Afrikaners that is very concerned their culture will disappear (De Vos 2011)
Among those youngsters were the future members of Fokofpolisiekar: Francois van Coke, Wynand Myburgh, Hunter Kennedy, Johnny de Ridder and Jaco Venter. They grew up in Bellville, a suburb 20 kilometers outside the city center of Cape Town, inhabiting some 40,000 people, most of them Afrikaans. Bellville consists of several neighborhoods that range from upper-middle class to lower-middle class. The Southern part of Bellville borders to an industrial area. Most people in Bellville work either in the industrial, the service or the trade sector (Turok 2001: 2362-2363). Behind the industrial area begin the colored Cape Flats. The Southern neighborhoods of Bellville, bordering to the Cape Flats, have become more colored in the past decades. Going to the Northern part of Bellville the neighborhoods become middle to upper-middle class. Francois and his friends came from the middle and the Northern part of Bellville. “Nobody was really poor, it was all kind of middle class environment,” Jaco told me. Two of the five members’ fathers were a minister of a conservative Afrikaans church. Life in the suburbs was, according to them, extremely boring and their main activities were skateboarding and making music. Francois told me that when they became popular he realized how similar his life had been to the lives of youngsters in similar suburbs nation-wide.

They were passionate about music and dreaming of becoming rock stars, but the – at the time poor – Afrikaner music scene offered them nothing they liked. Popular among Afrikaners was (and still is) the so-called sokkie music style: musically undeveloped and rather corny music that the Afrikaner web blog WatKykJy9 describes as: “Typiese untsunts sokkie beats wat enige doos met ‘n bietjie software aanmekaar kan sit”, (typical untsunts [suggesting an up-tempo beat] sokkie beats that any cunt with a bit of software can put together) (Griffin 2012). Jack Parow – a popular Afrikaans rapper – told me that the music “makes us, Afrikaans music, people, look like fucking…the old regime”. As both quotes suggest this was not the kind of music that young kids dreaming of becoming rock stars wanted to make. Afrikaans music, like the Afrikaans identity, was in no way ‘cool’. Angola Nel, an established South African music critic, recalled somebody shouting: “You’re singing fucking Afrikaans, man! Fuck off!” at a rock concert in the mid nineties (Klopper 2011: 108).

The bands that were cool were either foreign or English South African. There were definitely Afrikaans rock bands10, but it was simply out of the question that they would sing in

9 www.watkykjy.co.za, “Die beste Afrikaanse blog en website in die heelal” (The best Afrikaans blog and website in the universe), is popular among young Afrikaners. ‘Griffin’, founder and owner of the web blog, lives in Pretoria and uses the website as a critical reflection on conservative Afrikaner culture.

10 The Springbok Nude Girls – also from Bellville – being the most influential one. The name betrays an attitude of mocking the Afrikaner community similar to that of Fokofpolisiekar: The Springboks are the national rugby team and symbolize Afrikaner masculinity, but are in this case represented by nude girls: feminine and stripped of their macho cover.
their native language. So again, the music that represented Afrikanerdom felt in no way related to who they were. It brought up the association of ‘the old regime’ and it referred to all they did not want to be connected to. The music that they did relate to, that they did associate themselves with, was English South African or international. They could make such music themselves but like the Afrikaners who pretended to be English speaking, they had to deny their Afrikaans roots in order to do so. Just like their general position in society and the daily struggles that they encountered in searching for it, their position in the music world was non-existent.

What perhaps came closest was the movement that arose in the late eighties, called Voëlvry (‘free as a bird’), a group of Afrikaner musicians that toured around the country making Afrikaans rock music, rebelling against the establishment and criticizing the apartheid regime (Hopkins 2006). But even this was connected to apartheid in its rebellion, and it did not address the problems that the post-apartheid generation was dealing with. Besides, the Voëlvry movement had been mostly popular among students and left-wing liberals rather than the average suburban youngster. So when on a day in 2003 Francois and Wynand were sitting at the beach and joking about starting an Afrikaans punk-rock band, Wynand became serious: “Fuck it, jy weet, dis nou die tyd. Kom ons begin dit.” “Fuck it, you know that now is the time. Let’s do it.” (Klopper 2011: 67).

2003 – 2007: The Movement

The five Afrikaners in between the ages of 20 and 24 did it in October 2003. They came up with a name, a rebellious name that undermined authority in general and Afrikaner authority in particular: Fokofpolisiekar, a conjunction of Afrikaans words that meant “Fuck off police car” in Afrikaans. But in order to record their music they needed money, and money was a problem. They found the solution when they heard about a German insurance company that would record a commercial in Cape Town. The commercial would feature a ten year old girl with a band in the background. They all applied for a role in the commercial and remarkably enough four of them – all except Jaco, the drummer – made it through the auditions. The 27.000 Rand\(^{11}\) that they made was just enough to rent a studio in Johannesburg, were they recorded seven songs (Klopper 2011: 89). When they did their first live performance in Mercury, a live venue in the city bowl in Cape Town, there were mostly friends and

\(^{11}\) About 2.700 Euros.
acquaintances, but those who were there now say that it was clear from the start: this was going to shake some dust (Little 2009).

As soon as they had come up with the concept of the band they had started to think about how to present themselves to the rest of the country. With friends who were graphic designers they started a thorough publicity campaign consisting of flyers and posters. The printed images depicted blood, zombies and other ghastly, horrid, hair-raising things. Shocking, yet presented in a humoristic fashion. The combination of the name of the band and the promotion material made people throughout the entire country extremely curious. So it came that when the band started touring in 2004, the first shows were immediately well attended. Within no time Fokofpolisiekar was a phenomenon and throughout the entire country young Afrikaners could finally relate to something (Little 2009).

The fact that they were an Afrikaans punk-rock band was the first thing that caught the attention. The reason for them to sing in Afrikaans was threefold. First of all Afrikaans was simply the language in which they could express themselves best. Even if they had wanted to sing in English, they felt it would not have been as strong as it would be in Afrikaans. Secondly, they were Afrikaners, Afrikaans was their mother tongue. “You cannot ignore where you come from”, said Jaco to me in an interview. The language was part of their identity too, even though they felt they had nothing to do with apartheid, the regime that the language was by many associated with. By speaking it you made yourself vulnerable to this association, a vulnerability that many could not bear; witness the common pretence of many people to be English speaking instead of Afrikaans. The members of Fokofpolisiekar felt they had the right to use it without being condemned for things they had not done. Thirdly, their use of Afrikaans was a blow in the face of all the Afrikaners that were against all that Fokofpolisiekar stood for. The band used proper Afrikaans, yet with the use of swearwords. The Afrikaners that were offended felt that their language, which they were so proud of, was being abused and vulgarized. It meant extra success for Fokofpolisiekar, to whom one priority was to shock this conservative community. This urge to shock came forth from a great deal of anger that they felt. The position in which they found themselves frustrated them to the point of evoking this anger, and they held the environment in which they grew up responsible. In Francois’ case this anger could be interpreted as one against his very direct environment, as his father was a minister of the DRC. But it was at the same time directed against the larger institutions of Afrikanerdom, whether tangible or abstract. In our interview Francois told me that “it was in retrospect a big frustration that had to get out. It was a psychological thing. We had to rebel against our background, our parents. Not so much the political things but just
rebellion.” The poetic language that Fokofpolisiekar used often left it open for interpretation what exactly was meant, which is perhaps one of the reasons for their huge success. The general themes of their lyrics were anger with the establishment, authority, often in the form of the church, and the alienation that they felt. I will briefly analyze some fragments of the lyrics of Fokofpolisiekar in order to illustrate the message that they conveyed.

The first fragment is of the song “*Hemel Op Die Platteland*” (Heaven in the countryside), from the EP “*Als Jy Met Vuur Speel Sal Jy Brand*” (If you play with fire you will burn) which they released in 2003. This was their debut and consisted of six songs, later rereleased with an extra song on it. It became a major hit in South Africa and the first Afrikaans song to ever make it in the popular radio station 5FM in their twenty-nine years of existence (Klopper 2011: 108).

(…)

*Kan iemand dalk 'n god bel*  
Can someone maybe phone a god

*En vir hom sé ons het hom nie meer, nodig nie*  
And tell him that we don't need him anymore

*Kan jy*  
Can you

*Kan jy "apatie" spel*  
Can you spell "apathy"

*Dis hemel op die platteland*  
It's heaven in the countryside

*Dis hemel op die platteland*  
It's heaven in the countryside

*Reguleer my*  
Regulate me

*Roetineer my*  
Conform me to routine

*Plaas my in 'n boks en merk dit "veilig"*  
Put me in a box and label it "safe"

*Stuur my dan waarheen al die, dose gaan*  
Send me then to where all the boxes go

*Stuur my hemel toe, ek dink dis in die platteland*  
Send me to heaven, I think it's in the countryside

*Dis hemel op die platteland*  
It's heaven in the countryside

*Dis hemel op die platteland*  
It’s heaven in the countryside

*Dis hemel op die platteland*  
It's heaven in the countryside

Obviously the most literal critique in this song is the request for someone to call a god and tell him that they do not need him anymore. Christianity is a very important part of Afrikanerdom. As I stated in the introduction conservative Afrikaans churches and especially the DRC played a large role in the identity of Afrikaners as a carrier of the Christian nationalist ideology. This meant that addressing the Church was an effective way to address traditional Afrikanerdom, and it was this particular sentence that in the first place evoked most anger from the religious Afrikaans community.
The fact that they did not say ‘God’ but ‘a god’ instead did not really make a
difference. They had discussed the matter for some time with each other, but decided to stick
with the latter option (Klopper 2011: 88), perhaps to add a double layer to the seemingly one-
sided message, meaning that if there was any truth to religion, it did not necessarily have to be
Christianity. They could count on some serious criticism right from the start of their
existence. This critique almost always came from the religious community of Afrikaners,
probably because the part of the message that addressed them was most concrete in its form.
The words god and heaven were actually used in the lyrics, directly criticizing religion.

But there are less concrete issues addressed in the lyrics too. One of my informants
(who was not a fan) questioned Fokofpolisiekar: “If you’re atheist, why bash God all the
time?” she asked. The answer is probably that they are not actually dealing with God himself
but with the huge community that did believe in him. In several ways they hint at
conservatism in general. By saying that they don’t need a god anymore, they suggest that
perhaps at some point in history a god was needed, but that those times were now gone.
Religion, in other words, is something old fashioned. This is also suggested by the reference
to the countryside. The countryside is naturally the place where farmers reside. Afrikaners are
among many people still referred to as Boers. Many youngsters are not happy with this
because of the connotations of the word. The countryside is often more old-fashioned than
urban environments, and also the Afrikaans farmers are thought of as people who are often
stuck in an old mindset. By suggesting that heaven is on the countryside, they suggest again
that religion is an old-fashioned institution that does not belong in modern times.

Finally, what they do is accuse the church of making people apathetic, and thus the
religious community of being apathetic. First of all they literally ask if one can spell “apathy”.
In other words, they ask if one knows what it is, is familiar with it, and is perhaps apathetic
him or herself. Also asking someone, probably an adult, to spell a word can be considered to
be rather ironic and hinting at the apathetic state of this someone. Secondly they ask (to no
one in particular) if he or she can regulate them and conform them to routine. Make them fit
in, make sure they are no different from the rest, because different is dangerous. Or: make
them apathetic. Again this state is linked to the old fashioned, conservative Afrikaner by asking
to send it to the countryside where this Afrikaner resides (the Boer this time functioning as the
link between conservatism and religion). A little word play is included by switching from
boks to doos in the next line. Both words mean box, but only doos means something like
‘cunt’ as well, thus valuing the typical Boer.
The figurative box that they sarcastically ask to be put in is the core of the alienation that they felt. Conservative as they experienced the Afrikaner community, they felt it was based on old values, values that were no longer the standard in South Africa, nor in the modern world that the country was to a larger extent exposed to since the abolition of apartheid. Values that they could and did not want to relate to. Whereas this song focuses mainly on the other party (though their own perspective on it is quite obvious), other songs address this feeling of alienation more directly. An example is the song “Tygerberg Vliegtuig” (Tygerberg Airplane) from the same debut EP. The same commentary on what they call the “sheep mentality” is provided, this time with a focus on their own feelings rather than only their view on what is around them.

(…)

Dis die gevoel van "iets moet breek"  It’s the feeling of “something must break”
Dis die ingeboude vrees  It’s the innate fear
Ek’s gebore met drie sesse op my kop getattoëer  I was born with three sixes tattooed on my forehead
Ek probeer net vasklou aan wie ek is  I only try to cling on to who I am
Ek probeer net vasklou aan wie ek is  I only try to cling on to who I am

(…)

Al die instruksies wat hul vir ons gee  All the instructions they give us
Werk, trou en kinders kry  Work, marry and have children
En moontlik dan aan depressie ly  And then possibly suffer from depression
Iemand moet vra hoekom  Someone has to ask why
Iemand moet vra hoekom  Someone has to ask why

The second verse that I took from the lyrics focuses on the more mundane aspect of suburban life in Bellville. Whereas the other song addresses God and criticized the control that church has over the lives of the people, this song is rather about the consequences of this blind trust in an institution. Without thinking for themselves people do exactly what the community that they are part of wants from them, presenting the negative consequences of this life as part of what this higher entity wants from them. That was an environment that they could not bear, and they felt something was about to break, as they sing in the first verse. One always had to be on watch not to do something that did not fit in the life style of this community. There was a constant fear of doing something wrong.

The sentence that follows is perhaps one of the sentences that expresses best the feeling that many people had, and that was the core of their frustration. Three sixes: the
number of the Devil, tattooed on their foreheads by birth. Stigmatized by their ancestors and rejected by those around them. In between camps, unable to find a place for themselves. It expresses the alienation that they felt, leaving them but one thing: trying to hold on to who they were; something that was not at all easy in a place where you were by definition bad. Therefore the only thing that they could do was to search for legitimization of their existence, creating space for themselves. The way to do so was to speak up and let people know that they were also there, which they did through their music. The immense popularity they gained in such a short period of time shows the broader need for this to happen, and it has proven the last sentence of the second verse right. The explanation that I received most often upon asking about the reason for Fokofpolisiekar’s popularity was exactly that last sentence: “Someone had to ask those questions”.

In the years that followed, they expanded their musical orientation. In between the usual punk-rock albums a somewhat calm album came out and in general the focus shifted to a slightly larger level. Instead of only looking at their own suburban environment they started to include larger issues such as the position of Afrikaners or even South Africans in the South African society. In 2006 they released an album called “Swanesang” (Swan song) including the big hit “Brand Suid-Afrika” (Burn South Africa). In the same year they released an EP called “Brand Suid-Afrika” which contained the song again plus another three songs, among which the hit of their first album: “Hemel Op die Platteland”, as if they wanted to hold on to their initial anger.

(…)

Blood and iron, blood and earth
Blood and oil, blood and earth
Scared and lazy and desperate
There’s nothing new under the sun
And in the shadows, South Africa burns

(…)

Landmines of guilt
In a one man concentration camp
You complain about the state of the country
Well fucking do something about it
Burn South Africa!

