Learning to Be 'Out of Order': A Life History of the Church Land Programme and the Theoretical Development of its Praxis

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is driven by the view that we urgently need a more truly emancipatory African politics, beyond the politics of the state or the hegemonic politics of the powerful; and the potential role of 'civil society' in this needs to be explored. Using a Gramscian frame, the study focuses on the life history of the Church Land Programme (CLP), an NGO based in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. This organisation claims to have radically shifted its praxis from that of a conventional NGO to one which has adopted an emancipatory politics. In a document reflecting on why and how it underwent this shift, the CLP made specific reference to the thinking of Paulo Freire, and post-shift, it has made frequent reference to Frantz Fanon. This study seeks to understand why and how the organisation shifted its practice and how this relates to the work of these two emancipatory thinkers. It finally considers the implications of this for emancipatory politics in the current South African context.

The study seeks to make three contributions. Firstly, it redresses the scarcity of work on the relationship between Fanon and Freire, despite the considerable recent interest in their individual thought and writings. Secondly, the study adopts a life history approach that is normally used to narrate and understand individual stories, to tell, and to understand, the story of an organisation. Thirdly, as the study confirms, CLP is a deeply reflective and self-critical organisation; however, it has not yet been subjected to outside scrutiny and the study thus provides an outsider's view of the organisation and its shift.

The findings reveal that for CLP emancipatory politics is a lived reality. CLP thought its emancipatory praxis into being through deep reflection on how it acts in the world, often with others. Rather than directly influencing CLP, Fanon and Freire (and others) resonate with this emancipatory thinking, and act as a resource. The study concludes that whilst civil society is

a realm within which hegemony is created, as Gramsci argued, because emancipatory politics is of the order the order of thought, civil society organisations can act in emancipatory ways.

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Education and Development), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Stephen Phiri, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Stephen Phiri

Student Name

October 2019

Date

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Name of Supervisor

Signature

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

19 July 2016

Mr Stephen Phiri 208524489
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Phiri

Protocol reference number: HSS/0809/016D
Project title: Learning to be 'Out of Order': A life history of the Church Land Programme (CLP) and the theoretical development of its praxis.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 03 June 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AbM/*Abahlali*	*Abahlali baseMjondolo*
AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
ANC	African National Congress
BINGOs	Big International Non-Governmental Organisations
BSWM	*Black Skin, White Masks*
CLP	Church Land Programme
CLRB	Communal Land Right Bill
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
FIFA	International Federation of Football Associations
FLN	National Liberation Front
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNCC	KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council
LAWAWO	Ladysmith Watersmeet Widow's Organisation
LPM	Landless People's Movement
LRDB	Land Redistribution and Development Bill
MST	*Movimento Sem Terra/ Movemento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra*
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLC	National Land Committee
PACSA	Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (now renamed Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action)
PH	*Pedagogy of Hope*
PLAAS	Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies
PO	*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RN	Rural Network

SACC	South African Council of Churches
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANGOCO	South African Non-Governmental Organisation Coalition
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisation
SESI	Culture of Social Service Industry
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCAR	World Conference Against Racism
WCAEC	Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign
WSSD	United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development
WE	*The Wretched of the Earth*

Chapter One: Introduction

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory.

(Zinn, quoted in Walker, 2013, p.94)

1.1 Introduction: The possibility of change

I have long been concerned about the failure of post-colonial African states to change the lives of their people for the better. My previous studies have focused on why this is so, how it might be addressed, and, in particular, on what civil society organisations can do in order to pressure governments to live up to their promises. In 2015, I read an occasional paper written by the Church Land Programme (CLP), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in the city I now live in, called *Learning to Walk – NGO Practice and the Possibility of Freedom* (Butler with Ndlazi, Ntseng, Philpott, & Sokhela, 2007). It recounts a fundamental shift CLP underwent as a result of a deep reflection on their context and practice, after existing for some years.

Learning to Walk talks about how CLP, through an analysis of the post-apartheid context, came to the realisation that

> at the true heart of this South African state project, lay a capitalist re-structuring and accumulation, as well as the creation of a somewhat de-racialised class of 'elites'. And further, that this inevitably implicated it in ongoing exploitation, domination and disempowerment of the poor. (p. 4)

This analysis resonated with my own. However, CLP took their analysis further:

> The challenge that necessarily followed was to examine the roles and practical effects of civil society – including ourselves – in relation to this state project. We became aware of the dangers of reaching an analytical conclusion to speak 'for the interests of the poor' without serious reflection on and criticism of our own practice . . . Somehow the way we were working as an NGO seemed to be in a pattern that depoliticised our contact with the landless poor, and stayed within the boundaries and bureaucracies of the official controlling system.

> What we came to realise, is that this approach is not only our own, but is also endemic to NGO practice. (pp. 4-5)

Part of how this happens is

> the way NGOs tend to shape interactions with grassroots people, so that while claiming the opposite, NGOs in fact 'teach' and impose on people, rather than supporting and assuming people's own capacities for learning, analysis and action for genuine transformation. (p. 5)

Learning to Walk recounts how CLP went about trying to find new ways of working in the light of these insights: "The first part was the shift to animation through reflecting on our practice, and the second a kind of 'struggling' with this new, emergent praxis" (p. 2).

Reading *Learning to Walk* made me question the logic of focusing on what civil society organisations can do in order to pressure governments to live up to their promises, rather than on the people themselves, and whether such organisations are in fact complicit in maintaining the status quo. I wanted to explore the ways in which civil society organisations might be acting to support the status quo, even whilst claiming to challenge it and be on the side of the poor and the oppressed, or how they might act to disrupt this, as CLP seems intent on doing. I also wanted to explore the potential for fundamental emancipatory change by the people themselves in a world that is increasingly unjust.

Our world is dominated by a neoliberal capitalist ideology (which essentially defines and shapes the status quo) that tends to maintain the power of the dominant class while the poor are either ignored or used as a means to promote the market-oriented agenda of this dominant class. As Badiou (2015) argues,

> In the world today there are a little over two billion people of whom we can say that they are counted for nothing. It is not even that they belong, as they obviously do, to the mass of the destitute 50%. It's worse: they are counted for nothing by *capital*, meaning that from the point of view of the structural development of the world, they are nothing, and that therefore, strictly speaking, they should not exist. They should not be there. It would be better for them not to be there. But they are there all the same. (p. 13)

It seemed to me, from *Learning to Walk*, that CLP was proposing that it is from the midst of those who count for nothing that the potential for emancipatory change exists, precisely

because of "people's own capacities for learning, analysis and action" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 5). However pervasive it is, neoliberal capitalism, and its ideology, is not invincible because of the potential for emancipatory thought, as Nash argues:

> Dialectical thought has flourished always in the margins and interstices of society. It seeks to follow the movement of contradictions while the major social institutions are designed to resolve or obscure them. This mode of thought seeks out the hidden cracks in prevailing ideas and conjunctures, anticipates the unexpected, imagines a future vastly different from the present, and examines the potentialities of the present to seek a basis for its realisation. (Nash, 2009, as quoted in Hart, 2013, p. 219)

This notion is consistent with the thinking of Antonio Gramsci, whose theory of hegemony frames this study. Gramsci argues that there is always a possibility of an opposing politics of change, because the hegemony of the dominant class is never complete (Gramsci, 1971). By ruling class hegemony, Gramsci meant the use of ideology to persuade the working class that existing power relations are not only inevitable, normal and natural ('common sense'), but for the greater good. So, through hegemonic ideas, "educative pressure [is] applied to single individuals so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, turning necessity and coercion into 'freedom'" (p. 242). Hegemony is thus an internalised form of authority. This explains why the ruling class in capitalist societies is able to maintain power with so little use of physical force. However, because the actual material conditions and lived experience of the working class/oppressed is in tension with 'common sense' hegemonic ideas, "hegemony is constantly open to negotiation and renegotiation, constantly being renewed and contested; it is incomplete" (Harley, 2012, p. 96). Crucially, according to Gramsci, hegemony is created within civil society (Gramsci, 1971), an idea I discuss in detail in Chapter Three. In Gramsci's perspective, civil society is thus a site of struggle or contestation. I discuss in detail in that chapter, that the concept of civil society is heavily contested, as is its relationship to emancipatory politics. In this thesis, I argue that civil society, as currently constructed by the post-apartheid South African state, precisely 'excludes' those who do not count; it is within the terrain of those who do not count that some kind of counter-hegemonic emancipatory possibility exists. However, as I will argue, it is not a given that the thought and action of those who do not count is emancipatory.

This study is thus built on two fundamental convictions. The first is that change is both necessary and possible; the second is that it is urgently necessary to explore how such emancipatory change is possible.

1.2 Background and rationale to the study

My focus in this study is on the African context, and particularly the African post-colonial context, through the lens of South Africa, whilst recognising that the struggle for emancipatory change is for all – is universal.

1.2.1 South Africa and the African post-colonial context

Despite claims that South Africa's history is unique, I would argue, along with Mamdani (2017), that more striking are the similarities between South African colonial and post-colonial history and that of other African states. As Mamdani argues, "apartheid, usually considered unique to South Africa, is actually the generic form of the colonial state in Africa" (Mamdani, 2017, p. 8). Gibson (2011a), in his book *Fanonian Practices in South Africa,* supports the contention that the post-apartheid experience is similar to the pattern of events which took place in other post-colonial African states. More (2017) highlights that,

> Besides the left and the South African Communist Party describing apartheid as 'colonialism of a special kind', the country itself existed as a Dutch and British colony for several years. Two of South Africa's provinces, Natal and the Cape Colony, constituted part of the British colonial project. The other two provinces (Transvaal and the Orange Free State) that later combined with the British colonies to form the Union of South Africa, were colonies of the Dutch settlers, the Afrikaners… Every feature of the British and Dutch colonial system bled into the Union of South Africa and ultimately became the apartheid system. (pp. 132-133)

Whilst, as I discuss in Chapter Three, it is also essential to consider the particular historical and geographical context, my point here is to highlight the fact that whilst this study focuses on South Africa, it speaks to the Pan-African experience. The post-colonial pattern across the continent follows a trend in which the people are condemned to relatively the same conditions that they suffered during the colonial or apartheid era. Even after independence, the situation of the people remains deplorable, despite the fact that the leaders are different.

1.2.2 Situating the study within the South African context

It is important to note that in 1996, during the Mandela presidency, South Africa adopted a self-imposed capitalist structural adjustment strategy in the form of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy. However, as explained by Madlingozi (2007):

> Under GEAR, unemployment, wage disparities, landlessness, and poverty have worsened. At the same time, the privatization and commodification of municipal services has meant that basic services such as health care and the provision of water and electricity have become inaccessible to the majority of South Africans.
>
> The state's turn to neoliberalism has effectively negated the Constitution's promise to 'improve the quality of life of all citizens and to free the potential of each person'. In line with the logic of neoliberalism, most of the socio-economic rights that are guaranteed in the Constitution in order to realize the Constitutional values of 'dignity, equality and freedom' are only realizable 'progressively' and not immediately and only when there are available resources. (p. 80)

Habib (2013) expresses the same point when he says: "South Africa's integration into the global economy resulted in the post-apartheid government's adoption and implementation of neoliberal policies at enormous social cost" (p. 152).

Neoliberal hegemony was, at the time of writing, dominant within South Africa – something I discuss in more detail in Chapter Three. According to Hearn (2001), as in CLP's analysis discussed above, civil society organisations – non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in particular – within South Africa are complicit in maintaining and supporting this hegemony. Partially, they do this through entering into partnerships with "powerful stakeholders such as the corporate sector, international private foundations, and even the development arms of foreign governments" (Habib, 2013, p. 158). *Learning to Walk* refers to this as staying "within the boundaries and bureaucracies of the official controlling system" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 5). They also do this through 'teaching' grassroots communities what they should be thinking and doing. However, not all NGOs support the status quo, because some are conscious and critical of their role in recreating neoliberal hegemony. As I have discussed, this argument is consistent with Gramsci's argument that civil society is a realm of activity within which hegemony is created and maintained; but it is also a site of struggle. It is also

consistent with the notion that emancipatory politics is of the order of thought, rather than related to any particular form or position, as I will discuss in Chapter Three. Thus, whilst most NGOs play a hegemonic role, denying and undermining the agency of the people, NGOs can play a pivotal role in the thinking of and process of emancipatory change. This study specifically focuses on the life history of the Church Land Programme (CLP), a particular NGO which claims to use an alternative emancipatory praxis.

CLP was founded in 1996, precisely in the context of the post-apartheid shift to neoliberalism, but also in a context in which civil society organisations had shifted focus from their largely conflictual role vis-à-vis the apartheid state to a more supportive role towards the post-apartheid state (Bratton, 1994 & Putnam, 1993, as cited in Zuern, 2004).

1.2.3 The Church Land Programme and its shift in praxis

The CLP is an NGO situated in Pietermaritzburg (the provincial capital of KwaZulu-Natal). The organisation is relatively small, consisting of eight permanent staff members. Its work is mainly in the KwaZulu-Natal province, and focuses on issues related to both urban and rural land. It connects with communities and movements struggling to access land or resist eviction, and to be treated with dignity. At the time of writing, CLP was working in solidarity with women's groups struggling with patriarchal systems and structures, groups and communities struggling to access land and services, those who have access to land and are resisting removal from this land for inter alia 'development', and groups producing food together using agro-ecology in resistance to chemically-based state-supported commercial agriculture (CLP website).

The CLP began in 1996 as a joint initiative between two Pietermaritzburg-based NGOs, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) and the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (as it was then called) (PACSA). AFRA was well known for its expertise on land issues, and PACSA specialised in church development and social justice issues. The project was founded to coordinate the transfer of land owned by the churches to the communities already living on that land, using the government's new democratic land reform policies. In 1997, CLP became an independent NGO. The organisation believed that "the new land reform framework of the government, offered possibilities for them [the Church] to make a contribution to justice and restoration, by transferring the land they owned to 'communities' living on it..." (Butler et al., 2007, p. 3).

After working with the government's land reform framework for about eight years, CLP began questioning the very nature of the South African transition. It realised that "the negotiated settlement that secured South Africa's transition out of apartheid was marked by contestation and deep compromise, and attendant land reform policy that it delivered was no less so" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 2). In the occasional paper they published, *Learning to Walk*, which as discussed above reflects on the shift they underwent, CLP argue that the tendency of government and NGOs to decide for the people ultimately undermines the people. In their analysis in *Learning to Walk*, they draw on the work of Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004), who argue that the post-apartheid government sought to "reorient the national economy towards global capitalism, while simultaneously deflating rising grassroots struggles through a combination of welfare, meeting some popular demands, and market discipline" (2004, p. 27).

The realisation of the hegemonic role it (and the NGO sector in general) had been playing led CLP to rethink its fundamental assumptions, and by 2004, the organisation had come to a difficult realisation about their own practice:

> Firstly, we could not 'know' any answers except by taking very seriously the fact that our prevalent NGO practice either silences ordinary people or carefully rehearses with them what they could/should say, so that what is heard – even when it is done in the name of 'giving voice to the poor' – is actually the echo of our own voice!
>
> Secondly, if CLP was going to be a productive part of a broader process that actually had (and built) the possibility of transformation, freedom and humanity, then our practice as an organisation needed to nurture and learn from the difficult task of building *actual* movements of *actual* 'poors', taking *self*-conscious, *self*-defined and *self*-initiated actions. Given the power imbalances between resourced NGOs and weak, emerging movements of the marginalised, we recognised that these were clearly going to be difficult and subtle tensions to work with – but it seemed to us they were necessary tensions to confront, and a worthwhile possibility to hope for. (Butler et al., 2007, p. 8 emphasis in original)

In their 2004 strategic planning, CLP decided to look for ways to build "a structure and conscious cycle of action and reflection" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 10). In this, they appear to have consciously drawn on Paulo Freire, the radical Brazilian thinker. *Learning to Walk* specifically references Freire in both its analysis of how even those in the 'dominant classes'

(including NGOs) who truly desire to transform the unjust order actually harm the oppressed, and in its discussion on how to do things differently. The document actually begins with the following quote from Freire:

> At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must themselves as people engage in the vocation of becoming more fully human... To achieve this... it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to bring about, or will abandon, dialogue, reflection and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues and instructions. While no-one liberates themselves by their own efforts alone, neither are they liberated by others. (Freire, as quoted in Butler et al., 2007, p. 1)

In the section on 'Realisations about NGO practice', the document again quotes Freire:

> Some of the dominant classes join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation. Theirs is a fundamental role and has been so throughout the history of the struggle. However, as they move to the side of the exploited they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin. Their prejudices include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. So they run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as harmful as that of the oppressors. Though they truly desire to transform the unjust order, they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation.
>
> They talk about the people but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his [*sic*] trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour, without that trust. (Freire, quoted in Butler et al., 2007, p. 5)

Freire is drawn on again in the section 'The shift to animation through reflection on practice', specifically referencing the book *Training for Transformation* by Hope and Timmel (1984), which consciously drew on Freire's ideas to argue for a Freirean emancipatory praxis (and had been a popular resource in the anti-apartheid struggle). *Learning to Walk* quotes Hope and Timmel on the question of 'reflection and action' (praxis):

> Most real learning and radical change takes place when a community experiences dissatisfaction with some aspects of their present life. An animator can provide a situation in which they can stop, reflect critically upon what they are doing, identify

> any new information or skills that they need, get this information and training, and then plan action.
>
> Often the first plan of action will solve some aspects of the problem, but not deal deeply enough with the root causes of the problem. By setting a regular cycle of reflection and action in which a group is constantly celebrating their successes, and analysing critically the causes of mistakes and failures, they become more and more capable of effectively transforming their daily life. (Hope & Timmel quoted in Butler et al., 2007, p. 10)

The CLP recognised that if it was to shift its practice, the organisation had "to pause and reflect on our own practice, precisely and partly, to create space in our [its] work 'on the ground' for dialogical relationships with grassroots people and formations" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 11). It tried to consciously build this deep reflection into its work and life in two ways. Firstly, it held "regular reflection days where each CLP worker would take a turn to lead and facilitate a full day's discussion on a theme or issue arising from their ongoing work, and which deserved collective and critical reflection" (p. 12). Secondly, it states

> we adopted an activity we dubbed 'accompaniment' for some in-the-field interventions, whereby the principal worker was accompanied by a colleague whose role was to be with, observe, and raise questions for critical reflection together afterwards. We consciously wanted to begin a fundamental shift toward 'animation'. (p. 12)

Through a new praxis, the organisation wanted to work with the people, emphasising the notion of walking with people, not leading them. This notion assumes that the people think and are able to act of their own accord.

In many ways, then, *Learning to Walk* seems to show a strong Freirean influence. As discussed, Freire is drawn on in CLP's analysis of how NGOs act to further oppress the oppressed, even when committed to justice. The practice of action and reflection (praxis) which CLP adopted as central to shifting how it acted in the world was fundamentally built on the key ideas of Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (PO), and those of Hope and Timmel in their Freirean-inspired book *Training for Transformation.* The critical narration of the shift contained in the occasional paper and its objective seems also to be essentially guided by Freire's key ideas, evident by the strategic positioning of quotations from Freire's book.

From reading *Learning to Walk*, it thus seemed clear to me in my initial conceptualisation of this study that Freire was potentially a seminal theoretical influence on CLP. Moreover, at the time I was beginning this investigation, another theorist, Frantz Fanon, also seemed to be important in the life of the organisation primarily because of the number of times he was referenced in CLP's *Padkos* postings and events.

In 2010 (i.e. after its shift), CLP set up what it called *Padkos* (an Afrikaans term meaning 'food for the road', or 'food for the journey'):

> CLP has often spoken of its work as a journey, and we are inspired by Paulo Freire's phrase that "we make the path by walking". The journey of our work is deeply rewarding, and our main guide and inspiration remains the struggles of the people. But it is also …a long and demanding journey. As we continue together, we all need *padkos* – sustenance and food for thought along the way. (CLP, n.d., 'Padkos: Why?')

Padkos began after CLP's 2010 evaluation and planning processes, as a way "to share resources, thoughts and conversations with others who join us on the journey of our work in the world. …These resources will mainly be written pieces that come from, or connect with, the thinking and reflection that is part of our praxis" (CLP website). *Padkos* has become an important part of the life of the organisation, involving face-to-face sessions to discuss a written piece or film, or presentations by people the organisation invites to share ideas, or simply sharing writing the organisation finds exciting or important. Events and written pieces are circulated via an email list, but also posted on CLP's website. Some of these postings have been collected together by CLP in the form of two *Padkos Digests*.

A relatively cursory look at the resources that had been sent out on the *Padkos* list, and what *Padkos* events had been held, revealed a strong presence of Fanon – more so than any other theorist (see Annexure 4). By the time I was really embarking on my research (early 2016), 12 out of the 70 emails sent out on the list had related to events or written pieces about Fanon, and 14 different written pieces on or by Fanon had been sent out. Four events specifically related to Fanon had been held. In May 2011, CLP organised what it called a 'Fanomenal' event to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the death of Fanon. CLP invited a number of prominent Fanonian scholars (both international and national) including Nigel Gibson, Mabogo More, Itumeleng Mosala, Michael Neocosmos and Richard Pithouse, as well as other academics and activists. Six written pieces directly related to Fanon and his ongoing relevance to emancipatory politics were distributed and discussed at the three-day

event. The organisation also produced a booklet, *Introduction to Fanon*, in isiZulu and English. In October 2014, CLP hosted another internationally noted Fanonian scholar, Lewis Gordon.

My first direct contact with CLP was in 2015, when I began conceptualising this doctoral research. At this time, Fanonian scholars seemed to dominate CLP *Padkos* events. In that year, CLP ran what it called a 'School of Thought', consisting of four sessions. The opening session was by Richard Pithouse, a nationally recognised Fanonian scholar in South Africa, presenting on the topic 'Frantz Fanon: Philosophy, Praxis and the Occult Zone'. The third session was on 'What Fanon said' by Lewis Gordon, an internationally renowned Fanonian scholar.

At the time I began this study, then, I worked on the assumption that the thinking of Fanon and Freire were probably important intellectual influences on the thinking and praxis of CLP post-shift (as will become clear, my findings problematise this assumption). From *Learning to Walk*, it appeared that Freire was being consciously and intentionally used in the organisation's analysis and praxis, at least at that point. I was not clear, however, whether Fanon had emerged organically or intentionally. At the time I began the study, Fanon was also being increasingly drawn on in student politics on the campus where I was based, and more broadly. I had not encountered Fanon prior to this, and was personally interested in further exploring his work. I was also already familiar with Freire's work, having encountered him in my own theological studies and from my involvement in the International Movement for Catholic Students. Considering Fanon and Freire, both individually and in relation to each other, thus strongly appealed to me and the probability that they had played a role in CLP's shift provided me with the opportunity to do this.

1.3 Objectives of the study and resultant research questions

In the light of the above rationale, the primary objective of my study was to understand the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why the organisation shifted from one which, through its practice, was complicit in supporting hegemony to one which embraced a more emancipatory praxis. I wanted to understand exactly what the organisation understood by emancipatory praxis, what influenced its shift, and how they were implementing it. I felt that looking at CLP's life history could help me see when and why the organisation had shifted. Given the background, I thought it likely that the thinking of Freire

and Fanon had influenced its shift and its new praxis, but I wanted to find out what particular aspects of their thinking had been influential. I also recognised that it was possible that there had been other intellectual influences.

I believed that understanding CLP's shift to a new emancipatory praxis, and what this praxis actually entailed, might provide useful insights for a project of radical change. Thus, a further objective was to consider the implications within the current South African context.

1.3.1 Research questions

I developed the following research questions for this study:

1) What is the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why did the organisation shift its practice?

2) Which theoretical influences contributed to the shift?

3) Which particular elements of the work of Fanon and Freire impacts on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and hence its praxis?

4) What implications does this have within the current South African context?

1.4 The theoretical framework of the study

The study draws its framework from the three theorists, Gramsci, Fanon and Freire. As discussed, the study takes as a point of departure Gramsci's theory of hegemony, in which civil society (and civil society organisations) is seen as largely complicit in the creation of the dominant ideology (currently neoliberal hegemony), but the possibility of disrupting this is ever-present. I use this very broad theoretical understanding to shape the study as a whole. Given my discussion about how CLP makes frequent reference to Fanon and Freire in relation to their shift and their current praxis and my own personal interest in the relationship between Fanon and Freire and emancipatory politics, I identify the thinking of Fanon and Freire as an obvious theoretical frame through which to examine this shift.

1.5 The research design of the study

The study is located within a critical paradigm. Considering that a paradigm always represents a particular worldview that defines, for the researcher, what to research and how the research should be done (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), I chose a critical paradigm

because it is most consistent with my own worldview. In keeping with the critical paradigm's ontological and epistemological assumptions, this research used a qualitative approach which allowed me to explore CLP's shift in praxis and what influenced this, and to think through its implications for emancipatory politics in South Africa.

Given that I focus on a particular organisation (i.e. a particular case) within the particular context of post-apartheid South Africa, the study is in the form of a case study. As Rule and John (2011) point out, "A 'case study' is…a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge" (p. 4). Thus, since this study aimed to understand how and why CLP shifted its praxis within this particular context, and what affected this shift, a life history research style is clearly appropriate. A life history is a story, and thus carries the features of a narrative. These include arranging a sequence of events (over time) into a whole, showing the connection between them (including causality) within a particular setting (context). A life history also involves the interpretation or evaluation of the events narrated by the teller and the listener (Harley, 2012); the positionality of the person telling the story is therefore important. Because of this, life stories may simply reflect society, but there are also "counternarratives" (Steinmetz, 1992, as cited in Davis, 2002), or what Ewick and Silbey (1995, as cited in Davis 2002) call "subversive stories" – stories against or as alternatives to dominant social narratives. Whilst the life history method is almost invariably used with individuals, its characteristics clearly made it appropriate for my study, but required the 'weaving together' of different stories into one whole. This had implications which I discuss in the next chapter.

I used the following qualitative data collection methods to construct a single life history of the organisation, focusing particularly on when and why the organisation shifted its practice:

1) A review of key documents of the organisation, including evaluation and strategic planning reports from its inception to the present; occasional papers produced by the organisation, and, in particular those which recount its shift; documents which speak about its philosophy and thinking; and a publication produced by CLP called *Padkos Digest*, which is a hardcopy collection of the *Padkos* emails, and thus contains resources the organisation finds useful. I also looked at the organisation's website.
2) Four in-depth interviews with individuals who have been involved in the organisation in some way from its inception and are well acquainted with it. These included two staff members who have worked for the organisation from its inception (both now in

senior positions); the person who was responsible for evaluating the organisation from its inception, including over the period of its shift; and a person who was involved in setting up the organisation, initially on the board of the organisation, pivotally involved in the shift itself, the lead author of a number of key documents, and is still working closely with the organisation. I asked each interviewee to construct a timeline of the organisation on which they identified theorists, concepts, and events/activities that they considered important, and used this as the basis for discussion.

3) Two focus groups, one with those CLP staff who were not included in the individual interviews (so that every member of the organisation participated in the study in some way), and one with the social movement with which CLP works most closely.
4) Field observations of interactions between CLP's staff and two other community organisations/movements with whom the organisation works.

To analyse the data collected, I used inductive analysis to identify key periods in CLP's life history, and themes within these (e.g. context and analysis; purpose, values and practice; relationships with others; intellectual resources). I then drew out key themes that emerged from CLP's thinking, such as 1) The order of things/the-world-as-it-is versus being 'out of order'/rupture/the-world-as-it-could-be; 2) Conventional NGO practice; 3) Thinking/voice/ agency/politics; 4) Reflecting and learning; 5) Supporting/solidarity/walking with/ journeying/being with); and then considered how these related to my literature and theoretical frame (deductive analysis).

1.6 The contribution of the study

In conceptualising this study, I hoped to make three original contributions:

Theoretical contribution: The study uses the work of Fanon and Freire as a theoretical frame through which to understand data on CLP's life history and apparent shift. There is growing interest in the work of both these thinkers. However, no one has considered them in detail in relation to each other and in terms of the notions of radical praxis and emancipatory politics. I would argue that both writers' ideas are intimately connected and Freire himself expressed his connection with Fanon when he said:

> I remember, for example, how much I was helped by reading Frantz Fanon. That is great writing. When I read Fanon I was in exile in Chile. A young man who was in

> Santiago on a political task gave me the book, *The Wretched of the Earth*. I was writing *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and the book was almost finished when I read Fanon. I had to rewrite the book in order to begin to quote Fanon. (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 36)

My hope is that this study will provide a theoretical contribution in its consideration of these two key thinkers in relation to each other.

Methodological contribution: The life history method has been predominantly utilised in research involving individuals. I used this method in relation to an organisation. I wanted this organisation to tell its story, through its documentation, the people who have worked for it in the past and those who do so now, and those with whom it journeys. Using the methodology in this way has a number of methodological implications, which I discuss.

Outside viewpoint: The organisation appears to be a deeply reflective one, and has written about its own journey, most notably in their occasional paper, *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007). However, this research aimed to reflect on CLP's journey from the perspective of an outsider.

1.7 The structure of this thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two comprises a discussion of the research design used in this study. It discusses the critical paradigm within which the study is located, and the case study and life history research style used. I explain and justify the data collection methods I used, and how they are applied. Issues of ethics, research limitations, and trustworthiness are considered.

Chapter Three reviews literature against which CLP's life history can be considered. It thus focuses on the concept and role of civil society as a 'realm of activity', and the concept of emancipatory politics. The first section looks at Gramsci's conception of civil society and the state, tracing this back to Hegel and Marx. The objective of this section is to consider debates about the nature of civil society, and of the state, within the overall Gramscian framework of this study. The second and third sections present literature related to civil society and the state in colonial Africa and post-colonial South Africa. The fourth and final section looks at the concept of emancipatory politics.

Chapter Four presents my theoretical framework. This framework is informed by the fact that CLP specifically referenced Fanon and Freire in their reflection on their own practice and in

their work. This research seeks to understand what these two theorists argued, and how they relate to each other and to emancipatory politics, providing a lens through which to assess CLP's changed praxis. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first looks at the thought of Fanon through two of his seminal works, *Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM) (Fanon, 1952/1986) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (WE) (Fanon, 1963), and through discussions and interpretations and debates about his work. The second deals with Freire through two of his seminal works, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (PO) (Freire, 1970/1993) and *Pedagogy of Hope* (PH) (Freire, 1994/2014), and through discussions and interpretations and debates about his work. The final section tries to express the ontological argument of Fanon and Freire as a single expression of an emancipatory politics.