Landmyne van skuldgevoelens
in ’n eenman konsentrasiekamp
jy kla oor die toestand van ons land
wel fokken doen iets daaromtrent
Brand Suid-Afrika!
Though the anger that shows through in the song “Hemel Op Die Platteland” is perhaps even more apparent in this song, it also shows that in some way the members of the band have matured. References to the history of Afrikaners and the political situation of the country indicate a somewhat more objective perspective towards the situation in which they find themselves. This slightly more objective position can only be taken because they have managed to distance themselves at least to some extent from the environment in which they found themselves when they started out. Reflecting on the national situation around them implies that they now find themselves more in the middle of it and have thus managed to take some steps away from the conservative Afrikaner community.

The first verse reflects on the complicated dialectical relationship between the elements in the power struggles that took place in the history of Afrikaners, and South Africa for that matter. “Blood and iron, blood and earth, blood and oil, blood and earth”: there were different peoples of different races, fighting about land and that which the land had to offer. The word blood in this sentence does not only refer to the Afrikaner race, but also to the claim about their right to the land that they made, as their blood was literally spilled on it, as I explained in the introduction of this thesis. But it can be interpreted in a more general way, since fights about minerals and oil are the cause of many wars worldwide. Indeed they say in the last two sentences of the first verse that nothing really has changed, and the conflicts of the past centuries are still present in South Africa. Self-centered as the Afrikaners were, they may have focused on their own people, but behind the topics that they shed their lights on, the rest of the country is suffering from their actions: in the shadows South Africa burns.

The second verse has more explicit references to the Afrikaner people and is a rather straightforward accusation to them. In the Second Boer War the English invented the concentration camps in which Afrikaner women and children suffered in terrible circumstances. If the concentration camps stand for the harm that was done to the Afrikaners as a people, the one-man concentration camp can be seen as the personalization of the post-apartheid problems for each Afrikaner. Yet it is filled with landmines of guilt: their self pity is complicated by (white) guilt, the knowledge of the actions their people took in the past. This guilt is brought upon them by those who actually suffered from those actions. People may complain about the state of the country, but in reality they are complaining about the fact that they have to face their own past, is what Fokofpolisiekar suggests. The harsh call to do something about it indicates that they are not doing anything about it currently. Or, to bring it back to the personal and daily level: people are not facing their own issues. Though this is in
essence the same commentary that Fokofpolisiekar gives in the other songs that I analyzed, they stick to South Africa as a whole this time, ending with a malediction: Burn South Africa!

The band knew, as I said, great successes, but they also had great conflicts. The four years of touring around the country were intense as they were together all the time. At some point they were playing about three hundred shows a year. They were driving from one little village to the other, camped in people’s gardens or just slept in their mini-van, they wore each other’s clothes because they did not have money to buy new clothes and they were eating bad hamburgers in cheap fast food chains almost every day. The situation was bound to reach a climax. Out of nowhere they had known incredible success, but it came accompanied by harsh criticism and inside the group tensions arose. After one particular show Wynand had a conversation about religion with a sixteen year old boy who had come to assist one of their shows. Wynand took the boy’s wallet and wrote “Fuck God” on it. After that a wave of anger and criticism like never before appeared in the national media. Several newspapers, both Afrikaans and English, reported the story on the cover page for about a week and the tensions inside the band reached a boiling point. They had to take some distance from each other. Fokofpolisiekar separated, only to reunite two years later (Klopper 2009).

2007 – Now: The Wave is Breaking

It is of course difficult to pinpoint the exact influence of Fokofpolisiekar, but it is safe to say that it has been very big. The director of the documentary about them, Bryan Little, had made clear arrangements with the band members about the ins and outs of the production, by the time the film was about to be finished all of a sudden there were several disagreements between the two parties.

The film portrays them as the sort of revolution in Afrikaans culture and it totally was, you cannot deny that, they had the front page of the newspapers for a week, they were having an impact. I think when they saw the film for the first time they were like, fuck… I think they were scared for us to tell the world like “these guys did this”. Because in the Afrikaans community if you stick your head out, it will be cut off. It’s very weird, there’s like boundaries in everything almost about how to behave, and you can’t come out saying you’re like, the revolution cause they’ll just cut you down.

Perhaps it was “die ingeboude vrees” that showed up now.

A short clip is included in that same documentary. In it, a man introduces himself in English as Gerald van Wyk (pronouncing his name with an English accent). He then tells the
viewer that he has something to confess. It is something that he has been walking around with for the past years, but that he wants to bring out now. “I am not Gerald van Wyk, *ek is Gerald van Wyk en ek is Afrikaans*” (I am Gerald van Wyk [now pronounced with an Afrikaans accent] and I am Afrikaans). The documentary suggests that due to the influence of Fokofpolisiekar the social position of Afrikaners in South African Society had changed for the better, so much that people dared to present themselves as Afrikaners again. Whether this was the actual achievement of Fokofpolisiekar is hard to tell, but certainly they contributed to it. Soon after they broke through, an enormous amount of Afrikaans band started popping out of the ground like mushrooms. The taboo on Afrikaner alternative music had been broken and suddenly there was a market for it. In 2005 an Afrikaner music channel was founded, simply called *Musiek Kanaal* (MK). In the years that followed developments took place that gradually led to an increased integration of Afrikaans music in the national music scene.

While the social and cultural landscape changed rapidly, Fokofpolisiekar and the individual members personally also developed. In our interview Francois van Coke told me that during his music career they roughly went through three stages. First there was the angry stage. In that stage the only concern they had was to express their anger and to be heard. They gained a lot of popularity in this initial phase. The second stage was more of a ‘party vibe’. Perhaps it was the popularity that they had gained so quickly that created this atmosphere. After almost every show they stayed in the bar and drank with the crowd. In the documentary that was made about them, one of them recalls this period and wonders how they managed to do this night in night out if they did not have any money to spend. He suggests that people were probably buying them drinks all the time. But also this stage passed and though it was not like the characteristics of the first two stages completely disappeared, a third stage arrived. In this stage they became again more serious, but now in a different way, less angry then before.

The later work of Fokofpolisiekar already reflected this stage, but it developed for the individual members in the new projects that four of the five members started when Fokofpolisiekar broke up. Together with mostly other Afrikaners (some of whom were also from Bellville) three new bands came into existence, all of which still exist today. Francois van Coke and Wynand Myburgh started a band called Van Coke Kartel. Hunter Kennedy and Jaco Venter started aKING (which Hunter Kennedy left after two years) and Hunter Kennedy also started *Die Heuwels Fantasties* (The Hills Fantastic). Though all bands have a sometimes critical attitude towards society, most of their songs are not as critical as the songs of Fokofpolisiekar. Their tone is definitely different, both in lyrics and in the music that they
make. Van Coke Kartel is most similar in style to Fokofpolisiekar, making rock music, but aKING and Die Heuwels Fantasties make much softer and more mainstream music. As the four bands were (co-)initiatives of the different Fokofpolisiekar members, they are often associated with one another. Sometimes they all come together for live performances under the name VanFokKingTasties.

But rock music was not the only thing that arose on the market that had developed since the break-through of Fokofpolisiekar. More or less simultaneously two acts broke through, though with a rather different impact and after having walked a completely different track in their lives: Die Antwoord, which I have already mentioned in the introduction, and Jack Parow (the stage name of Zander Tyler). They had “both jumped on the Fokofpolisiekar train” as one of my informants put it. The connection between the three is somewhat strange: whereas Fokofpolisiekar makes punk-rock music, Jack Parow makes rather funny satirical Afrikaans rap music and Die Antwoord makes downright shocking Afrikaans/English rap-rave. Yet, the connection is undoubtedly there. When I had just arrived in Cape Town and I would introduce my research to people, they would very often name those three bands as being the most important ones in the field of Afrikaans music. Or if I would talk about Fokofpolisiekar, they would ask me if I knew Die Antwoord or Jack Parow and vice versa. The discussion about Afrikanerdom had been addressed by Fokofpolisiekar; the other two took their own turn on it, yet in different ways.

The connection of Jack Parow with Fokofpolisiekar is an interesting one. Jack Parow and the members of Fokofpolisiekar are good friends. They are from the same age and all grew up in Bellville. They worked together on several of each other albums and on other occasions and are therefore often associated with one another. Both of them certainly deal with Afrikanerdom, but you could say that they deal with different aspects of it, or rather, with a different group of Afrikaners. Like any other people, the Afrikaners cannot be considered a homogenous group. In my thesis I focus mainly on the influence of Fokofpolisiekar, and therefore on the environment that they come from. Though many Afrikaners claim to be religious, not all of them are practicing intensively (as will become clear in the third chapter). Jack Parow did not come from a very religious background and he had less of the restricted feeling, the ‘box feeling’ that the members of Fokofpolisiekar had. He explained it this way:

The fucking hectic Christian movement, I was never part of that. Like my parents weren’t preachers, like, you can imagine if your parents… Christianity is a very, very huge part of Afrikaans. It’s like, gigantic.
They got forced into something and rebelled completely against it, and, against the morals and the teachings of it. So I mean that’s the difference between me and them.

His mission is rather to deal with the perception of Afrikanerdom among people that were *not* part of where he came from instead of breaking away from his own background, whereas Fokofpolisiekar does both.

The image that Jack Parow embraces is a whole different one than the image that Fokofpolisiekar rejects. It is not the conservative Christian image that he identifies with but rather that of the lower-middle class Afrikaner with a taste for cheap beer, Brandy, cars and *braai*: the typical trailer trash. Jack Parow’s mission is to make Afrikaans ‘cool’ again. As I was sitting in his apartment to conduct an interview, he was laying comfortably on his back on the couch, wearing only shorts while he smoked a cigarette and looked up at the ceiling. I felt a bit like a therapist as he was recalling the memories of his youth. Just after the abolition of apartheid, when he was about 16, he would go with his friends to the beach by car. The CY license plate gave away that they were from the Bellville area and they would get beaten up by other white people for being poor and Afrikaans, the associations that people had with being from Bellville. This anecdote is representative of Parow’s drive to alter the image of Afrikaans and deprive it from its negative connotation. He does so in the first place through the language, probably the most noticeable characteristic of Afrikaners.  

For Die Antwoord things are even more complicated. They too collaborated with both Jack Parow and Fokofpolisiekar, and they too deal with Afrikanerdom in some way. But – as I noted in the introduction – their image is rather complicated as it is connected to different classes, places and races in the various songs and video clips. For example, they started out presenting themselves as typical suburban youngsters in the video that I described in the first part of the introduction. After that, they moved more towards the image of the poor white trailer trash. They then started to identify more with the colored community in the Cape Flats (even though they are white themselves). A large part of the colored community speaks Afrikaans as well, though colored Afrikaans is not quite the same as white Afrikaans. So in a way they were still dealing with Afrikaans, but less with white Afrikanerdom. Lately they published a video in which they have returned to the stereotypical white Afrikaans suburban middle class family. Their image is therefore often considered insincere and in their case “jumping on the Fokofpolisiekar train” is by many people regarded as an opportunistic and

---

12 There are many other interesting things that could be said about Jack Parow and how he positions himself in relation to Fokofpolisiekar, but I do not have the space to elaborate on this thesis.
despicable move, especially because they make use of the colored identity – the identity of those who were subordinated during apartheid on the basis of racial inferiority.

However you interpret the developments of these different artists, what is most important is that Fokofpolisiekar turned Afrikanerdom from being a taboo into a topic that became literally a subject of debate. People started to express different views on what Afrikanerdom meant for them, and the position of Afrikaners changed. Jack Parow put it this way: “Now fokken every all the English people want to be Afrikaans, everybody wants to be Afrikaans all of a sudden. Which is obviously a cool thing.” Indeed, Jack Parow has become quite popular in South Africa and what he says counts in a way for Die Antwoord. Watkin Tudor Jones, English South African and not even very fluent in Afrikaans at all, flirts heavily with Afrikanerdom, even if he mixes it with other cultural and racial identities. And though they might take it too far according to most South Africans, similar but less extreme initiatives start to arise in the national music scene.

Afrikaners and Afrikaans have started to blend in more with the rest of society to some extent and in certain circles: those of young popular culture. Die Antwoord is not the only party that establishes this mixture. Laudo Liebenberg, front man and lyricist of aKING does, despite its background, not sing in Afrikaans but in English. Not because of the social climate but rather because he feels more comfortable with it. MK used to have two different awards every year for best English rock act and best Afrikaans rock act. In 2012 there was for the first time just one award for the best rock act (which was won by Van Coke Kartel). Afrikaans is starting to become more embedded in the South African society rather than to be an isolated island. To use Jack Parow’s words once more:

[Fokofpolisiekar] started the wave, and they came to a top and when it broke we were all lucky enough to be there. And it’s still not completely broke, I think it’s still moving towards, like the, like it becoming, cool, Afrikaans becoming like, huge, and big. We still have trouble, we still like, not making the money that would be made if you’re a big star in Holland or if you’re a big star in Europe or you’re a big star in America we never, we won’t make, we don’t make that money. But we’re lucky enough.

The wave was necessary to make certain issues debatable, but in the end the wave must break; the water that arose must fall down again to blend in with the rest of the water, no longer distinguishable. The wave has started to break, but it is not completely broken. The stigma on Afrikaners is not entirely gone yet.

What is interesting is also his commentary on the money issue. I have discussed the reception of Afrikaans music in this chapter, but as I emphasized in the beginning I have
reflected on ‘cool’ Afrikaans music, alternative music popular mainly among young people. Other Afrikaans music, represented by artists such as Kurt Darren and Steve Hofmeyr, the ones that, according to Jack Parow, make Afrikaners ‘look like the fucking old regime’ are actually among the best sold artists in South Africa. This kind of Afrikaans music has the biggest market in the South African music industry. Diane Coetzer, editor of the South African version of the Rolling Stone magazine argues that the reason for this is that Afrikaans music is supported by a large part of the Afrikaner community simply because it is Afrikaans. Among non-Afrikaners however, Afrikaans music was a taboo, until now. As Jack Parow says, Afrikaans artists are starting to make more money with music that is not solely meant for Afrikaners. Perhaps still for the most part Afrikaners listen to it, but the message is clearly directed at a broader public.

Conclusion

Nine years ago the members of Fokofpolisiekar were heavily frustrated by the fact that they did not feel accepted by anybody. They felt they did not have a place in the South African society, even though they felt they deserved one. They were also South African, they belonged to the land too and they had nowhere else to go. After the political transition from apartheid to a multi-racial democracy in 1994 the social status of Afrikaners dropped radically and like many young Afrikaners they felt that they were the victims of something they had nothing to do with. The way to deal with it was by starting an Afrikaans punk-rock band in which they could express their feelings, their anger and frustrations, and make their position clear. It rapidly caught fire and within no time they had become the voice of a generation. The consequences were significant and nowadays some of the issues that they put on the agenda are addressed, or even solved.