Chapter Five presents the life story of CLP, as constructed from the interviews, focus groups, and documents of the organisation, accounts from the social movement with which CLP works most closely, and my own observations. It tells the story of CLP, and its thinking and practice, in relation to its historical context, but also to the theoretical resources on which it draws. Ultimately, the chapter attempts to answer my first two research questions through an inductive analysis of the life history.

Chapter Six considers CLP's shift in relation to the ideas of Fanon and Freire, locating this within the literature as discussed in the literature review. Ultimately, it answers my third research question.

Chapter Seven concludes by providing an overall summary of the study and findings, and considering the implications it has for the wider South African context. It thus seeks to answer my fourth and final research question. The chapter also reflects on the study. I evaluate my success in terms of the contribution I hoped to make, and consider possible further areas for exploration arising out of the study.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the background of the study and its rationale, and the theoretical framework underpinning it. I presented the research questions and research design used to answer these, and considered the original contribution that I hoped the study would make. In the next chapter, I present the methodology and research design in more detail.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In my introduction in Chapter One, I expressed my severe discontent with the present state of the world. However, despite the fact that the forces which keep the world the way it is seem very strong, I believe that change is possible. I believe we can best understand the world through the lens of power, and my position is that the state of the world today is a result of those who hold power.

As I have explained, my choice of CLP as a case study is because it claims to have undergone a fundamental shift in its praxis towards an emancipatory politics, having reflected deeply on its role in supporting the status quo. It took a conscious decision to depart from conventional NGO practice. I believed that studying this organisation and how and why it shifted to an emancipatory praxis might provide some insight into possibilities for change in South Africa in particular and Africa more generally. I thus identified the following research questions:

1. What is the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why did the organisation shift its practice?
2. Which theoretical influences contributed to the shift?
3. Which particular elements of the work of Fanon and Freire impact on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and hence its praxis?
4. What implications does this have within the current South African context?

This chapter discusses the research design used to answer these.

2.2 Research paradigm

As briefly explained in Chapter One, a paradigm represents a worldview through which the researcher determines what to research and how the research should be done. There are a number of paradigms. The most commonly discussed in the research literature are the positivist/post-positivist, constructivist/interpretivist and critical paradigms (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005). Each of these have a distinct ontology, epistemology and methodology that gives them their distinctive features. Ontology relates to our assumptions of what reality is and the nature of being, epistemology to our assumptions regarding how we can know reality, and methodology provides a way in which we can discover reality (Ritchie & Lewis, 2005).

In terms of its ontology, the positivist paradigm holds the view that reality or truth is objective and that there is only one reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This reality can be observed from an objective viewpoint (Levin, 1988). In seeking knowledge about reality (epistemology), positivists argue that it can be measured in an empirically verifiable way, using specific tools. Observation is the basis through which they understand reality (O'Leary, 2004). The research methodology that is usually used is experimental, through survey research, and the specific approach used is usually quantitative (Duffy, 1987).

In contrast to the positivist paradigm, the constructivist/interpretive paradigm argues for multiple realities and truths. Groups or individuals construct their understanding of reality or truth (Mertens, 2005). Hence, truth is dependent on the perception of a group or individual. Within this paradigm, epistemology is premised on the argument that reality needs to be interpreted (Kura, 2012). The claims of positivists of an 'objective' researcher are thus false. Some of the most common methodologies for constructivist research include phenomenological research, ethnography, grounded research and action research. The approach used for constructivist inquiry is mostly qualitative, and it might employ case study, life history, or narrative research styles, using data collection methods such as interviews and observation. Data analysis generally involves the identification of themes (Kura, 2012).

Like the constructivist/interpretive paradigm, the critical paradigm believes that 'reality' is constructed through social action, and the influence exerted on it from internal dynamics is continuous. However, those working in this paradigm believe that power influences both the construction of reality, and our ability to understand reality. Thus, the paradigm pays close attention to history, and tends to be action oriented (Kura, 2012). Critical epistemology is thus based on the premise that because knowledge is a product of social constructions, power dynamics and relations in society influence it. Therefore, those who hold power frame what counts as 'knowledge'. Understanding reality – coming to 'know' reality – requires us to look at it, and at knowledge, using a lens of power. Marxism and feminism are common theoretical perspectives within the critical paradigm (Kura, 2012).

For this research, I have chosen a critical paradigm because it reflects my own ontological and epistemological assumptions, as I indicated in Chapter One. In addition, I believe this paradigm to be consistent with the political position of CLP. Unlike the interpretive paradigm that seeks only to understand the situation, this paradigm rests on an assumption that change is possible, and, in contexts of oppression, necessary. Critical research is thus aimed at

understanding a situation with a view to gaining a better perspective of what action could be taken to end the oppressive conditions within it. Thus, my fourth research question specifically focuses on the implications of CLP's shift to an emancipatory praxis for the current South African context.

2.3 Research approach

The three basic research approaches are quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches. The quantitative approach emerged from within the positivist paradigm, and focuses on testing objective theories or hypotheses by evaluating relationships among different variables (Creswell, 2013). The variables involved are measurable through appropriate instruments, and statistical analysis is a common method of analysis for this approach. The conclusions drawn for this type of method are usually 'rigid' rather than flexible, and quantitative research is typically deductive because those who use it on the whole intend to generalise their findings (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers several different styles of research such as ethnography, case study, life history, phenomenology and grounded theory. It is inherently uninterested in numbers as data (Silverman, 2013) and thus emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2008). In lieu of observing the quantity of observed phenomena, qualitative research focuses on understanding the nature of the problem being researched (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Qualitative approaches are thus normally associated with either critical or interpretive paradigms because of their ontological and epistemological assumptions, as discussed earlier: They seek to comprehend the meaning that people attach to certain human and social problems. People's beliefs are paid particular attention, because qualitative researchers argue that reality is created by human actions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Data collection is therefore done mostly through observation or open-ended questions that are asked purposefully (Creswell, 2014). Data generated is thus generally descriptive (Bryman, 2008), and analysis of this data focuses on content and is often inductive in that the researcher builds the argument or findings from the data to reach general conclusions (Baškarada, 2014) or to develop concepts and theories grounded in the data (Bryman, 2008). The researcher in this type of approach assumes the responsibility of making sense of the data collected and hence exercises some control over the conclusions that the study might draw. Rather than being rigid, qualitative research is flexible. What distinguishes a qualitative approach is that i) data is collected in the field of study; ii) the

researcher is the key instrument; iii) data is obtained from different sources through a variety of methods such as focus groups, interviews, observation, and documents; and iv) the researcher derives meaning from participants (Creswell, 2009).

The advantages of a qualitative approach are that it requires smaller data sets to provide trustworthy results, and allows for direct contact with the people who are involved in the study, creating an interactive environment conducive for informed knowledge (Bryman, 2008). The approach also allows the researcher to see how events and patterns unfold over time, and the ways in which different elements of a social system interconnect (Bryman, 2008). Qualitative methodology is flexible, with limited imposition of predetermined concepts, and so changing direction in the course of an investigation can be done much more easily than in a quantitative approach (Bryman, 2008).

The disadvantages of a qualitative approach are that it is possible for the researcher to be too subjective, reading into the data what is not there, and it can rely too much on the researcher's unsystematic views about what is significant and important and on the personal relationships established by the researcher with participants (Bryman, 2008). In addition to that, qualitative research is difficult to reproduce, because it is relatively unstructured and often reliant upon the qualitative researcher's ingenuity. It can be argued that it is difficult to conduct a true replication, since there are usually hardly any standard procedures to be followed. The researcher controls or decides what strikes him or her as significant, and another researcher may well be interested in, or struck by, other issues. There is also a problem of generalisation, and transparency (about how exactly the study is done) is essential. There is also a limit to the degree to which one can genuinely adopt the worldview of the people being studied (Bryman, 2008).

Mixed research has become increasingly useful for many researchers and those who use this approach argue that it provides the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this approach, both qualitative and quantitative data undergo simultaneous collection, analysis and interpretation. Thus, methods used for collecting data of both kinds, such as survey questions, interviews and observation, are used. The promoters of mixed research are persuaded by the possibility that a varied means of collecting data from a range of respondents or sources enhances the prospects for validity and reliability (Creswell, 2014).

I used the qualitative approach as the most appropriate for this study, because the objective of the study is to understand CLP's shift in its praxis through its life history. As discussed

above, a qualitative approach requires a smaller data set to provide trustworthy results, and allows for direct contact with the people who are involved in the study. This approach thus allowed me to interact closely with key informants at a relatively deep level. The approach also allows the researcher to see how events and patterns unfold over time, and obviously this was highly relevant to my study. Finally, a qualitative approach helps the researcher consider the ways in which different elements of a social system interconnect, and I wanted to understand CLP's shift in relation to different perspectives of those involved in the organisation, within its broader context. There is no possibility that one can gather such information in quantified units or through a survey, because one needs an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and understanding.

2.4 Research styles: Case study and life history

As discussed in the previous sections, there are different ways of doing qualitative research, and research styles can include case studies, ethnographic research, life histories, action research, and participatory research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This study explored the shift in CLP's praxis through its life history, as a case study. A case study research style seemed relevant since I was looking at a single or individual unit or entity of study (i.e. the organisation). Furthermore, because I was interested in understanding a shift in the organisation's practice over time, a life history research style was appropriate. Whilst life history research is generally used with individuals, in this case I applied it to allow an organisation to tell its story.

2.4.1 Case study

Rule and John (2011) argue that, "A 'case study' is…a systematic and in-depth investigation of a *particular instance in its context* in order to generate knowledge" (p. 4; emphasis in original). However, the research literature makes it clear that in fact there are different understandings of both 'case' and 'case study'; and, as a result, different arguments about case study design, including data collection, analysis and validation. Yazan (2015) compares the work of three of the seminal writers on case study, Yin, Merriam and Stake, showing how their epistemological commitments have resulted in different approaches. Yazan argues that there are fundamental differences in the ways these three theorists define a case. Yin proposes that a case is a phenomenon within a real-life context in which the boundary between the phenomenon and the context may not be clear, whereas, both Stake and Merriam

emphasise the boundedness of a case in contrast to Yin. Stake asserts that a case is an integrated system, and thus "has a boundary and working parts" (Stake quoted in Yazan, 2015, p. 148), whilst Merriam tends to consider a case in a more unitary way. In terms of case study, Yazan suggests that Marriam is less concerned about the interrelationship between the case and its context than Yin and Stake; whilst Stake's understanding of a case as a system means that he places more emphasis on a consideration of the complexity of the case itself.

Possibly because of his more positivist epistemological commitment, Yin's proposals for case study design are relatively structured, following a logical sequence, and incorporating both quantitative and qualitative elements. Stake, on the other hand, argues for a highly flexible and responsive design, in which the researcher can effect major changes at any point. Both State and Merriam favour a qualitative approach to case study research (Yazan, 2015). It is thus fair to say that case study research is still a relatively contested research style. Nevertheless, it remains a highly relevant and useful style for my own study – particularly the more constructivist approach of Merriam and Stake – as I argue below.

The variety and flexibility of case study research means that it can be used for many different purposes. Rule and John (2011) list five reasons why a researcher might choose a case study research style:

> Firstly, they can generate an understanding of and insight into a particular instance by providing a thick, rich description of the case and illuminating its relations to its broader contexts. Secondly, they can be used to explore a general problem or issue within a limited and focused setting. Thirdly, they can be used to generate theoretical insights, either in the form of grounded theory that arises from the case study itself or in developing and testing existing theory with reference to the case. Fourthly, case studies might also shed light on other, similar cases, thus providing a level of generalisation or transferability… Fifthly, case studies can be used for teaching purposes to illuminate broader theoretical and/or contextual points. (p. 7)

As can be seen, a case study approach is clearly appropriate to this study for a number of reasons. I was interested in a particular case, CLP, within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. I wanted to consider how and why this particular organisation shifted its praxis within this context, and to examine the possibility that this shift had been influenced by particular theory/theorists. I also wanted to consider the implications of CLP's shift and its new praxis more broadly.

Not surprisingly, there are also multiple suggestions on how to classify case studies. One way is to classify them according to their purpose:

> A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An exploratory case study often examines a phenomenon that has not been investigated before and can lay the basis for further studies. An explanatory case study attempts to explain what happens in a particular case or why it happens. This kind of study often tests existing theory or generates new theory. (Rule & John, 2011, p. 8)

There is no mutually exclusive categorisation of case study in terms of whether a case study is descriptive, exploratory or explanatory. A case study might have some descriptive elements, some explorative aspects and/or some explanatory elements, but what ultimately classifies a case study is its predominant trait (Rule & John, 2011). Although my study attempts to both describe and explain some elements of CLP's activities, it is predominantly explorative. I am not aware of any other study on the phenomenon of an NGO making a conscious shift to an emancipatory praxis, particularly in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

Case studies can also be classified as intrinsic or instrumental (Rule & John, 2011). Instrumental cases are when a researcher chooses a particular case not because of the intrinsic interest in that case in particular, but in order to examine a broader issue. By contrast, the intrinsic case study is interested in the case itself, as a particular or unique instance. An intrinsic case is a unique situation worthy of understanding more fully. This study is focused on CLP as a unique case, in its bold decision to shift from conventional NGO practice to one that is emancipatory. This research seeks to understand the particular conditions which led CLP to change its practice.

As discussed above, not all case study theorists place the same emphasis on context, or understand the relationship between the case and its context in the same way; but it is generally agreed that a case study cannot be divorced from its context, which includes both spatial and temporal elements (Rule & John, 2011). Rule and John propose thinking differently about the relationship between the case and its context, and the context and its case. They suggest three ways in which the case might be related to its context. If a case reflects the wider context in which it is located, in other words, it reflects and reproduces its context, it is called a microcosm. A catalyst case study emphasises how the case influences or

shapes its context or wider community. An outlier case is one that is an exception, as it stands out of its context. From the background presented in Chapter One, it is clear that CLP, at least after its shift, is an outlier rather than a microcosm or catalyst – it is different and exceptional. It chose neither to reproduce its (hegemonic) context nor influence it, but rather to disrupt it. Rule and John (2011) suggest analysing the relationship between the context and its case using four different lenses, which they call background, foreground, liftground and underground. I discuss this in more detail under data analysis below.

However cases studies are classified, almost all case study research uses the same series of steps, although, as discussed, different writers allow for greater or lesser flexibility on case study research design. The first step generally involves purposeful selection of the case to be analysed (depending on the purpose of the study, e.g. descriptive/exploratory, intrinsic/instrumental, etc.). The next step involves collecting data, generally using qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and document analysis (Merriam & Simpson, 2005; Rule & John, 2011; Yazan, 2015). Data collection in case study research almost invariably intends to collect rich, thick data, because, as Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue, case studies aim to give a sense of 'what it is like' in this particular case. Data collection is followed by data analysis, which is obviously usually qualitative in nature – I discuss this further below.

As discussed, case study research is flexible and versatile, and thus has many advantages. It can be used to study different particular instances, circumstances or situations using a variety of methods and can be applied in many fields. Another benefit is that case study research can be combined with other research approaches (Rule & John, 2011). For instance, this study uses a case study in the form of a life history of a particular organisation (the case). The focus on a particular situation enables the researcher to provide a rich description of the phenomenon under study, offering large amounts of rich, detailed information about a unit or phenomenon (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). One key strength of case studies as that the results are easily understood by a wide audience, because they are frequently written in everyday non-professional language, making them immediately intelligible.

Limitations of case studies are that they can be time consuming and expensive, and they demand expertise in observation and interviewing techniques. It can also be argued that case study narratives can be lengthy documents demanding time to read and write (Merriam & Simpson, 2005, p. 111). Cohen et al. (2011) point out that a weakness of case studies is that

the results cannot be generalised (although this is disputed (Rule & John, 2011)). They are also not easily open to crosschecking and so may be biased, personal and subjective (Cohen et al., 2011).

I used a case study design because, as discussed in Chapter One, encountering CLP forced me to rethink some of my assumptions and I wanted to focus on this actual 'case' of a civil society organisation that had changed its practice to a more emancipatory one within the context of post-apartheid South Africa. A case study approach allowed me to focus in detail on this phenomenon, and to provide a rich, thick description of what happened in this case. However, I also wanted to consider this case over time. I wanted to look at the shift which CLP went through, so I had to look at what happened before the shift in order to understand the processes which led to it and I had to look at what happened after this shift, in order to understand its nature. It thus seemed appropriate to use a life history research style.

2.4.2 Life history

Rule and John (2011) argue that case studies can be presented in three forms (although they may include elements of all three). The first and second forms are descriptive and argumentative. The descriptive form presents a thick description, seeking to answer questions such as: What are the key elements of the case? How do these elements relate within the system? How does the system relate to the context? The argumentative form seeks to explain the case by applying existing theory to the case. The third form presents a case study as a story, adopting a narrative format. This narrative style has the elements of a story such as characters, where and when things happened (setting), what it is about (themes), and how the story is arranged (plot). Thus, it seeks to ask and answer questions: "What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? How did it happen? What changed? What did it mean?" (p. 117). A narrative case study "details an event as it unfolds, focusing on key periods or critical moments. It is diachronic, in the sense that it examines changes within a system over a period of time. It uses a chronological order – arranging events as they happened" (p. 118). Clearly, this relates well to my study, as I wanted to understand a shift that had happened to an organisation (system) over a period of time, and what key periods or critical moments had influenced this shift. I wanted to know what happened, when, and how and why it happened. I also wanted to explore what it meant for emancipatory change in South Africa.

Rule and John (2011) argue that narrative is the usual way in which case studies are presented, since they usually tell a particular story of a person, programme, organisation or event. Although a narrative case study is generally presented in chronological order, it might be arranged thematically, or combine the chronological and the thematic.

Obviously, the narrative nature of case study research lends itself to a life history. As Bogden and Biklen (1982, as cited in Rule & John, 2011) point out, a life history is really a kind of case study. Indeed, some researchers use a life history research style to construct their case study. Rule and John (2011) give as an example of this a researcher conducting life history interviews with key members of an organisation in order to find out how their lives were affected by the organisation, and how they influenced it. This study, however, does not focus on the life history of CLP's participants, but on the organisation itself. This is an unusual way of applying this particular research style, but was clearly useful in this case, and allowed me to explore this methodology and potentially extend it.

The narrative or life story method has become an increasingly popular one within qualitative research since the mid-1980s (Elliott, 2005). According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 44), "a life history is an account of a person's life or particular aspects of people's lives". Obviously, therefore, a life history is a narrative. The three main features of narrative are:

1. Temporality (happens at a particular time or over time; it is time bound): In this case, I focused on a particular, time bound context – that of the post-apartheid period, and the lifetime of CLP up until the time I conducted the study.
2. Causality (what happened and what caused it to happen - this is often referred to as the plot): In this case, I sought to understand the story of CLP's shift in praxis and what caused it.
3. Interpretation or evaluation of the event narrated by the teller and the listener: In this case, I sought to understand CLP's own understanding of their shift to an emancipatory praxis and the theoretical influences underpinning it, from the perspective of the organisation itself, and then to interpret this in the light of my theoretical frame and the literature I reviewed.

Because of changes over time (temporality), life stories change. So a story may be told differently immediately after an event, compared to many years later (Webster & Mertova, 2007). When life stories are told, not everything is said; there is a selection process in which some events are exalted over others. The ordering of events can also emphasise certain

events, or suggest causality. This selection and ordering is influenced by the political or ideological position of the storyteller. In this sense, stories document the innermost experience of individuals because they manifest people's understanding and definition of the world around them (Davis, 2002). Elliot (2005) argues that the critical feature of narratives is that they impose meaning on events and experience. So, narratives becomes a means through which information about lived experience *and* the meaning given to this experience by participants can be gleaned by the researcher. Given this emphasis on events, Webster and Mertova (2007) argue for a specific method of analysis for life history research, which they call 'critical event analysis'. I discuss this in more detail under analysis, below. As will be discussed, I gathered CLP's life history from a number of different sources of data, as is recommended for case study research.

In my research of CLP's life history, key research data were drawn from interviews with people close to the organisation (especially those who had worked with the organisation from its inception). Although the people that I interviewed talked about the life of the organisation, they inevitably brought with them their worldview and ideological constructions – in other words, their stories about CLP's life were influenced by their own positionality. I thus had to take the issue of the source of data – the storyteller – into account, because of the issue of positionality. Whilst I made no attempt to shape the selection of events (or intellectual influences they identified), I did attempt to shape the ordering of events (internal and external to the organisation) and the influences through the use of a timeline in the interviews and focus group discussions, as discussed in more detail below. This is recommended by Rule and John (2011) as a useful tool in collecting data for a narrative case study, and it assisted me to understand the chronological order of events and intellectual resources being drawn on in order to construct CLP's life history and also to compare different stories.

Rule and John (2011) argue that there are a variety of data collection methods that could be used in case study research, and recommend that multiple methods be used in a single study. The choice of methods is determined by the purpose of the study, the key research questions, research ethics, and the question of resources. As will be shown in the following sections, the research design influences not just the collection of data (2.5), but also how data will be analysed (2.6).

2.5 Data collection

The data collection methods used in a study need to be informed by the research paradigm, approach and style. Since my study is framed within a critical paradigm, using methods that presupposed an equality of intelligence and attempted to equalise power relations was crucial. The qualitative approach meant that my methods needed to ensure that rich, qualitative data was collected. Finally, my choice of using a case study and life history research style meant that the emphasis was on collecting rich, thick data. As Rule and John (2011) state:

> A case study approach allows you to examine a particular instance in a great deal of depth, rather than looking at multiple instances superficially. While a survey would reach conclusions by gathering data from a large sample, a case study design does so by examining only one or a few. It focuses on the complex relations within the case and the wider context around the case as it affects the case. It is therefore intensive rather than extensive. (p. 7)

Thus, collecting a large quantity of data would not be useful – I needed rather to carefully select data sources that could provide rich in-depth detail, and employ methods that would allow me to collect the data in all its richness and depth. Because I wanted to examine the life history of CLP, I needed to ensure that I was collecting data related to a period of time. As Rule and John (2011) point out, "Chronological sequence is particularly important for historical case studies and for case studies that have an event as their unit of analysis. Such studies pay careful attention to continuity and change over time" (p. 122). My data sources thus needed to provide an historic sweep of the organisation's life; but in depth.

I thus used as data sources documents and key people who had been involved in the organisation in some way over a period of time in order to construct CLP's life history. The process of selecting which documents and key people to include in a research study is called sampling. For documentary sources, I used a form of snowball sampling to find relevant ones. I discuss the different documentary sources and how they were sampled in detail below. The purposive type of sampling that I used to select people I would interview was determined by the qualitative approach and research styles this research adopted. I discuss the process in detail below. In purposive sampling, a researcher specifically chooses the participants based on their knowledge of the phenomenon under scrutiny: "In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156). I used four methods as

part of my data collecting process: document analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation.

2.5.1 Document analysis

A document can be defined as a record of an event or process (Cohen et al., 2011). Creswell (2009) points out that documents can include public documents such as minutes of meetings or newspapers, and private documents that include journals, diaries, letters, and so on. Such records may be produced by a group or an individual. Documents can be divided into primary and secondary sources, where the primary sources include those which come into existence during the period on which the research is focused (such as minutes of meetings), while secondary sources are the interpretations of the events of that period, based on the primary sources (such as evaluation reports). It can also be argued that primary sources can be divided into two types: deliberate sources and inadvertent sources. Deliberate sources are produced specifically for the attention of future research, while inadvertent sources are produced for some other purpose, but could then be used for the purposes of research (Bell, 2005).

Bell (2005) suggests that when doing a study using documents, there are two different approaches that can be taken. The first is the source-oriented approach that involves letting the nature of the sources determine the project and help the researcher to generate questions for the research. The second is the problem-oriented approach that involves formulating questions, using other research methods as the primary way of generating data, as well as reading secondary sources. The latter is the one that I used in this study. This method assesses what has already been discovered about the subject before establishing the focus of the study and then researching the relevant primary sources (Bell, 2005). In this study, I used secondary documents, such as the key occasional paper already discussed, from the moment I started the enquiry. From these documents, I started looking for other relevant documents such as evaluation reports.

Document analysis can be useful in all forms of qualitative research:

> In practical terms, using documentary sources is in some way easier than doing interviews or participant observation. This is because one does not have to 'think on one's feet' as in an interview, nor engage in the tedious process of transcribing everything. (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2014, p. 316)

Documentary research can also help us understand "the past, patterns of continuity and change over time, and the origin of current structures and relationships" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 254), something clearly relevant to this study. The advantage of using documents as sources of data is that they enable a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants, and they can be accessed at a time suited to the researcher. An additional advantage is that documents represent data that are thoughtfully compiled with sufficient attention. As already written material, they can save a researcher the time and expense of transcribing (Creswell, 2009). The limitations of documents as data sources is that not all people are equally articulate and perceptive in their writing; some documented information may be protected and not available for public or private use; hardcopy documents may be difficult to access and if they are available only in hardcopy, they may require transcribing or optical scanning to create a digital copy; and documents may be incomplete or may not be authentic or accurate (Creswell, 2009).

In the light of the advantages of using documents, CLP documents were considered as potentially pivotal in assisting me to understand the organisation's life history and its shift in praxis. As I have discussed, the 'story' can change over time; and using documents allowed me to assess what the story was at various points in time, and compare this with the 'story' as told in the interviews and focus groups. I purposefully examined specific documents produced by the organisation, or directly related to its work, in the period from its inception until 2017, focusing on both primary (but inadvertent) and secondary sources. The four categories of documents which I at first intended to examine (i.e. my sample) included: CLP publications (newsletters, occasional papers, bible study series, and a special edition of the *Bulletin for Contextual Theology*); general, annual and fieldwork reports; evaluation reports; and *Padkos Digest* (a collection of some of the resources considered useful by CLP, and circulated on their email list, discussed in more detail below). After an initial cursory examination of these documents, according to what they conveyed about the life history of the organisation and how it developed its praxis, I discovered that there was a great deal of repetition on some issues, and some information contained in the documents was not relevant to the objective of this study. As a result of this discovery, I decided to focus on occasional papers, and in particular the one published in August 2007 (Butler et al., 2007); evaluation reports; funding reports; documents created by CLP in relation to its 'higher level thinking', concerning fundamental principles and beliefs (e.g. what are often referred to in 'conventional' NGOs as vision and mission statements, although they are rarely referred to as

such by CLP itself); and *Padkos Digest*. To construct the early history of CLP, I also consulted articles written by those involved in the creation of the organisation. Below, I discuss these different kinds of documents in more detail.

Occasional papers: These are CLP documents that explore the experiences of CLP and relate them to the broader context. As their name implies, they are produced irregularly and, at the time of writing, CLP had produced only three. I focused in particular on the seminal August 2007 Occasional Paper, *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007), which explains the reason why the organisation decided to change its practice, and gives a relatively detailed, reflective and self-critical explanation of CLP's journey as an organisation. As discussed in Chapter One, this was one of the documents that inspired me to focus this study on CLP.

Evaluation reports: The evaluation reports incorporate the strategic plans of the organisation. Evaluations are done by the organisation in three-year cycles. At the end of every three years, CLP meets and reflects on their practice with the help of an external facilitator, who then writes a report. This study used four detailed reports: i) the 2001 Report (Hallowes, 2001), from 1997 to 2001; ii) the 2004 Report (Hallowes, 2004), from 2001 to 2004; iii) the 2007 Report (Hallowes, 2007), from 2004 to 2007; and iv) the 2010 Report (Hallowes, 2010) from 2007 to 2010. These reports gradually unfold the life of CLP as an organisation, highlighting its successes and failures. They present a good account of the transitional process of the organisation and were important in helping me to construct and understand CLP's life history.

Funding documents: I read a number of narrative reports written by CLP for their funders, covering the period 2013–2017.

'Higher level thinking' documents related to fundamental principles and beliefs: I used a 2010 document called *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010). I also used a 2013 document entitled *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b) which summarises three internal 'notes' which the organisation had produced ('A CLP Confession of Faith' (2011); 'The Land Question: A Statement of Belief' (2011); and 'CLP: Summation of our Principles and Politics' (2013)), and includes summaries of CLP's position on politics, state, civil society, democracy, solidarity, agency, and so on. I also used two internal documents written in 2014, *Centres and peripheries* (CLP, 2014a) and *PAP [Praxis for Autonomous Politics] 2014 – Local and in Season* (CLP, 2014c). These are not publically available documents, and I specifically requested them because they were referred to in the CLP staff focus group.

Padkos Digest: This is the name of a CLP publication which collects together in hardcopy form some of the mailings sent out on the *Padkos* list, including CLP's message (they call it a 'blurb'), and all resources attached. These resources either come from within CLP, or are external to it but connect with, or resonate with, its thought and reflections. Two *Padkos Digests* have been produced (CLP, 2012; CLP, 2014b). These were very useful in identifying the theorists that the organisation regarded as relevant to their praxis, and what CLP believed to be useful at the time.

2.5.2 Interviews

Individual interviewing is one of the most basic methods used to gather data in a qualitative approach. An interview is a conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee. This interactive conversation allows both participants to create and construct narrative versions of the social world (Silverman, 2004). Interviews can be structured or unstructured. The former is guided by an interview schedule, whilst an unstructured interview is one in which the researcher's questions are entirely dependent on the interviewee's responses to an initial probe (Creswell, 2009). According to Struwing and Stead (2001), a semi-structured interview is a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. This type of interview overcomes the issues associated with structured (limiting the depth and intensity of participants' experiences) and unstructured (encouraging the participants to express experiences which might not be relevant to the research question) interviews. An interview schedule is used as a guide to the interviewer about the questions to be asked. This helps the interviewer to avoid straying from the topic/issue being discussed (Fox & Bayat, 2007).

Terre Blanche et al. (2014) point out that conducting an interview is a more natural form of interacting with people than making them fill in a questionnaire. It also gives researchers an opportunity to get to know people quite intimately so that they are more likely to understand what participants think or feel (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). It is different from many other approaches in the sense that it allows the object of study to speak for him or herself. The benefit of conducting an interview is that the presence of the researcher during the interview allows him or her to gather detailed information and clarify responses where ambiguity arises. Furthermore, a face-to-face interview is useful because it enables the interviewer to

directly observe the participant and to ask personal historically related questions, allowing a researcher to have control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009).

The limitations of interviews are that the presence of the interviewer can influence power relations, where the participant can feel pressured to say what s/he thinks the interviewer is expecting. Another drawback is that interviews sometimes produce a large amount of data that can be overwhelming (Creswell, 2009).

Apart from looking at documents, an organisation's life history can also be discovered by interviewing individuals who are acquainted with the organisation and have been involved with it from its inception to the present. I chose to use semi-structured interviews, since this was clearly the most appropriate interview form to collect the kind of data I wanted. The individuals spoke about their experience, involvement and contribution to the life of CLP – their personal relationship with the organisation – because it is not independent of the people who shaped or promoted its ideas. It is important to note that these individual interviews were more dialogical than simply a question and answer session. Before I conducted the interviews, I read the selected documents so that the interviews could help me probe for more information or seek clarity on issues that I did not understand in the documents.

While I was preparing my sample of research participants, I initially planned to interview three individuals, namely Mark Butler, Graham Philpott and David Ntseng[1], because they have been with the organisation since its inception (i.e. were key 'characters' in the story of CLP, and hence an important element of life history research). Because the 'teller' of a story affects the story, I thus had to identify important 'tellers', and also multiple 'tellers'. Clearly, these needed to be different people who knew the organisation intimately over its lifetime. When I was reading the CLP documents, I discovered that David Hallowes' name appeared on most of the evaluation documents, in particular over the period of CLP's shift in practice, so I decided to include him as one of my interviewees. As a result, I ended up interviewing four people. It is also important to note that I had initially thought about including Phumani Zondi in my interviews. He and Graham played a pivotal role in the founding and establishing phase of CLP. His contribution would have been useful in the telling of his experiences before, and during, the first few years of the founding of CLP, because he left the organisation as early as 2002. Unfortunately, I was not able to contact him during the time I

[1] None of my interviewees requested that they be kept anonymous, although they were specifically offered this option. Real names are thus used.

was collecting my data. However, since he had not been part of the organisation over the period of the shift, this is not a major limitation of this study. All four of the individuals I approached agreed to be interviewed.

Rule and John (2011) suggest using a timeline for plotting the main events in a case study which focuses on changes or events over time. At the start of the interview, I gave each interviewee a blank timeline on a piece of flipchart, labelled from 1997 to 2017. I asked each participant to write down any theorist of theory which they could remember being a useful resource to CLP, and the time when a particular theorist's ideas had been first introduced into the organisation. Similarly, I asked them to write down the work or activities that CLP had been doing at any one time, and any phrase or concept that they could remember CLP adopting at different times in their life history. All of my interviewees, apart from Mark Butler, completed this task (I discuss why this was the case later in the thesis). I designed the interview schedule (see Annexure 1) to elicit information, and allow me to ask for clarification and probe more deeply into how and why certain theorists, activities or terminology emerged at particular moments, and the impact this had on the organisation's thought and praxis(See Annexure 5 for completed timelines). Since there was no timeline to refer to in Mark's case, I simply had to ask direct questions.

David Hallowes: I conducted my first interview with David Hallowes (David H.) in Durban at his home on the afternoon of 31st January 2017. The interview took about one and a half hours. David H. had evaluated CLP four times, from its inception in 1997 to 2010, which made him a good person to help me understand the transition process of the organisation. Since he has never worked for CLP, his contribution allowed me to start understanding CLP from an outsider's viewpoint.

Graham Philpott: I conducted my second interview with Graham Philpott, the director of CLP, at the CLP offices in Pietermaritzburg on 1st February 2017. This interview also took almost one and a half hours. Graham has been the director since 2003. He is also a founding member of CLP, together with Phumani Zondi, who left the year before Graham was made director. Graham had been involved with activities related to CLP as a fieldworker, before it was initiated as a joint project of the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) and the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (as it was then called) (PACSA). This made him an irreplaceable resource in trying to understand CLP and how and why it changed its practice.

Mark Butler: The third interview was with Mark Butler, and took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, on 6th February 2017. It took about forty-five minutes. Mark became involved with CLP in the very initial stages – before it was even set up as a project of PACSA and AFRA. He was a board member once CLP became an independent NGO, and has been working closely with the organisation since then. He is quoted in CLP documents as one of the individuals who contributed to shaping the 'theoretical resources' of CLP. He also authored or co-authored key CLP documents.

David Ntseng: The last interview was with David Ntseng, and took place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 21st February 2017. This was one of the shortest interviews, taking about thirty-five to forty minutes, because of his busy schedule. Like Graham, David N. has been part of CLP from its inception and had worked as an intern with PACSA even before the founding of CLP as an independent NGO. At the time of my study, he was Programme Manager of CLP, and acted as director when Graham was unavailable. He played an integral role in the organisation and its transitional process.

Note that because of the possible confusion related to having two interviewees named David, in citing the interviews, I have used David H. to refer to David Hallowes, and David N. to refer to David Ntseng.

2.5.3 Focus group discussions

I initially planned to conduct four focus group discussions, one for each of the three communities or networks with which CLP worked, with the fourth composed of the CLP staff I had not interviewed. When I started to study more about how these communities work, I realised that observations of the interaction between community/movement members and CLP staff would be more useful than a focus group discussion. I thus decided to attend and observe two meetings between CLP staff and community groups. As a result of this realisation, I ended up conducting two focus group discussions and two observations (discussed in detail below).

A focus group discussion is a form of interview in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In qualitative research, it is about a specific topic or theme (Bryman, 2008). Although it typically involves a group of people who share similar types of experience, this is one that is not naturally constituted as an

existing social group (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). A focus group can involve as few as four people (Bryman, 2008), or as many as twelve (Bickman & Rog, 1998). Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014, p. 183) define a focus group discussion as "the meeting of a small group (usually between six and twelve people) and a facilitator, who is often also the researcher". Generally, focus group discussions last from one-and-a-half hours to two-and-a-half hours (Bickman & Rog, 1998; Bryman, 2008).

The main purpose of a focus group discussion is to stimulate an in-depth exploration of a topic. It is pertinent to note that a focus group is useful for exploratory research when little information is known about the phenomenon of interest. It also facilitates the interpretation of quantitative results and adds depth to the responses obtained in a more structured survey (Bickman & Rog, 1998). A rich body of data, expressed in the respondents' own words and context, is usually produced.

There are a number of advantages to using focus groups. Time and money are saved because they bring a number of people together to interact while making it possible for the researcher to use techniques enabling observations of the group interaction on a topic (Bickman & Rog, 1998; Mouton, 1998). They can also be assembled with much shorter notice than a more systematic, larger survey (Bickman & Rog, 1998). They also provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the interviewees' opinions and experiences (Mouton, 1998). If facilitated well, focus groups create debates that can provide a deeper and better understanding of different ideas and perspectives of the participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Moreover, focus group questions, if asked in an interactive and dialogical manner, free up participants to talk with other group members, thus generating more data than might otherwise be the case. Direct interaction with respondents produces opportunities for clarification and probing of responses, and follow-up questions (Bickman & Rog, 1998).

The limitations of focus groups are often evident, especially during the moment when the researcher loses control of the proceedings. If the facilitator is not doing her or his job well, there is a tendency for some people to dominate the discussion, thus narrowing the range of views that can be captured (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014), and potentially biasing the data towards the views of the dominant or opinionated members (Bickman & Rog, 1998). Moreover, the data from a focus group discussion may be difficult to transcribe when respondents speak at the same time (Bickman & Rog, 1998). The open-ended nature of responses obtained in focus groups often makes summarisation and interpretation of results

difficult. It has also been argued that statements by respondents are frequently characterised by qualifications and contingencies that make direct comparisons of respondents' opinions difficult (Bickman & Rog, 1998). On a technical level, it can also be argued that focus groups take more time than individual interviews. As mentioned earlier, one focus group can take one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours.

For this study, I conducted two focus group discussions: one with CLP staff and one with *Abahlali baseMjondolo* members (see Annexure 2 for schedule used):

CLP staff focus group: The focus group consisted of all the CLP staff, excluding Graham and David N. whom I had interviewed earlier that month, and who, as director and deputy, might have influenced staff responses. The focus group took place at CLP's offices in Pietermaritzburg, on 23rd February 2017. Since the CLP staff is small (eight in total), the total number of participants was five (the Finance Manager did not attend). As I did with the individual interviews, I gave them a timeline and asked them to write onto it any theorist, theories or writers who had influenced CLP, and when. I then asked them to follow the same process with the work done/activities of CLP, and then with concepts or phrases used or created by CLP. They discussed this among themselves and wrote whatever they remembered as a collective exercise (See Annexure 5 for completed timelines). After this exercise, I asked questions relating to what they had put on the timeline. The whole process took between two and two-and-a-half hours.

Abahlali baseMjondolo: *Abahlali baseMjondolo* is an independent and autonomous movement of shack dwellers in the Greater Durban area and in Cape Town. At the time of the focus group discussion, the former connected about 23 shack settlements, while the latter had four affiliated settlements. The movement not only fights for decent houses in the areas where they work, but also for recognition as human beings who think and know what is best for their own emancipation. Their activities are based on insisting that shack dwellers are people with a voice, not objects of analysis, and their voice needs to be heard. CLP is one among many groups with which they work. The objective of this focus group was to try to understand how CLP works with them. The focus group took place at their offices in Durban on 1st March 2017. A total of between 10 and 15 members of *Abahlali* participated in the focus group meeting – the number fluctuated, since the meeting was informal and I allowed members to join or leave as the discussion progressed. There was thus only one set criterion for selecting the members for the focus group – I wanted to obtain the views of *Abahlali*

members about CLP, and membership of *Abahlali* was thus the only criterion. I informed David Ntseng (the CLP staff member working most closely with *Abahlali*) and S'bu Zikode (President of *Abahlali*) that I wanted to meet *Abahlali* members, who were made aware of the time and place of the meeting. Since using *Abahlali* members to construct a life history of CLP clearly did not make sense, I did not give them a timeline, but simply asked questions of the participants related to how CLP works with them (See Annexure 2 for schedule used).

2.5.4 Observations

Observation is when a researcher goes to the site of a study, which may be a school, classroom, church or community meeting space, and observes what is actually taking place there (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). First-hand data is obtained during an observation and it reports on things as witnessed and recorded, as opposed to second-hand witnessing and reporting. This allows the researcher to see for herself the context and site of the research study. Observation can be structured or unstructured. Structured observation begins with a clear idea of what the researcher is looking for and uses a structured observation schedule. This kind of observation tends to be worked out in advance and offers a way of quantifying behaviour rather than explaining it (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Unstructured observation, however, means that the researcher does not go through a checklist ticking off boxes or rating particular activities (Creswell, 2009), but writes a free description of what is observed. Within unstructured observation, the researcher need not record by filling in particular categories on a schedule (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

An advantage of observation is that it is a powerful method for gaining insight into situations. It can provide a well-rounded and well-founded picture of the community under study, while at the same time creating and encouraging trust to develop between the researcher and community (Pratt & Loizos, 1992). Other advantages of observation are that the researcher gains first-hand experience with participants, and information can be recorded as it occurs, with unusual aspects being noted in the process. Observation is also useful for exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss (Creswell, 2009).

Disadvantages of observation are that any observation is selective, so choices must be made about which occurrences to focus on. It is impossible for a person to observe everything that is happening in a situation. What an observer decides to write down and how he or she interprets it can be affected by his/her view of the world and what the individual expects to see. It may be difficult for a person to understand fully the meaning of interactions that she/

he is observing, because events and interaction have a history of which the observer is unlikely to be aware. In other words, human interactions are complex and based on relationships and previous experiences between people (Creswell, 2009).

Babbie and Mouton (2001) highlight two types of observation. The first is simple observation, when the researcher is not part of the community, but an external observer. The second type is one in which the researcher is part of the community which she or he is investigating. In this study, my observation was from outside the community that I was observing. In order for me to carry this out effectively, I constructed a relatively open observation schedule (see Annexure 3), which helped me to focus specifically on elements that I wanted to observe: for example, whether the community is as independent and self-sufficient as the CLP documents claim, and how CLP staff actually acted. I observed how the meetings were conducted, who spoke most of the time, and who decided the agenda. I also tried to discern from the meetings how CLP works with the communities in general. I was looking at the aspect of independence and ownership of activities and CLP's actual praxis in relation to these. The objective was to compare the organisation's claims with its actual praxis within communities. I conducted my observations in September 2017. Below is a brief description of the two interactions I observed.

Nquthu Women's Group: This women's group is based in Northern KZN in Nkunzi. I attended a meeting between CLP staff and approximately 25 to 30 women from the group in a local community hall. The group had been formed with the objective of encouraging mutual aid among women who have suffered the pain of patriarchy and society's neglect because of their gender. It aims to empower rural women to be self-sufficient and independent. These women specialise in farming and use traditional methods as a channel for sustainability. The meeting was being held to reflect on their work, with the aim of finding ways to improve their daily activities. Because they cover many issues, meetings are generally long, often taking the most part of the day. I observed how CLP interacted with this group.

Rural Network (RN): Rural Network is a social movement of rural dwellers in KwaZulu-Natal, organised in response to the violation of rural dwellers' rights. It connects various local struggles against illegal eviction, assault and murder. It also aims to highlight how the justice system is systematically biased against the poor. The day before the meeting that I observed, the group had attended a trial related to a black hunter who was shot and killed by a white farm owner for illegal trespassing. The group went to the high court in Newcastle in Northern

KZN to protest and show solidarity. The aim of attending the RN meeting, similar to that with the Nquthu Women's Group, was to reflect on their work. A presentation was also made by one of its leaders to initiate new members to the network. The 20 men and women participants consisted of leaders from various parts of Northern KwaZulu-Natal. This meeting took place at Newcastle Lodge, and lasted the whole day.

2.6 Data analysis

The research literature generally agrees that there are two types of data analysis, namely quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. This study uses the latter, described thus: "Qualitative Data Analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating" (Sunday, n.d., p. 4). This study handled and processed all the data that was collected from interviews, focus group discussions, documents and observations following the stages set out below, as recommended in the research literature. This is not to suggest that the analysis followed a highly structured or easy path - qualitative analysis is generally an iterative and fairly messy process (Marshall, 2002).

The first stage was to organise and prepare the data. This involved transcribing, typing notes, and categorising data according to their different sources, for example, interviews or observations (Creswell, 2009). The second stage involved reading all the data. This allowed an overall sense of the data and made room to reflect on it.

The coding stage of my thematic content analysis was a "process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998 as quoted in Creswell, 2009, p. 186). Tesch (1990, pp. 142-145) gives detailed guidelines for inductive analysis of qualitative data. This begins with the two stages already discussed (i.e. preparation of raw data files, and close reading of text). This is followed by the creation of categories, overlapping coding of uncoded text, and continuing revision and refinement of the category system. Inductive coding requires multiple close readings of the text and consideration of the multiple meanings that might be contained. Segments that contain meaning are then identified, and a label is created for a new category to which the text segment is assigned. An initial description of the meaning of the category is then

developed. Other segments which fit into this category are then coded accordingly (Thomas, 2003).

Because I was constructing a life history of CLP, my first task was to identify periods; and in particular when CLP's shift to an emancipatory praxis occurred. I did this in two ways. Firstly, I used inductive analysis, looking at what the text (transcripts and documents) actually said about particular time periods and processes. In addition, in keeping with the life history research style, I also used critical event analysis, as proposed by Webster and Mertova (2007). Webster and Mertova argue that in a life history, there may be what they call 'critical events'. These are not simply important events, but are profoundly transformative events which change the worldview of the person who experienced them. Thus, they might well be traumatic, rather than positive. Identifying critical events is an important part of life history analysis, according to Webster and Mertova. They suggest the following as strong indicators that an event could be identified as critical:

- It occurred in a particular context;
- It impacted on the people involved;
- It has life changing consequences;
- It was unplanned;
- It reveals patterns of well-defined stages;
- It was only identified after the event;
- It was intensely personal with strong emotional involvement.

I looked for these indicators in the process of identifying key time periods. I then used inductive analysis to identify key themes within the time periods (e.g. context and analysis; purpose, values and practice; relationships with others; intellectual resources).

After this initial coding, I then created "a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis" (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). As Rule and John (2011) argue, an important factor in case study research is understanding the case within its context. To understand the relationship between CLP and its context (i.e. the setting), I applied Rule and John's four lenses of analysis. The first lens is that of 'background', the socio-historical background of processes or events. This method is common in historical case studies because it looks at what happened prior to a particular moment. It operates on the belief that a phenomenon arises from a historical context: "The advantage of seeing context as

background is that it helps us to locate the case in relation to its history. It is not an isolated ahistorical phenomenon but arises from a particular set of circumstances" (p. 48). The second lens, they term 'foreground': "Context in the sense of foreground is a present reality that informs people's lives" (p. 48). In other words, foreground considers the current, rather than historical context; but also how the historical context continues to be played out: "From this perspective, context is not simply an inert backdrop, but plays an active role in shaping the present and the future" (p. 48). The third and fourth lenses relate to how meaning is made within and about a particular situation. The third lens is 'liftground', which relates to the public discourse used or created about a particular situation. I would argue that this relates to the idea of hegemony. This discourse (particular language or genre) is used by politicians or media to frame prevailing circumstances in the public imagination. The last and final lens they propose is 'underground': "public discourse is not necessarily the same as the discourse of ordinary people and does not necessarily reflect their experience" (p. 49). It is thus important to consider the personal or communal discourse of silenced or hidden voices. Such discourse is often "submerged in the public domain" (p. 49). However, given the positionality of the teller of a story, 'underground' discourse must also be viewed critically. It is thus not necessarily counter-hegemonic.

In this thesis, although I have included all of these lenses, I do not present this analysis as a specific discrete analysis, since this would have resulted in a high degree of repetition. Rather, the 'background' analysis forms part of my literature review chapter, where I specifically discuss the post-apartheid context within which CLP emerged, and to which it was responding. The 'foreground' is presented in CLP's analysis of the context in each period, in the theme 'Context and analysis'. 'Liftground' is included in Chapter Three, in my discussion of hegemonic ideas, including neoliberalism, developmentalism, and so on. My analysis using the lens of 'underground' is presented in both the life history and deductive analysis chapters. In Chapter Five, I specifically include the theme 'Conceptual understandings', in which I present the data regarding CLP's use of concepts and language which constitute an alternative, 'underground' framework.

This 'underground' framework is then used in drawing out key categories or themes that emerged inductively from CLP's thinking in Chapter Six: a) The order of things/the-world-as-it-is versus being 'out of order'/rupture/the-world-as-it-could-be; b) Conventional NGO practice; c) Thinking/voice/agency/politics; d) Reflecting and learning; e) Supporting/solidarity/walking with/journeying/being with. I consider these categories in

relation to my literature and theoretical frame; this then constitutes the deductive analysis phase.
In the final stage, this analysis was worked into a qualitative narrative in response to my research questions.

2.7 Trustworthiness: validity and reliability

All research has to be tested to see if its claims can be supported by data collected through appropriate methods from relevant sources. The type of verification process is determined by the nature of the research and the paradigm within which it is located. The process used in qualitative research differs from the one used in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Creswell (2009) understands validity as a means through which a researcher checks the accuracy of the findings by employing certain measures. Research can be considered reliable if it demonstrates that the same results can be produced if repeated with a similar group and context (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007). There have been efforts made to make the validity measure appropriate to social sciences, since it was initially designed to measure positivist-oriented research (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). Instead of using validity, trustworthiness is seen as a better concept to evaluate the quality of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is because validity-measuring criteria assumes research to be value free.

However, "The attempt to produce value-neutral social science is increasingly being abandoned as at best unrealizable, and at worst self-deceptive, and is being replaced by social science based on explicit ideologies" (Hesse, 1980, as cited by Lather, 1986, p. 63). Arguing from a critical paradigm, Lather (1986) says that we cannot measure the validity of our research processes using criteria that claim to be value free when we are fully aware that all research is ideologically positioned. For validity to be relevant to 'openly ideological' research, Lather claims that there is a need "to formulate approaches to empirical research which advance emancipatory theory-building through the development of interactive and action-inspiring research design" (Lather, 1986, p. 64). However, this research is not 'interest-free'. I intentionally chose to do this study due to my belief in the dignity of all human beings and that this is being systematically denied. I also intentionally chose CLP because of its emancipatory stance. Despite this, my position should not interfere with the

credibility of the research process. Lather specifically considers the ways in which the quality of openly ideological research can be maintained, stating that

> [A] reconceptualization of validity [is done with the] hope that it will aid those of us who work within openly ideological research programs to focus more of our energies on how best to establish data credibility…The vitality of postpositivist research programs necessitates the development of credibility checks that can be built into the design of openly ideological research. Both our theory and our empirical work will be the better for the increased attention to the trustworthiness of our data. (pp. 65, 77)

She suggests four criteria that can assist the trustworthiness process of critical research, the first three of which are relatively standard qualitative measures of trustworthiness. The first is the standard qualitative criterion of triangulation in terms of 'method', which involves using several data sources, and several ways of collecting data from these sources, as I have done. This allows differences and similarities in the data to be compared (Lather, 1986). The second criterion for checking trustworthiness is for the information collected to be returned to the people from whom it was collected so that they can read it and say what they think about it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I thus sent a copy of the initial draft of this thesis to CLP. Lather's third criterion is 'reflexive subjectivity', which is when the researcher openly acknowledges that his/her own experience has a direct influence on the research output (Etherington, 2006), and goes through a constant process of trying to ensure the research does not become distorted as a result. Earlier in this study, I openly declared the fact that my choice of this research is based on my beliefs. During the inquiry, I was aware that I might influence the data, so I had to make sure I did not impose my beliefs on the research outcomes. In addition, my supervisor constantly probed my analysis and findings, forcing me to justify this. Lather's final criterion is 'catalytic validity', where the processes involved in the research are able to encourage emancipatory acts. In this research, I write about an organisation that is already trying to do exactly that. My research process, I hope, encouraged critical reflection by those involved in it that can be fed into future acts. My final research question specifically reflects on the possible implications of what might be learned from CLP's praxis shift for the current South African context.

2.8 Ethics in research

Ethics is associated with morality, as both deal with matters of right and wrong (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). However, ethics can be seen more narrowly as conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group (Mouton, 1998). The three elements of ethical consideration in research are voluntary participation, no harm to participants, and anonymity and confidentiality. Voluntary participation requires that the participants are fully informed about the research and their rights related to this, including that they do not have to take part in the research process and may withdraw at any point if they wish to, and that they formally consent to participate. No harm to participants involves making sure that the participants are not exposed to any danger that might cause harm (for example, the researcher should avoid misusing data collected or using the participants as experimental objects) (Bryman, 2008). No harm to participants and voluntary participation are formalised in the concept of informed consent (Mouton, 1998). Protection of participants' identity and their wellbeing is ensured through anonymity and confidentiality. A research respondent can be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. Confidentiality means that the researcher can identify a given person's response, but promises not to do so publicly. Any information about respondents that could lead to their identification must be kept confidential if this is what the participant requests.

Ethical issues arise when people's interaction results in a conflict of interest. In social sciences research, what is right for me as a researcher is not necessarily right for those who participate in the research. For that reason, ethical choices require a compromise between the researcher and the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Research committees agree on certain ethical norms, which in most cases seek to protect the participants.

I collected information through interviews and focus groups only from those who agreed to participate of their own free will and had been given sufficient information about my research to make an informed decision. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw at any point should they wish to. Before I interviewed anyone, I wrote a letter clearly explaining the research objectives. Before I carried out either the interviews or the focus group discussions, I made sure that the participants understood all the essential elements of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Before I conducted an observation, the CLP staff members with whom I was travelling told the group who I was and what I was doing. CLP staff also told them that I might use whatever I might observe in my thesis. They were also

informed that if they were interested in the outcome of my findings, they would be given access to them.

The information that this research uses is not very sensitive, indeed some of it has already been published, but I assured all the participants that it would not be used against them. Since there were interviews and focus group discussions, I asked if the participants wanted to be positively identified or not, and because almost all of them were not worried about identification, the research positively identifies many of them.

As discussed previously, in a critical research paradigm the issue of power is taken seriously, because how power is used by a researcher can determine the difference between good and bad research. As I conducted this research, I was aware of the position of privilege that I occupied as a researcher. I was consciously self-reflexive in trying not to abuse this power, or to manipulate or distort the views of those who I was interviewing and observing. I was also aware of the position of influence that CLP had, and the possibility that this might influence what I was observing.

2.9 Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, this study was located within the critical paradigm as the most appropriate for research exploring a shift to emancipatory politics, and as consistent with my personal political beliefs. Consistent with this paradigm, I adopted a qualitative approach, and a case study approach in the form of a life history of CLP. The chapter considered the research literature related to these choices and justified them. I also discussed the methods used to collect the data – document analysis, interviews, focus group discussions and observations – and how I sampled the data sources. Choices made regarding data analysis were explained, and issues of trustworthiness and ethics were explored.

The next chapter considers the literature pertinent to the study: the contested nature of civil society and the role of civil society organisations such as CLP in radical change, and the notion of emancipatory politics.

Chapter Three: Literature Review - Civil Society and Emancipatory Politics

3.1 Introduction

In trying to understand the nature of CLP's shift to an emancipatory praxis, it is necessary to consider literature against which can be explored CLP's understanding and critique of the role of a 'conventional' NGO in the post-apartheid South African context and its understanding of 'emancipatory praxis'. My discussion of the literature is divided into four main sections: a) Western theories of civil society, which specifically focuses on Gramsci but draws from Hegel and Marx's ideas of the state and civil society, b) Civil society (and civil society organisations, including NGOs) in Africa, c) Civil society (and civil society organisations, including NGOs) in South Africa, and d) Emancipatory politics within the South African context.

Following Rule and John's (2011) argument that it is important to analyse the relationship between a case and its context, as discussed in my methodology chapter, this chapter also serves to present my case study's background – i.e. the post-apartheid context within which CLP emerged. In doing so, it also considers the 'liftground' – i.e. the hegemonic discourse of development and economic growth.

3.2 Gramsci's theory of civil society

It is important to note, from the onset, that understandings of civil society emerge within a particular context at a particular historical moment and reflect the position (social, political, class and race) of those who created them. As a result, many conceptions of civil society are constructed on the basis of exclusion.

Thus whilst both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic conceptions of civil society emerged over time in the West, these do not necessarily reflect the African context, and, as a number of writers have argued (Losurdo, 2011; Robinson, 1983; Wynter, 1994), they are fundamentally implicated in colonial and racial thinking. For example, according to Weatherford, John Locke understood civil society to be

> a state of Nature free of coercion in which each and every individual has equal rights and power, and yet this has nothing to do with the concrete conditions of the

> seventeenth-century England nor to Locke's own employment as the manager of the Earl of Shaftsbury's slave investment. (Weatherford, 1988, pp. 31-32, as quoted in Holst, 2002, p. 59)

Losurdo (2011) argues, in *Liberalism: A Counter History,* that liberal philosophers such as Locke claimed liberalism as the bearer of freedom and democracy. However, according to Losurdo, liberalism in fact served particular classes and reflected the beliefs of particular cultures. Liberalism was built on colonial slavery, forced removals and other unacceptable acts that promoted the exclusive rights of privileged groups. Liberal thinkers, according to him, ironically supported slave holders and authoritarian governments. Wynter (1994) uses the concept of supraculturalism to show how the white race 'universalises' itself as a standard measure of true humanity. Thus, many modern Western theories are able to talk about a supposedly inclusive concept of civil society, whilst in fact excluding most people. Marx has been criticised for prioritising class emancipation over, for example, race.

Given the study's Gramscian frame, this section focuses on Gramsci's understanding of civil society with reference to his *Prison Notes* (Gramsci, 1971). I am aware that Gramsci cannot be understood in a vacuum because his thinking is built on the ideas (and praxis) of other thinkers as well as the particular geographic and historical context to which he was responding. I thus explore how Gramsci developed his idea of civil society from Marx's *Critique of Political Economy*. Since Marx built his idea of civil society from his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, I will start by drawing some insights from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (Hegel, 1896).