Francois van Coke indicated three stages in his career as a musician. The first was the very angry stage in which most of the popular songs were written. It was those songs that made them famous and popular among many (but unpopular among others), but it was also those songs that – again according to Francois van Coke – worked like therapy for them. They broke up in 2007 and started to focus on other projects. When they came together two years later it was mainly because they were still immensely popular. They did not make any new music and you could say that their priorities lay elsewhere. When Francois van Coke asked me after a show of Van Coke Kartel which of the two I liked better, Fokofpolisiekar or Van Coke Kartel, I answered that I thought musically Van Coke Kartel was better. “I’m so glad
you say that!” was his response. However, still today Fokofpolisiekar is touring and immensely popular.

In this chapter I have attempted to analyze the vision of Fokofpolisiekar in order to relate it to the four pillars of Afrikanerdom that I distinguished. Clearly their opinion about religion is most explicit. Their lives were heavily influenced by the conservative Afrikaans church. The clear distance that they took from the church was their most explicit condemnation of apartheid and gave them a clear anti-apartheid image. They dealt with the issue of land in a similar way, though less explicit. They commented in several songs – among them “Hemel op die Platteland”, from which I quoted – on the difference in mentality between the countryside and urban environments, suggesting that the countryside is more conservative than the city. Suburbs such as Bellville can be considered in between the countryside and a liberal urban environment such as the city center of Cape Town. Them moving away from Bellville and into the city meant further distance from what they experienced as a conservative area.

Afrikaans as a language was one thing that they consciously and provocatively did not move away from. Paradoxically, language almost played the same role for Fokofpolisiekar as it did for the Afrikaners in the beginning of the twentieth century in the course to apartheid. For them Afrikaans was one of the fundaments of their identity, what distinguished them from the British. It became a carrier of their pride. Now for Fokofpolisiekar it was again important as a carrier of pride, for being allowed to speak Afrikaans in a non-Afrikaans context meant not to be ashamed of whom you were. Finally race was the aspect that they dealt less with, or at least less explicit. It was mostly the general tendency of moving away from an apartheid mentality that implicated that they were not racists, but they never bothered to express this in words. As they had been white in a white environment they had not been subjected to it, and it was not an issue they had to deal with in that sense. In the next chapter I will look at the way in which Fokofpolisiekar is perceived nowadays and analyze the difference between their vision and that of their audience.
2 Paradox of the Post-Apartheid Generation

We left Cape Town at six in the morning by car. I was with a Dutch female friend of mine who had to go to Johannesburg and had decided to drive with me. I was full of expectations of what I would see. Long empty roads with nothing but far stretching hills, yellow grass, termite mounds and windmills, every now and then a little village where I would step into a house that had the word Biltong painted in large letters on the wall to buy some of the dried meat that kept the Voortrekkers alive on their great trek through the wild and savage country it still was back in those days. I was hungry for that experience. People had told me that Cape Town is not the ‘real Africa’. “Follow the N1 highway up north, and you will find it”, they said. Though I tend to disagree with such claims of authenticity I believed this trip could only improve my understanding of the country and my research population. After all I was about to do the same thing that Fokofpolisiekar did in the first four years of their existence, driving around in their mini-van from one place to the other for yet another show. So when Francois van Coke told me that I could join them on tour, but that I would have to take care of my own transport, I knew I would not take the airplane but go for the more expensive and time consuming option.

My aim was twofold. My research was in the first place about the consumers of alternative Afrikaner music in Cape Town, but in order to understand them I had to have a frame. I wanted this tour to help me understand the specifics of the popularity of Fokofpolisiekar in Cape Town, compared to other places in the country. In addition to that I felt that in order to understand the consumers, I had to understand more about the producers. Fokofpolisiekar had already been touring since 2003 and the audience at their concerts remained for the most part in its early twenties. As I explained in the first chapter a lot has changed concerning the position of Afrikaners in the new South Africa. I was curious about
the effect of these developments and the generation gap on the reception of Fokofpolisiekar among its fans. Therefore I wanted to attend some shows, spend more time with the band members and see how things went backstage. I interviewed Francois van Coke about a month earlier and through email contact we arranged for me to be with them before, during and after the shows.

In this chapter I will start with an ethnographic description of the Fokofpolisiekar concert in Bloemfontein. From there I analyze the manifested enthusiasm and show that there is a difference in the way Fokofpolisiekar and its audience in Bloemfontein look at issues of identity and Afrikanerdom. I will then make the link between Bloemfontein and Cape Town to show that a similar ambiguity – though in a less extreme form – that I saw in Bloemfontein can be found in Cape Town. I will end with a short analysis of the role of Bellville – the suburb of Cape Town where the members of Fokofpolisiekar as well as many of my informants grew up – in the lives of my research population. With this I aim to show the way in which my informants not only reject Afrikanerdom and move away from it, but also embrace certain elements of it at the same time.

“Fokof Will Play the Shit out of that Rugby Match”

I called Francois at seven at night when we arrived in our youth hostel in Bloemfontein after a day of driving through the country. He had arranged a backstage pass for me at the entrance of Die Mystic Boer, the bar where they would perform as part of the RAMFest (Real Alternative Music Festival), where I was welcome to join them during the night. My name was neither on the list, nor were there any backstage passes to give away, said the man at the door of Die Mystic Boer after he discussed my story with his colleague. I tried to convince him that I am Francois’ guest, and showed him the text messages that he sent me. It did the trick, I could come in. I was delighted to hear everybody speak Afrikaans. The man was surprised that I addressed him in English. It was a habit of mine that I adopted in Cape Town where people generally speak English during the first encounter with someone else. Though my Afrikaans was not really bad, I had experienced that people started to speak English when they heard my accent. Perhaps it was the tourist in me, perhaps the traditional anthropologist; I felt enthusiasm arising about the fact that I was dealing with people that were culturally speaking perhaps more Afrikaans than the Afrikaners back in Cape Town with whom I spent so much time. I had been warned that I might find those here, by my very informants.
Should I say I was warned? I could say that I was prepared by them, but that does not cover the way in which they brought the information to me. It came, in several occasions, accompanied by lifted eyebrows and ironic laughter. One time a person even wished me good luck in Bloemfontein. There was a definite connotation to this ‘real Afrikaner’, living in the ‘real South Africa’. Upon asking, the stereotypes of the real Afrikaner appeared quite clear and straightforward. The most important ones were rugby, *braai*, family values, Christianity, racism, machismo and above all the pride of being white and Afrikaans. According to my informants, I would find those negative stereotypes a lot more in Bloemfontein and like-minded cities in the region than in Cape Town.

This idea was quite common in Cape Town and, as I would learn later, in Johannesburg and even in Pretoria, which has itself a bit of a similar reputation in Cape Town, too. The mentality that my informants referred to could be traced back to the time of the first *Voortrekkers*. As I explained in the introduction, the first European settlers had arrived in Cape Town about two hundred years before the *Voortrekkers* moved to the interior of South Africa in great numbers. Contrary to Cape Town, having flourished from trade for decades and aware of European trends, the places where the *Voortrekkers* went were relatively isolated from the coast, let alone the rest of the world. The Boers had to work hard to survive. The ideals of the Enlightenment that spread from Europe never quite arrived at this place and their belief that they were the chosen people, racially superior over others, were held on to as a motivation that they were doing the right thing. Life was tough; it was an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. This combination of strong belief, economic backwardness and the dependence on those close to you, accounted for the differences with Cape Town, still today.

So here I was in Bloemfontein. Francois had told me there were only one or two bars in the whole city that were willing to host them, for the rest was too conservative to appreciate Fokofpolisiekar. One of them was *Die Mystic Boer*. Though the word Boer referred to traditional Afrikanerdom, the word Mystic gave an ironic twist to it. Mysticism would be the last thing the strongly Calvinist farmers in the South African countryside would want to be associated with. Upon arriving in the street filled with clubs next to which also *Die Mystic Boer* was located, I witnessed segregation that I was not used to from Cape Town. Every single bar had its own racial orientation. Most of them were black, a couple were colored, and just around the corner at the beginning of a side street, slightly deprived of view from the main entertainment street was *Die Mystic Boer*. A bar with only whites, and as far as I found
out that night completely Afrikaans speaking too. The second of two establishments of Die Mystic Boer is located in Stellenbosch, yet another Afrikaner stronghold close to Cape Town.

My entry into Die Mystic Boer was easier than I had experienced entering other clubs earlier in my research. Whenever I walked in somewhere on my own I indirectly presented myself as someone with a different interest in the night’s event, for usually people who came to enjoy the night had company. Just before leaving the owner of the hostel and an employee had insisted that we as their only guests for that night would have a couple Jägermeister shots with them, and used the 15 minutes that we stayed to make a handful of sexist jokes about gay people. That in combination with their flirtatious behavior towards my friend hinted at the stereotype of the macho Afrikaner that I had been warned for. In Die Mystic Boer I experienced a similar atmosphere which was in the first place hard to explain, but which made me glad that I had company, and female company for that matter. I felt that it offered me a little bit of prestige that would help me to get in touch with the people. I thankfully profited from the situation by buying a drink at the bar for the two of us. As we ordered two beers, they were to my great surprise not opened with regular beer openers but with thirty centimeter long kitchen knives. For a moment I thought the bartender used it because it was just the first thing at hand, but I realized that all the bartenders carried the same knife with them, for the sole purpose of opening bottles. Though I had not quite defined machismo, I figured this behavior fell under it.

We walked around a little bit and I absorbed the atmosphere in the bar. Contrary to what the people in the youth hostel had promised us, the place was quite crowded at that time at night. A hard rock band singing in English was performing and a fair amount of people – about fifty percent of the estimated 150 people present in Die Mystic Boer – were standing in front of the stage. They clearly liked what they were seeing and quite a few of them appeared to be hard rock fans, judging by the band merchandizing that many of them wore. The other half of the people were standing outside or around the pool tables that were positioned in the wing of the bar, many drinking and smoking. The whole place had a bit of a rough character with brick walls, band and film posters and some darkish corners, due to a lack of proper lights. I texted Francois van Coke and told him I was inside. He invited me over to the backstage area.

I left my friend behind for a while and found the door opened by an enthusiastic Francois. He quickly introduced me to the three members of Fokofpolisiekar that I had not met: Wynand Myburgh, Hunter Kennedy and Johnny de Ridder’s stand in, Jed Kossew, guitarist of Francois’ current other project Van Coke Kartel. Francois, Hunter and Wynand
were about to do a short interview and Francois asked me if it was ok if we talked afterwards. I saw Jaco “Venter” Snakehead standing in a corner warming his wrists, drumming with his sticks in the air. I had met him before and went over to him to say hello. He looked horrible and told me that his appearance was the result of downing two crates of beer and no sleep with Hunter after last night’s show in Port Elizabeth. The rock’n’roll spirit was still there.

We chatted a bit and Jaco told me that earlier that night a couple people from the DRC had been praying in front of Die Mystic Boer against RAMFest. I remembered a circulating E-mail that had been posted on the earlier mentioned Afrikaner web blog WatKykJy? in which a member of the DRC from Bloemfontein had expressed her worries about the “satanic” festival which was, according to her, organized in order to worship the Devil. Griffin, owner of the web blog, had reacted mockingly, telling her to look for the Devil in her own church (2012b). Originally the festival was supposed to have taken place elsewhere in town, but the owner of the location had succumbed to the pressure of the DRC and had stepped back as a host. A new location had to be found and Die Mystic Boer had been willing to host the festival. Though the intended location had been bigger the organization took their loss and decided to go for this option. Apparently Francois had been right when he told me that there were not many places where Fokofpolisiekar was allowed to play in Bloemfontein. Unable to ban the festival entirely from Bloemfontein, some members of the DRC had gone to Die Mystic Boer that night to pray and chase away the evil spirits, but neither the organizers nor the audience of the festival had paid much attention to them; I had tried to ask some of the people in Die Mystic Boer about it, but they either had not heard or did not care.

I left Jaco to his preparations and spotted two guys standing in the middle of the room. I approached them with the silly but effective question whether they were Fokofpolisiekar fans. Immediately I had their attention. Both claimed that they were the biggest fans in the world. One of them argued why, simultaneously suggesting what his life looked like: “I play Fokofpolisiekar at all my parties. I party with Fokofpolisiekar, then I go to sleep with Fokofpolisiekar, then I party with Fokofpolisiekar, then I go to sleep with Fokofpolisiekar, then I party with Fokofpolisiekar, then I party with Fokofpolisiekar.” A chance to support his claim was provided when Francois walked into our direction after his short interview had finished. The boys addressed him and asked for a photograph. Phones were taken out and pictures were being taken. It took a couple of shots to capture Francois pulling angry faces with his admirers standing next to him. In between he looked up and saw me taking a picture of what was happening. He winked at me, creating a bond over the back (literally and
figuratively) of his fans. That week our relation would grow and I felt that he appreciated me as a neutral outsider who had not quite experienced their fame yet.

Both fans wore the same rugby jerseys, white and orange with green advertisement. I realized they were not the first that I saw; in fact about twenty people in the bar were wearing them. I also remembered now that when we made a reservation for the hostel the day before, the employee told us over the phone that we were welcome to arrive before five or after seven, but not in between. They would be at the stadium watching a match of the Free State Cheetahs, the local professional rugby team. The boys, both in their early twenties, came straight from the stadium too, as did most of the other people wearing rugby jerseys. They had seasonal tickets even though they were not from Bloemfontein. For every game they had to drive about 200 kilometers, an event that they usually combined with a weekend of going out in town. That day the Cheetahs did not play well. My understanding of rugby was not significant enough to follow their critique on the match, but a third guy in a Led Zeppelin T-shirt who had just joined us knew what they are talking about. Though he was also sad, this young man knew that the remedy to this great disappointment could be found right there and right then: “Fokofpolisiekar will play the shit out of that rugby match”, he said. Francois and his companions had just left the backstage area after a friendly pat on my shoulder, and I followed my newly made contacts to the front of the stage, while they yelled the lyrics of the band’s name song: “Fokof, fokof polisiekar, fok jou, fok jou polisie-man!”

Back there I saw that all people in Die Mystic Boer had gathered to see the night’s main act. I estimated the average age to be early twenties and there were about twice as many boys as there were girls. I saw then that apart from the people with band merchandizing and those with the rugby jerseys, there were also a lot of ‘normal’ people, wearing jeans and plain colored t-shirts. Those were not the typical hard-rock fans but the average Afrikaans youngster. The band came on stage, the people started yelling and shouting. For about half a minute they took a couple of necessary actions like the plugging in of guitars. Then, without any further announcement, they started playing “Brand Suid Afrika”. Immediately the crowd started reacting. I had thought that they were enthusiastic toward the band that performed before, but after seeing this I had to reconsider my earlier opinion. That was nothing compared to what was happening now. Almost everybody knew the lyrics of every song and sang along throughout the entire show. Instantaneously a mosh pit developed in front of the stage. People threw their hands in the air with generally two gestures. One was the clenched fist that symbolizes rebellion, joining Fokofpolisiekar in their anger. The other was perhaps
best described as two open hands held up in the air, as if firmly trying to receive something from the atmosphere around them.

All the enthusiasm taken into account, there was one thing that struck me above all other things that I observed. As of the moment Fokofpolisiekar started to play, a transformation took place among the public. I believe the best way to describe what I saw is an enormous increase of a sense of brotherhood among the people present. People started to embrace each other. Close hugs between two people, face to face or side to side faced towards the stage, with the two spare arms in the air while their heads often touched each other. They made rows from three up to seven people, standing side by side, arms over one another’s shoulders, sometimes closing into a circle, heads again bent forward so contact was made. If one of the people stood alone there was a fair chance his friend would jump on him, grabbing his body as the start of a new embrace.

When they did not face the stage to sing towards Francois and his fellow musicians, they looked each other in the eyes while shouting out the lyrics of the songs, making dramatic faces as if they felt the emotions that were connected to it physically. A girl standing next to my friend – who I had joined again – looked up at her while singing the lyrics of the song that were being played at that moment, looking with expectation for her reaction and the bond they might create through singing together. My friend did not know the lyrics and could not answer her request. The expression on the girl’s face changed into a look of curiosity; she kindly laughed and turned back towards the stage. Though she had tried to react with enthusiasm, thus encouraging the girl’s introduction, her reaction was not good enough to actually join the group.

On stage Jaco was drumming wild while Hunter and Jed were rather introvert in playing their parts, next to Francois and Wynand who were almost hyperactively doing what they usually did. I recognized the movements from the documentary about Fokofpolisiekar that I had seen and I would see the same movements again when I saw them performing live twice more in the week that would follow. Some of them were individual movements that characterized the person but were not meant to evoke interaction with the public. Wynand for example had one move in which he took a sip of water and spat it out right at the climax of a song. Francois had a habit of swinging the microphone around on a meter of cable, catching it from the air the second before he had to start singing again. Some of the movements were universal rock symbols, like the jumping up while kicking both legs in opposite direction, hitting the ground the moment you strike the guitar, or the good old head banging.
Other movements, however, were very clearly directed towards the public. Especially Francois was interacting a lot. He stage dived, high-fived or bent down to bring his face to those of the crowd while singing. The people reacted to this by reaching out with their hands to whatever body part was within their reach and sang the songs along. There was one movement, however, that evoked the most significant reaction. Francois stood at the front of the stage, stretched his body out so far that it slightly curved his torso in front of his head and feet, spread his arms with a slight angle upwards and looked down upon his fans. As if reenacting Jesus Christ’s position on the cross, a rush of energy went through the venue and instantly all fists arose to pay tribute to this man that seemed unearthly while performing on stage. I had to think about the story that was told in the Fokofpolisiekar documentary in which Francois puked on stage, was hit by Wynand's guitar and started to bleed. He kicked the combination of blood and vomit from the stage onto the public where one girl smeared it over her body as if receiving a divine gift.

I felt great standing there between those people that were soaked from their own sweat, ecstatically listening to this band of which they were probably all the biggest fans in the world, trying to express the connection between each other that was too strong to express through just embracing, causing them to pull painful faces indicating the hurt they felt under such intense feelings. I felt the energy that was rushing through the venue, even though I could not be fully part of the experience that these young Afrikaners had. But at the same time I had a strange feeling. I was witnessing something that I had not quite expected. In this place, where I felt an anthropological excitement about the supposed pureness of Afrikanerdom, about the recognition of stereotypes, I was witnessing an ecstatic admiration of a band that brought all these Afrikaners together, that touched them in their very essential being, but that also created a bond that could in no way be entered from the outside. It was a bond between people who lived in a country where they were not only a minority but also politically and socially disadvantaged. They were in a place and at an event where they could be who they were, where the core of their being was touched upon. This looked like an experience of something that could not be experienced in daily life, not in this way, not in other places or other situations. Even though I had never experienced actual apartheid, I saw a celebration of Afrikanerdom that reminded me of it.
Different Time, Different Place

About nine years earlier, as I described in the introduction, Fokofpolisiekar came about with a mission. They wanted to break away from the restrictive and claustrophobic Afrikaner community in Bellville. This community was characterized to a large extent by its Christian nationalist beliefs. The DRC was one of the main elements of the conservative community that the band rebelled against. This church had during apartheid propagated that they, Afrikaners, had been the chosen people. Fokofpolisiekar did not want to be associated with this church, nor with apartheid, a regime they had never consciously experienced, let alone stood behind. Breaking away from the self-centered ideas of Christian nationalist Afrikaners, they met the ideals of the rainbow nation where people of different color, sexuality or religion had equal rights and acceptance.

That night in Bloemfontein I saw a group of Afrikaners who clearly flourished in the establishment of a communal feeling. But I could not see in what way this was different from the self-centered attitude of the conservative Afrikaners in Bellville that Fokofpolisiekar had tried to move away from. After the show I had approached a boy of about 18 years old. He was showing his friends some pictures that he had taken with Francois and Jaco. When he noticed my interest he proudly showed the pictures to me, telling me that it was such an honor to have met them. I had addressed him in English but, as was the case with many people that night, his English was poor and after some time we switched to Afrikaans. He looked exhausted, overwhelmed by the experience of tonight. When I asked him why he was such a great fan of Fokofpolisiekar he told me he could hardly explain. They spoke to his emotions; their lyrics spoke to his emotions. I knew that the lyrics, written by Hunter Kennedy in poetic and very correct Afrikaans had played a huge part in their popularity. I asked the boy what exactly the lyrics were about, but he could not really pinpoint it. Unable to come up with a concrete example he told me: “Fuck it man, they say what they think. Fuck the people, you know”.

It was this quote that made me realize the association I had made times of apartheid. A group of young Afrikaners in Bloemfontein were attending a show of the most popular Afrikaner rock band in South Africa. They felt they were part of a group like they did not often feel it, and ecstasy came over them. Their thoughts: “Fuck the rest”. They shared the anger of Fokofpolisiekar yet something had shifted the focus of their anger. Whereas Fokofpolisiekar had tried to exclude themselves from one group, the people that I was spending my night with were trying to build themselves in and keep others out. The influence
of Fokofpolisiekar on the lives of these people was exactly like Ryan had told me it was in many places outside Cape Town. “Those kids took one sentence of a song and gave their own twist to it, walking away with it, and becoming exactly those white Afrikaners that the movement had tried to get away from”. They misinterpreted the connotation that Fokofpolisiekar tried to give to Afrikanerdom.

Thus, they focused on the part that only united them stronger as a group and more excluding towards those who were not part of the group. Apparently they did not care much for the DRC. I could not detect any boundaries of their group within the Afrikaans community, like it had been the case for Fokofpolisiekar. It definitely seemed that the boundaries of the group they belonged to were racially and ethnically determined. There were neither Blacks nor Coloreds to be seen, but also my friend and I did not quite manage to get in. I had seen a group that strongly excluded other people. They identified with Fokofpolisiekar, but I also knew that Fokofpolisiekar had not so much been excluding others from their own group but had rather excluded themselves from another group.

Though nobody told me that they supported apartheid, I felt the people in Bloemfontein resembled the people that Fokofpolisiekar had moved away from in many aspects. I remembered a joke that a colored friend of mine back in Cape Town had told me. The question was: which is the fastest moving living being in Bloemfontein? The answer is that it is not the Cheetah, fastest animal on the planet and the name of Bloemfontein’s professional rugby team, but a black man followed by a horde of Afrikaners. His intention had not been to make me laugh but rather to explain the mentality of the city and the reason why he did not like to be there. I had found many of the Afrikaner stereotypes lived up to by the people whom I saw that night. The machismo, the sexist jokes, the inability to speak any other language then Afrikaans, the passion for Rugby. Within this context, Fokofpolisiekar just fit in. Whereas the members of Fokofpolisiekar were now busy with projects that created bridges with other groups in society, the atmosphere in Bloemfontein was oriented inwards instead of outwards and had a nostalgic touch to it. I saw a gap between the producers and the consumers.

This gap was a result of both a difference in place and a difference in time. Contrary to Cape Town, Bloemfontein lies, figuratively speaking, in the middle of nowhere. The boys whom I talked to backstage traveled over two hundred kilometers to get from their home towns to Bloemfontein, the closest city that had any entertainment to offer. The influence from outside was much smaller than in Cape Town and the strong tradition of Boer culture had remained intact. In addition to that, the times were now different. As I described in the
first chapter, a lot happened in the past ten years, both in the music scene and in the national social-political climate (which was partly a result of the music scene). When I did an interview with Bryan Little, director of the earlier mentioned documentary about Fokofpolisiekar, he told me that according to him Fokofpolisiekar would do better by stopping to perform live. He argued the issues that they addressed were no longer relevant today since the situation for Afrikaners in South Africa had changed. Due to the wrong context that the music was then performed in, the lyrics were misinterpreted and considered an ode to Afrikanerdom, a nostalgic commemoration of the old days when Afrikanerdom could publicly be celebrated.

“Francois is fokken Bellville”

During my experience in Bloemfontein I realized that there were certain similarities between the people that I observed in Die Mystic Boer and the people in the scene in Cape Town. Though not to the same extent, I saw the same ambiguity regarding Afrikanerdom among them. My informants came from the same place as Fokofpolisiekar, but also for them the time difference played a role. There were several aspects of Afrikanerdom that my informants in Cape Town embraced, and as with the people in Bloemfontein, they were in certain occasions excluding others rather than simply excluding themselves from the non-integrating group of Afrikaners in Bellville, where many of them came from.

Just after the three boys took a picture with Francois in the backstage area of Die Mystic Boer in Bloemfontein, one of them made a remark about him as Francois turned away to talk to somebody else. “Francois is fokken Bellville”, he said with enthusiasm and deep respect to the others. Like I doubted the connotation to the Afrikanerdom that they glorified, I could not be sure what evoked the respect in his way of speaking that particular sentence. Was it the reputation of Bellville as a conservative Afrikaner suburb, an environment that in many respects looked like Bloemfontein? Or was it rather the reputation of Bellville as a place that brought forth bands such as Fokofpolisiekar? In that case the boy complimented Francois for coming from Bellville for the very reason that he came from Bellville. This double image of Bellville is important in order to understand in what way the ambiguity that I recognized in Bloemfontein was also present in Cape Town. I will therefore sketch both images that Bellville has among my informants in Cape Town.

As is the case with most of the so-called Northern Suburbs, Bellville is mostly inhabited by Afrikaners. The mind-your-own-business mentality of many of those Afrikaners
has obtained the whole Afrikaner area, including Parow, Welgemoed, Durbanville and Brackenfell, the status of being located behind the Boerewors gordijn. The boerewors (farmer’s sausage) is one of Afrikaners’ favorite sorts of meat to put on the braai\(^\text{13}\). Since Afrikaners are known to be rather passionate about braai itself, up to the point of claiming it to be part of their identity, the boerewors is a double association with Afrikaner culture. Hence the imaginary boerewors gordijn – the curtain of farmer’s sausage – effectively symbolizes the line behind which Afrikaner territory begins.

It was the social environment in Bellville that frustrated the members of Fokofpolisiekar up to the point of starting an Afrikaner punk-rock band to shock the conservative Afrikaner community, trying to find a way to get out of Bellville and move to Cape Town. Though Fokofpolisiekar articulated the general feelings of many young Afrikaners throughout the entire country, my informants consisted for a significant part of people who were actually friends of, had been on the same high school or church or were from the same neighborhood as the members of Fokofpolisiekar. They did not only recognize the conservative Afrikaner community as a concept in their songs and lyrics, they knew the very place where their anger had come from and shared that specific anger\(^\text{14}\).

Bellville looks even more conservative because of the strong contrast with culturally rich and arguably liberal Cape Town. The tendency of South African society to reify places instead of thinking in areas that flow over from one into the other adds up to this contrast. For instance, I witnessed a discussion between Ryan and several other people about whether a particular slang word originally came from Cape Town. The arguments of both Ryan and somebody else were dismissed for the same reason: they were both not originally from Cape Town themselves. The fact that Ryan came from Bellville, only 20 kilometers away, and the other from Durban, almost 1300 kilometers away, did not make a difference. Even though officially part of the city of Cape Town, Bellville is often regarded as a separate city and explicitly not part of Cape Town.

For the people in Cape Town who had grown up in Bellville, this ‘other place’ had become representative for the roots of the sentiments that they shared with Fokofpolisiekar.

\(^\text{13}\) Though braai is usually translated as barbecue, many Afrikaners will tell you that it is not the same thing. A braai should ideally take place on an open camp fire, but in practice built-in fire places in the garden or even metal barbecue sets are often used. Yet, the use of wood instead of charcoal is a necessity.

\(^\text{14}\) Obviously Bellville is not only bad. Not all people that live there are Christian nationalists or racists. However, the general tone in which the people in the scene talked about Bellville was rather negative. As I will argue in the third chapter this has got to do with the fact that the message of Fokofpolisiekar has become a bit of a label that the people in the scene wear. Hence, the conservative Afrikaners in Bellville have become symbolic for the whole area.
When Ryan took me to Bellville for the first time we ended up going to a bar where we ordered half liters of Brandy and Coke for 10 Rand$^{15}$ and played pool. A drunken man came over to our table and started talking without invitation. Within five minutes he had been showing his muscles extensively, invited us for a *braai* on which he would prepare a piece of meat of the size only both his arms could embrace, told me that he did not like black people and sexually harassed (though not very seriously) our female companion. When I asked Ryan whether he liked it here he told me he did not. While looking around he said that “this” had been exactly the reason for him to leave.

But there is another connotation to Bellville. When Ryan told the other people in the earlier mentioned discussion that he had grown up there, he told them with pride. He had witnessed the developments to the formation of the band from the very beginning, when the members were still in several English speaking bands. The context in which the discussion took place was not unfamiliar to him, yet not quite part of his own comfort zone. The people present were from different parts of the country and not all familiar with his background. In addition to that, not all of them were Afrikaners and a couple of them were of Indian ethnicity. They were however all musicians and we were sitting at the bar in a jazz club. You could say that we found ourselves at the edge of the scene. Ryan profiled himself by emphasizing the fact that he was from Bellville. All of them being musicians and in a creative environment, he could play the Bellville card in order to claim the prestige of having been there when ‘the revolution’ took place.

The claim to prestige that Ryan made is not unique. The recent production of a documentary shows that there is at least some agreement over the fact that Bellville can be seen in a positive light as well. It was called “12 Mile Stone”$^{16}$ and complemented a compilation CD called “Bellville Rock City” with songs from bands that originated from Bellville. The documentary followed some of those bands on tour, combined with interviews with the band members. Interestingly enough, the focus of the documentary was on some of the bands that the individual members of Fokofpolisiekar had started in 2007, which I mentioned in the previous chapter. Those bands consisted of people that for the most part came from Bellville originally, but at the time of starting the bands they had already moved to Cape Town. Still, they were associated with Fokofpolisiekar and through it with Bellville.