We can only understand the Hegelian's conception of civil society by looking at how he conceptualised the state; and in order to do that, we need to explore why he decided to suggest such a conception of the state. Lancaster (1959) points out that

> Hegel was one of those young Germans who had enthusiastically welcomed the French revolution – just as many ardent spirits had welcomed it in Britain. To young and generous minds, the Revolution seemed to be the bearer of ideas likely to destroy the oppressive feudal order and introduce more liberal institutions. As it turned out, however, the Revolution in the Germanies was abortive. Napoleon, in order to destroy Britain, forced the Germanies into his Continental System and, instead of creating free institutions east of the Rhine, ruled those territories quite as despotically as had their former princes. (pp. 20-21)

In *Philosophy of Right* Hegel attempts to introduce a political philosophy which seeks to sustain the principles of a true revolution. His work was a reaction to the failed revolution, which pushed him to introduce a political system 'embodied' in the idea of the ideal state. Kouvelakis (2003) explains:

> Hegel intends to locate deduction of the state in the strict immanence of the contradictory form represented by the moment of civil society. In this perspective, the transition from society to the state marks Hegel's break with the 'natural', paternalistic model of authority: he proceeds in strict opposition to those who, in their yearning for the traditional order, trace society back to the family, and exalt patriarchal authority as the general source of all authority. (p. 254)

Hegel understood that the movement towards freedom is a movement of consciousness towards universality – and it is in the ideal state that this consciousness reaches its full expression. According to Hegel, this consciousness cannot be attained with the family, or in civil society. Within the family, the individual is part of a unity, with emotional bonds tying him or her to others:

> The family, as the immediate substantiality of mind, is specifically characterised by love, which is mind's feeling of its own unity. Hence in a family, one's frame of mind is to have self-consciousness of one's individuality within this unity as the absolute essence of oneself, with the result that one is in it not as an independent person but as a member. (Hegel, 1896, pp. 160-161)

This unity is very different from a consciousness of universality. The family inevitably breaks down "both essentially, through the working of the principle of personality, and also in the course of nature" (p. 178), to create 'civil society'. In civil society, the particularity of the individual becomes the overriding consciousness: "This is the stage of difference" (p. 179); "In civil society each member is his own end, everything else is nothing to him [*sic*]" (p. 180). However, ironically, this particularity is in fact the beginning of an expression of universality (in a way that the family is not):

> But except in contact with others he cannot attain the whole compass of his ends, and therefore these others are means to the end of the particular member. A particular end, however, assumes the form of universality through this relation to other people, and it is attained in the simultaneous attainment of the welfare of others. (p. 180)

Hegel argued that the ideal state is the consciousness and embodiment of this universality, whilst still guaranteeing the freedom of the individual. He argued that some conceptions of the state are in reality not conceptions of the state per se, but rather they confuse the state with civil society, because this conscious, rational recognition of universality is missing:

> If the state is represented as a unity of different persons, as a unity which is only a partnership, then what is really meant is only civil society. Many modern constitutional lawyers have been able to bring within their purview no theory of the state but this. (p. 180)

The final moment in a movement from the family towards freedom is a state of consciousness or recognition of universality embodied in the state:

> The primary reality of ethical life is in its turn natural, taking the form of love and feeling. This is the family. In it the individual has transcended his prudish personality, and finds himself with his consciousness in a totality. In the next stage is seen the loss of this peculiar ethical existence and substantive unity. Here the family falls asunder, and the members become independent one of another, being now held together merely by the bond of mutual need. This is the stage of the civil society, which has frequently been taken for the state. But the state does not arise until we reach the third stage of ethical life or spirit, in which both individual independence and universal substantivity are found in gigantic union. The right of the state is, therefore, higher than that of the other stages. It is freedom in its most concrete embodiment, which yields to nothing but the highest absolute truth of the world-spirit. (p. 46)

Hegel could argue that the individual's duty was to be an obedient member of the state, because the state was the fulfilment of the individual's destiny:

> If the state is confused with civil society, and if its specific end is laid down as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, then the interest of the individuals as such becomes the ultimate end of their association, and it follows that membership of the state is something optional. But the state's relation to the individual is quite different from this. Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life. Unification pure and simple is the true content and aim of the individual, and the individual's destiny is the living of a universal life. His further

> particular satisfaction, activity and mode of conduct have this substantive and universally valid life as their starting point and their result. (p. 230)

The Hegelian state is thus absolutely rational and perfectly designed to neutralise or reconcile the apparent contradictions found in civil society. This is not to say that Hegel saw the state and civil society as entirely separate realms. According to Thomas:

> In this perspective, civil society is not simply opposed to the state. Rather, it is a stage of 'difference' 'between the family and the state'; insofar as it is precisely this dialectical difference, it 'presupposes the state'. More precisely, civil society for Hegel is dialectically penetrated by the state, which, in its turn, is eventually found to be the 'true ground of the family and of civil society'… the *Philosophy of Right* comes to grasp the state as an immanent principle of rationality animating social life, distinguished from civil society not as its irreducible other, but as the alterity that it must carry within itself in order to be that which it is. In this sense, the state is not a distinct location, but 'the actuality of the ethical idea', 'a system of systems, and, like philosophy, a circle of circles' that includes civil society as a constitutive moment. (Thomas, 2009, p. 179)

However, as Thomas (2009) argues, Hegel is contradictory in his discussion on the state. Hegel's state is a final stage in the movement towards freedom, in which universality is recognised; however, he also speaks of a far more limited conception of the state as a governmental apparatus (as indeed the state at that time was generally thought of):

> The precise relationship between these two concepts ('State' in the broader sense of ethical life and the 'strictly political State') remains notoriously unclear in a text that was only published in its 'canonical' form, it should be remembered, long after Hegel's death. (Thomas, 2009, p. 183)

Marx's writings cannot be understood adequately without reference to Hegel, because at the time Marx was writing, the writings of Hegel were prominent, and Marx was specifically influenced by and responded to some these. According to Kouvelakis (2003), in around 1843, Marx underwent a shift in his politics which his analysis and writings, as first becomes evident in his (unfinished) *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* written in 1843 (but only published in 1927).

Kouvelakis (2003) notes that Marx's shift in politics led to a shift in his understanding of the state, and of civil society. Marx initially saw civil society in Hegelian terms – as a space in which multiple contradictory interests exist, contradictions which could be resolved through an ethical, democratic state, which is the goal of politics. Kouvelakis elaborates:

> Politics, posited as a movement of democratization of the full range of social activities, thus makes it possible to confront the internal contradictions of civil society by tapping the emancipatory potential of a legal system that is receptive to the gains made by the lower classes. (Kouvelakis, 2003, p. 270)

However, as discussed, Marx came to reject Hegel's idea of the state precisely because the (bourgeois) state does not transcend the divisions within civil society, but in fact duplicates them (Kouvelakis, 2003).

Marx was not only influenced by (and increasingly critical of) Hegel, but also by one of his contemporaries. Marx belonged to a group of young radical scholars that were known as 'young Hegelians'. In as much as these young radicals appreciated the philosophy of Hegel, they saw his belief in a universal rationality (which was synonymous with religion) as irrational. Among this group was a young philosopher and contemporary of Marx called Ludwig Feuerbach. He is well known for his critique of religion in his book *The Essence of Christianity.* Feuerbach (1881) argued that human needs are not determined by consciousness. According to him, there is no rational, universal and super power independent from human needs. It is out of people's needs that this universal super power (God) is created. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, written in 1845, Marx agrees with Feuerbach that Hegel's position that consciousness determines human needs did not reflect reality. Actually, it is the needs of the people that determines our consciousness.

The thinking of Marx develops the ideas of both Hegel and Feuerbach, as Kouvelakis explains:

> In his reading of Hegel, Marx was to proceed as a consistent Hegelian, inverting Hegel and incorporating, in this inversion, Feuerbachian notions that seemed to him to offer useful springboard for a critique – but in a way that is still fundamentally Hegelian. (Kouvelakis, 2003, pp. 288-289)

Marx rejected Feuerbach's emphasis on individuality because he believed that people are essentially social beings. He also did not reject religion per se, but he saw it as a true

expression of human alienation. What Marx did was to extend the thinking of Feuerbach from religion to the society as a whole within a historical framework and then link it with Hegel's political philosophy (Fine & Saad-Filho, 2004; Kouvelakis, 2003). By 1844, in his *Introduction* to his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx uses the term 'proletariat' for the first time.

Marx saw economics as crucial because he was convinced that one can understand the nature of humanity better through looking at how human beings produce their daily material needs. Out of this reasoning, Marx and Engels developed what is called historical materialism. A concise statement of historical materialism is found in *The German Ideology* (1846), and reads:

> The first premise of all human history, of course, is the existence of a living human individual. The first fact to be established, then, is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relationship with the rest of nature…[Man] begins to distinguish himself [*sic*] from the animal the moment he begins to produces his means of subsistence, a step required by his physical organisation.
>
> The way in which man produces his food depends first of all on the nature of subsistence that he finds and has to reproduce. This mode of production must not be viewed simply as reproduction of the physical existence of individuals. Rather it is a definite form of their activity, a definite way of expressing their life, a definite mode of life…The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions which determine their production.
>
> The fact is, then, that definite individuals who are productively active in a specific way enter into these definite social and political relations. The social structure and the state continually evolve out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear on their own or other people's imagination but rather as they really are, that is, as they work, produce materially, and act under definite material limitations, presuppositions, and conditions independent of their will. (Marx & Engels, 1846/1977 as quoted in McLellan, 1977, pp. 160-161)

Through these processes of production, relationships are formed. These relationships shift as the mode of production shifts – so in a capitalist mode of production, the division of labour

and distribution of private property results in the emergence of the working class (McLellan, 1977).

This argument is developed ten years later in his *Critique of Political Economy,* which ultimately becomes Marx's central theme in all his work. Marx's argument is that the real basis of society can only be understood in the way people organise in order to produce their food and the tools that they use in this production. It is out of this process that the legal and political superstructure arises, reflecting particular forms of social consciousness. In this sense, the social, political and intellectual life is basically drawn from the mode of production (McLellan, 1977).

For Marx, people drive and change the mode of production and hence, social relations and institutions. Thus, he rejects the Hegelian explanation of state, arguing that "Hegel proceeds from the state and makes man into the subjectified state" **(**Marx, 1843, n.p.), while it should be the other way around – people should make the state. However, because the state emerges from 'definite social and political relations', under capitalism, the state is an expression and instrument of class struggle operating to further the interests of the dominant class (McLellan, 1980, p. 209). So, unlike previous thinkers such has Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke and Hegel, who saw the state as an instrument for common interests (Bobbio, 1979), Marx "does not make the state into something that is simply unreal, an inverted projection of human essence…" (Kouvelakis, 2003, p. 289); he saw the state as an instrument of particular class interests, as Thomas explains:

> The actually existing 'strictly political State' does not immanently resolve the contradictions of civil society; as a false universality that is in truth a particularity—that is, the institutionalisation of the interests of one class, over and against those of others,—it exacerbates them. (Thomas, 2009, p. 185)

Marx saw civil society within a capitalist system as "the ensemble of relations embedded in the market; the agency that defines its character is bourgeois" (Mamdani, 2017, p. 14). In other words, Marx situated civil society within the economic base:

> The form of intercourse determined by the existing productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determining these, is *civil society*…Civil society embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces. It embraces the whole commercial and industrial

> life of a given stage and, in so far, transcends the State and the nation, though, on the other hand again, it must assert itself in its foreign relations as nationality and inwardly must organise itself as State. (Marx, 1846/1977 as quoted in McLellan, 1977, pp. 38, 76)

In a capitalist society, then, "the estate [Stand] of direct labour, of concrete labour… [is] not so much an estate of civil society as the ground upon which its circles rest and coincide" (Kouvelakis, 2003, p. 329). This civil society is also responsible for ideological production, meant to serve a particular class interest. Marx and Engels argued that the ruling ideas of each age are the ideas of its ruling class (McLellan, 1977). These ideas are normally represented by institutions, for instance, churches, schools and courts. These views of the dominant are presented in disguise as if they serve the good of everyone, while they are actually designed to cater for the needs of a few. In Marx's analysis, in the modern state, the dominant group is the bourgeoisie. As noted earlier, Wynter (1994) shows how this process cannot be seen as simply one of class, but of race – that the white race 'universalises' itself as a standard measure of true humanity; a process which Marx ignored.

Marx's understanding of the state and civil society as inherently connected to the material base has huge implications for how he perceived social change. True social change cannot take place within the bourgeois state because of its representation of the class interest of a particular group. For Marx, "any worth-while conception of democracy had to go beyond the political state" (McLellan, 1980, p. 28). Marx argued that a merely political revolution could not fundamentally shift anything – revolution needed to rupture the (capitalist) material base, by exposing that the existing system not only did not satisfy existing needs, but in fact made it impossible to satisfy them (Kouvelakis, 2003). Marx argued that such revolutionary change was ultimately inevitable because the capitalist structure is self-contradictory: "Capital is contradiction embodied in a process, since it tries to reduce labour time to the minimum, while at the same time establishing labour as a sole measure of wealth" (Marx, 1858/1977 as quoted in McLellan, 1977, p. 380). Change is also only possible if the class that takes responsibility for disrupting the economic base does it for everyone. Marx contrasted this form of disruption with the bourgeois class in the French Revolution, which 'liberated' itself and presented this as the emancipation of all. In contrast, he believed, true revolution needed to be undertaken by

> A class in civil society that is not a class of civil society, of a social group that is the dissolution of all social groups, of a sphere that have a universal character because of its universal suffering and lays claim to no particular right, because it is the object of no particular injustice but of injustice in general. This class can no longer lay claim to a historical status, but only to a human one. It is, finally, a sphere that cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating these other spheres themselves. (Marx, 1843/1977 as quoted in McLellan, 1977, p. 69)

Such a class is none other than the working class, since ultimately this class represents everyone. Thus, when the working class take over the state, the state will no longer represent particular interests, but everyone; and will thus no longer be necessary: "The political state disappears in true democracy" (Marx, 1843/1977 as quoted in McLellan, 1977, p. 28).

As we will see, Gramsci, my main focus, drew on Marx's key ideas, whilst also extending them. By the time Gramsci was writing, Marxism had developed into two strands: the first believed that Marx's analysis of capitalism and the role of the worker within this system was correct (Luxemburg, early Lenin and Stalin); the second supported the claim that in as much as Marx's analysis was correct during his time, there was a need to rethink some of its assumptions because of changing circumstances (Harvey, 1990). Like Marx, Gramsci developed his understanding of the state and civil society through a careful examination of actual existing historical junctures for political reasons – he wanted to "determine the reasons for the defeat of the Italian Communist Party by the Fascist regime, and to find resources for the re-emergence of a militant revolutionary position" (Thomas, 2015, p. 5).

Although some have suggested that in his *Prison Notebooks* Gramsci was departing from Marx, as Thomas (2009; 2015) shows, Gramsci was deeply rooted in Marx's analysis, but expanded some elements which he deemed as lacking or needing to be adjusted for relevance. Indeed, Thomas argues that Marx's concept of 'philosophy of praxis' is "the central term organizing all of Gramsci's philosophical reflections" (2015, p. 5). Thomas suggests that Gramsci's translation of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* (from German into Italian) was to profoundly influence his *Prison Notebooks*: "Marx's *Theses* literally constitutes a touchstone to whose themes Gramsci incessantly returns throughout the *Prison Notebooks*" (2015, p. 6). Thomas also rejects the claims made by many Gramscian scholars that Gramsci used particular phrases or concepts as a kind of 'code' in response to possible monitoring by

prison authorities. Instead, Gramsci was deeply reflecting and developing his thinking throughout this time, and using specific terms or concepts deliberately.

Gramsci agreed with Marx's fundamental principles (dialectical materialism) embedded in *The German Ideology* and later summarised in the *Critique of Political Economy.* Like Marx, he argued that people organise their production for survival, and the tools that they use in the process constitutes the basis of a society. It is out of this that the superstructure emerges, but the process is dialectical. Gramsci further agreed with Marx that division of labour and social inequalities created under capitalism lead to the creation of different classes. These classes are constantly in conflict. Just as Marx did, he also believed that only a proletariat revolution can create a classless society, because, unlike the bourgeoisie who are preoccupied with their particular needs, the proletariat represents everyone.

However, inasmuch as Gramsci agrees with Marx that the state is an instrument of the ruling class, he departs from Marx's conception of the state by arguing that the state is not just the political society (separate from the economic base, although in a dialectical relationship with it), but that it includes civil society (Gramsci, 1971). Hence, Gramsci does not restrict civil society to the base as Marx does, but relocates it in the superstructure, which constitutes both the political and civil society.

As discussed, like Marx, Gramsci recognised the role of the state in a capitalist society as serving the interests of the ruling class. He deemed the state as also important in uniting the ruling class by strengthening its (the state) relationship with civil society:

> The historical unity of the ruling classes is realised in the State, and their history is essentially the history of the State and a group of States. But it would be wrong to think that this unity is simply juridical and political (though such forms of unity do have their importance too, and not in a purely formal sense); the fundamental historical unity, concretely results from the organic relationship between State or political society and 'civil society'.
>
> The subaltern classes[2], by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a 'State': their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil

[2] I discuss Gramsci's notion of subaltern at length later in this chapter.

> society, and thereby with the history of States and a group of States. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 52)

Gramsci argued that it was only in the post-French Revolution period that an 'integral state' began to emerge, which dramatically influenced both the nature and form of both state and civil society. Thomas explains that

> Henceforth, the state could not be a sovereign instance above 'civil society' (itself now redefined in its relation with the state), in many respects appearing in daily life only exceptionally, but must invest itself in all levels of society to an extent previously unimaginable. The state was no longer merely an instrument of coercion, imposing the interests of the dominant class from above. Now, in its integral form, it had become a network of social relations for the production of consent, for the integration of the subaltern classes into the expansive project of historical development of the leading social group. (Thomas, 2009, p. 143)

Gramsci argues that the integral state is a combination of the political society and civil society:

> What we do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or 'state'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the state and 'juridical' government. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12)

Thomas (2009) shows how this famous quotation from Gramsci has been misread to suggest a hierarchical relationship between political and civil society, in understanding political and civil society as two separate terrains and conflating political society and the state (as governmental apparatus). This reading leads to an incorrect understanding of the state/political society as a domain of force, and civil society as a domain of consent. According to Thomas, instead "Gramsci attempted to explain the transition between civil society and the state by introducing the concept of 'political society or State' as a superstructural 'level' *alongside* that of civil society *within* the integral state" (2009, p. 186). The relationship between political society and civil society is thus not hierarchical; nor are

they two separate terrains; 'political society' cannot be substituted for the 'state' as governmental apparatus:

> In fact, 'political society' here refers to something more extensive than an apparatus of institutions; or, rather, it considers those institutions as moments of the 'universality' claimed by the 'political' in class society. The state apparatus plays an important role in concretising this unifying supplement to civil society's constitutive divided particularity—but the 'political' as such necessarily exceeds the institutions that seek to organise and regulate it, just as, from another direction, civil society necessarily exceeds the political society that attempts to impose meaning upon it. If the political represents the 'consciousness' of the supposedly 'non-political', or civil society, the state apparatus functions as the moment of 'self-consciousness' of the political itself. In both cases, the higher term is dependent upon its 'object' in the very moment that it seeks to supersede its limits. For Gramsci, political society in this broader sense is constituted by a class's transition from a merely (economic-) corporative to a properly hegemonic or political phase, in which it posits its own particular interests as valid, or at least capable of providing leadership, for the society as a whole. The history of political society hitherto (a social form that came into being *only* with the modern world) has consisted in its conscious separation from civil society, as the speculative juridical resolution of civil society's contradictions. (Thomas, 2009, pp. 189-190)

The integral state, for Gramsci, constitutes both political and civil society which are dialectically related and interdependent. In a capitalist society the bourgeois class must first secure control of political society, representing its interests as universal, in order to secure control of the institutions that organise and regulate civil society (the apparatus of government). This in turn is needed in order to mobilise civil society to serve their interests. Hence, the bourgeois integral state's "function is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level which responds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 258):

> Between the economic structure and the State with its legislation and its coercion stands civil society…The state is the instrument for conforming civil society to the economic structure, but it is necessary for the State to 'be willing' to do this; i.e. for

> the representatives of the change that has taken place in the economic structure to be in control of the state. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 208)

Gramsci recognised that the bourgeoisie was different from previous ruling classes, which were conservative and unwilling to incorporate other classes into their 'caste'. In contrast, the bourgeoisie poses "itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. The entire function of the State has been transformed; the State has become an "educator", etc." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 260). As Thomas argues, this is the moment of hegemony:

> In principle, (bourgeois) freedom and its consummation in the state is open to all, and it is precisely this that constitutes the immense revolution of the 'political' brought about by the bourgeoisie. Hegemony, then, emerges as a new 'consensual' political practice distinct from mere coercion (a dominant means of previous ruling classes) on this new terrain of civil society; but, like civil society, integrally linked to the state, hegemony's full meaning only becomes apparent when it is related to its dialectical distinction of coercion. Hegemony in civil society functions as the social basis of the dominant class's political power in the state apparatus, which in turn reinforces its initiatives in civil society. (Thomas, 2009, p. 144)

Bourgeois hegemony, through the creation of 'common sense', seeks to make the masses unaware of the contradictory nature of capitalist society, and the exploitation of the proletariat to the benefit of the bourgeoisie:

> The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force dominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by so-called organs of public opinion – newspapers and associations – which, therefore, in certain situations, are superficially multiplied. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 80)

The bourgeois class also makes some sacrifices, partially inclined to the interest of other groups, in a bid to seek consent and keep their hegemonic hand intact (Mouffe, 1979). As Thomas (2009) suggests, the reading which argues that the creation of hegemony occurs only

within civil society makes no sense, and is the product of the misreading of Gramsci's understanding of the integral state:

> Just as political society and civil society are not conceived in a spatial but a functional sense, so hegemony is conceived as a practice 'traversing' the boundaries between them. More accurately, hegemony is a particular practice of consolidating social forces and condensing them into political power on a mass basis (Thomas, 2009, p. 194)

However, there is a continuous ideological contestation in civil society. These contestations are not reduced to class, but involve different classes and social groups. Gramsci argued that as long as the proletariat are not aware of the contradictory nature of capitalism, there is no possibility of change, as McLellan puts it: "Thus, the centre of interest for Gramsci was less on the economic substructure of society than on the means by which the proletariat could attain to an understanding of the socio-economic relations of capitalist society and on the political means necessary to overthrow it" (McLellan, 1980, p. 184).

Gramsci suggests two methods of overthrowing a capitalist society – the most appropriate one depending on the particular historical moment. The first is the 'war of manoeuvre', a direct confrontation with the state. The second is the 'war of position', a process of raising consciousness and breaking the 'common sense' created by hegemony. For Gramsci, "in politics, once the war of position has been won, it has been won definitively" (Cammett, 1967, p. 202), because it is the most decisive stage in the struggle. Through the war of position, capitalist hegemonic ideology and 'common sense' could be dismantled in a bid to create the hegemony of the philosophy of praxis:

> A philosophy of praxis cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world). First of all, it must be a criticism of 'common sense' basing itself entirely, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 330)

In Gramsci's (reworked) understanding of 'common sense', it is "a wide range of pre- or non-critical beliefs and ideas operative in everyday life" (Thomas, 2015, p. 11). Through a critical analysis of common sense, people can come to recognise 'good sense'.

As discussed in Chapter One, a Gramscian understanding of civil society is central to this thesis. I recognise that Gramscian theory originates in the West, and draws on Marxism, also a theory from the West. A number of writers, including Robinson (1983), have argued that Marxism presupposes a European model of history and experience, whereas, black people's history of rebellion can be understood without a Marxist analysis, and indeed, understanding black people's history through Marx reduces the agency and autonomy of African people. Clearly, this calls into question my use of Gramsci. I argue, however, that Gramsci's thinking remains highly relevant, even in our context, for a number of reasons.

Some writers have suggested that Gramsci ignored issues of race, gender and religion (and is therefore largely irrelevant to geographical spaces where class is not necessarily the key conceptual tool), whereas writers such as Green (2013b) show that this is a misreading of Gramsci. As I will discuss in more detail later, Gramsci also understood how the bourgeois class, and its hegemonic project, was racialised.

The Marxist and Eurocentric elements of Gramsci's thinking are relevant because the South African context at the time of writing reflects an imported Eurocentric (bourgeois racialised) model of capitalism and the state. To understand the way the status quo functions within this context, a knowledge of how this (integral) state emerged and retains its control is vital. This thesis seeks to understand how bourgeois civil and political society within South Africa promotes and maintains hegemony; but also how this hegemony is open to contestation (including through organisations like CLP).

Gramsci's understanding of hegemony allows us to look at a variety of contesting ideologies, independent from economic class. Whilst this is not to deny the influence of productive forces, the source of this consciousness may be drawn from historical and cultural experiences completely divorced from production. Finally, related to this, Gramsci's relevance to the colonial context has been shown through subaltern studies.

Below, I thus use a Gramscian framework to consider civil society in relation to Africa and South Africa. However, before focusing on this, it is necessary to first highlight the dominant neoliberal understanding of civil society, since this is the concept of civil society frequently drawn on debates about civil society in Africa. The neoliberal view argues that civil society is a means of defence against potential abuse by political leaders who gain power and control through top-down leadership (Keane, 1988, pp. 37-39). Civil society is thus the victim of the state and/or the defender of freedom from the state's tyranny. This is consistent with the

neoliberal view that the state as problematic. The contemporary conception perceives civil society as independent of the state, and also separate from the market, creating what is known as the 'New-Triad Model' (Laratta, 2012). In this sense, civil society becomes a third independent sector (Laratta, 2012, p3), which is always seen in a positive light. Hence, civil society is understood in this sense as untainted by the politics of the state and the greed of the markets (Fisher, 1997). This understanding sees it as offering "more and better services than the state and, at the same time, maintain[ing] the stability and reproduction of a market economy by alleviating the socioeconomic inequalities created and aggravated by the markets" (Laratta, 2012, p.4). Civil society is also "celebrated as a powerful contribution to the democratisation of politics and to bringing common sense and civility to difficult situations" (Sen, 2010, Introduction).

3.3 Civil society theory and Africa

There is no doubt that Africa has always had indigenous structures, organisations and formations. Whether these constitute 'civil society' as conceptualised in the West, either historically or in the current context, however, has been the subject of considerable debate.

3.3.1 "Is the concept of civil society relevant to Africa?"

Davis Lewis (2002) tries to respond to the question: "Is the concept of civil society relevant to Africa?" by identifying four different answers from the literature. He summarises these as yes, no, qualified or adapted yes answers, or as a position which argues that the question is the wrong question to ask.

Some writers argue that civil society, in its current hegemonic Western understanding (i.e. that civil society, as a space of voluntary association, is independent of the state and the market and is an inherently good thing), is relevant to Africa (i.e. 'yes', in Lewis's terms) because it is essential for the development of democracy. Lewis (2002) calls this view **Prescriptive Universalism**. In the late 1980s, for example, Bratton (1989) argued that contemporary Africa was characterised by a strong civil society presence as compared to weak African states, although this was generally not recognised by political scientists:

> At first glance, African societies seem to possess few intermediate organisations to occupy the political space between the family (broadly defined by effective ties of blood, marriage, residence, clan, and ethnicity) and the state. (p. 411)

Bratton asserted that a closer look showed a vibrant associational life in the political space beyond the state – and this had existed since pre-colonial times, although colonialism had reshaped this to some extent:

> While many precolonial cultures in Africa may have lacked states, they certainly did not lack civil societies, in the broad sense of a bevy of institutions for protecting collective interests. Large areas of Africa have never experienced effective penetration by the transformative state, and rural folk there continue to grant allegiance to traditional institutions such as clan, age-set, or brotherhood. Upon these foundations, Africans invented fresh forms of voluntary association during the colonial period as response to disruptive impacts of urbanization and commercialization. Sometimes these new organizations were updated expressions of long-standing informal solidarities (for example, ethnic welfare associations, prophetic movements, agricultural work parties); in other cases, they gave collective shape to new occupational and class identities (peasant movements, labour unions, professional associations). Many of these voluntary associations became explicitly political by giving voice, first to protest at the indignities of colonial rule, and later, to the call for independence. (p. 411).

Bratton argues that after independence, many new African states attempted to exert control over this association life, but with very limited success. Thus "state-society relations now stand at a crossroads in Africa" (p. 412). In his view, the weak state allowed an enlarged political space for associational life, and some voluntary associations were becoming more organised and assertive. However, although it is clear that Bratton assumes civil society as independent of the state, and potentially able to promote democracy (which it should do), he argues that a deeper lower level of analysis of the organisations of civil society on the continent was necessary before the question of 'does civil society promote democracy' can be answered. Harbeson (1994, as cited in Lewis, 2002), whilst agreeing with Bratton that a vibrant civil society exists on the continent, in contrast to Bratton sees civil society in Africa as playing an important role as a counterbalance to the state.

Other writers holding this first position (Prescriptive Universalism), however, assert that there is no robust civil society, and as a consequence, African states are relatively undemocratic. Makumbe (1998), in an article entitled 'Is there a civil society in Africa?',

argues that the colonial regimes in sub-Saharan Africa largely destroyed indigenous forms of civil society:

> The colonial governments throughout Africa destroyed most of the civic groups and organizations that existed prior to the advent of colonial rule. These civic groups were viewed with suspicion by the colonial rulers, who feared that they could be instrumental in mobilizing the colonized against the colonizers. This is not to say that African tradition prior to colonialism included or supported civil society as currently defined in the modern world; but it is, nonetheless, true that precolonial African political systems recognized the role of popular participation in decision-making and governance. (Makumbe, 1998, p. 306)

A result of this process, as well as current social, cultural and political conditions, is a relatively weak current civil society (which Makumbe views as separate from the state and exercising pressures and controls on state institutions). In his analysis, then, it is "rather difficult for civil society in Africa effectively to represent, promote and protect the interests of the people" (p. 316).

The second possible answer to Lewis's question (i.e. 'no') regards Western ideas of civil society as largely irrelevant to the current African context and situation, or rejects its 'universalism'. Lewis (2002) calls this view **Western Exceptionalism**. Writers within this position (Lewis gives as examples, Ferguson, 1998; Maina, 1998; and Sogge, 1997) argue that the Western understanding of civil society evolved within a specific historical context completely detached from the African experience. African societal life, they state, is more complex than what the dominant Western concept of civil society allows for. For example, the distinction between civil society and the state suggested by the hegemonic Western understanding (and the Prescriptive Universalists) is actually not that clear in many African countries. In addition, the African situation has been profoundly affected by external relations, including colonialism. Under colonialism, the colonial state was all powerful, controlling both the political and social life of the colony. From this viewpoint, the post-independence 'weak' African state is a result of external power relations (through, for example, Structural Adjustment Programmes), not of a weak internal civil society. Indeed, 'international' NGOs are considered to play a role in weakening the African state through furthering the agenda of Western powers, particularly in the area of education, development and environment (thus undermining the role of the African state).

Obviously, this does not only apply to the African context, and a number of writers have argued much the same thing in other, largely post-colonial, contexts. For example, in his article, titled 'A Response to Taylor's Modes of Civil society', Chatterjee (1990) directly expresses his dissatisfaction with the current dominant Western conception of the term 'civil society' by pointing out that the historical specificity of European social thought cannot be applied to understanding the whole world:

> One can see how a conception of the state-society relation, born within the parochial history of Western Europe but made universal by the global sway of capital, dogs the contemporary history of the world. I do not think that the invocation of the state-civil society opposition in the struggle against socialist-bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe (or, for that matter, in the Soviet republics or in China) will produce anything other than strategies seeking to replicate the history of Western Europe. The result has been demonstrated a hundred times. The provincialism of the European experience will be taken as a universal history of progress; by comparison, the history of the rest of the world will appear as the history of lack, of inadequacy – an inferior history… The fact that these doctrines were produced in complete ignorance of the histories of other parts of the world will not matter: they will be found useful and enlightening. (Chatterjee, 1990, pp. 131-132)

Lewis's third possible answer to the question of the relevance of civil society to Africa, what he calls **Adaptive Prescription**, tries to bridge the 'yes' and 'no' positions by suggesting that the concept can be relevant if it is adapted to the African context (Lewis, 2002). Maina (1998, as cited in Lewis, 2002) is one example of writers who adopt this position (although Maina initially adopted the Western Exceptionalism stance). These writers, like the Western Exceptionalists, argue that the Universal Prescriptive view focuses too much on 'formal' civil society (for example, associations, NGOs, etc.), which is seen largely in relation to the state, whereas informal groups (for example credit groups, age-sets, lineages), existing largely independent of the state, are a characteristic of African civil society (Lewis, 2002).