---

15 About 1 Euro.
16 Bellville is located on the place where the “12 Mile Stone” – indicating the distance to Cape Town – used to be. The city that developed there was called 12 Mile Stone for some time before it was renamed Bellville.
One moment Bellville can represent strong Afrikanerd, conservatism, Christianity and even values that are associated with apartheid, such as racism. Another moment it can represent the start of a new generation, one that has supposedly moved away from the old values, from all that is – paradoxically enough – associated with Bellville. I saw this clearly in Bloemfontein, and it made me realize that it is also present in Cape Town among my research population. This ambiguity makes the following possible: Ryan told me in several occasions that he only really grew up after he left Bellville for Cape Town when he was 17 years old. That is where his education began, where he said that his identity was constructed. But at the same time, when the conversation was on at a party, he would proudly claim – like the young man in Bloemfontein did for Francois van Coke – that he was “a Bellville”.

Conclusion

Even though the members of Fokofpolisiekar, as I explained in the first chapter, now had different priorities than when they started out, their music was still immensely popular and they kept on touring. In this chapter I have argued that despite this popularity the intentions of both parties – producers and consumers of the music – were not (or no longer) exactly the same. The anger that was by Fokofpolisiekar particularly directed against the conservative and religious community was by the people in Bloemfontein directed against “the rest”, which in that setting meant the non-whites and non-Afrikaners. In other words, instead of excluding themselves from the conservative Afrikaner community, thus defining what they were not, they excluded other people, thus defining what they were. By doing so they constructed a social group that they withheld for certain others. It revealed a mentality that forms a great barrier to achieving a successful rainbow nation where people of different race and color are regarded equal and live alongside one another. In this mentality I recognized similarities with the philosophy behind the apartheid regime in which the white minority was in many ways advantaged over the rest of society.

This observation was an eye-opener to me about the situation in Cape Town. Though I never had the idea that the scene meant a revival of times of apartheid, I clearly saw that there were certain elements of Afrikanerd that the people in it clung to. Because of the very popularity of Fokofpolisiekar, what they rose against – Bellville, symbolizing conservative Afrikanerd – had gained a new status, a positive one, that existed next to the ‘original’ negative one. This had created a paradox that lay at the foundation of the processes of identification of the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners in Cape Town that was involved in
the music scene. And just like in Bloemfontein, I realized that because of this the scene had a somewhat excluding character.

This discrepancy was manifested to different extents in the four pillars that I distinguished. For Fokofpolisiekar the most important source of frustration was religion, as I described in the first chapter. Clearly the DRC is an institution that plays a role in Bloemfontein, as they had managed to change the location of the festival and were praying in front of Die Mystic Boer. However, the lack of interest among the visitors for those people shows that it was not really a big issue for them. They had not really paid attention to it and they hardly had an opinion about it when I asked them. Clearly their anger was not so much directed against this institution, like it had been the case for Fokofpolisiekar. Two of the other pillars however played a bigger role. Both language and race were very important in Bloemfontein as they distinguished the people who were present that night. In the strictly segregated environment of Bloemfontein there was not a single colored or black person to be found in the venue that night. They spoke few English and my friend and I could not actually become part of the group. Whereas the English singing band before Fokofpolisiekar had evoked relatively little enthusiasm, Afrikaans speaking Fokofpolisiekar “spoke to their emotions” and evoked a strong sense of brotherhood.

As for the role of land it was a bit different. Many of the people that night came from the countryside, like the two young men that I spoke to backstage. They came from the place that Fokofpolisiekar criticized as being the worse, in the sense that what they were angry about was most present there. Part of the reason for the discrepancy between the view of the audience that night and the view of Fokofpolisiekar was this difference in place. Together, the difference in place and time are responsible for this discrepancy and the paradox of the post-apartheid generation. In the next chapter I will elaborate on this paradox by analyzing the role of the scene in the way in which the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners deals with the past of Afrikanerdom.
3 Being Tolerant or Being Tolerated?

I was in the second week of proper research after about a week of settling in, and I had my first official interview. Francois van Coke, lead singer of Fokofpolisiekar, was willing to sit down with me for an hour or so in a café close to where he lived in the neighborhood Woodstock, ten minutes outside of the city center of Cape Town. We sat on the porch on a hot early afternoon. Francois ordered a vodka tonic, I was drinking coffee, and I fired away. I explained my interest in Afrikaner bands, but before I could go into more detail about my research, he interrupted me: “I do not call myself an Afrikaner”, he said. I worried, was I completely on the wrong track with my research? I asked him why and he told me that it was “because Afrikaner culture is so often seen as Boere culture, (...) the culture of the more conservative Afrikaners”. I realized later that this very first quote that I wrote down contains the core of the argument of my thesis. Because of the negative associations of Afrikanerdom, Francois did not identify as an Afrikaner. He identified with many of the elements of Afrikanerdom through his songs and performances, but only in the context and on the conditions that he had created himself: as a musician that had disconnected himself from the conservative Afrikaners.

In the previous chapter I have argued that even though there has been a clear movement among a group of young Afrikaners away from their conservative Afrikaner background, there is at the same time a tendency to refer to that background with a certain pride, even some kind of nostalgia. Even if this group criticizes many aspects of that environment, they identify with it at the same time on some level. So far I have argued the presence of this paradox among my informants. In this chapter I will elaborate further on the manifestations of it. I argue that the music scene functions as a platform for the debate about Afrikanerdom and the people who are part of the scene directly or indirectly take part in that
debate. As such, being part of the scene offers the possibility to identify with many aspects of Afrikanerdom, yet in a way that has different connotations than the ‘old Afrikanerdom’. Because of the marginal position of Afrikaners in South Africa, nowadays identification with this scene provides a more convenient position in society. I will make my point by comparing the lives of two of my informants, structured along the four pillars of Afrikanerdom: land, language, religion and race. I will translate them, as said, into the four related themes territorialization, pride, hypocrisy and tolerance. By doing so I indicate beforehand the role the original elements play in the lives of my informants.

One of my informants was Ryan van der Merwe. Ryan was 25 years old and a very active member of the scene. He grew up in Bellville and hung out with the members of Fokofpolisiekar every once in a while. He came to Cape Town when he was 17 and studied acting. He was about 1.70 meters tall and with dark blond straight hair till his ears and a short beard (that was growing bigger during my stay, as did his hair). He usually wore a T-shirt over a pair of shorts or pants. He drove a very old and most of the time broken Jeep that he had been borrowing for quite some time now in return for working in a sound studio on a friend’s album. He always looked relaxed and especially while driving around, wearing Ray Ban shades and smoking a cigarette you could see he was in his element.

He lived in Vredehoek, a neighborhood in the city bowl just outside the city center of Cape Town where he rented an apartment with one of his best friends, but their apartment functioned a little bit as a second living room for their group of friends. Ryan wanted to be able to live from his music, but though his band was gaining popularity in Cape Town, he was not able to manage yet and until then he had to take jobs such as being a chef or a bartender. Thanks to his huge network He usually had something offered, but he often got bored or annoyed with the job soon and quite. He was therefore usually without money, but like I mentioned in the introduction, this was not necessarily a problem since the members of the scene often did favors for each other in return. His always welcoming others to sleep over at his place got him a fair amount of credit. When I left Cape Town he just got a logistical job offered in the production of a popular television program in 13 countries over the world, for which he would go to a South-East Asian island for a month.

My other informant was Leon Fourie. Leon was 23 years old. He was about 1.80 meters tall with short brown hair and a usually a very short beard. In a way he had the same dressing style as Ryan, usually wearing T-shirts with a pair of pants or shorts, shoes or slippers. Yet he always looked more neat than Ryan and his overall appearance was less rough, less rock’n’roll. It was perhaps the absence of the ever present cigarette in Ryan’s
mouth that played a role too. Leon owned a car but there were some legal complications because of which he could not drive it at the moment. Though in a less joyful way then Ryan, there was definitely something charismatic to him and in encountering other people I often noticed that he made a certain impression on others. Though he had a social character he was not part of any network like Ryan was. He moved in different circles in which he was often professionally engaged.

His background was rather diverse: he lived in several places, among which Cape Town, Namibia, Transkei (an area in the South Eastern part of South Africa) and Durbanville (the earlier mentioned suburb of Cape Town that is often considered to be a part of Bellville). Right now he lived with his uncle in the house of his grandmother (who stayed in a retirement home) in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. He studied photography and tried to become an established fashion photographer. But like Ryan, he had to take other jobs at the side until he managed to live from his photography. However, Leon’s mentality (partly due to the lack of a group such as the scene to rely on) was different than Ryan’s, in the sense that he took those jobs much more serious. At the time of my research he was teaching English at an English school in Cape Town. He recently spent a year in Germany and was trying to arrange a visa for an undefined period of time. As I am writing this, he is in the slow process of application. The data that I gathered with both Leon and Ryan will be complemented here and there with data from people that are respectively outside and within the scene.

**Territorialization**

The Shack is where I have gathered by far most of my data. It is a fairly large place consisting of three two-story buildings of which the six public compartments are connected by a network of staircases, doors and bridges. Next to The Shack is Mercury, also Afrikaans oriented and one of two big live venues in Cape Town (the other being more English South African oriented). When Mercury is open, it can almost be seen as yet another compartment of The Shack. People walk in and out of both places on such nights. For a significant amount of people The Shack has become a bit of a second living room. This was also the case for most of my informants. For some, The Shack meant even more. Exemplary is Ryan, and it is on the basis of his story that I argue the territorial value of this bar, a demarcated area where the legacy of Fokofpolisiekar and the positive connotation of Bellville are manifested as an island of creative Afrikaners in an otherwise mixed urban environment.
Ryan left Bellville when he was 17 years old for reasons that are very similar to those of the members of Fokofpolisiekar: general disagreement with the mentality of Afrikaners in Bellville and in a heavy clash with his direct environment, especially his parents. In an interview that took place in The Shack he told me that when his father found out that he wanted to leave the house, he made his car dysfunctional in order to prevent him from doing so. Ryan called a friend who picked him up and who brought him to Cape Town. After several weeks of crashing at other people’s couches he did not have a place to go anymore. He walked into The Shack, where he had been a couple times in the past weeks, and explained his situation. They offered him a job and a place to stay. Ryan recalls: “The Shack was my family for a very long time. They brought me up, they showed me the way. (...) They wanted to take care of me and show me the right way.”

Ryan quite often said that he only grew up in Cape Town, after he had left Bellville. In this particular case he not only ignored Bellville as the place where he actually grew up, he also replaced the role that his parents had in his life – bringing him up – with that of the people that he worked with and for in The Shack, the people whom he called his family. In the same interview he told me that he had always considered his friends his real family. In the scene, it is most importantly the person’s network that establishes his position. Sometimes references to these networks are vague, like “my brothers from Bellville”, “Francois and all of them” or “us musicians”. One girl summarized it best by saying “we creative people from Bellville are like a family”, thus combining the most important elements of the scene. Though the references were sometimes vague and it was not always clear who Ryan meant, he literally called “the people from The Shack” his family. For others the role that these people played was less explicit, but even for them The Shack felt like the territory of the scene in the Cape Town city bowl – the relatively small area including the city center of Cape Town, surrounded by the Table Mountain and Table Bay.

When considering the territorial value of places like either The Shack or Bellville, we have to keep in mind that South Africa has failed to properly desegregate since the abolition of apartheid, especially the white population in urban environments (Cristopher 2005: 2310). It is due to that legacy of apartheid that people attach such a strong value to a place. For a long time people of certain color belonged to a certain territory by law. Even English South Africans and Afrikaners were mostly divided between respectively the Southern and the Northern suburbs. Typically enough Ryan and the others who called themselves ‘a Bellville’ literally identified with the place rather than with the people from Bellville, who are officially called ‘Bellville-ites’. Still today this influence is sensible and according to many of my
informants one finds different kinds of people in the different suburbs of Cape Town. They are all like little islands where people are alike one another but different from people on other little islands.

The city bowl is where most of the people from the scene lived at the time of my research. In the first chapter I described the feeling of alienation that Fokofpolisiekar felt. They felt disconnected from their background, but at the same time they felt they were stigmatized by the past of their people and did not have their own place in society. This feeling was present among my research population too. Some of the people in the scene had broken quite radically with their parents or with their entire background. Whereas Bellville was, like most suburbs, predominantly inhabited by one particular ethnic group, the demographics of the city bowl were ethnically rather mixed. In this area The Shack was known as the local Afrikaner hangout. Having come from Afrikaans oriented Bellville to the City Bowl the bar functioned as a territorial demarcation of the scene.

For Leon all of this was very different. He had a rather different background that was not bound to any specific suburb, neighborhood or city. His parents were quite young when he was born, and his father was still studying theology at the University of Stellenbosch. At that time they lived in Wellington, a small town about sixty kilometers North-East of Cape Town. They moved to Namibia shortly thereafter. Leon always told me that one can find even more exaggerated manifestations of the stereotypes of Afrikaners in Namibia. Because his father was a freelance minister working for the DRC they had to move often. He went to Transkei in the Eastern Cape in South Africa when he was five years old, but moved back to Namibia again when he was about 12 years old. After high school he left his parents in Namibia and moved back to Cape Town. There he first spent two years in Durbanville in an orphanage for mostly colored people, doing voluntary work. After that he stayed in Germany for three months, and then came back to South Africa where he moved in with his uncle in the house of his grandmother (and his uncle’s mother) in the Southern suburbs.

Leon found it difficult to live in South Africa; he could not really find his place here. In contrast to Ryan he never had one place where he stayed for all his life, yet he did feel at home in certain places. He often told me about the peaceful beauty in Namibia, but even more about how he felt at home in Germany. Leon did not know exactly why, but he did not feel completely at home in South Africa. He did not have a place such as The Shack where he and his friends met, which felt like ‘their place’. At the time of my research he wanted to live in Germany for a longer period of time, perhaps even permanently. He was waiting for his visa,
but it was not at all sure that he would get it. It was hard for South Africans in general to get a visa for Europe, but it was especially hard for white South Africans.

As I explained in the introduction, land has always played an important role in the history of Afrikaners. Already in 1913 the parliament of the Union of South Africa installed the Natives Land Act which ensured that the black native tribes could only claim property on a very small percentage of the land of South Africa. This act remained in place throughout apartheid and formed the basis of the segregation of white and black people. In the previous chapter I argued that in the course of the past nine years Bellville has, in addition to its negative image, gained a positive image. Bellville was the suburb where the members of Fokofpolisiekar were raised, the place where the anger was awakened that shows through in their songs and their image. Because of this, Bellville has a negative connotation which refers to conservative Afrikanerdom, but it also added a positive connotation that refers to the rebellious nature of Fokofpolisiekar and the possibilities of Afrikaner youth in general. The role that land played for this group of young Afrikaners changed in the sense that they moved out of the white and predominantly Afrikaner suburbs that were a product of apartheid. Yet their alternative – The Shack – is essentially similar. Such territorialization is unfamiliar for Leon, whose movement through Cape Town is more diverse and much less predictable.

Pride

The first night I met Ryan was when he had a concert with his band in Mercury, next to The Shack. A girl who I had met told me he would be the right person to talk to for my research. She had introduced us via Facebook and Ryan had expressed himself willing to meet me. Ryan’s band was the supporting act at an album launch of another band. The host of the night addressed the crowd in English, a common habit in Cape Town. When Ryan came on stage, however, he asked the crowd how they were doing in Afrikaans. Immediately after that he switched to English and asked whether there were a lot of English people that night. The main act of that night was the English South African metal band “Sabretooth” and, judging by the reaction of the crowd, there were relatively many English South Africans present that night. “Aah… many English tonight hey?” Ryan observed with a slightly ironic smile on his face, distinguishing himself as an Afrikaner from those who were not. He kept on switching from Afrikaans to English for the rest of the show.

Afterwards, I saw him standing at the bar and I approached him, after which he offered me a drink and showed me around in Mercury and The Shack for about an hour,
introducing me to an enormous amount of people. He was clearly at home there. Every time he moved on he took me with him. I was happy to follow him and I did not have a clear plan for that night but rather let him decide what would happen. When we had seen everybody who he wanted to see, he took me backstage in Mercury and we sat down to “finally do the interview”. What was interesting is that during my time in Cape Town I usually spoke English with Ryan, especially in the beginning when I spoke only a little Afrikaans. That first night we may have spoken a few words of Afrikaans, but no more than that. However, in the months that followed, this night often came up in conversations when Ryan introduced me to someone new and he always mentioned that we spoke Afrikaans. Though he started out saying that only our introduction was in Afrikaans, in time the story evolved to where we did the whole interview in Afrikaans. “He studies Afrikaans youth so we should speak Afrikaans, right?” would be his motivation. Apparently he needed to express that he felt as comfortable speaking Afrikaans as he felt speaking English.

That night in the Mercury and The Shack Ryan felt extremely comfortable, as he usually did when he could perform on stage. In daily life his use of language was slightly different. Many Afrikaners punctuated their English with little Afrikaans words or expressions such as ach, ja, or lekker (oh well, yes or nice), but their comfort was mostly manifest in the urge to swear in Afrikaans. One thing that many of my Afrikaans informants agreed upon was that when it comes to swearing there is no better language than Afrikaans. Ryan even saw the romance of swearing in Afrikaans: “You know… Afrikaans is very… romantic, dis baie romanties. It is a very strong language, like when you say ‘Je ma se poes’ (your mother’s pussy/vagina), right? That’s so strong.” Though Ryan might not use the poetic Afrikaans that Fokofpolisiekar used to express themselves, he too felt the desire or even the need to use his mother tongue when it came to expressing his basal emotions.

However, even if Ryan had the same fundamental urge to express himself in Afrikaans on the most basic level, the role of language in his music was different from the role that it played in the music of Fokofpolisiekar. You could say that Ryan took the statement that Fokofpolisiekar made one step further. As I explained in the first chapter it was unheard of to sing Afrikaans when they started out. As time passed the social climate softened and it was now no longer considered a statement to sing in Afrikaans. Ryan made instrumental music. He did not use any language at all, except “the language of music”. The reason for that, Ryan said, was that they did not want to exclude anybody, which he argued happens the moment you sing in one particular language. Not everybody understands every language, but everybody understands music.
This issue of exclusion always played a role in the scene. For example, whenever one person who did not speak Afrikaans participated in a conversation in the scene, the whole conversation would switch to English. The diverse demographics and the cosmopolitan character of Cape Town made that, at least in the mixed areas, English was the main language on the street. It was very natural for most people to speak English, and it even happened that two Afrikaans people would speak English together just because they did not bother to change to Afrikaans when they had just been speaking English. I heard of people who had known each other for weeks before they realized that they were both Afrikaans. Unlike the people that I met in Bloemfontein, virtually all of my informants mastered the English language better than I did, even though you could tell of many Afrikaners that they were Afrikaans by their accent.

Even in The Shack conversations were therefore often in English when perhaps the majority of the people was Afrikaans. The matter of being Afrikaans or English speaking would often surface, for instance in jokes about each other. The English would call Afrikaners “Dutchmen”, which was conceived derogatory since they always felt strongly that they were not from Holland or from Europe in general but from Africa. Afrikaners in turn would call the English “soutpiel” (salt penis) as they would stand with one leg in Africa and with one leg in England with their penis dangling in between in the ocean. But in the scene Afrikaners did not want to exclude English speakers by means of language.

However, it was a different thing when it was not a voluntary decision. I have witnessed strong indignation among my informants when the right to speak Afrikaans was, according to them, taken away. The one time that I saw Ryan most angry was when he had just come back from a job interview in Bellville and was frustrated to the bone from this experience. One particular part of his frustration was about a policy that had been implemented from higher up as part of the BEE:

R: This Afrikaans girl came in, she couldn’t really fucking speak English at all, but she had to do the introduction in English.
T: Why did she have to do it in English?
R: I don’t know man, she said the government actually states that we have to do this in English, because we don’t discriminate between if you’re black or white, Afrikaans or English or male or female.
T: Tell me what happened there, were there Afrikaans people only?
R: Ja ja it was just Afrikaans people and I went to them and I am pretty bilingual you know, and I went to them and I see this girl and I’m like “if it’s more comfortable in Afrikaans you know, I’m Afrikaans, there’s nobody else around me you know”. What I mean, it’s me and this guy and I can
This fragment fits well into the paradox that I explained in the previous chapter. Ryan had called me that night and clearly needed somebody to talk to. For more than an hour he went on about how he hated the whole application that day. Most of it was similar to the earlier frustrations and anger that he had expressed about the people and their mentality in Bellville. In that respect Bellville represented those parts of Afrikanerdom that Ryan did not approve of. But part of Afrikanerdom is the language Afrikaans. Ryan did not want to exclude anybody by singing in Afrikaans or speaking it when non-Afrikaans speakers were around. At that moment in the interview however, the roles turned around. In Bellville, a girl ignored his Afrikaans nature and in reaction to that he stood behind it stronger than I had ever heard him do so. It was a bit like the members of Fokofpolisiekar used Afrikaans to rebel against their own background.

With Leon I never quite witnessed the confidence in speaking Afrikaans that Ryan often had. Our introduction was interesting in that respect because indirectly my learning Afrikaans was how we met. I wanted to take lessons at a Language School in Cape Town. My teacher was Monique, a girl of my age that I got along with in my first lesson of one hour. Afterwards, without me asking her for any favor she advised me not to take any more lessons. I understood the basics, she said, and what I needed to do was practice more. And so we kept in touch without involving the language school that she worked for. One of those times she introduced me to a colleague and friend of hers who taught English at the same school: Leon. Whereas I would speak Afrikaans with Monique, the conversation between the three of us was in English. I soon learned that Leon was Afrikaans too and I asked him why he would not speak Afrikaans with me. He said the problem was not that he did not want to speak Afrikaans but that he just wanted others to feel comfortable. Though I had indicated that I wanted to improve my Afrikaans, he did not switch.

Leon’s English was exceptionally good. He was in general very good in languages: He was an English teacher and was learning German in his spare time. When I left the country he had just passed a test that he needed to take for his visa. When Leon spoke English he spoke it correctly and without any of the Afrikaans words that Ryan punctuated his English with. He did not use any of the small words that I mentioned earlier, but he also never swore. He was especially in that sense different from people in the scene for whom swearing was, in the tradition of Fokofpolisiekar, a style of speaking and the most important reason to code-switch.
Whereas I spoke Afrikaans with Ryan every once in a while, especially towards the end, I never did with Leon because I had to try so hard before he would give in.

I only heard Leon speak Afrikaans twice. Once was when we were sitting at his place and his uncle came home. We introduced and chatted for a little while. Then he asked Leon in English whether he had fixed a part of the fence in the garden as he had said he would. They went outside and the conversation switched to Afrikaans. The other time was when we were hiking on the Table Mountain. A group of five coloreds approached us to ask if we knew the way and if they could join us. Leon was familiar in the area and said they could. They were very talkative and were constantly making jokes, to us in English and to each other in colored Afrikaans, which is somewhat different from white Afrikaans. Leon spoke in English with them until some point when the group had spread out and he found himself close to one of them. At that point we had just been running down a steep part and Leon tentatively said: “ons eet die berg” (we eat that mountain), to which the guy calmly responded: “ons vreet die berg” (we devour that mountain), after which he continued in English. I cannot tell why exactly he continued in English. It seemed that the colored person did not want to be associated with the white Afrikaans language, the Afrikaans of apartheid. As if taking on a humble attitude, Leon elaborated on how extremely funny colored Afrikaans people are, and how well they use their language, when they had left us.

In the introduction I described how a shared Afrikaans identity was consciously constructed in the beginning of the twentieth century. Language was an enormously important aspect of this identity, and one of the major carriers of the pride that was and still is so strong among Afrikaners. The Belgian writer David van Reybrouck describes how ten years ago when he visited an Afrikaner family in the north of South Africa an old lady told him that he should either speak Afrikaans or leave the house immediately (2001). Though this would probably not happen in Cape Town, it does illustrate the extreme pride that still exists today. The other end of it is the embarrassment of Afrikaners to freely speak Afrikaans. Ryan and Leon were both somewhere in between, but my ethnography shows that they were not quite at the same point.

Ryan was much freer in his use of Afrikaans than Leon was. On stage, where he was at the center of attention and where he embodied the scene, he felt confident enough to explicitly show where he came from. Though he was slightly less confident in daily life he still did not bother to hide his mother tongue and he even got angry when somebody suggested he should. Leon on the other hand was more than averagely interested in language but did not feel the confidence to play with code-switching or to openly speak Afrikaans in
the presence of non-Afrikaners. He too told me about his love for the Afrikaans language and its strength, and he also shared the pride that many Afrikaners had, but in post-apartheid South Africa he did not dare to manifest it. Perhaps the attitude of the colored people on the table mountain illustrated why.

_Hypocrisy_

Ryan was only seven when he decided he did not want to go to church anymore. He always knew that his parents were not really religious, even though they went to church. The moment he found out that his father would actually rather not go either he decided that there was no reason for him to go. Even so it remained a topic of debate until he moved out, his parents always tried to take him with them. It was a very social event and an important meeting ground for the local community. Only once in a while he would join them, but those occasions were rare. He had always been a rebel from the moment he could think for himself, he would often tell me.

He did not have much more to say about it, his opinion was rather straight-forward. He told me he used to pull jokes with his parents to mock religion. For example, his mother had a cross hanging in the hallway and whenever he would pass it he turned it upside-down. While laughing hard he told me what a blast he had when his mother would ask him if he had done it and he would say that it just happened instantly the moment he walked past. The light-hearted way in which he would talk about his break-up with church made it seem that for him there was not so much anger involved, but rather a lack of interest. Still, he would often brag about the fact that he had already come to this point when he was only seven, whereas the members of Fokofpolisiekar had taken much longer to realize that church and religion were not the answer. He constantly positioned himself in relation to Fokofpolisiekar and the moment of them taking the step away from the church. Rebellion was a trademark of the scene and especially when it concerned rebellion against church. Ryan went along in this line, but his ideas about religion were to a large extent a matter of belonging to the scene rather than the result of a personal trauma.

Leon was more nuanced in his ideas about religion. He had critically reflected upon religion and church practices and had reached the conclusion that it was not religion itself that he disagreed with, but rather the form in which others put it. For him the DRC, which is a large part of religion for Afrikaners, was too much associated with apartheid. He was aware
that the DRC functioned as an apparatus for the regime to convey ideology and establish control. He wanted to get away from this association, but not from religion itself:

I wouldn’t move away from it. Because not everything, the whole religion came from apartheid, about people controlling each other. That created some bad stuff in it and people, and people misused that. Personally I am convinced of God, so I just want to purify what I believe in, make sure it’s right. I can’t enforce my views on you, because then you wouldn’t believe in it. I would be a complete hypocrite if I’d try that.

Though he found his own ways, he still believed in a Christian God, a concept that he challenged for himself but ended up believing in after all. The personal level on which Leon believed in God turned out to be relatively close to what his father believed. Leon’s father was himself a freelance minister who worked for the DRC in Namibia. Leon did not disapprove of this, for by far most churches were, according to him, no longer very conservative. His father was connected to a rather liberal one, but it was still not always easy to explain this. Whereas he had reflected upon his religious ideas and concluded that he could not be connected to a church, his father was connected to the church that was most associated with apartheid. When he had the time he did not mind to explain his ideas to people, he could defend himself in this matter. When Leon was younger he once got enrolled in a conversation about his believes with a colored man who saw that he felt uncomfortable talking about it. What he said made a great impression on Leon: “Never be ashamed of where you come from”. But even now, when the situation was not such that he could properly explain it he preferred to avoid the topic. It just made things easier.

The hypocrisy mentioned in the previous quote that Leon was afraid of was for him a big issue in the religious practices of many Afrikaners:

I became a lot more questioning about ways in which people question Christianity, because of where it comes from. I’m very sensitive about doing certain things, for example marriage. Christians try to do everything from the bible, but did they have marriage 2000 years ago? How did that go? I don’t want to be a hypocrite. (…) Afrikaans people are religious in a dangerous way. Afrikaans people go to Church, pray to God and then in the week drink every night, sleep around, hit people, so doing things that they say on Sunday that they won’t do. So Afrikaners became comfortable with the practice of religion but they weren’t really religious. And that’s one of the biggest things that I rebelled against, on a personal level.

Though they dealt differently with religion in form, the essential critique of hypocrisy was wide-spread among my informants. Some of them, usually those who were not part of the
scene, were, like Leon, religious. Most were not. But almost all of them recognized the hypocritical nature of church going Afrikaners. Ryan told me about a time during which he already lived in Cape Town, when he went to a charity day of his parents’ church as he was visiting them in Bellville. By that time he had done something remarkable: together with his (now ex) girlfriend he had adopted a black child. In this conversation, Ryan tells me about a time when he took his adopted child to a charity day of a DRC in Bellville a couple years earlier:

Nadia was like almost the only little black kid there, this conservative fucking area, (…) and then ‘n auntie[^17] said: ‘I hope that’s not yours’, and I was like, ‘what do you mean?’ She’s just like: ‘ach… nothing…’ and I’m like: ‘ja! That’s my kid, I helped this kid, I took her in from the street and I adopted her. I thought that was what the Christian people do, you know? Why am I buying food here at the bazaar then? To support the cause?’ Because what’s wrong with a black kid? (…) And [Nadia] ran to all the other kids and she wanted to play with everybody, and some moms took their kids away, and I was like: ‘really?!’ I mean this kid is the only one that is smiling, and like you’re putting your kid away because my kid wants to go greet your child, you know what I mean?

Other parts of the conversation made clear that Ryan did not expect any better from the people he encountered at this charity day, and his asking whether what he did was not exactly what Christianity wanted him to do, was ironic in the sense that he would never do anything because it would be the Christian thing to do. Yet, he clearly indicated that the people in the church do not practice what they preach.