Ekeh (1992), for example, tries to show that the African context demands a broader conceptualisation of civil society by proposing a two-fold understanding of the public realm. These two publics were created in the colony. The first is the 'civic public realm' that is controlled by the state. The second he calls the 'primordial public realm', a realm of indigenous groupings, beliefs and practices, beyond the control of the state. Ekeh argues that

both the colonial administration and the African bourgeoisie favoured the 'civic public' over the 'primordial public' – the colonial administration because of its European ideological bias, the African bourgeoisie in order to support its claim to leadership of the anti-colonial struggle. This impacted on both the anti-colonial struggle, and the post-colony: "Africa's political spaces are fragmented and … the state has only partial control over the space it claims as its own" (Ekeh, 1992, p. 196). In other words, civil society in the post-colony cannot be understood with reference only to the structure of a modern state.

This third position thus refutes the Hegelian understanding of civil society associations as primarily economic and voluntary (Lewis, 2002). Some writers also critique the claim that civil society is inherently a good thing, and suggest that the view of civil society as a sector independent of the state and the market is problematic – in fact, the lines of separation are far more blurred. They thus argue for a more open view of civil society as a contested terrain with complex relations to the state (Ibid.).

Lewis (2002, p. 582) thinks that the first two responses are not convincing enough, describing the first as "clearly flawed" and the second as "underestimating both the analytical and inspirational power of the term". However, the third position is also problematic in that it may "move from prescription into an equally unhelpful position of cultural relativism" (p. 580), or make the definition of civil society so broad as to be largely meaningless.

Lewis's final category is **those who argue that the question is the wrong one to ask**:

> This final position is the argument that the concept of civil society has always been relevant to questions of African governance and citizenship, since it was used as an organizing principle by colonial administrations. It makes little sense therefore to ask how useful the concept is to African contexts. By taking such histories and their legacy as an analytical starting point – rather than the current return to fashion of the term 'civil society' – advocates of this point of view argue that the relevance of the concept of civil society is self-evident. (p. 580)

One of the leading African scholars within this position is Mahmood Mamdani. Writers like Mamdani (2017) have argued that civil society has to be relevant to the way Africa is governed and how it makes decisions based on citizenship, precisely because it was the organising principle that was used by colonial powers. The only

way to understand civil society in Africa is by looking at these historical processes together with their legacy as analytical tools.

3.3.2 Mamdani and civil society in Africa

Mamdani conceptualises civil society in Africa in his book *Citizen and Subject* (2017, originally published in 1996). It is important to note that, according to Freund (2000), at the time of writing, Mamdani was not planning to rewrite the history of African civil society, because historical accounts had been provided by Thomas Hodgkin's book *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (1956), Michael Crowd's *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (1969) and William Derman's *Serfs, Peasants and Socialists* (1973). Freund states that Mamdani's approach was rather to

> apply their wisdom effectively and systematically to contemporary problems. In this case his work is really directed towards the 1990s debate on democratization in Africa. It stems from Mamdani's frustration at the glib and superficial institutional prescription of the Washington consensus that seem irrelevant to African reality. Methodologically he poses against these positivist dogmas, surviving with surprising little development from the classic modernization literature, the weight of lived process. Democratisation cannot exist outside of this process; it has to be an effective intervention into the political consciousness and political lives of people with a real history. (Freund, 2000, pp 101-102)

In other words, Mamdani was specifically responding to the dominant Western understanding of civil society at the time, and thus rejecting Universal Prescriptivism in Lewis' categorisation. He was convinced that if we are to understand civil society in Africa now, we need to understand how the structure of power in contemporary Africa was shaped during the colonial period. Mamdani, like Hegel, Marx and Gramsci, thus requires that actual historical situations in particular places be considered rather than abstract theorising.

As is clear from the title of his book, and will be seen in the argument he presents, Mamdani uses a particular Gramscian frame in his analysis. In doing this, he can be seen as part of the broader subaltern studies movement, which was heavily influenced by Gramsci (Green, 2013a; Thomas, 2018).

Both Green (2013a; 2013b) and Thomas (2018) argue that Gramsci's notion of subaltern is a critical component of his thinking. Indeed, Green (2013b) considers it "one of his major

contributions to social and political theory" (p. 116). Gramsci used the concept over and over throughout his *Prison Notebooks*, as well as in a 'special' notebook specifically on the subaltern. For Gramsci, subaltern refers to subordinate groups, classes and individuals, embedded in socio-political and economic relations. According to Green, the concept itself "constitutes a category of political investigation… intended to provide insights into the relations of power and hegemony" (Green, 2013b, p. 116) and he goes on to explain that

> In many ways, the intricacies of subalternity can be understood in dialectical relation to the complexity of hegemony – that is, subalternity functions within an ensemble of economic, political, ideological, cultural, and social relations, which are manifested in political institutions, as well as in morality, customs, religion, folklore, and common sense. (pp. 116-7)

The subaltern has a fatalistic and mechanistic view of the world because of the hegemony of the dominant group (Green, 2013a). In order for the subaltern to act to change relations of power, this conception of the world must be transformed:

> Because, basically, if yesterday the subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but an historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible, because "resisting" a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 337)

In other words, the subaltern needs to critically reflect on common sense, in the process realising that "the conditions of society are not dictated by the laws of nature or history but are effects of human will and initiative" (Green, 2013a, p. 95).

Subaltern studies emerged with the founding of the Subaltern Studies Group (SSG) in the early 1980s under the leadership of Ranajit Guha. It draws on Gramsci's concept of the subaltern (largely neglected in discussions of Gramsci outside Italy (Thomas, 2018) to help understand historical processes, especially colonialism, in South Asia and India. The work of the SSG has been very influential; however, it has also been critiqued, inter alia by Gramscian scholars. Green (2013a; 2013b), for example, argues that literature within subaltern studies (and post-colonial studies) suggests that there has not been a serious engagement with Gramsci's actual writings. One of the key problems in subaltern and post-colonial versions of Gramsci is the conflation of subaltern with proletariat. This derives from

the ‘misreading’ of Gramsci as using ‘codes’ to deal with prison censorship. Green continues: “This interpretation, which is unsupported with textual evidence, completely disregards the way in which Gramsci understood subalternity in relation to race, class, gender, and nation” (Green, 2013a, p. 97). Green also critiques some recent post-colonial readings of Gramsci as neglecting the ways in which Gramsci’s thinking was fundamentally Marxist (Ibid.). Thomas (2018) also argues that subaltern studies developed from a partial reading of Gramsci. This reading has emphasised the subaltern as excluded, and focuses on the subaltern’s ‘incapacity’ (including, to speak, as Spivak famously asserted). In fact, a careful reading of Gramsci’s work results in a far more complex understanding of the subaltern, here analysed by Thomas:

> The subaltern for Gramsci is not defined by an experience of exclusion. On the contrary, subaltern social groups are represented in the Prison Notebooks as integrally and actively “included” or integrated into the hegemonic relations of what Gramsci characterizes as the bourgeois “integral state”… inclusion here should be understood in terms of … an “enclosing”. It is the enclosure of subaltern classes and social groups within the relations of the integral state that constitutes them as distinctly modern subaltern social groups…instead of being unable to speak, Gramsci’s historical and cultural analyses emphasize the extent to which the subaltern continuously makes its voice heard and its presence felt in contradictory and complex cultural, social and political forms. (Thomas, 2018, pp. 2-3)

In Thomas’ analysis, Subaltern Studies have misrepresented the subaltern in three key ways. Firstly, they have rejected the capacity of the subaltern to express and/or represent itself; but Thomas states that, “For Gramsci, on the other hand, subaltern social groups are continuously expressive, albeit in many ways which are not easily comprehended within the existing political and intellectual orders – or even by themselves in the initial phases of their rebellions” (2018, p. 9). They are also always “fully present actors on the stage of history” (p. 10). Thomas is also critical of the tendency to present subalterns as “an amorphous mass of the indifferently oppressed” (Ibid.). Rather, Gramsci understood there to be many different subalterns, with many different relations to each other and with other groups in civil society.

Secondly, Subaltern Studies have tended to argue that dominance, rather than hegemony, characterises the relationship between the ruling group and the subaltern group, particularly in the colony, where the colonial state ruled through “dominance without hegemony”. In fact, Thomas argues, “subaltern classes or social groups, whether in the metropolitan “centres” or

their colonial "peripheries", participate in hegemonic relations in varying forms" (p. 11). Ruling groups are never simply oppressors – they need to produce and reproduce subaltern classes through a hegemonic process.

Thirdly, subaltern studies writers have portrayed the colonial subaltern as 'subject', as opposed to the 'citizens' who inhabit the 'normal' modern Western state. Thomas argues that Gramsci saw citizenship and subjecthood in relational terms, rather than as mutually exclusive – they are "in a relationship of simultaneous co-constitution" (p. 12). This leads us back to Mamdani and his *Citizen and Subject* (2017).

In his work, Mamdani looks at how the Europeans ruled Africa and how Africans responded. He examines how the structure of power under the colonial regime determined the shape of resistance, on the one hand, and, on the other, how power is organised in a way that depoliticises resistance in contemporary post-colonial Africa. Within both the colonial and post-colonial African state, those with power determine who is a citizen and who is a subject. In other words, the structure of power determines who belongs to civil society and who does not. It is during this process of demarcation that contestation is established between those who are citizens and part of civil society and those who are subjects. Mamdani cites Eley's argument:

> The "public sphere" was from the very outset "an arena of contested meaning", both in that "different and opposing publics maneuvered for space" within it and in the sense that "certain 'republics' (women, subordinate nationalities, popular classes like the urban poor, the working class, and the peasantry) may have been excluded altogether" from it. This process of exclusion was simultaneously one of "harnessing… public life to the interest of one particular group". (Mamdani, 2017, p. 15)

Mamdani shows that during the colonial period the selection criterion for belonging to civil society or not was mediated through the lens of race. To understand how civil society was rationalised within this period we need to look at how the colonial state was organised as a bifurcated one. The formation of 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' groups in Africa during the colonial era was done as a solution to the 'native question', which was "the problem of stabilizing alien rule" (Mamdani, 2017, p. 3). This problem was common to all colonies, and thus, all colonial states operated in roughly the same way. In order to stabilise alien rule, the organisation of the colonial state needed to be regulated and controlled to allow for a process

whereby a small white minority (citizens/'civilised') could rule the majority of black people (subjects/'not civilised'). The answer that emerged over time was the bifurcated state, which was characterised by both direct and indirect rule.

Direct rule applied in the urban areas of the colony, and was embedded in a "single legal order, defined by civilized laws of Europe, (where) no native institutions were recognized… Civil society, in this sense, was presumed to be civilized society, from whose ranks the uncivilized were excluded" (p. 16). The natives, mostly black, were seen as uncivilised and the minority white colonial population was categorised as civilised. Thus, race was the deciding criterion of whether one was 'civil' or 'uncivil'. The 'civilised' white race was entitled to all the rights and protection of the state – that is, they were citizens. The 'uncivilised' natives in the urban areas were excluded from this realm, both physically (through segregation) and politically. Mamdani (2017) states that "for the vast majority of natives, that is, for those uncivilized who were excluded from the rights of citizenship, direct rule signified an unmediated-centralised-despotism" (p. 17). Indirect rule was a mode of domination of those natives who were mostly in the rural areas. In order to control this big native population, "the tribal leadership was either selectively reconstituted as the hierarchy of the local state or freshly imposed where none had existed, as in stateless societies" (p. 17). Mamdani calls this a mediated-decentralised-despotism. The African colonial experience in the rural areas was characterised by day-to-day violence embedded in the customary Native Authority, which acted as the local state. Britain, for example, made land in the rural areas of its colonies a customary possession under the custodianship of the Native Authorities. Every peasant household had customary access to land defined by these colonial state-appointed customary authorities. The Native Authority thus exercised considerable control over the rural native dweller. However, the seat of customary power headed by the chief (the local state) was ultimately controlled by the coloniser, since the coloniser retained the right to recognise the chief. Unlike the centralised system of rule in the urban area where there was one legal system, each tribe had its own customary law; customary law was intentionally designed by the colonial state to restrict the people from thinking beyond the confines of these imposed cultural values. Through indirect rule the thinking and values (ideology) of the colonial state, which sought to subjugate the natives, were trickled down to them through the local (tribal) authority which constituted 'compromised' tribal leaderships. Mamdani does not deny that some customary laws were not imposed from above, but he argues that the ones that explicitly controlled traditional societies were imposed by the colonial state. These

efforts prevented the native from being a 'citizen'. There was also a third group of natives which belonged neither to those governed through "a racially defined citizenry…", nor to those governed through customary law. This third group was comprised of peasants that had left the rural and moved to the urban areas, but found themselves not acceptable by the conditions of urban. This third group thus "languished in a juridical limbo" (p. 19).

Mamdani asserts that analyses of post-colonial African states argue "that the impact of colonialism on our societies was mainly economic" (Mamdani, 2005, p. 2). In other words, they focus on the economic dimension of how Europe economically underdeveloped Africa and are based on the assumption that people were divided on the basis of class. Mamdani gives as an example, Walter Rodney's famous book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* Mamdani claims that analyses of the post-colonial condition based on political economy are not sufficient for understanding, in particular, political violence:

> The limits of political economy as a framework for political analysis began to surface in the face of postcolonial violence, for political economy could only explain violence when it resulted from a clash between market-based identities – either class or division of labor. From this point of view, political violence had to be either revolutionary or counterrevolutionary. In the face of political violence that cut *across* social class rather than between them – violence that was neither revolutionary nor counterrevolutionary but simply non-revolutionary, violence animated mainly by distinctions crafted in colonial law rather than sprouting from the soil of a commodity economy – explanations rooted in political economy offered less and less analytical clarity. This limit provided an opening for a second coming of cultural explanations of political conflict, most obviously those addressing the political resurgence of ethnicity. (Ibid., p. 2)

Mamdani (2017) argues that in the post-colony, in the urban areas the state and civil society were deracialised – efforts were made for black workers and the black 'elite' class to be incorporated into a middle class, which had previously completely excluded all natives. However, the rural areas which had been governed by customary law were never detribalised. True democracy, then, necessitates not just deracialisation of civil society, but also detribalisation of customary powers. This is explained by Neocosmos (2016) as follows:

> In my conceptual apparatus, Mamdani shows well how not only discourse but different political subjectivities were formed through state intervention within the

> distinct domains of civil society and traditional society in Africa. At independence, he notes, urbanized Africans demanded entrance into urban civil society. They sought access to democratic rights, but these were denied to peasants, who continued to be ruled by chiefs or chief-like cadres. The continuity of the state was ensured by the fact that urban groups simply demanded incorporation into the existing civil society, while the rural population continued to be ruled as a subject population. The coercive structure of the state remained unaltered after independence, as neither the urban nor the rural form of rule was democratized. (p. 491)

Mamdani (2017) agrees with many writers, such as Frantz Fanon, who argue that the modern African state is inherently a colonial import. Such writers refer to the 'weakness' of African states, by which they mean that the modern state has not developed from grassroots communities, but is an imposed colonial and foreign project (Gifford, 1998), and hence, its influence is not rooted deep in African communities. Many writers maintain that the modern African state continues to be profoundly affected by ongoing imperialist relations. Wamba dia Wamba (1996, p. 12), for example, points out that "political independence in Africa was a limited victory. It reproduced, with minor changes, the colonial partition of Africa and the imperial restructuring of her economy". Wa Thiongo (1986/2005) also acknowledges that imperialism is a reality in post-colonial Africa, even though there is considerable resistance against this oppressive tide:

> On the one hand is imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial phases continuously press-ganging the African hand to the plough to turn the soil over, and putting blinkers on him [*sic*] to make him view the path ahead only as determined for him by the master armed with the bible and sword…But on the other, and pitted against it, is the ceaseless struggle of African people to liberate their economy, politics and culture from that Euro-American-based stranglehold to usher a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination. (Wa Thiongo, 1986/2005, p. 4)

However, Mamdani's argument is that whilst it is a colonial construct, the modern African state is both undemocratic and coercive, serving the interests of a black middle-class (largely urban) elite, and is not just an imperialist project. In his understanding, this profoundly affects the kinds of struggle in African societies today, which are determined by the nature of the state – just as anti-colonial struggles were.

Mamdani (2017) is convinced that the form of rule shapes or determines the nature of revolt against that rule. The example he gives is that a local colonial state, as has been argued earlier, was organised on the basis of divide and rule: It is on this basis that resistance is born. In other words, resistance to the colonial state tended to be divided along the lines created by that state. Thus, what made tribal revolt to colonialism complex were the diverse views among the multiplicity of ethnic and religious groups (intentionally created by the colonial regime), which produced problems of unitary action inside any peasant movement. Because the post-colonial state continues to be tribalised, struggle in post-colonial African states continues along ethnic or religious lines.

Mamdani has been critiqued along a number of different lines. One line of critique focuses on Mamdani's tendency to assume the African experience of colonisation and post-colonisation as homogenous. They argue that he over-emphasises the similarities to the detriment of crucial distinctions, and that the specifics of each case need to be considered. For example, Mamdani insists that South Africa should not be seen as an 'exceptional' case, but rather as one which is typical of the colonial process (although this is a somewhat unfair claim, given Mamdani's insistence that South Africa was exceptional in terms of the strength of its civil society, as discussed above). Myers (2008), for example, critiques Mamdani for not sufficiently recognising differences across colonial contexts:

> In particular, the political requirements of South Africa's large population of permanent settlers differed from those of administrative regimes in Nigeria or the Gold Coast. For example, Mamdani describes indirect rule as a form of decentralised despotism, yet in South Africa indirect rule was not just aimed simply at the development or operation of blunt, brute tyranny. Instead, what characterized the system of indirect rule as it was assembled and elaborated in South Africa was its central position in a strategy designed to build legitimacy for colonial and segregationist states. (Myers, 2008, pp. 1-2)

Myers point here is a critical one – that considering the specific historical conjuncture in the colony can help unravel the exact nature of the colonial rule. In the case of South Africa, this suggests that the thesis of "domination without hegemony", of which Thomas (2018) as discussed above is so critical, is incorrect, at least in the South African case. Myers (2008) argues that in the process of creating indirect rule, the British colonialists had assumed existing clear lines of political authority in the rural space. In fact, the reality on the ground

was far more complex. In some areas, the British needed to manufacture 'chieftaincy', since it did not actually exist. Where hereditary chieftaincy did exist, the British faced the problem of chiefs rebelling against the colonial power. They (the British) thus had to find a way to become the final authority for the appointment and deposition of chiefs. This, according Myers, simply could not be achieved through force alone – the colonial state had to constantly seek ways in which to make its state power legitimate.

If the colonial state was characterised by both hegemony and domination, then any analysis of the post-colonial state must also consider both. Settler (2010) examines how Mamdani's bifurcated state has indeed been sustained in post-colonial South Africa, but looks at the crucial issue of the legitimacy of traditional leaders in this process. He argues that traditional authorities in post-independence South Africa have managed to retain very high levels of legitimacy, despite the discourse of their colonial invention:

> Evidently, in the post-colonial state, the possibility of dislodging the indigenous is quite difficult and its desirability is the subject of debate. This may be the result of enduring forms of colonial rule or residues of Ekeh's two publics, but also because indigenous collectivities have secured their protection and promotion not just legislatively, but equally have procured it through the deployment of "massive resources, media campaigns, technical expertise, and political influence […] [harnessing] support of co-believers around the world, whether in support of their rights and efforts to proselytise, or to protect them" (An-Na'im 1999). This tension between consolidating modern democracy and the celebration or recognition of indigenous tradition is reflected in much of what has been said about the development of a critical civil society in South Africa. (Settler, 2010, p. 54)

Settler shows that whilst the African National Congress (ANC) was critical of the institution of traditional leaders before 1990, once it had taken over government, it endorsed their authority, partially because of the success of traditional authorities in establishing their cultural legitimacy. Thus, in a Gramscian analysis, in the post-apartheid period the ANC had to juggle the attempts by traditional authorities to secure hegemony within civil society in order to increasingly secure political authority with its own need to secure legitimacy and power. Settler shows how the ANC has attempted to regulate and control the political power of traditional authorities:

> It would appear that the endeavour to clarify the status and the role of indigenous authorities functions not so much as a mechanism for codifying traditional values and practices, and thus granting them legitimacy, but rather they provide a framework for regulating the relationships between the traditional authorities and the state. (Settler, 2010, p. 56)

Freund (2000) agrees with Mamdani in his analysis that although there were efforts made by the post-colonial governments to reform the colonial state, they in fact reproduced of the bifurcated state. In further agreement with Mamdani, he believes that for true democracy to be realised there is a need to rethink the strategy of dealing with a bifurcated structure. However, Freund differs from Mamdani's position that resistance is determined by the nature of the state. For Freund, resistance in the colony was shaped from below (resistance as an initiative of the people), not from above. Neocosmos (2016) takes this position further by pointing out that popular resistance in Africa has, in most cases, been informed by the people. He criticises Mamdani for identifying the politics of resistance only with the state. In his view, Mamdani does not recognise people as agents with reason, but as those whose ability to resist is regulated by their location or the mode of rule. According to Neocosmos, Mamdani's understanding of resistance does not allow space for people's creativity, and he ignores the social dimension, because, in Mamdani's view, every action is regulated and influenced by the nature of the state's power. This, for Neocosmos, undermines the struggle initiated by people, because customs and practices are reduced to the state, not to how people think. He argues that Mamdani's conception denies the possibility of emancipatory politics, a discussion that will be taken up in due course.

Neocosmos' (2016) emphasis on the agency of people echoes arguments made by Monga (1994), Mbembe (1992) and others. This is agency from the periphery, not from the centre. Theorists like Monga (1994) highlight that there has always been an element of protest against unfair practices exercised by dominant groups over the masses in African indigenous communities. His main argument is that there is a quest for freedom in Africa that is deeply entrenched in the grassroots; the driving force behind this is 'anger'. Monga highlights that people get angry when they are systematically oppressed; they develop ways to escape repression, necessitated by the need for an inclusive democratic process.

Although Monga focuses on Africa, protests against injustice are not only inherent in African communities, but seem to characterise all communities. Thus, Holloway (2010) uses the word

‘scream’ to describe the only appropriate response to neoliberal capitalism around the world. Gurr (1970) tries to explain the underlying factors behind the ‘anger’ (according to Monga) or the ‘scream’ (according to Holloway). He uses the term ‘relative deprivation’ as having the potential ‘for action’. This understanding is useful for conceiving how frustration can make individuals participate in some kind of political protest. According to him, the relationship between deprivation and action serves as the fundamental basis of understanding civil strife, where deprivation is proportional to discontent. Scott (1990) shows us that oppression is never tolerated and the will to ‘scream’ or express ‘anger’ can never be suppressed. He uses the word ‘infrapolitics’ of the subordinate group, by which he means “a wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance which dare not speak in their own name” (Scott, 1990, p. 19). Infrapolitics is the social space where the oppressed develop their own discourse and their own norms. This is the place where the forbidden is permissible, it is the safe space for the subordinate, but an uncomfortable domain for those who dominate. Bringing this back to Africa, Mbembe (1992, p. 6) shows how this kind of infrapolitics played itself out in the way the people of Togo identified the abbreviation of the post-colonial Togolese state as the “sound of fecal matter dropping into the sceptic tank”. Instead of directly confronting the oppressor, the oppressed used language in the form of imagery of pervasive filth to challenge hegemony.

These understandings of resistance, as inevitable and shaped by people’s agency and thinking, require us to rethink dominant notions of civil society in Africa. As discussed earlier, Makumbe (1998) highlights, for example, that as a result of the nature of African states, although people generally think that civil society in Africa “is synonymous with anti-statism, the truth is that the African experience of civil society is largely focused on the people’s struggle against despotic rulers, repressive regimes and government that violated both their individual and their collective right” (Makumbe, 1998, p. 305). While Makumbe’s position clearly situates struggle (and civil society) vis-à-vis the state, other writers critique this understanding.

As we have seen, Mamdani’s (2017) understanding of the colonial African state is that it is spatially bifurcated along an urban-rural divide, and this continues in the post-colony – ‘civil society’ is a largely urban phenomenon; the rural is still largely tribalised. Like Mamdani, Chatterjee (2001) argues that the post-colonial state is characterised by different domains of rule, but he sees these as not necessarily spatially defined (i.e. urban versus rural). Chatterjee distinguishes between ‘civil society’ and what he calls ‘political society’ in the urban space of

the post-colony. By political society, Chatterjee does not refer to Gramscian 'political society' but refers to a group of people subjected to unconditional state violence because they operate outside of the rule of law. 'Civil society', in his conception (as in Mamdani's), is largely formal, middle class, and associated with laws and rights, and is largely a Western construct:

> I find it useful to keep the term 'civil society' for those characteristic institutions of modern associational life originating in Western societies which are based on equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract, deliberative procedures of decision-making, recognized rights and duties of members, and other such principles. . . . Indeed, for theoretical purposes I even find it useful to hold onto the sense of civil society used in Hegel and Marx as bourgeois society. (Chatterjee, 2001, p. 176)

Chatterjee argues that civil society in this sense is "still restricted to a fairly small section of 'citizens'" (p. 176) within the post-colony. Drawing on the work of the Subaltern Studies group, Chatterjee argues that those who fall outside of 'civil society' constitute that domain which he refers to as 'political society'. He identifies the specific features of 'political society' as follows:

> Firstly, many of the mobilizations in political society which make demands on the state are founded on a violation of the law. They may be associations of squatters, encroachers on public property, ticketless travellers on public transport, or even habitual defaulters of civil taxes, unauthorized users of electricity, water, or other public utilities, and other such violators of civic regulations. It is not that they are associations of citizens who merely happen to have violated the law; the very collective form in which they appear before the state authorities implies that they are not proper citizens but rather population groups who survive by sidestepping the law. (2001, p. 177)

Those in 'political society', however, are "demanding governmental welfare as a matter of 'right'" (Ibid.), and these rights are seen as collective – they are not demanded as individual rights of citizens. According to Chatterjee, it is a feature of 'political society' that those within it are treated by the agencies of the state (and NGOs) "not as bodies of citizens belonging to a lawfully constituted civil society, but as population groups deserving welfare" (Ibid.), but only if they are able to successfully exert pressure on the state. Chatterjee asserts that whereas civil society was the most significant site of transformation in the colonial

period, ‘political society’ is that site in the post-colony. As discussed, Thomas (2018), however, has critiqued many Subaltern Studies writers for what he sees as a misreading of Gramsci’s concept of the subaltern – including the idea of the subaltern as excluded from civil society, subject only to domination and not hegemony, and as distinct from the citizen.

Neocosmos (2016) draws on Chatterjee’s work in looking at the post-colonial African state. He argues that ‘civil society’ “must be understood as limited by what the state sees as legitimate political activity and legitimate organising; this is its first and fundamental defining characteristic” (p. 202). In a Gramscian sense then, ‘civil society’ in the post-colony has been subjected to a war of position in which the (neoliberal) ruling class has established hegemony. Civil society is thus framed within citizenship and human rights vis-à-vis the state, as Neocosmos asserts: “Civil society is in fact the liberal state within society … [it] is thus the domain that defines the essence of democracy; it is where organised interests are said to be allowed expression and managed within a neo-liberal consensus” (pp. 204, 205). In contrast ‘uncivil society’ “relations between state and people are governed by patronage relations and violence along with the subjective politics associated with them” (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 212). As Chatterjee argues, it is the domain beyond rights and the rule of law. However, for Neocosmos, “politics is not to be located a priori in one domain exclusively” (p. 415); he thus rejects Chatterjee’s “structural argument that recognises the existence of a realm of politics beyond civil society” (p. 207), the separation of two different politics located in the two different domains. Neocosmos also replaces Chatterjee’s term “political society” with “uncivil society”.

Sen (2010) creates a third category. Focusing on the Indian sub-continent, as does Chatterjee, Sen understands ‘civil society’ in the post-colony in much the same way as Mamdani, Chatterjee and Neocosmos. Like them, he sees it as largely a construct of the colonial state: “Indeed, the rise of colonization coincides precisely with the formation of so-called ‘civil society’ in colonising countries: the two took place together” (2010, no page). He argues that ‘civility’ continues to be the defining characteristic of ‘civil’ society in the post-colony, and the oppressive nature of ‘civility’ is used by dominant groups to protect their interests by introducing values and norms which exclusively protect (include) those who support their interests and exclude those who oppose them. The first category is, then, that of those who support the norms and values of the status quo; the core of ‘civil society’ is middle or upper class, white (or fair-skinned), heterosexual, male, actively or passively practicing the

dominant religion of the region, and speaking the dominant language (often colonial). Civil society can also include those who are 'civilised' – those who are loyal and follow the rules.

Sen uses the term "incivil society" to talk about that domain which includes the lower classes, lower castes in general, people of colour (especially black and indigenous peoples), those of other languages, faiths, and preferences, indeed "the victimised and oppressed who are building insurgent societies and challenging the existing power structures dominated by the civil" (2010, no page). Sen's third category is 'uncivil society' which, whilst still acting in opposition to the status quo, is the world of gross exploitation and crime.

Running through Hegel's conception of civil society, and continuing through Marx and Gramsci, is the idea of civil society as a space of associations or 'corporations' (as Hegel terms it) – in other words, of collectives. This idea has been transposed onto the African continent in the conception of civil society as being comprised primarily of organisations (a conception which dominates globally). Thus discussions of civil society in Africa are often focused around the role of civil society organisations, in particular NGOs. The role of NGOs in Africa in general and South Africa in particular has been contested, although as discussed above, in line with hegemonic understandings of civil society, NGOs are frequently seen as pivotal to ensuring liberal democracy and human rights.