Not doing what they stand for – that was in essence the critique that both Leon and Ryan – and with them many other of my informants – had about religion, but more importantly, about traditional Afrikanerdom in general. Hypocrisy is a word that often came back while talking about many different aspects of Afrikanerdom, swearing for instance. Whereas Ryan and his friends swore without reservations, Leon and most people that were not part of the scene did not. One of my informants reflected on the use of swearwords in Afrikaans culture. She was a 25 years old girl who studied Literature in Stellenbosch, but lived in Cape Town. Though she was not part of the scene she was a big fan of Fokofpolisiekar and loved Jack Parow even more. Die Antwoord was one step too far and the main reason for that was their explicitly vulgar language. She explained the absolute taboo on the word poes (pussy/vagina) among Afrikaans people. The one time in her life that she had

[^17]: ‘n auntie is the anglicized form of ‘n tannie, meaning an aunt. Ryan says ‘n (pronounced ‘a’), Afrikaans for a/an, which indicates the influence of Afrikaans on his English.
used it she was driving her car with three male friends next to her. Suddenly a truck cut her off and in a reflex she started shouting and swearing. Her friends had looked at her in disbelief and even got in a verbal fight. According to them it was completely inappropriate to use such language, especially for girls.

Their claim correlated with what I heard about the reactions to Fokofpolisiekar once they had come out. When they were finally broadcasted on national radio, they were announced as “Polisiekar”, because the word “fokof” could not be said. Another time when they appeared in a television show the host said he was so relieved that they were there because by announcing them he could finally swear, finally he could use the word fokof, a word that he would otherwise never be allowed to use. It seemed as though the Christian values were surfacing and, Christian as Afrikaners are, swearing was something they did not do. Yet, I heard other stories about Afrikaners that did nothing but swearing, for example those that Griffin from the web blog WatKykJy? told me. When I asked him why he started the website he told me that:

There is still a big group of conservative church going Afrikaans people, but they don’t really live by the book. They party hard in the weekend and then on Sunday they would go to the church. If you’d sit in a bar and you’d look at them, they would say “Wat kyk jy?”, like they would want to sort out everything with their fist. They are the people that would get really drunk at a rugby match and get into trouble and stuff and then go to church on Sunday. We decided to hold up a mirror to Afrikaans people. These people would swear at home, in private, and me and my friends wanted to show how they really are.

Griffin highlights the fact that there is a clear difference between what Afrikaners say they do and what they actually do. Like in the religious practices of many Afrikaners, hypocrisy also plays a role in many other parts of their lives.

I defined religion as one of the pillars of traditional Afrikaner identity. Leon disapproves of the role that the DRC played during apartheid. Ryan disagrees with the idea of religion entirely. Ryan, whose break-up with the church fits in with the general tendency of the scene regarding religion, takes position right opposite from traditional Afrikanerdom, a position that the people in the scene understand immediately as the same that Fokofpolisiekar took. Leon on the other hand took a much more complicated position that, if he did not have the time to explain it thoroughly, he rather just not mentioned. But they both agreed on one thing. Many Afrikaners are hypocritical in their practice of religion. Hypocrisy, in turn, stood for many of the bad habits of Afrikaners. But again, Ryan used the word hypocrisy without
nuance to label Afrikaans behavior, whereas Leon made sure that he would explain why he thought a certain behavior was hypocritical.

**Tolerance**

Whenever I asked Ryan any question relating to racism he was always explicitly and fanatically against it. Those conversations, if we had them, were usually quite abstract, about the concept of equality or about the despicability of the racist. We did not very often have those conversations because he would never start them and I always felt a bit uncomfortable talking about racism with whites in South Africa. As they knew what my research was about I always felt a bit like I was judging them. When we did talk about the issue it was only a couple times on a more personal level. Ryan told me once how he used to step out of his father’s car when he would use the highly derogatory word for a black person: *kaffer*. Though he said he did not think of his father as a racist, it turned out that his father often used that word. Ryan disapproved of it strongly, and no matter if he would have to walk twenty kilometers, he would not stay in the car sitting there next to him.

To better understand the role of race in his life it is interesting to elaborate on one of Ryan’s favorite activities: “to mission”. Ryan’s greatest mission was to “fill kids’ bellies with food and their minds with music”. He had a plan to open a soup kitchen where musicians played benefit concerts and poor children were fed. In a way he had taken a first step when he adopted Nadia with his (now ex) girlfriend. He had been together with his girlfriend for some time and they had moved in with her mother. Though he never quite realized it while they were a couple, in retrospect Ryan told me his girlfriend was downright crazy, and so was her mother. She had wanted them to adopt a child. Ryan was afraid that they were too young to do so, being only twenty and twenty one years old. But the mother of his girlfriend persisted and they adopted Nadia, though she was registered on his girlfriend’s mother’s name. When he broke up with his girlfriend she and her mother would not let him see Nadia anymore and by the time he told me it had been more than a year since he last saw her. He told me the whole story while we were sitting in his car on the way to a tattoo studio where he would have his entire left chest covered with a picture of Nadia.

Big as though this mission was, they could range to something small and insignificant as sitting in a bar for a whole night, or an adventure that he was undertaking whilst on a psychedelic mushroom trip. At the end of the day surviving was a bit of a mission itself for Ryan. As I mentioned earlier he hopped from job to job and was usually without cash. He still owed his father a big sum of money and whenever he had a bit to spend it often went to drugs.
and alcohol rather than to soup for poor children. In other words, the only results of his missioning were achieved in The Shack, at night, with his friends. What I mean with this is that even if he truly had intentions to do something good for society, his priorities clearly lay with the community of musicians and creatives that he was part of. As a matter of fact, his being without cash reinforced the networks in the scene for the people in it would exchange favors to get around.

There were definitely black or colored people that he dealt with; there was even one black guy who was more or less part of the scene and a friend of Ryan, though he was a bit of an exception. However, analyzing Ryan’s life, one can conclude that he has largely been confined to white circles. He grew up in a white suburb and became part of a rather white scene in a white bar. When I asked Francois van Coke in our first interview about the ‘whiteness’ of the scene he expressed the irritation about my question that I was always afraid of encountering when touching upon the subject. The explanation that he gave me for the lack of black people was that black people just do not listen to rock music. I believe those are true words and very typical in South African society where, even more than anywhere else in the world, cultural and racial lines are synchronized because of the racial segregation on a geographical level.

I should add to this that the racial boundaries of the scene seemed to be expanding slowly as well. I was for instance at a festival in a small village two hours outside of Cape Town. It was a wine making festival where Ryan’s band performed, next to about 20 other solo artists and bands. Though at this festival there was still a vast majority of white people there were also quite some colored and Indian people (but no black people). There was a similar atmosphere at the festival in terms of a “we” feeling among creatives that you would find on a typical night in The Shack. The Shack could be seen as the most important meeting place for the scene, and there everybody’s position in the social setting was relatively established, the networks were already there. At this festival there were many unknown factors, but because networks were so important for the existence of the scene, the “we” feeling in this new setting full of ‘creatives’, a setting with high potential for new connections, was rapidly being established. People that did not know each other at the beginning of the festival soon found out who were there mutual friends – their mutual interests were in the first place making music – and after three days and two nights I would have had difficulties telling who had known each other before the weekend already, had I not been there from the beginning. But even though at the festival the scene appeared to be racially mixed, The Shack as a white bar remained the most important meeting place.
Leon's life is in this respect almost the opposite of Ryan’s life. The first years of his life he did not grow up in a white environment; Leon spent the first five years of his life in Namibia. According to his mother, he told me, that was one of the most important parts of his life. They lived quite solitary and there were not a lot of children around to play with. The few children that were there were black. He believes the only reason why they became friends with him was because he as a white kid had better toys to play with. It does not really matter to what extent this is true or to what extent you can actually become friends at that age. For him these years were formative in his attitude towards non-whites. Also later in his life he has been moving in non-white circles more often. He worked and stayed two years in an orphanage in Durbanville with predominantly colored children. At his work as an English teacher he also has a lot of non-white students.

For Leon, in contrast to Ryan, his priorities did not lie elsewhere. He told me: “one of my most important things is having connections with people. People that I find interesting. (…) For me [that is] one of the most important things in life. Whenever there’s a spark or a real connection I really value that high.” When he found his Somalian student studying his English books while he was selling sunglasses on the street he was deeply touched. Ryan does not encounter many non-white people in his most important circles, Leon does. Still – or perhaps because of that – Ryan’s overall attitude towards people of other races is much more positive than that of Leon. While Ryan, when he does, always speaks positively about non-white people, Leon told me that he sat in a car the other day and somebody in the taxi in front of him threw trash out of the window. Immediately he said “black people”. “It carries itself on and on. It’s really hard to get out of this circle.” But despite that attitude you could say that whereas Ryan does not go further than ideological but usually very abstract glorification of equality of human kind, Leon actually addresses problems and critically thinks about them. For him, they are an actual issue in his life that he cannot deal with by fantasizing only.

This means that whereas Ryan enthusiastically greets black people on the street, Leon is always busy ensuring his position in the context of that particular moment. He will for instance often start a remark about people of different race with the words “I'm not a racist, but…” You could interpret this sentence as an attempt either to refute his own claim to racism or that of an imaginary or non-present other, for he never said who did think he was a racist. Upon asking he told me he said that to anticipate on the ever present possibility of anybody thinking it, and the frequency with which this actually happened. When he visited me at home one day, my black Xhosa flat mate Sibu was sitting in the courtyard. Usually a very interested person, I saw his reservation when Leon introduced himself, his name
betraying his Afrikaans roots (a reservation that Sibu confirmed to me later on). When I asked Leon about it he said he was used to this and had learned not to take any offence from it. Though it did not necessarily confirm that he was considered a racist by others, it did confirm that his background influenced other people’s perception of him.

As I explained in the introduction, apartheid was institutionalized by whites to keep the blacks and coloreds away from them. Inspired by their believes they felt superior to other races and expressed this by inventing an effective system of segregation. Post-apartheid meant one thing above all: whites were not superior to non-whites. Whether or not they agreed with that, all people that I met that were part of the post-apartheid generation knew this, and they were wise enough not to challenge those ideas in public. In theory, times of intolerance towards other races were over, but the reality was that nation-wide many whites complained about reversed apartheid: intolerance towards whites. I compared the way Ryan and Leon dealt with people of other races, and described how Ryan was more explicit in his acceptance of non-whites. In terms of tolerance however, things are significantly easier for Ryan than they are for Leon, because Leon is the one for whom non-whites actually play an important part of his life. Paradoxically Ryan’s ideology is further away from that of apartheid than Leon’s is, while his life-style is closer to it.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I looked at the role that the scene played in the way that the Afrikaners that are in it deal with the past of Afrikanerdom. I did so by comparing the way one person in the scene dealt with each of the four elements that I defined as the pillars of Afrikanerdom with that of somebody who was not part of the scene. It is important to realize that my research took place almost exclusively among whites, and in particular white Afrikaners. The conclusions that I draw are therefore based on their perception of the reality. Although it would be more then interesting to research the way in which coloreds or blacks look at Afrikaners in and outside of the scene, I did not do the proper research to elaborate on that. The confidence, comfort and convenience that I analyzed are experienced among my informants themselves. I talked to colored and black people and most of them were definitely aware of what I call the scene. Also, they shared some of the opinions about the function of it. For example, the label of progressiveness, anti-apartheid and tolerance that the people in the scene feel they carry, simply because they are part of it, turned out to be attributed to them by
some of the colored and black people that I spoke with too. Further research should however take place to support this hypothesis.

As a result of certain connotations to the scene, largely founded by the activities of Fokofpolisiekar, you could say the people in it put a label on themselves, and took certain personal characteristics of each other for granted. Because Fokofpolisiekar has become so popular, this ‘model’ is well known through their lyrics and their image, among many people, but in particular among young Afrikaners, which form the majority of their fan-base. They are, for example, known to be against religion, especially the way the conservative Afrikaans community practices it, and against racism. Those are two important statements that give them an ‘anti-apartheid’ image. On the other hand they do support the Afrikaans language, which suggests that Afrikanerdom and apartheid do not necessarily go hand in hand. As for the issue of land, the people in the scene are not very outspoken about it. Yet, I argued that – perhaps unconsciously – the role that land had during apartheid is still comparable to that which it has in their lives nowadays, though on a different level. It is in any case an important aspect of the existence of the scene and therefore perhaps a necessity for the ‘label’ to exist. Leon, who is not part of the scene, dealt with the same issues that the people in the scene deal with. However, for him everything is much more nuanced. The decision to be very strongly against something is one that he has to make entirely for himself. The figurative label exists in the networks of understanding in the scene. As he is no part of that, he will have to explain and support his opinions all by himself.

In other words, he does not have the scene to back him up. Ryan identifies and often presents himself in the first place as a musician, whereas Leon does not have such an alternative identity. In a country like South Africa – where I still had to indicate whether I was white, colored, Indian or black at the police office when my car was broken into – Leon is, without being part of the scene, in the first place a white Afrikaner. Being an Afrikaner means having to explain yourself, for it does not necessarily mean a good thing (Vestergaard 2001: 22). But there is another benefit to the scene. Even if someone in it would not feel the comfort that the scene offers to introduce or express him or herself to outsiders, there is also less of a necessity to do so. In the end, one already has a group that he or she is part of. This group, with its own territory, decreases the need to be accepted by other people. The scene had somewhat of the same excluding character that I recognized among the group of people that I saw in Bloemfontein. As such the two functions of the group complement one another. Leon has to be more nuanced in his opinion – or: tolerate more – to be tolerated himself. Ryan, paradoxically, has to tolerate less but feels tolerated more.
4 Conclusion

I met Leon a couple weeks after I had met Ryan. In those weeks I got absorbed in the scene, spending many nights in The Shack. Though I met with plenty of other people it was a good thing that I could really engage in a more personal relationship with somebody who was not part of the scene and who could offer me some perspective on their position in society. When we sat together for the first time I introduced my research and he said he had been thinking about those issues a lot lately. He found it fascinating that people still felt ashamed to be Afrikaans. I was confused at that time, because I had just been hearing stories for the past weeks about the fact that people were not ashamed to be Afrikaans anymore. “But that’s different,” he said, “because I’d say that people within the music scene are trying to make an image, are trying to make a statement. Especially in the Rock scene (…) they are all linked together, they are all trying to be against something. So they aren’t ashamed of being Afrikaans.” In the two months that followed I spent more time with both Leon and Ryan and I joined Fokofpolisiekar in Bloemfontein, and I started to understand the effect of the scene on the lives of the post-apartheid generation Afrikaners who were part of it.