3.3.3 Civil society organisations: NGOs in Africa

Many authors writing about NGOs in Africa do so largely from the hegemonic Western understanding of civil society as discussed above. They thus see NGOs as an important mechanism for ensuring democracy on the continent. Gyimah-Boadi (1996, p. 118), for example, first acknowledges that "although external influences such as the fall of communism and pressure from foreign donors were important, it was often the resourcefulness, dedication, and tenacity of domestic civil society that initiated and sustained the process of transition". He then argues that civil society organisations deserve commendation for advocating the encouragement of pluralist democracy and the installation of democratically elected governments (and in some cases, for leading the debate on the future of African politics). Simutanyi (1996) argues that civil society organisations in post-Kaunda Zambia were very limited in the extent to which they can champion a better life for all Zambians, and especially the poor and workers, because of the lack of resources needed for civil society organisations to bolster their influence. This is a very similar argument to that of Makumbe (1998):

> To the extent that there exist in Africa organised groups of citizens which undertake various non-state activities, including exerting pressure on the state and the ruling elite for positive socio-political and economic changes, it can be safely argued that civil society exists in Africa today. African civil society is, however, fairly weak and beset with constraints of a financial, organizational, operational and even environmental nature. Naturally, these multifaceted constraints make it rather difficult for civil society in Africa effectively to represent, promote and protect the interests of the people. (p. 316)

As can be seen, all of these authors see civil society organisations as an inherently good thing that will extend democracy and which therefore need to be developed.

However, other writers assert that civil society organisations such as NGOs have, in fact, tended to play a pivotal role in promoting the hegemony of the ruling group (and neoliberal capitalism). Among those who have highlighted how civil society organisations have depoliticised efforts of grassroots communities to change their lives and resist the status quo is Manji and O'Coill (2002), in his article titled 'The Missionary position: NGOs and Development in Africa'. Manji and O'Coill liken the work of NGOs to that of the missionary in the pre-colonial and colonial period, where missionary societies and voluntary organisations played a role in promoting the colonial agenda. They provided an environment conducive for controlling the behaviour of black people through welfare; even if their charity might have been inspired by religious convictions, they also invoked fear. Colonies needed acts of charity as an antidote to social unrest. Welfare was used for social control by dealing with immediate needs, thus preventing the colonised from questioning what had led to these needs. This welfare was not designed for the poor, but to protect the privileges of the rich.

Manji and O'Coill argue that in the post-colonial state, NGOs became the replacement of the missionary societies and voluntary organisations. Furthermore, African countries have lost control of determining social and development policies because of the dominance of multinational co-operations. In this view, the 'weak' African state becomes the justification for the work of development NGOs, and when governments are weak, these NGOs become the preferred channels for providing services. They become agents (not necessarily by conscious choice), who help to maintain neoliberal hegemony. According to Manji and O'Coill, the work of NGOs has in fact undermined the efforts of African people to emancipate themselves from social, economic and political oppression.

While Manji and O'Coill do not specifically distinguish between African NGOs and those from the West, Ransom (2005) looks at the role played by big international NGOs (BINGOs) in undermining the agency of people in the global South, who are supposed to benefit from them. He argues that these NGOs are powerful, self-righteous institutions, whose revenue and assets run into hundreds of thousands, or even billions, of dollars. They are thus indirectly major players on the political stage and act to cement neoliberal hegemony:

> The people [are] forced to consume the poisonous brew of free market economics and fake democracy that is concocted by corporate globalisation and neoliberal politics. The brew is homemade in the countries where almost all bingos live. (Ransom, 2005 p. 5)

Sen (2010) agrees that the growth of civil society organisations is often part of a neoliberal project. Taking a global perspective (rather than focusing on the African continent), Sen shows how so-called 'global civil society' (including the World Social Forum) really represents those who constitute 'civil society' in other words, continues to entrench the power of a largely Northern/Western, male, white (etc.) elite. In most big 'resistance' actions, such as those in Seattle in 1999, or Gleneagles in 2005, the 'incivil' were hardly seen. Indeed, civil society organisations, like NGOs, act to pacify and co-opt emancipatory movements and their leaders "to bring order into society by making sure that everything operates within defined limits". (2010, no page)

Hearn (2001) looks specifically at NGOs in and from Africa, rather than those from the West, and argues that they, too, largely play the role of consolidating neoliberal hegemony on the continent. She highlights how NGOs are co-opted and controlled by those who determine the shape of this status quo. Using a Gramscian understanding of civil society, Hearn uncovers how Northern governments support African NGOs in a bid to influence their policies:

> Donors have successfully influenced the current version of civil society in these countries (Ghana, South Africa and Uganda) so that a vocal well-funded section of it, which intervenes on key issues of national development strategy, acts not as a force for challenging the status quo but for building societal consensus for maintaining it. (Hearn, 2001, p. 43)

Neocosmos (2009) also argues that NGOs play a hegemonic role on the African continent:

> Insofar as civil society is reduced to NGOs in particular (which it usually is), the evidence suggests that it contributes to the formation and extension of a state domain of politics structured around techno-legal practices and not politically emancipatory ones. (p. 273)

In his thinking, this is related to the fact that NGOs in Africa are normally middle-class professionals, whose work is a substitution of state functions. Englund (2006), however, using two 'human rights' NGOs in Malawi as case studies, argues that NGOs are often themselves deeply unequal, with a well-educated, relatively affluent leadership, whilst much of the work is actually done by poorly paid staff and volunteers. Despite this, as agencies, NGOs promote an elite discourse and serve to undermine actual emancipation:

> In contrast to some definitions of democracy, the starting point is not the actual concerns and aspirations of the people, their particular situations in life and experiences of abuse, but freedom, democracy, and human rights as universal and abstract values. (p. 9)

Although presented as 'universal', in fact these concepts reflect the subject positions of the elite; the 'universal' concepts of freedom, democracy and human rights come to be defined in very particular ways, helped by foreign funders, so that, in fact, they confine the scope of what can actually be discussed – so the idea of empowerment is in fact disempowering, and the idea of freedom is in fact promoting unfreedom. In the Malawian context, as Englund shows, the urban and rural poor had very little opportunity to help define freedom, human rights, and democracy – rather, they were 'taught' what they meant (often by the non-elite stratum of the NGOs).

Hearn (2001) and Manji and O'Coill (2002) argue that not all civil society organisations and NGOs are captured by the ideological influences of the dominant; some groups are independent in their thinking and implementation of their programmes. Manji and O'Coill (2002) argue that if NGOs are to play an emancipatory role, their work has to be in support of social movements that challenge a system that benefits a few and condemns the rest of the population to poverty. Sen argues that it is precisely these kinds of movements which are in fact gaining ground:

> The new reality is that all over the world we are now seeing precisely these sections of society – people who have been historically oppressed and marginalised by civil

> society and state – organising themselves… we live in a time when the incivil, more than ever before, are independently and insurgently building their own organisations and their own transnational coalitions and alliances within and beyond 'national' societies. (2010, no page)

3.4 'Civil society' and civil society organisations in South Africa

As has been mentioned, there is some agreement that whilst South Africa should not be considered exceptional from the colonial experience of the rest of the continent, it is also important to recognise historical and geographical specificities. In this section I focus on the unfolding nature of civil society within the specific South African context.

3.4.1 'Civil society' during the apartheid era

Mamdani (2017) asserts that, "The main features of direct and indirect rule, and the contrast between them, are best illustrated by the South African experience" (p. 17). In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, direct rule (in the Cape) was the main mode of control. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, indirect rule emerged as the means of control in Natal. By the late nineteenth century, the South African state was thus a bifurcated state. However, by 1929, the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, General Jan Smuts, was expressing concern that the urbanisation of the native may have undermined institutional segregation, that is, tribal indirect rule. However, Mamdani argues, the Broedebond (an organisation of Afrikaner hardliners) disagreed. Thus, when the National Party came to power in 1948, indirect rule/institutional segregation/apartheid was enforced, but "to rule natives through their own institutions, one first had to push natives back into the confines of native institutions" (Mamdani, 2017, p. 7).

Thus, in Mamdani's reading, in apartheid South Africa, as it did in settler colonies across the continent, 'civil society' constituted a largely urban, middle-class, racialised sphere, separated from the 'tribalised' rural. This reading is supported by Habib (2013), who argues that in the apartheid era, especially before the 1970s, civil society was dominantly pro-apartheid and pro-business. During this time any group that was against the policies of the regime was mercilessly suppressed or politically marginalised. The institutions that constituted formal civil society during that time were the "pro-apartheid institutions such as *Broederbond* and the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* on one hand and liberal-oriented organisations such as the Institute of Race Relations and National Union of South African

Students on the other" (Habib, 2013, p. 144). In this period, contestation and engagement in civil society was limited largely to white civic associations. It was only in the late 1960s that anti-apartheid NGOs, trade unions and other organisations associated with black consciousness started to make their presence felt (Friedman, 1987, as cited by Habib, 2013). The operations of these civic groups went no further than the urban townships and industries, and were continually harassed by the state. Habib (2013) argues that opposition to apartheid resurfaced within civil society in the late 1970s and early 1980s, made possible by inter alia the liberalisation of the political system in response to the Soweto uprising in 1976. However, the liberalisation, intended as a way to contain tensions, was not sufficient – what also facilitated this upsurge was the increased human and financial resources made available to non-profit organisations.

According to Madlingozi (2007), an effective challenge against the regime only became a reality in the 1980s when the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed; but the ANC-aligned UDF and other organisations fighting for liberation existed largely outside what was, then, understood by the state as civil society (i.e. a different conception from Gramsci's, who argued that the subaltern is never actually excluded/outside). At its founding in 1983, the UDF consisted of a total of 565 organisations with a membership of up to 1.65 million (Madlingozi, 2007). These organisations included civic and student organisations, women's groups, church-aligned movements and trade unions among others. The formation of this umbrella body was enabled by the formation of numerous community resistance organisations during the 1970s and 1980s (Ballard, Habib, Valodia, & Zuern, 2006). Madlingozi (2007) argues that as long as the efforts of these many organisations were not collective, their resistance was not enough to adequately challenge the regime: "With the formation of the UDF, struggles over grassroots issues were combined with those that amounted to direct challenge against apartheid state power" (Madlingozi, 2007, p. 83). Madlingozi (2007) reminds us that the UDF was initially formed to react against cosmetic reforms by the apartheid government, but it later reconfigured itself and started to focus on every issue which would contribute to the total liberation of South Africa. He makes a further point that the UDF was a coordinating body, but the actual struggle was spearheaded both politically and ideologically by its affiliate member organisations.

Neocosmos (2009) shows that these processes in the 1984-1986 period in fact developed a politics of the people independent from the politics of the National Liberation Struggle (NLS). This politics was drawn from the people's initiative and genuine everyday needs, as

witnessed in the setting up of street committees. These committees served as local government by the people in areas made 'ungovernable'. The committees developed out of the people's need to defend themselves against state repression. These street committees "were taking up local grassroots issues, [and also] functioned as vehicles for the direct challenge to apartheid state power by the people" (Neocosmos, 2009, p. 305). Drawing attention to this politics is important because, as Neocosmos explains,

> The urban popular masses of the oppressed black population took an independent role in the politics of transformation and managed, for a time, to provide an inventively different content to the slogan of the NLS mode…The struggle for liberation in South Africa during the 1980s were part of a new worldwide wave of resistance which in Africa has been referred to optimistically as 'the second struggle for independence'… These struggles denoted a fundamental break with liberalism for which the nation is to be identified with the state and democracy with a form of a state. For the state, the mass movement in the 1980s substituted for a while a notion of 'people's power'. One of the main characteristics of this event which constituted a break from previous modes of resistance politics is that arguably, for the first time, nationalist/nationwide resistance did not take the form of a mirror image of colonial/ apartheid oppression; that mirror image already existed in the politics of the exiled ANC. (pp. 299-300)

Selmeczi (2015) agrees that the UDF was not simply engaging in a struggle for state power (the NLS) – rather, "the significance of the organs of people's power that had emerged by the mid-1980s was their potential to begin and remedy decades (and centuries) of exploitation and oppression through allowing everyone to actively shape their lives. For the UDF, parliamentary democracy in itself could not guarantee the continuation of that process" (p. 60). This is clearly a very different argument from that of neoliberal hegemony.

It was within the nature of the UDF's functioning that ideological and political plurality was tolerated until 1987. Whilst there is agreement that things started to shift at this point, there are different interpretations of why. Madlingozi (2007) argues that the UDF was 'captured' by the ANC, because the former was forced to give up its tolerance of diverse ideological views in order to adopt a "comprehensive political program" (p. 85). Neocosmos (2009), whilst agreeing that the politics of the UDF shifted after 1986, suggests this was instead the result of the extreme oppression of the 1986 state of emergency, which made the open direct democracy of the UDF increasingly difficult.

3.4.2 'Civil society' in post-apartheid South Africa

In order to fully understand CLP's shift, it is necessary to understand the context within which this occurred in some detail – this is consistent with Rule and John's (2011) argument that the relationship between a case and its context be analysed. This section then specifically presents the 'background' analysis of CLP's context, as well as the literature regarding civil society in the post-apartheid context.

There is a huge body of literature on the nature of the South African transition and on its impact on civil society. Saul (2001) argues that the transition towards the democratic dispensation was characterised by two moments. The first was an endeavour to move from a racially regulated and authoritarian rule to a more inclusive democratic governance system. The second was an effort to seek integration into the global capitalist economy through the neoliberal route. Many writers suggest two policies characterise this: the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) economic policy; although others have problematised this.

The RDP was the manifesto of the ANC in the first democratic elections in 1994. It was a product of alliance partners and community structures, conceived as a blue print policy for transforming South Africa into an inclusive humane society. With the ANC's victory in the elections, the post-apartheid government had to recognise the demands of the RDP by focusing on basic needs like housing and education. According to Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004), the reforms suggested by the RDP were limited because they were done in an environment where the renewal of capitalist profits were prioritised. Thus, the issue of redistribution embedded in the RDP was, in fact, not the major preoccupation of the ANC government, but was used to contain the possibility of mass uprising. Greenberg and Ndlovu argue that there was a dual effort by the government: on the one hand, to provide basic needs and opportunities to those previously disadvantaged, and on the other, to create a conducive environment for (neoliberal) capitalism. They highlight that the concept of developmentalism, which underlies the RDP, is drawn from the hegemonic discourse on development which arose in the United State of America after World War II. This concept sought to restructure the global economy to favour the West and proposed a political model called liberal democracy that would accommodate this type of economic hegemony (Rist, 1997). Once South Africa had decided to integrate with the global economy, what Hart

(2013) calls denationalisation, it was automatically surrendering itself to the global capitalist hegemony of the West.

Neoliberalism was introduced to South Africa through the adoption of the GEAR policy in 1996. This policy made four promises: to increase annual economic growth to 4.3%; create 1.35 million jobs by the year 2000; boost exports by an average of 8.4% per annum; and improve social infrastructure (Marais, 2001). It argued that this could only be achieved in four ways: 1) if there was an increase in private sector investment by cutting down on government spending; 2) by lowering corporate tax; 3) by encouraging wage restraint; and 4) by creating a flexible labour market (Marais, 2001). The neoliberal influence here is clear, and thus the results of the policy were fairly inevitable; as Habib describes: "Poverty and inequality increased, particularly in the 1990s, and while economic liberalisation benefited the upper classes of all racial groups, its effect on the lives of millions of poor and low-income families was devastating" (Habib, 2013, p. 152). Moreover,

> under GEAR, unemployment, wage disparities, landlessness, and poverty have worsened. At the same time, the privatization and commodification of municipal services has meant that basic services such as health care and the provision of water and electricity have become inaccessible to the majority of South Africans. (Madlingozi, 2007, p. 80)

GEAR was declared non-negotiable by both Trevor Manuel, the then Minister of Finance, and the then President Nelson Mandela. Those who opposed it were threatened with disciplinary action or were excluded from central decision making and power (Madlingozi, 2007). The implementation of this neoliberal policy needed a powerful centralised state. For this state to be successful, it needed to neutralise all those who were a threat to the implementation process, among which trade unions and mass movements were included (Marais, 2001). Successful implementation of neoliberalism was only possible if very limited and carefully selected members were included in the process, hence, popular movements' opinions were never considered. According to Madlingozi, "ANC neoliberal restructuring of the economy has become an instrument for empowering (ANC) elites' hold on state power and for, simultaneously, marginalising and disempowering opposition to this neo-liberal turn from within the Alliance and from society in general" (Madlingozi, 2007, p. 80).

The wide spread of protests in South Africa in the decades after 1994 clearly show that the people are not happy about the direction in which the country is going. Duncan (2016), in her

book *Protest Nation,* highlights how widespread protest actions are. Whilst there is contestation about the nature of protests in South Africa, they are, according to Duncan, an expression of deep dissatisfaction, and intimately related to the formation and activities of social movements and informal community organisations that were negatively affected by government policies. Duncan argues that whilst the protests can be traced to the time of Mandela's reign, they have progressively intensified in the subsequent years. The post-apartheid state has not been able to deal with protests with the impunity of the apartheid state, although the post-apartheid state has turned against protestors and used legislation and other mechanisms against poor South Africans with genuine grievances (Duncan, 2016). As Selmeczi (2015) states, "due to its renewed intensity, popular protest has been criminalized and depoliticized in South African public discourse over the past decade" (p. 67).

The transition also brought about a lot of organisational and ideological changes in South African civil society. These changes have been subjected to much research and analysis and a number of different arguments have emerged to explain what happened. As discussed, the UDF facilitated the struggle against apartheid as an umbrella organisation. Thus, there was a highly active 'incivil' society (to use Sen's term) in the period leading to the transition. This included both community-level groups such as civics, youth organisations, women's organisations, street committees and so on, as well as more formal formations like trade unions, faith-based organisations and service organisations (NGOs). The substantial organisational changes at both grassroots and formal levels that the post-apartheid context brought about were to be expected and, to a large extent, were necessary (in the view of both the state and the more formal civil society organisations), because the relationship to the state was understood to be completely different from that which had existed under the apartheid regime, as pointed out by Greenberg and Ndlovu:

> It was therefore expected that civil society formations, like all the other sections of South African society, would engage the democratic state in a manner and using methods that were different to the way they had engaged the apartheid state. To that extent, it was expected that civil society would have to undergo some changes, both in the way it organized itself and its interaction with the state. (p. 26)

The new post-apartheid state argued that the new role of NGOs was to help it deliver 'development' to its people; it ensured this kind of role through a number of different mechanisms. The post-apartheid government passed laws meant to regulate the realm of civil

society, such as the Non-profit Organisations Act of 1997. Whilst the Act does not compel civil society organisations (now called non-profit organisations (NPOs)) to register with the state, those who did not risked losing existing financial support or failing to secure future funding (Habib, 2013). It was able to shape the role of NGOs as partners in service delivery and policy development because the donors who were giving these organisations money now shifted to directly funding the state. This gave the state the power to determine the nature of organisations, by deciding what kind of organisation deserved funding. The government also established institutions such as the National Development Agency and the National Lottery Distribution Fund Trust to administrate funds for what they perceived as legitimate non-profit activities (Habib, 2013). It is in this sense that most NGOs were reduced to service delivery-related roles, often as the state's sub-contractors.

At a formal level, NGOs were encouraged to form a coalition, the state arguing that it would be easier to deal with a national representative body than individual NGOs. This resulted in the formation of the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) in 1995 (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004), but also in sector-specific structures, such as the National Land Committee (NLC) in the land sector (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004). Additionally, NGOs were encouraged to 'professionalise' – "code for adopting more technocratic approaches to development with emphasis on efficient financial and management systems, and the ability to effect swift delivery" (Marais, 1997, as cited in Ballard et al., 2006, p. 17).

At the same time as this role of NGOs shifted, the NGO sector in the country went through a process of decline. A number of different arguments for this have been put forward. One argument sees this decline as related to the incorporation of NGO staff into party and state structures. Skilled individuals were recruited into, or decided to work for, the state, leaving a shortage of skills in NGOs (Levin & Weiner, 1996). Another argument focuses on shifts in funding to explain the decline. During the anti-apartheid struggle, NGOs received funds directly from donors, but as mentioned, post-apartheid, these funds were redirected from NGOs to the new state, particularly to grand development programmes such as the RDP. This rendered NGOs underfunded and many closed down (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004).

However, a number of writers argue that the decline of the NGO sector was part of a deliberate attempt to demobilise, depoliticise or co-opt formal civil society organisations. Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004), for example, argue that the creation of SANGOCO was to protect the interests of the state as its neoliberal agenda emerged. In fact, when the implicit

neoliberal capitalist objective of the government (disguised in the RDP) was made explicit in 1996 through the introduction of GEAR, SANGOCO and its members categorically expressed their disappointment and unhappiness. Some NGOs that were aligned to the government rescinded their membership and SANGOCO's relationship with the government was tainted (Ibid.). Inasmuch as SANGOCO rejected GEAR, it did not completely reject the (neoliberal) agenda, as can be seen by the fact that it participated in initiatives such as the United Nations-initiated World Conference against Racism (WCAR) and the United Nation World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Although these two initiatives seem progressive, their agendas were, in fact, controlled and determined by core capitalist states with global financial influence and who are the source of the very issues which these initiatives were supposedly trying to address (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004). As a result, SANGOCO was not only losing favour with the government (because of its anti-GEAR position), but was also being criticised by new social movements for its participation in the WCAR and WSSD.

At the time, part the of state discourse about the role of NGOs as partners in the delivery of 'development' was to argue that to be recognised as legitimate, NGOs should be closely related to the grassroots (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004); in fact, it was considered their duty to assist the state to deliver to the grassroots. Greenberg and Ndlovu argue that most NGOs followed the prescription of the state without critically looking into how this process maintained the neoliberal capitalist system of production. They argue that, in stark contrast to the 1980s period, by the early 2000s the composition and structure of South African NGOs ensured that they were not in fact *accountable* to grassroots communities although this is where their work was targeted. Their programmes were controlled by a very few individuals, who gave very little consideration, or none at all, to the views of the grassroots. Their mandate was driven by either the South African government, if their funds were channelled from it, or by foreign donors, who, in most cases, were controlled by a (Western) foreign government. The majority of NGOs, in fact, sought to align grassroots communities in support of the status quo, or to demobilise grassroots initiatives, even whilst claiming to be adopting a more critical approach. Greenberg and Ndlovu state: "Indeed, while the post-apartheid period has been marked by large civil society gatherings that have brought many grassroots people together to voice their demands, there has been a complete failure to put into practice the alternative proposed" (p. 34). As can be seen, this is very much in keeping

with the arguments already made concerning the role of NGOs in Africa as part of cementing neoliberal hegemony.

However, even in the post-apartheid period, "a small minority was emphasising the need to support radical organisation at the grassroots" (Greenberg & Ndlovu, 2004, p. 33). This study specifically focuses on one such NGO, the Church Land Programme (CLP) that claims to support the emancipatory action of grassroots militants.

As the preceding argument has shown, the post-apartheid period saw a process of incorporating the more formal structures that had been part of 'incivil society', in Jai Sen's terminology, into 'civil society'; or, in a Gramscian understanding, a process of 'enclosure' of (more formal) subaltern groups into hegemonic alliances within civil society and political society (i.e. the integral state). The story of the more informal, grassroots-level organisations is more complex and relates to the ways in which the idea of 'civil society' was reconstructed, even before the 1994 transition, as part of a process of reshaping the legitimacy of the popular protest and direct democracy of the UDF moment:

> A particular idea of civil society emerged in South Africa during the late phase of the apartheid regime to effectively circumscribe the vision of post-apartheid freedom by delegitimizing popular mobilization and reconstructing the emancipatory ungovernability of the black subject as inimical to the democratic order. (Selmeczi, 2015, p. 72)

This was clearly a process of hegemony, a war of position by the emerging state to equate 'freedom' with liberal democracy (and the rights of people as essentially economic rights). Selmeczi shows how through inter alia deploying concepts such as the culture of poverty, of violence, of non-payment, of dependency, "the ungovernable subject has… been reconstructed as the racial other throughout the post-apartheid government's effort to find a new role for "the people" within the democratic order" (p. 74). As we have seen, Neocosmos (2016) also argues that the idea of 'civil society' within post-apartheid South Africa has been constructed to create a domain of specific relations between the state and its citizens, whilst 'uncivil society' marks a different kind of relationship, where people are cast as partial citizens, or enemies.

According to a number of writers, post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed two waves of social movements: one in the late 1990s and the other in the mid-2000s (Harley, 2012). Some

scholars argue that these two movements have no links with pre-1990 movements. They claim that there is "limited institutional continuity between the movements of the 1980s and those of the late 1990s" (Ballard et al., 2006, p. 15). Others suggest there are links with pre-1990 movements (Gibson, 2006). McKinley and Naidoo (2004) argue that the story of the first wave of 'new' social movements in South Africa shows a clear counter-hegemonic trajectory:

> It speaks to the homogenizing discourse of capitalism, against the commodification of all forms and aspects of life, against the institutionalization and domestication of the struggle, against the alienation of work and consumerism. It is also a story of the struggle to reclaim life from its capitalist 'inevitabilities', and the fight for human dignity. It is a story of the struggle of ordinary people, just ten years after the advent of democracy in South Africa, for the life imagined in the liberation struggle, outside of the silencing confines of the ANC Alliance and its broken promises…it is a story that must be told in its diversity. (McKinley & Naidoo, 2004, p. 10)

According to this story, the first wave of social movements emerged as a response to the introduction of neoliberal economic policies (Harley, 2012), and involved not only social movements, but also a "proliferation of informal, survivalist community-based organisations, networks and associations, which helped poor and marginalised communities to simply survive the daily ravages of neoliberalism" (Habib, 2013, p. 152). This response was necessitated by the failure of organised labour to effectively challenge the implementation of GEAR (Gibson, 2006). At first, the social movements worked with NGOs, but later they worked independently. According to Hlatshwayo (2008), by 2005 there was a decline of the visibility of this wave of social movements because of a failure by the movement leaders to establish concrete links with popular uprisings associated with communities. This analysis provides certain grounds for claims made by some that many of these movements were 'manufactured' by NGOs or leftist leaders.

The second wave took place in the mid-2000s. It was more spontaneous and was linked with a series of demonstrations and revolts (Gibson, 2006). These demonstrations were initiated in communities who were tired after over a decade of waiting for a better life. Whilst the state characterised the protests as 'service delivery protests', many scholars argue that they were more a claim for human dignity and social justice (Gibson, 2006). The movements that were formed at that time fit within the category named by Sen as incivil society, by Neocosmos as

uncivil society and by Chatterjee as political society; among them is *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, the shack dweller movement in Durban with whom CLP have worked for many years.

However, not all social movements seek to emancipate themselves and others from the oppression of neoliberal capitalism. Inasmuch as NGOs often operate as part of the process of creating and cementing hegemony within civil society, so too can social movements. Pithouse (2006), for example, argues that not all social movements are equally emancipatory in intent, whilst Helliker (2010) asserts that South African social movements have generally operated within state/civil society consensus, with many dependent on NGOs, and with some NGOs masquerading as social movements. Thus, the critical issue is the 'politics' of movements and organisations.

3.5 Emancipatory politics

There is now a very broad consensus outside of the hegemony that not only is something new needed, but is actually possible; many, such as McKinley and Naidoo (2004), argue that social movements, in some form, are a pivotal part of this, both globally and within South Africa, and provide cogent reasons for this role:

> They [social movements] embrace diversity in thought and action, provide fresh approaches to organizational forms, engage in self-critical dialogue and are instrumental in rewriting the alternative for the future. In their hands, another world may indeed be possible… The very fact that new social movements are able to engage in self-critical dialogue, as part of a global community of anti-capitalist activists, further serves to refute the self-serving claim that there is no alternative. (McKinley & Naidoo, 2004, p. 7)

I would argue, however, that it is not the form of organisations that is the essential element; it is their politics. As Neocosmos (2016) asserts, understanding civil society as organisations "makes it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the relations between organisations of society and the state" (p. 201). Rather, he continues, we need to focus on civil society as "a realm of activity" (Ibid.). Considering Chatterjee's (2004) argument, that on the Indian subcontinent there are two different domains, 'civil society' and 'political society', each with a distinct form of politics, 'civil society' is the domain of the politics of the elite: 'Political society', on the other hand, is the domain of 'subaltern politics', the politics of those who have been excluded, and whose demands on the state are founded on violation of the law (and

as explained Chatterjee thus means something profoundly different from what Gramsci means by the term). Because the excluded create discomfort and apprehension for those who serve and are served by the status quo, the state regards the actions of these groups and associations "as disorderly, corrupt, and irrational practices of unreformed popular culture" (p. 47), but not as politics. By contrast, Chatterjee argues that subaltern politics "is a sign that people are learning, and forcing their governor to learn, how they would prefer to be governed" (p. 78). As Neocosmos puts it: "It is therefore outside civil society that, according to him [Chatterjee], a politics of agency exists, at least in the countries of the South" (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 208). But Neocosmos (2016) problematizes this view. Whilst he also distinguishes between 'civil society' and what he calls 'uncivil society',

> In the second domain of politics… politics is not to be understood primarily as informal relations with the state and popular assertions of entitlement, as Chatterjee seems to assert with reference to India. Rather, in Africa it takes the form of a politics of patronage and violence through which the state relates to people not as full citizens with rights, but only as partial citizens and, in South Africa more and more, as enemies. However, it is important to show that the state politics that dominate in whatever domain can be resisted and challenged in such a way that the subjectivities of the domain itself are challenged. It is this that holds the possibility of an emancipatory politics. (p. 212)

Neocosmos shifts the terrain of the debate from the space or 'realm' within which emancipatory politics can happen (eg. Chatterjee's political society, or Sen's incivil society), by arguing that emancipatory politics can happen anywhere, since it is of the order of thought.

This position is consistent with Gramsci's view of the dialectical relationships and contestations inherent in the notion of hegemony. As we have seen, Gramsci (1971) argued for a philosophy of praxis, in which hegemonic 'common sense' is disrupted, here elaborated on by Thomas:

> The philosophy of praxis represents simultaneously the valorization and sublation of *senso comune* [common sense], which is recognised as both the necessary starting point of critical philosophical activity (as the incoherent ensemble of conceptions of the world really operative among the subaltern social groups, expressing and confirming the experience of subalternity) and, for precisely that reason, as one of the

> obstacles that must be overcome if the subaltern social groups are ever to build their own hegemonic project – that is, to exit from the condition of subalternity. (Thomas, 2018, pp. 11-12)

Part of the process is the recognition of the false universality of the ruling class (or race or gender or culture). Philosophy of praxis is, as the name suggests, related to both the order of thought (and Gramsci was clear that "everyone is a philosopher" (Gramsci, 1971, p.330)) and of action.

This notion is in keeping with Neocosmos' insistence that emancipatory politics is about thought – and it can thus take place anywhere. But what exactly is emancipatory politics? In my discussion of this question, I focus primarily on the work of Neocosmos. Neocosmos is one of the most important current theorists of emancipatory politics on the continent in general, and in South Africa in particular. He has spent most of his life working on the continent, having been at various times based at the Universities of Dar es Salaam, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Pretoria, and the university currently known as Rhodes University. In 2016, he published *Thinking Freedom in Africa: Toward a Theory of Emancipatory Politics*. Widely acclaimed, the book won the Frantz Fanon Outstanding Book Award for 2017, with one of the referee reports arguing:

> given that the global division of academic labour continues to assume that Africans will, as Lewis Gordon notes, provide experience to be theorized by the West, the fact that this book thinks from Africa, via an engagement with popular struggles in Africa and in conversation with a genuinely international body of theory, there is something heretical, and genuinely politically significant, about this project. (Wits University Press, 2016, 'Reviews')

Neocosmos argues that emancipatory politics is, first and foremost, about thought. Central to this politics is an emphasis on the ability of the people to think for themselves; hence, the agency of the people is of paramount importance to an understanding of this politics: "politics is thought, thought is real and people think" (p. 26). People are thus always capable of thinking beyond the status quo, and imagining a world other than the one that they are experiencing. According to Neocosmos (2016), everyone can think; although they may not always do this, and their thinking may not be political thought. Emancipatory political thought is always collective, not individual; it is the thinking of people together. It is also

always practical; it is about acting in the world. Thus, emancipatory politics is collective thought practice; but, and this is crucial, it is the collective thought practice of the universal:

> I think that such a politics is always founded on some idea of universal humanity, of equality, of justice, of dignity – these are the requirements for human emancipation. People don't necessarily think in those terms, but they have the capacity to do so, and if we do not recognize this we won't even see it when it happens. (Neocosmos, 2018, n.p.)

In current hegemonic understanding, politics is considered to be the representation of different interests, identities or markers, for example, ethnicity, sex, race, class, disability, sexual orientation, African, and so on. However, this is an exclusive politics. In contrast, to continue Neocosmos' view, "there exists, at certain times in certain sites, a politics beyond interest and…this politics is the core idea behind a politics of emancipation, as emancipation is always 'for all', and never for 'some'" (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 22). Thus, emancipatory politics transcends the interests of either a group or a segment of the population and it rests on the radical assumption that there is only one human race.

The (unemancipatory, hegemonic) politics of the state, then, is identity politics. Liberal democracy analyses the world in terms of groups and interests that are represented within the state. It claims to be for all; but is, in fact, always only for some. The similarity here with the Marxist/Gramscian reading of the bourgeois state is clear. Because the (neoliberal) ruling group have established liberal representative democracy as a hegemonic 'common sense' idea, the idea of the emancipatory universal has to be invented in thought. Neocosmos argues that universality *tends* to be thought of by those the state excludes (although it might be thought of by others; and those the state excludes might not think it). The idea of the universal always emerges from a particular practice or situation; from a particular place and time. Thus, all emancipatory politics is dialectical and contains within it a contradictory element.

Neocosmos gives as an example of emancipatory politics the living politics of the shack dweller movement, *Abahlali baseMjondolo*. *Abahlali* define living politics as follows:

> We call it a living politics because it comes from the people and stays with the people. It is ours and it is part of our lives. We organize it in our own languages and in our

> own communities. It is the politics of our lives. It is made at home with what we have and it is made for us and by us. (Zikode, 2008, n.p.)

Chance (2018) specifically considers *Abahlali's* living politics in *Living Politics in South Africa's Urban Shacklands*. According to Chance (2018), living politics is constructed by a collective group of poor people whose identity is beyond race categorisation and classifications – thus it is clearly similar to Neocosmos' requirement that emancipatory politics be a collective thought process of the universal. These are people whose lives and struggles are defined by their everyday activities. Their everyday lives constitute continuous struggle for their dignity, which the state criminalises and regards as illegal. Chance (2018) argues that this kind of politics, criminalised by the post-apartheid government, is inherently the same as the very forms of struggle that made the democratic transition possible.

For Neocosmos (2016), then, resistance to oppression is not inherently emancipatory. When struggles are pitched as adversarial to the state, or as demanding inclusion into the system, they remain trapped within the logic of the state. Thus, Holloway's (2010) 'scream' in response to the horrors of capitalism, or Monga's (1994) anger as an expression of outrage of the oppressed against apparent injustices, may not necessarily lead to emancipatory politics.

Emancipatory politics must, instead, according to Neocosmos (2016), be at a distance from the state. Holloway (2010, p. 19) agrees that "the world cannot be changed through the state. Both theoretical reflection and a whole century of bad experience tell us so". As has been argued, Neocosmos says this is precisely because state politics is the politics of representation, the politics of what is. When Neocosmos is advocating for a politics at a distance from the state, he does not mean a physical distance or a structural distance from it (as we have seen, he rejects that idea that emancipatory politics is confined to a structural domain or a realm of activity); he means that the distance should be subjective or political. This requires subjective thinking completely different from that of the state. He means a complete and radical ideological break. Neocosmos calls this 'excessive', beyond the 'expressive' of identity, difference and interest. This disruption, he believes, creates the real possibility of something beyond what we have: there need be no end to politics if politics is not equated with the state; if by politics we understand collective thought. Therefore, we are now necessarily faced with the understanding that the state may disappear, while politics may remain, as we have detached politics from the state in thought (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 7).

Neocosmos (2016) warns that emancipatory politics, when it does emerge, is difficult to sustain. Partly, this is explained by the relentlessness of the politics of representation. He gives as an example of how the UDF moment – which he sees as a moment of excessive thought, or emancipatory politics – was replaced by the politics of representation in the late 1980s. In the post-apartheid period, Neocosmos uses the Treatment Action Campaign and the shack dweller movement, *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, to distinguish between statist, identitarian politics and emancipatory politics. The latter seeks to contribute to the good of everyone, while the statist and identitarian seek to benefit particulars. His argument tries to highlight that it is necessary to judge social movements not by the activities that they are involved in, but by the nature of their politics. For them to be truly emancipatory, their politics has to go beyond interest.

Thus, emancipatory politics is not the domain of 'social movements', or of 'political society' (in Chatterjee's terms). In Neocosmos' understanding, anyone can think in emancipatory ways. Thus even those forms of indigenous association identified by Mamdani (2017) as part of the bifurcated post-colonial state hold the possibility of something emancipatory:

> It would be mistaken to restrict traditional society to [repressive] modes of rule. In fact. . . forms of resistance can utilise 'traditionally derived' subjectivities in order to propose a political practice that distances itself from the state. In fact, a concept of universality can be activated politically from within traditional society, for example; universality does not necessarily presuppose a European kind of 'modernity'. (p. 252)

> Sites of emancipatory politics in Africa have included in the past the factory or place of work. . . 'traditional' and popular institutions such as the 'palaver', village assemblies. . . as well as educational institutions, neighbourhood groups, social movements, churches, and so on – in sum, all collective locations in which the possibility of an emancipatory politics has arisen in people's thought. (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 245)

Clearly, such sites might include NGOs; including the Church Land Programme (CLP), an NGO which emerged only after the South African political transition. In its own analysis, CLP initially acted as a 'conventional' NGO, but claims to have later shifted to an emancipatory praxis (Butler et al., 2007). This study seeks to establish why and how this shift occurred and the nature of the emancipatory praxis it claims.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented Gramsci's conception of civil society theory as it emerged from Hegel and Marx's work. It then considered different views about the nature and role of civil society in Africa, and the extent to which 'Western' theory remains valid. It followed with a consideration of the particular history of civil society in South Africa in the pre- and post-apartheid eras, arguing against the idea of South African exceptionalism, whilst recognising the importance of understanding the particular historical conjuncture. The last part of this chapter, in recognition that the problem is not simply the need for change, but also the nature of change and the politics behind it, discussed the nature of emancipatory politics, focusing in particular on the work of Neocosmos.

This chapter argued that civil society should be seen as a 'realm of activities', rather than being reduced to particular organisations or groups. In this understanding, civil society, a la Gramsci, is a contested space in which groups wage a war of position, seeking to secure hegemony as part of a simultaneous, dialectical process of gaining control over 'political society', and hence the integral state. As part of this process, the post-apartheid South African state has constructed a particular understanding of 'civil society', in which some groups or organisations or 'citizens' are recognised, whilst others are constructed as either 'uncivil', criminal or as enemies of the state. This process is an inherently racialised one, and has echoed that in other post-colonial nations. Neocosmos' argument shifts the terrain of debate from the 'realm' of activity (i.e. where emancipatory politics happens), arguing that because emancipatory politics is thought, it can happen anywhere.

The next chapter considers the thinking of Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire. As discussed in Chapter One, CLP frequently referenced these thinkers in relation to their shift to an emancipatory praxis. I thus consider the key concepts and arguments of Fanon and Freire, both separately and in relation to each other, in order to construct a theoretical framework from which to analyse my data.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework – Fanon and Freire

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, at the time I first embarked on this study, it appeared likely that Freire and Fanon had played some kind of a role in CLP's shift to an emancipatory praxis. I thus wanted to explore my data (CLP's life history, and in particular its apparent shift) using the theoretical lens of these two thinkers. There are a number of other reasons why Freire and Fanon made sense as a theoretical frame, three of which will be discussed here. The first is that both thinkers are also consistent with the overall Gramscian frame. As a number of writers (Allman, 1988; Mayo, 2018) have pointed out, in the case of Freire, there are similarities between his thinking and that of Gramsci's. This is not surprising, given that Freire read Gramsci whilst he was in exile, but had also been reading others similarly influenced by his thinking:

> I only read Gramsci when I was in exile. I read Gramsci and I discovered that I had been greatly influenced by Gramsci long before I had read him. It is fantastic when we discover that we had been influenced by someone's thought without even being introduced to their intellectual production… (Freire quoted in Mayo, 2018, p. 148)

Mayo (2018) traces some of the similarities between their thinking. Like Gramsci, Freire was concerned with the issue of consciousness, and the ways in which 'common sense' might obscure reality. Both insisted that human beings make the world, and can change it – but they must first realise this. Thus, a struggle for liberation must begin with a thorough analysis of lived experience. In the case of Fanon, the similarities with Gramsci have also been discussed by a number of writers (Ali, 2015; Hart, 2013; Gibson, 2011a). Indeed, Sekyi-Otu remarks:

> So strikingly similar are Gramsci's and Fanon's idioms and programs – to say nothing of their supportive concepts – that I am tempted to call Gramsci a precocious Fanonian … Without a doubt, the conceptual supports of Fanon's vision of the national, the social and the revolutionary as cognate terms of a new political practice, have an elective affinity with Gramsci's philosophy of praxis and its political implications. (Quoted in Hart, 2013, p. 222)

A second justification for the theoretical pertinence of these two thinkers, is the context of questioning the relevance of 'Western' theory to this continent by a number of writers; whilst

neither Fanon nor Freire was born in Africa, both were familiar with the continent and its independence struggles. Not surprisingly then, there has been growing interest in the work of both theorists in relation to both the post-colonial African continent and emancipatory politics. Some writers have drawn on their work in an attempt to think through the current context, whilst others (in particular post-colonial theorists) have questioned their usefulness and relevance, an approach which will be discussed in due course.

A third important reason for drawing on Freire and Fanon, is that both have a deep connection to South Africa, in that they were drawn on extensively in the anti-apartheid struggle (Gibson, 2011a; Hadfield, 2017; Macqueen, 2018) and a number of writers have argued that they continue to be relevant in analysing the post-apartheid context and/or thinking through what should be done in response to the current state of affairs (Figlan et al., 2009; Hart, 2013; Gibson, 2011a; Pithouse, 2016).

Considering my own concerns about the failure of post-colonial African states and what could be done to bring about radical change (as discussed in Chapter One), it seemed clear to me that [considering the work of these two theorists within this study as a lens for understanding CLP's shift, made sense. Mark Butler, in his interview with me, commented on the importance of an indepth reading of Fanon:

> I suppose one of the reasons why he's [Fanon] attractive is because he can be read differently, and I think that's one of the dangers of some of Fanon's popularity now, as people read the bits they like or that suits them. Which is kind of how we all read, I suppose [laughs] to some extent. But in Fanon's case I think it's really important to make sure that you've got some kind of handle on the whole work, not just the phrases you like. (Interview 6/2/2017)

Focusing on whole works, rather than 'cherry picking' or relying on secondary accounts, is thus important. Cherry picking can clearly be a problem when a writer has produced a large body of work, as is the case with Freire – his body of work is so extensive as to be simply unmanageable for a doctoral study. Selecting which works to focus on was thus an important decision. As seen in Chapter One, a specific Freirean reference for CLP is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (PO), still considered to be his seminal text (Darder, 2018), so I chose to focus on it. In addition, I drew on *Pedagogy of Hope* (PH), published more than two decades later, because it reflects deeply on PO, and responds to critiques of it. In the case of Fanon, I chose to focus my attention on *Black Skin, White Mask*s (BSWM) and *The Wretched of the Earth*

(WE), both of which are considered his key texts. I have also briefly drawn on his other work where appropriate.

This chapter analyses Fanon and Freire in turn, their specific historical and theoretical contexts, and the key arguments they made. I also assess interpretations and critiques of their work. Finally, I relate the work of Fanon and Freire, and in particular their ontological and epistemological understanding, to each other, and to the literature I reviewed in Chapter Three, in particular the thinking of Gramsci, Mamdani, and Neocosmos. Thus, this chapter sets up the basis from which to analyse CLP's shift to an emancipatory praxis.

4.2 Fanon

4.2.1 Who is Fanon?

Frantz Fanon was born on the 20th July 1925 in Martinique, at that time a French colony. Due to the French assimilation policy, natives of French colonies such as Martinique were encouraged to internalise French culture. Fanon thus considered himself French. This is important in trying to understand his reaction to how he was treated due to his skin colour when he later arrived in France. Fanon's father was a descendant of African slaves and indentured Indians, whilst his mother was of black and white descent. Fanon's family was middle class, and this privileged position allowed him to attend the most prestigious high school in Martinique, where Aimé Césaire, a writer and founder of the concept of Negritude, was one of his brother's teachers. Negritude was a movement that emerged in France during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, as the brainchild of French speaking African and Caribbean writers who initiated it as a protest against French colonial rule, and especially its policy of assimilation (Imbo, 1998). Whilst there are different strands of Negritude, Césaire used the term "to conceptualise the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of black people" (Imbo, 1998, p. 11).

In 1940, during the Second World War after the defeat of France by Nazi Germany, a collaborationist Vichy regime was established on the island. As a result, Fanon experienced explicit racism (Macey, 2000). In 1943, when he was aged about 18, Fanon left Martinique to join the Free French Forces, and was wounded in France in 1944 (Macey, 2000). During the war he experienced anti-black sentiments from his white colleagues in the army (Gordon, 2015). In 1945 he returned to Martinique where he worked for the political campaign of his friend and mentor Césaire, who influenced his thinking.

After completing his baccalaureate, Fanon studied in Lyon, qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951. He then worked under the radical psychiatrist Francois Tosquelles. A year after qualifying as a psychiatrist he wrote his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM). The book sought to show how colonialism psychologically affects black people. It was an analysis of the racism that Fanon experienced when he was studying medicine in France (Cherki, 2006).

Fanon left France for Algeria, then a French colony, in 1953, where he was appointed as a psychiatrist at Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital. Here he changed the method of treatment by connecting it to the cultural backgrounds of the people he treated. After a year in Algeria, Fanon joined the National Liberation Front (FLN) following the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in 1954. In the psychiatric hospital he was simultaneously treating French soldiers suffering psychological distress as a result of torturing those involved in anti-colonial resistance, and the Algerian victims of this torture. In 1956, Fanon resigned from the hospital and devoted his time to helping Algeria in the fight for independence. He was expelled from Algeria by the French in January 1957 and spent the next few years either in Tunisia, or travelling on behalf of the FLN; and continued to write. In 1961, after diagnosing himself with leukaemia (for which he was treated for a time in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)), Fanon dictated WE. He died at the age of 36 on 6 December 1961 in Maryland, USA, where he was receiving further treatment for leukaemia.

The historical context within which Fanon was writing, naturally, profoundly affected his thinking and work. The post-World War II period was one of considerable change, marked by growing tension between the capitalist West and the communist USSR and increasing pressure to decolonise (both internal to colonised countries, in wars of liberation, and globally – in 1960, the United Nations General Assembly issued its *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*), a process itself profoundly affected by the Cold War tensions. Fanon writes about this context at some length at the beginning of WE (pp. 59-66). Fanon himself, of course, was living through the extraordinary violence of the Algerian revolution and, in his travels on behalf of the FLN, experiencing the decolonisation processes in other countries.

4.2.2 Fanon's work and thought

As stated, this discussion will use Fanon's two seminal works, namely BSWM and WE, which I consider as containing his core ontological and epistemological argument, and is

consistent throughout his work. The two books are often seen as integrally linked. Sekyi-Otu (2003), for example, argues that Fanon takes the existential phenomenology of BSWM and places it in a more explicit determinant historical context in WE. I propose that Fanon's main argument across the two books is to expose the dehumanising effect of colonialism through racism; but also to suggest ways in which the humanity of all can be restored. In order to show the link between BSWM and WE, I will present a chronological summary of each book, showing how BSWM generally explains the predicament of the colonised, with its last chapter indicating the need to break away from this predicament; and then how the consequences of psycho-colonial violence manifest in the post-colonial state in WE, and how, according to Fanon, we might deal with this.

***Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM)**

The first draft of what became BSWM (1952/1986) was initially written as a medical dissertation whilst Fanon was still studying in France; it was rejected as academically inferior because it questioned the very foundation of French psychiatric norms (Cherki, 2006). It was Fanon's first book, and explains the conditions and experiences associated with colonial forms of dehumanisation (Macey, 2000). The book seeks to understand how and why a black person came to be perceived as less than human (Gordon, 2015).

In the introduction, Fanon makes it clear that he intends the book as a psychological analysis of alienation. He lays out his key argument thus – in a racialised world, the white person constructs him/herself as human and the black person as nonhuman: "At the risk of arousing the resentment of my colored brothers, I will say that the black is not a man [*sic*]" (p. 1). The black person rejects this dehumanisation – s/he wants to be human. However, because being human is white, "the black man wants to be white" (p. 3). Through the book, Fanon traces the various ways in which the black person attempts to gain her/his humanity by becoming white. But precisely because of his/her blackness, this is always impossible. Ultimately, Fanon argues for the total dismantling of the ontological construct of 'whiteness' and 'blackness', and the recognition of the humanity of all. Inasmuch as Fanon was influenced by the idea of Negritude, through Césaire, he saw Negritude as reinforcing the binary (Manichaean distinction) between black and white, and hence maintaining the construct and making the possibility of being human impossible.

Chapter One (pp. 8-27) considers the issue of language within this framework. Fanon argues that language is not simply words spoken, but signifies the culture and nature of the world

that it comes from; and is thus racialised: "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (p. 8). By mastering the white person's language, (in this case, French), "The Black[3] of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (p. 8). In Martinique, then, the 'sub-standard' French dialect called Creole was considered inferior and discouraged by parents and teachers. Language is thus a source and medium of transmitting and maintaining the colonial culture of subjugation.

Chapters Two (pp. 28-44) and Three (pp. 45-60) addresses the issue of sexual relations between a woman/man of colour and the white man/woman, through an examination of two popular literary works in the French speaking world. In the example of Mayotte Capécia's book, Fanon argues that the relationship portrayed shows the same desire to enter into a white world in order to leave the black world of nonbeing. But doing so requires white recognition. The black woman thus aspires for a place in the world of white people through marriage or a relationship, thus leaving blackness behind. Fanon argues that for Mayotte Capécia, "It would seem indeed that for her white and black represent the two poles of a world, two poles in perpetual conflict: a genuinely Manichean concept of the world" (p. 31). Fanon questions "to what extent authentic love will remain unattainable before one has purged oneself of that feeling of inferiority or that Adlerian exaltation, that overcompensation, which seem to be the indices of the black *Weltanschauung*" (pp. 28-29).

In Chapter Three, Fanon revisits the problem of inferiority within a racialised world and its impact on the relationship between the black man and the white woman in René Maran's book. In this case, the black man loves a white woman; she loves him, but her acknowledgement of love is not sufficient. His feeling of inferiority as a black man (his alienation from what he is) means that he cannot enter into a healthy relationship with the white woman. Fanon tries to show that we are the way we are as the product of the social world, the racialised world. He rounds up Chapter Three by pointing out that the Manichean distinction between white (as superior) and black (as inferior) must be restructured. These two chapters try to show the consequences when whiteness symbolises goodness and purity (and humanity), while on the contrary blackness symbolises the lack of all good qualities (including humanity).

[3] Fanon used the term 'Negro' in his writing. I have replaced this with 'Black' or 'Black person'.

Chapter Four (pp. 61-81) presents Fanon's critique of the so-called dependency complex of the colonised. He specifically considers Mannoni, a French psychoanalyst who endeavoured to understand the mind of both the native and the colonial agent within Madagascar, concluding that "although he has devoted 225 pages to the study of the colonial situation, M. Mannoni has not understood its real coordinates" (p. 61). Mannoni claimed that it was only possible to colonise those who subconsciously desired to be dependent – thus the Malagasy had a pre-existing tendency to feel inferior and had longed for the coming of their colonisers. Mannoni also argued that France was the least racist society in Europe; the racism in the colony was thus because some white colonialists had a pre-existing desire to dominate. Europeans and their agents were thus not responsible for colonial racism. In response, Fanon argues as follows:

> I can subscribe to that part of M. Mannoni's work that tends to present the pathology of the conflict – that is, to show that the white colonial is motivated only by his desire to put an end to a feeling of unsatisfaction, on the level of Adlerian overcompensation. At the same time, I find myself opposing him when I read a sentence like this: 'The fact that when an adult Malagasy is isolated in a different environment he can become susceptible to the classical type of inferiority complex proves almost beyond doubt that the germ of the complex was latent in him from childhood'. (Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 62)

Fanon insists that inferiority is the product of racism – "it is the racist who creates his inferior" (p. 69). In response to Mannoni's claim that France was 'less' racist, Fanon says: "Once and for all I will state this principle: A given society is racist or it is not… European civilization and its best representatives are responsible for colonial racism" (pp. 63; 66). Fanon also rejected Mannoni's claim that colonial racism was inherently different from other kinds of racism. He asserts: "All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same 'object': man" (p. 65).

In the chapter, Fanon makes it clear that psychoanalysis is not as objective as it was claimed to be in French psychology; for him it is biased because it is informed by specific cultural values.

Chapter Five (pp. 82-108) highlights the predicament of a black person in a racialised world where his/her humanity, intelligence and achievement are unrecognised because of his/ her colour. At the start of the chapter, Fanon recounts his own intense experience of racism in

France – an experience of being seen and constructed as a thing, an object, rather than a human being, of being "sealed into that crushing objecthood" (p. 82). He argues that in a racialised world, black people exist only in relation to white people: "Ontology – once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside – does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (p. 82-83). The question of why the black person is in this predicament is because

> his metaphysics, or, less pretentiously, his customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him… [as a result I was] completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematization. (pp. 83, 85)

Even if whites know that black people are just as human as they are, their bias prevails, based on irrationality. As a response to this irrationality, Senghor and Césaire preached a philosophy of Negritude (although with somewhat different emphases) – as a response to 'white supremacy'. According to Fanon, this counter-philosophy only serves to feed the binary – when what is needed is to go beyond the black and white binary, a philosophy in which being human is central. He wanted a world where humanity is not enslaved and limited by categorisations of race, creed or culture, proclaiming: "[All] I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together. But I rejected all immunization of the emotions. I wanted to be a man, nothing but a man" (p. 85).

In Chapter Six (pp. 109-162), Fanon returns to the themes of objectification and the binary of white as good/human and black as bad/nonbeing. The first part of the chapter again questions the relevance of Western methods of psychoanalysis. It seeks to show that the method used in Western psychology is foreign to the predicament and situation of black people:

> Whenever I have read a psychoanalytic work, discussed problems with my professors, or talked with European patients, I have been struck by the disparity between the corresponding schemas and the reality that the Black presents. It has led me

> progressively to the conclusion that there is a dialectical substitution when one goes from the psychology of the white man to that of the black. (p. 116)

Thus, he argues, there is a need to introduce a method informed by the situation of black people in a world dominated by white culture. The second part of the chapter looks at black men's manhood as a perceived threat to a white man's ego: "In relation to the Black, everything takes place on the genital level" (p. 121). A white man is afraid of the black man, so the black man is constructed as a (sexual) threat, and this fear is sold to the white world. The black man is seen as little more than an animal, is dehumanised, and hence feared for what he can do with his body. Black people are also seen as morally dark, sinful and evil. While black is seen as bad, white is seen as innocent. This conception is internalised by black people themselves. Whites preoccupy themselves with using blacks as scapegoats, instead of working on their own brokenness and insecurity. For Fanon, the white world makes black people scapegoats as a way of hiding its own insecurities. If one has a low self-esteem the easiest way of dealing with such insecurity is to undermine and suppress the person who makes you feel that way. The attitude of white folk to black men's manhood is a sign that the presence of black people intimidates them. The white world is thus the source of the insecurity of white people and the inferiority of black people. Furthermore, according to Fanon, psychoanalysis in a white world is not objective, but informed by the conception which white people have prescribed to black people.

Chapter Seven (pp. 163-173) focuses on how, because the humanity of the black person is denied, as are his/her attempts to become human (by becoming white), black people, in turn, put each other down to feel better about themselves. In this chapter, Fanon then analyses the Hegelian dialectic in relation to the black person. For Hegel, all human beings must first become self-conscious (i.e. aware of their own humanity); but this is not enough. Each requires acknowledgement or recognition from the other – each must "recognise themselves as mutually recognizing each other" (Hegel quoted in Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 169). The recognition thus has to be reciprocal – reciprocity is at the centre of Hegelian dialectical philosophy. Drawing on his analysis throughout BSWM (i.e. that in a racialised world, the black person is not recognised as a human being, and believes that to become a human being s/he must become white), Fanon argues that the black person must first recognise his/her own humanity; and this must also be recognised by the other (i.e. the white):

> Man is only human to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognized by the other, that other will remain the theme of his actions. It is only on that other being, on recognition by that other being, that his own human worth and reality depend. It is that other human being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed. (pp.168-169)

Thus, unless the black person is recognised as human by the white, there is no possibility of being fully human, or existing as more than a thing. But recognition cannot be given – it must be demanded. Hegel said: "it is solely by risking life that freedom is attained… The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a person, but he has not attained the truth of his recognition as an independent self-consciousness" (Hegel, quoted in Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 170). So for Fanon, "human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and through the risk that conflict implies" (p. 170):

> When it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of *desire* – the first milestone on the road that leads to the dignity of the spirit…
>
> As soon as I *desire* I am asking to be considered. I am not merely here-and-now, sealed into the thingness. I am for somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity insofar as I pursue something other than life; insofar as I do battle for the creation of a human world – that is, of a world of reciprocal recognition. (p. 169-170)

However, if the freedom and recognition of a black person is given to him/her by a white person, then the black person is not free. The freedom of the black person only comes when s/he fights for the end of the binary of black/white, the recognition that everyone is human.

Chapter Eight (pp. 174-181) concludes with Fanon reasserting the declaration that he no longer wants to be a black man, but a man (a human being). Being either a white man or black man is being a prisoner of history; it brings out the position of being either inferior or superior:

> There is no Black mission; there is no white burden…

> There is no white world, there is no white ethic, any more that there is a white intelligence…
>
> In a world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.
>
> I am a part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it…
>
> No attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free.
>
> The Black is not. Any more than the white man.
>
> Both must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors in order that authentic communication be possible…
>
> At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognise, with me, the open door of every consciousness. (Fanon, 1952/1986, pp. 178-181)

In BSWM, Fanon is thus unveiling the way whiteness has been essentialised as a determinant of humanness, while blackness is reduced to non-being, a symbol of evil, an essential negative. He points out that blackness is only recognisable in relation to whiteness. Thus, it is no wonder a black person wants to be a white person to be whole and belong to a white world to be complete. However, s/he can never achieve humanity in this way. Gordon (2015) summarises the main argument that Fanon makes in this book as follows:

> There is a white construction called "the black." This construction is told that if he or she really is human, then he or she could go beyond the boundaries of race. The black can supposedly "really choose" to live otherwise as a form of social being that is not black and is not any racial form or designation. Racial constructions are leeches on all manifestations of human ways of living: language, sex, labour (material and aesthetic), socializing (reciprocal recognition), consciousness, and the "soul." *Black Skin, White Masks* thus describes a quasi-anonymous black hero's efforts to shake off these leeches and live an adult human existence. Each chapter represents options offered the black by modern Western thought. In good faith, then, the black hero attempts to live through each of these options simply as a human being. But the black soon discovers that to do so calls for living simply as a white. Antiblack racism presents whiteness as the "normal" mode of "humanness." So, the black reasons, if blackness and whiteness are constructed, perhaps the black could then live the white

> construction, which would reinforce the theme of constructivity. Each portrait is, however, a tale of how exercising this option leads to failure. (p. 24)

Fanon's rejection of Negritude is because he does not support any philosophy that reproduces the Manichean binary of black and white. His quest rests on being a human being. This uncompromising quest for a dignified humanity, and how it can be achieved, is the central theme in Fanon's WE.