Post-Apartheid Melancholia

Though the structure of my thesis is such that the different chapters develop into the main argument that I make in the third chapter, a separate argument can be distinguished in chapter two: The Paradox of the Post-Apartheid Generation. Although Fokofpolisiekar meant to move away from a group of people that they could not identify with, I saw hints of identification with that group among the young Afrikaners in Bloemfontein which were evoked by the very show of Fokofpolisiekar. I argued that for the people in that particular time and that particular place the message of Fokofpolisiekar was interpreted differently than for the members of
Fokofpolisiekar itself. Their attempt to deal with the very environment and culture where they came from seemed to be interpreted as a celebration of this environment and culture. Among the people present in *Die Mystic Boer* in Bloemfontein I recognized the social phenomenon that Paul Gilroy describes as postcolonial melancholia (2001). Though there are certain differences in the situation that I describe with the one on which Gilroy argues his point, the fundamental process is similar.

At the essence of Gilroy’s analysis lies the idea that traditional English culture is being threatened. “…Contact with aliens, blacks and any other outsider can represent only the decline of the UK and the debasement of time-worn British identity.” (2001: 152). Strong as the pride and relatively homogenous as the cultural heritage of Afrikaners is (Jansen 2009: 70), I believe this to be the case in Bloemfontein as well; especially in Bloemfontein where Afrikanerdom can be considered rather traditional. After the abolishment of apartheid Afrikaner values were no longer represented in politics and as a result could no longer be manifested in national social and cultural spheres the way it was manifested before the abolition. Many Afrikaners feared that their culture would disappear (Vestergaard 2001: 27) and still today the matter is being debated, probably most explicitly in the issue of the Afrikaans language disappearing.

The difference with the situation in Great Britain lies in the fact that the British identity is supposedly still being represented on the political platform. Even if the “shared values of the majority” are an illusion (Gilroy 2001: 155), it is these “shared values” that Gilroy challenges and not the majority. In South Africa on the other hand Afrikaners are not, neither have they ever been, the majority. Now that they are no longer politically in charge either, they are in all senses the minority. As a result the fear of cultural decline cannot be fought on a political level. As a matter of fact it is, theoretically speaking, difficult to fight it at all (though the earlier mentioned joke of my colored friend about Afrikaners chasing a black man in Bloemfontein argues otherwise), for even on a day-to-day basis such ‘fights’ could be sanctioned by the non-Afrikaans government. In the minds of Afrikaners Afrikaans culture may be in decline, but in everyday practice they have to deal with the minority status and cherish what they have.

The “blame-the-victim” attitude (ibid: 155) is therefore not applicable, for on a political level Afrikaners are the victims themselves. A certain frustration is however apparent and directed outwards. “Fuck the people” said the boy in *Die Mystic Boer* to me. Though he never quite said who he meant with “the people”, there was clearly somebody to blame. And in this process of blaming the other the same principle becomes apparent that lies at the core
of the situation that Gilroy describes, namely the way of acting upon this blame. In both situations the actual problem is concealed in a different message. It is nowadays problematic to promote Afrikanerdom, just like it can be problematic to criticize the role of (black) immigrants in society in the political debate in Great Britain and the western world in general. What happens is that they “keep the idea of ‘race’ away from the centre of political calculation” (ibid: 154).

The night in Bloemfontein started with a protest of the DRC against RAMFest, but the audience did not show any emotion about the protest. The anger in Fokofpolisiekar’s music had been evoked in the first place by the role of the DRC in their lives, but apparently it did not play a big role in the lives of the youngsters in Die Mystic Boer, neither in a positive nor in a negative way. What did play an important role was the fact that Fokofpolisiekar represented the Afrikaans rebellion. But instead of it being against the exclusionist character of the apartheid mentality it became rebellion against “the people”, thus making it exclusionist itself. The message of the lyrics did not really matter; it had become music to party on, to feel good on. Also musically Fokofpolisiekar was not so different from the other bands that preceded them that night. But when Francois stood on stage in a Jesus like pose he symbolized that Afrikaners could stand up for whom they were again. Whether intended or not, for his fans in Bloemfontein he embodied Afrikaans glory.

Though in Bloemfontein it does not concern politics on an official and national level it does concern informal politics on a day-to-day basis. Great-Britain ignores the issue of race by claiming to have surpassed the problems that race evokes and presenting problems of race as problems of a different nature. The young people in Bloemfontein that I encountered in Die Mystic Boer did not celebrate Afrikanerdom as such, but instead celebrated the performance of Fokofpolisiekar. However, in their celebration they glorified the aspects of traditional Afrikanerdom rather than celebrating the aspects that moved away from it. In both cases the core of the issue is race.

Post-apartheid melancholia – obviously derived from post-colonial melancholia – is a laden concept and you would not soon hear somebody from the post-apartheid generation confirm such sentiments. I spent only one night in Bloemfontein but the atmosphere overwhelmed me. I have tried to bring that atmosphere across and have founded a sub-argument on my observations and conversations there. In addition to that the chapter also had a function in the main argument that I presented in this thesis. In a somewhat more complex way the same thing held for my informants in Cape Town. Though they were more explicit in their rejection of ‘old Afrikanerdom’ they too expressed affection for many of its typical
aspects. In the line of Gilroy I have tried to show the deeply rooted Afrikaner values that also the post-apartheid generation shares. This is not surprising; they were after all raised by their parents, part of an apartheid-generation. I called this the paradox of the post-apartheid generation, which lies in the clashing sentiments about Afrikanerdom and its past. Some are rather conscious about their complex position; some truly believe they have cut loose from the past. Some may be aware of it but just do not like to think of it too much. At the end of the day they are all young people with Afrikaans baggage, trying to cope with it in some way.

Labeling the Network

The main argument that I make is that the people in the scene deal with this baggage in a way other than through Afrikanerdom per se. Fokofpolisiekar and related artists that followed in their footsteps form the ideological fundaments of the scene. Yet, the existence of the scene means more than just an association with music. It gives people the possibility to belong to an entity that associates with this music. In the introduction I stated that I do not consider the people that are part of the scene to be a collection of individualists. Some of my informants that were not part of the scene were fan of Fokofpolisiekar, Jack Parow or other Afrikaans artists. Yet, the difference between them and the people in the scene was that they did not have a comfort zone of others that recognized the statements that were made in the music scene as being part of their identity too. In other words, the associations with the music scene were important, but they only functioned in the social context of the scene. I shall therefore elaborate on the sociological nature of this entity.

It is hard to draw the exact boundaries of where the scene stops and starts, and for some people the consequences of belonging to it were stronger than for others. For example, there was a girl that I would consider as part of the scene. Yet, she maneuvered at the edges. She was originally from France but had moved to Cape Town only when she was 10. She had gone to an Afrikaans school and spoke fluent Afrikaans (though with a slight accent) but she had always lived in the city center and did not have a strict and claustrophobic suburban Afrikaans background. She did not make music either but was a graphic designer; hence she belonged to the creative community. What was most important for her legitimization as a member was the fact that she was good friends with many people in the scene. When I sat down with her she expressed her connection to the scene to me by telling me stories about Francois van Coke that made it seem as though they had been best friends. When I got to

18 I changed some of her characteristics, though in such a way that her relation to the scene is the same.
know Francois better I realized that some of those stories could not have been from her own experience. This mechanism reached far, up to the point of people who had never met any of those people claiming to be their friends.

The scene is not a group in its traditional sense. Communities that used to be important as social glue are characterized as stronger, ask a great deal of loyalty from its members and are distrustful to the outside world (Abma & Selten 2004: 104). As a reaction to the decrease of such communities western societies are often considered more individualist nowadays. Yet, as I have argued in this thesis, my informants clearly considered themselves to be part of “something” which I have labeled the scene. We may then consider it a “community lite” (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp 2004: 16). Characteristics of a community lite are more dynamic than that of a traditional community. It is the experience of the event that is important (Mommaas 2004: 164): as there is no membership for the scene you ‘have to be there’ in order to be part of it. The acknowledgment of your ‘being there’ exists in the network. If the people of the scene know that you are there and have been there, you are part of it. It is thus the network that is most important in the functioning of it (ibid: 162). The before mentioned girl was establishing her position in the scene for me by telling me where and with whom she had been.

The development of traditional communities to communities lite are to be considered in a context in which “de sociaal-culturele verschillen tussen standen, plekken (naties, regio’s, buurten) en religieuze gemeenschappen zijn opengebroken” (the social-cultural differences between classes, places [nations, regions, neighborhoods] and religious communities are opened up) (Mommaas 2004: 153). In Cape Town (and in the whole of South Africa for that matter) the political transition in 1994 had a huge impact on those developments. The people in the scene for the most part come from the close and closed Afrikaans community with its strong family and religious values, demarcated by relatively strict neighborhood boundaries. My informants all moved out to places that are demographically more mixed and have distanced themselves for the most part from the church community. Though most of them still have contact with their parents, the control and insight of their parents on and in the lives of their children has decreased significantly, up to the point that you can no longer say they really belong to the same community.

The media has an important role in this process (Mommaas 2004: 160, 164). Again the sudden transition to a post-apartheid state and the lack of censorship is fundamental for the South African case (Vestergaard 2001: 36). Whereas in the late nineties the Voëlvry movement was banned by the national government (Hopkins 2006), Fokofpolisiekar received
rather heavy criticism but could nonetheless not be effectively banned. Together with an increased exposure to foreign music (as I mentioned in the first chapter the alternative music industry in South Africa is rapidly developing and aiming for high quality music that can compete on a global level), the music scene provided an image that my informants thankfully made use of: that of musicians rather than Afrikaners. An example of this is when Ryan told me about the time he went to the charity day of the DRC with Nadia, his adopted child. In the same conversation with the woman that I quoted from earlier he said:

She’s like what do you do now? I’m like, I party, I play in a rock band, and I’m a musician, I fucking love what I do, I’m fucking happy. Why? And she’s like: “Oh, oh, well you wanna see what my son does? He is studying to be a priest,” and everything. And I’m like “Oh oh oh, I just walked here and talked to another ten kids and they said they did the same,” hehehe. 17 other kids are doing priest and I fucking love life, I rock and roll, and she was like “oh...”

In this quote he establishes his position as not being part of the Afrikaner community by being a musician rather than what is probably the most typical conservative Afrikaans career: that of a priest.

In addition to that, he establishes a level of unicity. However, “flexibiliteit troef, maar gezelschap is onontbeerlijk” (flexibility is strength, but company is indispensible) say Abma and Selten (2004: 104). The search for and acknowledgment of like-minded people in his life indicate that this counts for Ryan. In the second chapter I have attempted to show the influence of suburban Afrikanerdom on the lives of my informants, which is clearly significant, even though Fokofpolisiekar successfully voiced the wish of a generation to break away from it. The question is: how to find company on the middle-ground between the claustrophobic and stigmatized Afrikaner community and the diverse, non-demanding and alien world outside of it? What are to be the criteria for this company, the shared interests and the form in which a group can be manifested? The characteristics of the scene have a very open nature. The places to meet are bars and clubs in general with a focus on one bar in specific; everybody can come in, nobody has to be there, leave alone at set hours. The people in it were ‘creatives’ as they sometimes put it themselves. It is not even relevant to go into the debate of what creativity is, because the point of that choice of word is that it is rather open to interpretation, yet with a strong connotation of being progressive and anti-apartheid. It is this ‘community lite’ in which an Afrikaner has the opportunity to give his background a place and not feel embarrassed about it.
I argued my point with a case-study of two people, Ryan and Leon. The former is probably one of the people who maneuvered furthest into the scene as possible. It was a ‘creative’ scene, but music was the foundation of it. Therefore, being a musician had helped him in establishing his position. On stage, he earned fame, at least in the scene. Ryan often told me that he identified as a musician rather than an Afrikaner. The methodological approach that I used makes it difficult to generalize exactly the role that the scene played in the lives of different young Afrikaners, especially on a national level. In addition to that I want to stress the fact that the period of time in which the developments that I described in this thesis took place is relatively short. It is only logical to assume that within a couple years the scene itself and the role of it in people’s lives will have changed. Notwithstanding I have attempted to generalize the role of the scene to some extent in the previous section, in which I argued that the scene offers an entity to which the people in it feel they belong and in which they can negotiate their position as Afrikaners in the new South Africa.

So far the role of the scene for the people that belong to it. As I mentioned in the conclusion of the third chapter I did not research the opinion on the scene of outsiders sufficiently, but I also remarked that I did notice an awareness of the scene among them. In any case they were aware of the national music scene and the increasing role that Afrikaans musicians played in it. As for the Afrikaners among them, they felt the stigma that rested on Afrikanerdom from the people around them. Some of them liked the music that I reflected on in this thesis, some did not. They were not the people that pretended to know the artists and a lot of them were rather neutral about it. They often preferred international music over both Afrikaans and English national music. When I asked them what they thought about the music almost all of them, Leon included, answered with a similar answer: “Oh well, it’s something new.”

Even though people were often negative about Die Antwoord, there were others that assured me that the point would arrive where they would become more popular. “South Africa is just not ready for Die Antwoord yet”, they told me. They suggested that the South African music scene was slowly moving towards the global music scene. Wendy Verwey, who worked for the record company Universal Music South Africa, told me that there used to be a saying “local is lekker”, meaning that the quality of music was established by it being local. She argued that this opinion was slowly changing in the South African music scene. In the first chapter I mentioned some developments that indicate the integration of Afrikaans music
into the national music scene. My ethnography supported the argument that the music scene offered a platform to negotiate Afrikanerdom for the people that were part of the scene. Further research could point out to what extent the role of Afrikaans musicians in the national music scene influences the association of Afrikanerdom in the broader spheres of society, both in the eyes of Afrikaners, as well as in the eyes of the white English speaking communities and the black and colored communities.
References

Abma, Ruud & Peter Selten (2004)

Beall, Jo, Stephen Gelb & Shireen Hassim (2005)


Coetzer, Diane (2012)

Duyvendak, Jan Willem & Menno Hurenkamp (2004)

Giliomee, Herman (2003)

Gilroy, Paul (2001)

Hopkins, Pat (2006)
Jansen, Jonathan D. (2009)


Klopper, Annie (2009)

_Biografie van ’n Bende: Die Storie van Fokofpolisiekar._ Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis.

Little, Bryan (2009)

_Fokofpolisiekar: Forgive Them For They Know Not What They Do._ DVD. Cape Town: Fly On the Wall.

Malan, Rian (1990)

_My Traitors Heart._ New York: Grove Press.

Merwe, J.P. van der (2010)


‘De kudde is dood, lang leve de kuddes’. In: J.W. Duyvendak en M. Hurenkamp, _Kiezen voor de kudde: Lichte gemeenschappen en de nieuwe meerderheid._ Amsterdam: _Tijdschrift voor de Sociale Sector /_ Uitgeverij van Gennep, pp. 152-166.

Norval, Aletta (1996)


Posel, Deborah (1987)


Reybrouck, David van (2001)


Turok, Ivan (2001)


Vestergaard, Mads (2001)

Digital references

Griffin (2012)


___ (2012b)

http://www.watkykjy.co.za/2012/02/ramfest-is-glo-van-die-duiwel/ (accessed February 15, 2012)

Vos, Pierre de (2011)

‘Why the taalbulle will destroy Afrikaans’. On: Constitutionally Speaking.
http://constitutionallyspeaking.co.za/why-the-taalbulle-will-destroy-afrikaans/
(accessed June 20, 2012)