The Wretched of the Earth

The Wretched of the Earth (WE) was written as Fanon was dying: he was so weak that he dictated it instead of writing it himself. It was "written in the crucible of the Algerian war of independence and the early years of Third World decolonisation" (Mbembe, 2012, p. 19). On behalf of the FLN, Fanon had travelled to a number of newly independent African countries and had been deeply disturbed by what he had seen. The book reflects some of his observations. Although WE was not immediately recognised, it later achieved 'biblical status', for it served as a beacon of hope to those who opposed the Vietnam war, marched for civil rights, supported revolutionary black struggles in America and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa (Mbembe, 2012, p. 19).

In WE, Fanon is examining the phenomenon of decolonisation. Drawing on his analysis in BSWM, he argues that the process of decolonisation has in some cases led to a betrayal of the people; and he attempts to explain how and why this happened, and how it can be avoided. The following discussion of the chapters of WE focuses on what I consider most relevant and central to the overall argument being made by Fanon (thus, for example, I have not included a detailed discussion on the section on 'violence in the international context').

In Chapter One, 'Concerning Violence', Fanon is setting out the context of colonisation and decolonisation. He emphasises that the colony is a fundamentally different space from the colonising country, one that is characterised by difference and violence. The colony is a world cut into two, both spatially and ontologically: "When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species" (pp. 30-31). Ending this thus requires a profound change:

> Decolonisation is quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete and

> absolute substitution. Decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is obviously, a programme of complete disorder. (p. 27)

This is an ontological shift, not simply the creation of an independent state; it is the acknowledgement of the humanity of everyone: "the well-known principle that all men [*sic*] are equal will be illustrated in the colonies from the moment that the native claims that he is the equal of the settler" (p. 34). This change is only possible if those who are colonised take it as their responsibility to free themselves: "Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself" (p. 28).

However, the colony is also fundamentally different from the colonising country in another key aspect. Fanon distinguishes between methods of control in the capitalist colonising country and in the colony. Control in the capitalist colonising country is maintained through hegemony: "In the capitalist countries a multitude of moral teachers, counsellors and 'bewilderers' separate the exploited from those in power" (p. 29). In the colony, however, control is through force:

> In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. (p. 29)

Fanon thus perceives colonisation as always a 'violent phenomenon' (p. 27), and he uses very strong terminology to expose this violence. The struggle against such violence is thus, understandably, frequently violent itself. The mind of both the coloniser and the colonised has become used to violence as the only means through which order can both be established and completely changed. While the coloniser uses the police force to maintain his/her privilege, the native also resorts to violence once s/he has realised that the order in colonised societies is unjust. Fanon acknowledges that violence is used in the process of decolonisation by the colonised, recognising that the colonised often see this as the only available means through which humanisation can be restored (as a way of changing the order): "The argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler, and by an ironic turning of the tables it is the native who now affirms that the colonialist understands nothing but force" (p. 66). Fanon goes on to argue that the violent response to the violence of the coloniser is met with fear by

both the colonisers and the intellectuals of the colonised. This colonised elite tries to undermine the violent process of resistance of the colonised people through negotiation or dialogue with the bourgeoisie of the colonialist country (p. 34), who are themselves eager to use negotiations as a way of pacifying the emancipatory drive of the colonised people. As these negotiations take place, the majority of the colonised are reduced from being agents of their own emancipation to mere 'masses'.

At this point, the colonised intellectuals may re-establish contact with the people; and the individualising competitive values which the colonialist bourgeoisie had "hammered into the native's mind" (p. 36) may be replaced by a commitment to the interests of all. However, Fanon explains that, in many cases, this does not happen, and the individualised values of the intellectuals remain intact. Thus, after independence, this elite betrays the struggle:

> But it so happens sometimes that decolonization occurs in areas which have not been sufficiently shaken by the struggle for liberation, and there may be found those same know-all, smart, wily intellectuals. We find intact in them the manners and forms of thought picked up during their association with the colonialist bourgeoisie. Spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national government, they organize the loot of whatever national resources exist. Without pity, they use today's national distress as a means of getting on through scheming and legal robbery, by import-export combines, limited liability companies gambling on the stock market, or unfair promotion. They are insistent in their demand for nationalization of commerce, that is to say the reservation of markets and advantageous bargains for nationals only. As far as doctrine is concerned, they proclaim the pressing necessity of nationalizing the robbery of the nation. (pp. 37-8)

Clearly, this process of 'liberation' is in no way emancipatory in that it is not the profoundly ontological process of becoming fully human. For Fanon, then, it is necessary to explore how this betrayal can be avoided. Obviously, one key issue is the role of the colonised elite; however, Fanon is clear that a colonial struggle in the hands of the people is no guarantee of emancipatory (ontological) change. He explores this idea further in the next chapter.

Chapter Two is called "Spontaneity: its Strength and Weakness". In this chapter, Fanon seeks to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the ways in which the colonised begin to organise themselves in the early stages of anti-colonial revolution. As he did in Chapter One, he emphasises the colony as fundamentally different from the colonising country. Part of this

difference relates to the nature of the working class. In the colony, the working class constitutes a tiny percent of the colonised population, simply because the urban population remains so small, unlike in the highly industrialized capitalist societies. However, the issue is not simply the size of the working class, but its commitment to the struggle:

> It cannot be too strongly stressed that in the colonial territories the proletariat is the nucleus of the colonized population which has been most pampered by the colonial regime. The embryonic proletariat of the towns is in a comparatively privileged position. In capitalist countries, the working class has nothing to lose; it is they who in the long run have everything to gain. In the colonial countries the working class has everything to lose. (p. 86)

Fanon thus argues that the political party in the colony is not capable of bringing about emancipatory change through appealing to the working class. He expressed this point by saying "The elite will attach a fundamental importance to organisation, so much so that the fetish of organisation will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society. The notion of the political party is imported from the mother country" (p. 85). Genuine change is only possible if the method of thinking used to change the situation is diametrically different from the method or ideas used by the old order. In the colony, this means mobilising outside of the urban working class. However, Fanon argues, "The overwhelming majority of nationalist parties show a deep distrust towards the people of the rural areas" (p. 87). This is partially because of how the colonial power has shaped the rural, through traditional authorities, who largely support the colonial regime and resist the penetration of the nationalists into the rural areas; but it is also because the young Westernised nationalists have been influenced by the revolutionary views of industrialised countries, which view the peasantry as a conservative force which generally acts as a brake on the revolution.

One of the fundamental contradictions with these nationalist political parties is that they are led by and designed for an urban elite. If they do seek to mobilise the majority of the people in rural areas, they frequently fail because of the division between the privileged (i.e. those in the urban areas) and the least privileged (i.e. those in the rural areas) among the colonised: "They do not go out to find the masses of the people. They do not put their theoretical knowledge to the service of the people; they only try to erect a framework around the people which follows an *a priori* schedule" (p. 89). The rural people, in turn, often do not trust the urban leaders. Sometimes, there will be spontaneous explosions in the rural districts. The

urban nationalist party's reaction to this is to largely ignore it: "They do not oppose the continuing of the rebellion, but they content themselves with leaving it to the spontaneous action of the country people" (p. 92). As the physical rural uprising confronts the colonisers, colonialism changes strategy and adopts a psychological approach, seeking to create divisions within the revolutionary fighters by manipulating local tribal leaders. The fight may simply become one of the colonised against the colonised; not against the coloniser. It thus becomes necessary to move the national struggle to the heart of the coloniser's power – the city.

On the fringes of the city, there is another group, the *lumpen-proletariat,* which is neither urban nor rural, and which Fanon thought could help bring about genuine change:

> that horde of starving men, uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, constitutes one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary force of a colonised people…The constitution of a *lumpen-proletariat* is a phenomenon which obeys its own logic, and neither the brimming activity of the missionaries nor the decrees of the central government can check its growth. This *lumpen-proletariat* is like a horde of rats; you may kick them and throw stones at them, but despite your effort they'll go on gnawing at the root of the tree…The *lumpen-proletariat,* once it is constituted, brings all its force to endanger the 'security' of the town, and is the sign of the irrevocable decay, the gangrene ever-present at the heart of colonial domination. So, the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and the petty criminal…These classless idlers will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood. (p. 103)

The *lumpen-proletariat* are not captured like those in the middle class, they will not bow down to colonial manipulative strategies because they are the ones who have nothing to lose. Fanon does point out that it is this very characteristic that could also be used by the colonial power, to enlist the *lumpen-proletariat* against the national struggle. Fanon argues that there may be those who have split from the party, and who throw in their lot with the *lumpen-proletariat*, or even more with the peasant in the rural areas. They are excluded by the party, and subject to harassment by the police they flee to the rural areas:

> They discover that the mass of the country people have never ceased to think of the problem of their liberation except in terms of violence, in terms of taking back the land from the foreigners, in terms of national struggle, and of armed insurrection. It is all very simple. These men discover a coherent people… The men coming from the

> towns learn their lessons in the hard school of the people; and at the same time these men open classes for the people in military and political education. (p. 101)

At the heart of this chapter is Fanon's insistence that in that struggle for there to be true freedom, people should be at the centre (p. 109). However, Fanon does not deny that the people can be an impediment to the struggle. Inasmuch as spontaneous uprising has its strengths, it also has its own weaknesses; it is not inherently emancipatory. To be emancipatory, the people must move beyond the confines of binaries. The liberation highlighted by Fanon is not limited to colour or race or blood, but is regulated by the spirit of true nationhood – universal humanism.

> The settler is not simply the man that must be killed. Many members of the mass of colonialists reveal themselves to be much, much nearer to the national struggle than certain sons of the nation. The barrier of blood and race-prejudice are broken down on both sides. In the same way, not every Black or Moslem is issued automatically with a hallmark of genuineness; and the gun or knife is not inevitable for when a settler makes his appearance. (p. 116)

Fanon's belief in 'the damned of the earth' is built on the premise that they are not simply thinking and rational beings, but are also able to organise to the extent of being able to change the world and make it more human. He is aware that inasmuch as spontaneous revolts can be created out of genuine need for change, they can also be compromised if built outside universal and egalitarian thinking.

In the opening lines of Chapter Three, 'Pitfalls of National Consciousness', Fanon makes the observation that anti-colonial struggles are not synonymous with nationalism. In this chapter, he focuses on the post-colonial regime that results when the people have not been fully involved in the struggle for liberation; a regime which is inherently flawed:

> It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps… The national middle class which takes power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case, it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. (p. 119-120)

Thus, the extent of the problems the middle class inherit, and their own limitations, makes it very difficult for these new rulers to tackle the tasks at hand. The logical conclusion of this is that national consciousness fails in its promise to unite the colonised natives and ends up being a mockery of what it might have been.

Fanon now returns to the argument made in Chapter Two, that total emancipation from colonialism cannot be left as the sole preserve of (the bourgeois) post-colonial leaders. Ordinary people, ranging from those in the countryside to the *lumpen-proletariat,* have to be involved in the building of their nations after independence. When they are not, national consciousness, which should ideally be the channel of mobilising the new nation, instead, becomes a tool for decline. The national middle class that takes over from the colonial masters does not seem to understand the reason for popular action. This is not only the result of colonial indoctrination of the colonised, but it is also a consequence of the weak understanding that the national middle class has of their populace. With its education and metropolitan outlook on life, the national middle class remains chronically limited in taking stock of what is obtaining in the countries of which they are now in charge. Fanon (p. 119) cites the "intellectual laziness of the national middle class [and] its spiritual penury" as examples of the factors compounding the problems that confront post-colonial societies. The national middle class feel that it is their duty to occupy posts that were previously the preserve of settlers. To them, nationalism simply means the taking over of the resources that previously were unjustly tilted towards the settlers, in other words, maintaining the colonial order. Thus, the takeover is myopic, because it does not transform the economy and the country.

Fanon argues that, in contrast, a successful national consciousness is one in which the people are the bedrock of the process of governance, because without the full participation of the people there is no hope of a humane society:

> In Algeria, we have realized that the masses are equal to the problems which confront them. In an under-developed country, experience proves that the important thing is not that three hundred people form a plan and decide upon carrying it out, but that the whole people plan and decide even if it takes them twice the time taken up by explaining, the time 'lost' in treating the workers as a human being, will be caught up in the execution of the plan. People must know where they are going and why… (because) everything depends on them; …if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and

> …if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people. (pp. 155-156, 159)

In his fourth chapter, 'National Culture', Fanon tries to show us that there is a danger of erroneously trying to change the order while unconsciously using the same processes that brought the order into being. He argues that if the subject of national identity is left unattended, the culture of the new nation might be overtaken by the Western culture which has seeped into certain sectors of the independent country. This is due to the fact that the effects of colonialism have dehumanised black people and portrayed them as inferior subjects who are backward and primitive, which they have internalised. It is because of this distortion that the native feels no sense of pride in his/her history:

> Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all its content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. (p. 169)

The danger, according to Fanon, is that the black people will be tempted to find ways of legitimizing their history. What complicates this legitimation process is the fact that the colonial draconian indoctrination has distorted the people's history in a variety of ways. Apart from recognising that those histories have been distorted, the discovery of those histories does not change the predicament of the oppressed:

> The passion with which native intellectuals defend the existence of their national culture maybe a source of amazement; but those who condemn this exaggerated passion are strangely apt to forget that their own psyche and their own selves are conveniently sheltered behind a French or a German culture which has given full proof of its existence and which is uncontested …I am ready to concede that on the plane of being factual the past experiences of an Aztec civilisation does not change anything very much in the diet of the Mexican peasant of today. I admit that all the proofs of a wonderful Songhai civilization will not change the fact that today the Songhais are under-fed and illiterate, thrown between sky and water with empty heads and empty eyes. (p. 168)

Moreover, the discovery of black people's history will be difficult because this history is, for the most part, dictated by the colonial masters' literature. Hence, the redemption of black people's literature is racialised. It gives birth to attitudes such as Negritude that are mere reactions to the dominance of the white culture. Thus, with their essentialist attitudes on black culture, certain ideologies from black people follow the same logic of European culture. Fanon argues that, therefore, seeking some form of an objective black identity will prove less successful in the final analysis. This is because this quest is born out of reaction rather than proof of any objective existence. For example, the black people in the United States had experiences that made them very different from the black people of Africa, but one of the most unifying factors of black people in these two countries is their experiences with Europeans and their culture (p. 173-174). Fanon states that the only exception in which the past can be used is in situations where the colonised themselves use it "with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, [they] must take part in action and throw [themselves] body and soul into the national struggle" (p. 187).

Fanon suggests that, for an authentic post-colonial national culture to emerge, it should not essentialise black people and their experiences. Culture, a living factor, grows, can be modified, and can die. The different generations that traverse the earth are given the mandate that history foists on them and, hence, develop a culture that attends to that mandate. Thus, Fanon says, asserting a new black culture does not mean going back to a pre-colonial existence, which, quite frankly, is impossible to attain in its pristine form. As he does in BSWM, Fanon is advocating for a humanity which must thus be beyond race. The question that Fanon wants to put forward is how this colonial predicament (or order) in which black people find themselves can be remedied to achieve a breakthrough for a new humanity.

He concludes this chapter by trying to define what national culture really means. It no longer identifies with original cultures, but is shaped by the struggle. The struggle against colonialism defines the content and form of this culture. After the struggle, not only will colonialism disappear, but also the colonised man:

> This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others. It is prefigured in the objectives and methods of the conflict. A struggle which mobilises all classes of the people and which expresses their aims and

> their impatience, which is not afraid to count almost exclusively on the people's support, will of necessity triumph. (p. 198)

In Chapter Five, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders", Fanon carefully considers information similar to that which inspired him to write BSWM. He specifically focuses on accounts of psychological disorders that, he claims, were a consequence of colonialism. The chapter discusses different types of psychological conditions associated with the experiences of both the colonists and the colonised.

Fanon starts by describing possible sources of these psychological states. He highlights the level of dehumanization that brutal colonial acts inflicted on the lives of the colonised. Another source of these abnormal psychological states is traced from the violence that both the colonised and the colonist witness or propagate. Here, Fanon notes that most psychologists recognised that the violence associated with World War I and World War II caused post-traumatic stress disorder in people directly involved in these wars. If colonialism rests on violence, then there is a high probability that those subjected to colonialism would experience more or less similar disorders.

The chapter explicitly focuses on actual case studies that Fanon encountered as a practising psychiatrist in Algeria from 1954 to 1959 (during the Algerian revolution and the violent repression of this). He groups these cases into four different categories, from A to D. 'Series A' (pp. 204-217), includes disorders that are a direct response to the experience of a particular traumatic event. For example, if a man witnesses the rape of his wife, this will eventually result in sexually-related dysfunctions; a man or woman who witness merciless killings will develop homicidal impulses. Both the colonists and the colonised would be affected by these disorders. In 'Series B' (pp. 217-225), Fanon presents cases that are indirectly related to the cause, but develop disorders due to a general experience of violence. For example, people, even children, may develop suicidal thoughts due to the unbearable situations that they experience from day to day. In 'Series C' (pp. 225-233), Fanon turns to people who develop disorders due to torture. This section graphically describes techniques of torture, not simply those designed to inflict physical pain, but those that use chemicals such as 'truth serum'. People who undergo torture exhibit symptoms such as depression, eating disorders, and insomnia. Fanon describes people whose minds were traumatised and broken by torture, resulting in both cognitive and psychological disorders. In 'Series D' (pp. 234-250), he describes how psychological disorders may result in psychosomatic physical

diseases. For example, women might stop menstruating, or someone can develop ulcers, and so forth. Fanon concludes the chapter by arguing that a present psychological predicament of the colonised people does not constitutes their nature, but is a result of the violence of colonialism.

In the final, brief chapter, Fanon calls on African revolutionaries to create their own states, institutions and societies, and new concepts, in an attempt to create a new 'man', rather than continuing to draw on European institutions and concepts. The creation of these institutions must not be left to the elite but has to allow the people to take a pivotal revolutionary role.

4.2.3 A brief summary of Fanon's ontology and epistemology

From the chapter-by-chapter presentation of BSWM and WE*,* it is clear that Fanon believes that in the colony (and beyond), humanity is equated to whiteness. Anything different from whiteness, especially blackness, is thus relegated to the realm of 'non-being'. Colonialism is therefore a dehumanisation process. For Fanon, humanisation is an inclusive process that transcends tribal or racial affiliations, and seeks to value all human beings as equally important, and equally human, beyond identities. Since the dehumanisation process is imposed through violence, Fanon sees violence, not as the best means, but as the only option in the struggle for humanisation in a colonised world. This violence, however, must recognise the humanity of the coloniser as just as important as that of the colonised.

Fanon believes that it possible for people to know that they are being oppressed in a way that undermines their humanity – that is, to attain self-consciousness. In WE, he seeks to show that the colonised may become aware that the way they are treated reduces them to a level where they are seen as less than human. Fighting against the colonialist is a way in which the colonised assert their humanity, and demand for it to be recognised. What makes them fight, is the quest to declare their humanity and have it acknowledged. Fanon argues that sometimes people do not know that they are being oppressed and reduced to being things. In such circumstances, those who are aware can politically educate those who are unaware.

4.2.4 Readings of Fanon

At the start of the chapter, I quoted Mark Butler saying in his interview that people have a tendency to read into Fanon what they want to see – "people read the bits they like or that suits them" (Interview, 6/2/2017). As I have stated, Fanon's work was important in the South

African struggle against apartheid, and interest in his thinking has recently been revived, although sometimes in problematic ways as Pithouse (2015) describes here:

> Fanon's name is frequently mobilised as if it carried the kind of authority, sometimes theological or prophetic rather than philosophical or political, that can be deployed to end rather than to enrich a debate. It is used to authorise all kinds of positions and power and, in some instances, the ideas attributed to Fanon cannot be sustained by even a cursory reading of his texts, or a basic familiarity with his biography. (p. 9)

For this reason that Fanon's work cannot be understood in 'piecemeal fashion', that is, through a chapter or section in one of his books, or through the forewords of his books, or only through what others have said about him, that I have engaged in a chapter-by-chapter discussion of BSWM and WE.

Nevertheless, it is clearly important to look at what others have said about Fanon, the key debates about Fanon's thinking, and the ways in which he is being used, given the growing interest in his work. I begin by looking at arguments concerning the relevance of Fanon's thinking to the African political crisis being experienced during this post-colonial period. I focus in particular on the work of Mbembe and Sekyi-Otu, but also draw on the work of Gibson and Maldonado-Torres. I then specifically consider debates related to Fanon's radical humanism, and how he has been depicted in relation to his position on violence. In this, I consider in particular the work of Gordon and Pithouse, as well as that of Mbembe, Sekyi-Otu, Gibson and Sardar.

More (2017) argues that Fanon has been read in very different ways because of the position of the reader; for instance, Europeans have read Fanon differently from black South Africans. Then, the historical context within which he has been read has also affected how he has been read and the extent to which he has been considered relevant. In fact, the issue of the relevance of Fanon's work has been raised at various points since it was first published, and it has been variously argued. Gibson (2007) suggests that the question "'Is Fanon relevant?' depends not only on what is indeed translated as relevant but on other perspectives, such as relevant to what, for what, and for whom?" (p. 33).

Fanon's relevance, or usefulness, for some scholars and activists, has been in relation to specific historical moments, contexts or actors. In this understanding, for example, Fanon was relevant to the particular independence struggles on the African continent and the immediate

post-colonial period or to the civil rights movement in the United States. Related to these historical contexts, Angela Davis, for example, is quoted on the back cover of the 2005 version of WE as saying that Fanon is "This century's most compelling theorist of colonialism and racism". However, Gibson argues that this contextualising reduces Fanon to simply an historical personage, and that the back cover blurb of WE presents it as "merely an artefact of the 1950s and 1960s anti-colonial and Black U.S. revolts" (Gibson, 2007, p. 35). Earlier, in the 1986 edition of BSWM, Sardar argued that although BSWM is a historic text, located in time and place, it still has resonance with the mid-1980 context, a context characterised by

> the silent scream of all those who toil in abject poverty simply to exist in the hinterlands and vast conurbations of Africa. It is the resentment of all those marginalized and firmly located on the fringes in Asia and Latin America. It is the bitterness of those demonstrating against the Empire, the superiority complex of the neo-conservative ideology, and the banality of the 'War on Terror'. It is the anger of all whose cultures, knowledge systems and ways of being that are ridiculed, demonized, declared inferior and irrational, and, in some cases, eliminated. (Sardar, 1986, p. viii)

Sardar argues that Fanon was ahead of his time, stating "This is why he is disliked by some… [T]his is why he is misunderstood by others. This is exactly why you should know him and listen to what he says. And if you recognize yourself in his words, then like him, I say, you have made a step forward" (1986, p. xx).

For some, Fanon is seen as having ongoing relevance, albeit for differing reasons. So Bhabha (quoted in Gibson, 2007, p. 37) recasts Fanon as useful in thinking about "the psycho-effective realm" rather than as a revolutionary thinker, "as a mythmaker rather than a participant-theoretician of the revolution" (Ibid.). Whereas, in the book *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience,* Sekyi-Otu (1996) argues that Fanon's work deserves a place as, no less, a founding text of the post-colonial world. He asserts that Fanon's text is "informed by the privileged vision granted by the specific gravity of the history of the African diaspora. It is as if he brought the contemplation of the contemporary African experience the epic imagination and tragic sense of racial destiny" (pp. 11-12). Sekyi-Otu states that the nature of the Fanonian text "marshals empirical details, poetic language, and a theoretical engagement with major metanarratives of human bondage and freedom to fashion a critical account of

colonialism and of the postcolonial condition" (1996, p. 12). Hence, Fanon's central question was "always that of releasing possibilities of human existence and history imprisoned by colonization of experience and realisation of consciousness" (p. 17). Sekyi-Otu (2003) continues to hold this position. In a presentation in 2003, he concluded that "Fanon is our pathfinder in that 'conversation of discovery' whose mission is to gather the voices of history and common dreams into the work of the critical imagination" (p. 14).

Others appear to have shifted their views on the relevance of Fanon. Mbembe, in his article, 'African Modes of Self-Writing', argues that

> The effort to determine the conditions under which the African subject could attain full selfhood, become self-conscious, and be answerable to no one else soon encountered historicist thinking in two forms that led it into a dead end. The first of these is what might be termed Afro-radicalism, with its baggage of instrumentalism and political opportunism. The second is the burden of the metaphysics of difference (nativism). (2002, p. 240)

Mbembe (2002) critiques Afro-radicalism for being rooted in Marxist political economy and which thus argues that African selfhood can only be understood using Western (Marxist) tools of analysis (i.e. class) and Western (Marxist) language; thus, no African discourse outside of this is really legitimate – which ultimately means that it reflects Western domination. The nativism perspective arrives at an ontological assumption of "a unique African identity founded on membership of the black race" (p. 241). As Mbembe critiques these 'African modes of writing' he also critiques Fanon's thinking, since he sees Fanon as part of these traditions.

Sekyi-Otu (2003) responded to Mbembe, defending Fanon in a paper entitled 'Fanon and the possibility of Post-colonial critical imagination'. He analyses and critiques Mbembe as follows:

> The hallmark of these twin currents of thought [Nativism and Afro-radicalism], according to Mbembe is a fixation upon the three emblematic historical events of slavery, colonization, and apartheid construed as violent and wholly exogenous acts of radical evil. The name of this evil or rather triad of evils is the alienation of the African self from itself, its material dispossession, and spiritual degradation – the seizure of native soil and soul…The "sole criterion for determining the legitimacy of

> an authentic African discourse", complains Mbembe, is the degree to which that discourse contributes to this programme of emancipation, in the severely reduced meaning assigned to it by Afro-radical and nativist criticism. (Sekyi-Otu, 2003, p. 3)

Sekyi-Otu (2003) argues that what Mbembe fails to recognise is that the Afro-radicalism and Nativist perspectives are simply trying to highlight how

> the effects of that history impose limits on being, action and knowledge. By virtue of that very plaintive knowledge of limits, however, they signal the human refusal of abject captivity to their dominion. For they wonder aloud what the world and the drama of human life would look like, what promises and predicaments they might proffer, were they ever unshackled from the constraints of a particular time and place, a particular historical circumstance. A coherent historicism is predicated, has to be predicated, on a consciousness of the possibility of freedom, intimations of what the nature of things might have been. (p. 4)

Sekyi-Otu suggests that Mbembe is contradicting himself. If he proposes to interpret 'subjectivity as time' as an alternative to Afro-radicalism and Nativism, then his overall understanding of Fanon is limited. For Sekyi-Otu (2003, p. 5-6), "Fanon associated freedom with human temporality, specifically with our openness toward the future, such that we are not slaves of the past, any past". In this sense, Fanon proposes a revolt "against every attempt to capture the horizons of a being that is, in any case, irrepressibly free". Sekyi-Otu tries to show that the humanist perspective of Fanon is not limited to the racial context by bringing us to Fanon's first book *Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM). Chapter Five of this book seeks to show us that Fanon did not want to introduce a theory of race, but a conception of universal humanism. Sekyi-Otu states that in this chapter

> Fanon courageously confronts and rejects the reactive temptation to fashion out of the oppressive racialization of experience a foundational racecentered social and moral ontology. In that sense Fanon was the first to live up to the true meaning of what has come to be called "critical race theory". With Fanon critical race theory is what it should be: an exercise in visionary realism. Despite the contingent obduracy of its object, critical race theory must be work that envisions, if not its own extinction, at least its eventual subordination to the task of exploring questions and problems and predicaments arguably far more central to the human condition in history. That is why Fanon, the first to name apartheid as archetype of the division of human experience,

> was also the first philosopher of a postapartheid, a truly post-colonial, moral universe. (2003, p. 8)

In 2012, Mbembe wrote an article in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Fanon's death in which he expresses a profound appreciation for Fanon's work, and a belief in its continuing importance, despite the very different context (suggesting a shift in Mbembe's thinking):

> Our world is no longer the same as his [Fanon's]. His diagnosis of life after colonialism was uncompromising. For him, there was a distinct possibility that post-liberation politics and culture might take the road of retrogression if not tragedy. The project of national liberation might turn into a crude, empty shell; the nation might be passed over for the race, and the tribe might be preferred to the state. (Mbembe, 2012, p. 25)

Mbembe argues that Fanon was correct in his prediction of what might happen; and that, in the world today, "deep inequities are being entrenched by an ever more brutal economic system… No wonder under such conditions, many are not only willing to invoke once again Frantz Fanon's heretic name, his sparkling, volcanic voice and exploding face. They are willing to stand up and rise again" (p. 26).

Gibson (2007), in his answer to the question 'Is Fanon relevant?', states that relevance lies not in "finding moments of relevance in Fanon's text that corresponds with the world, but in searching for the moments where Fanon's text and the world did not correspond, and asking how Fanon, the revolutionary, would think and act in this period of retrogression" (Gibson, 2007, p. 41). So he argues that Fanon's discussion of the *lumpen-proletariat* in Chapter Two of WE manifests today in vibrant movements like that of shack dwellers in South Africa, *Abahlali*, who revolt against the prescription of the status quo. Of such movements, looked at in this way, Gibson says that, "even if *The Wretched* is out of place, or perhaps moreover out of joint with the hegemonic world, the point is to find, in a Fanonian sense, the truth in the movements of the damned, the excluded and dehumanized" (Gibson, 2007, p. 41).

The recent advent of coloniality as a concept, and the so-called decolonial turn, as also led to a reassessment of Fanon's relevance. Some decolonial scholars see Fanon as pivotal in the very notion of decoloniality. Nelson Maldonado-Torres distinguishes colonialism and coloniality by highlighting that the former "consists of a political arrangement that has

existed since time immemorial" (2017, p.117) whilst the latter "refers to the logic, culture, and structure of the modern world-system" (p. 117). The decolonial turn constituted "a massive and possibly more profound shift away from modernization towards decoloniality as an unfinished project [which] took place in the twentieth century and is still unfolding now" (2011, p. 2). He describes these decolonial turns or responses as consisting of fundamental shifts of the colonised "from acceptance of inferiority and conditions of slavery to the assumption of a questioner" (p.118). He understands Fanon as a key decolonial thinker in his questioning of "the hegemonic Western concept of the human and [calling] for a new definition of humanity on the basis of the practices of the colonized" (2017, p. 118), and his understanding of emancipation as beyond national independence:

> Fanon found that 'the European spirit is built on strange foundations' and called for the creation of a new material, practical, and intellectual basis to define the human (*ibidem).* This meant that the colonized could not simply rely on former 'declarations' of 'We, the people' or of the 'Rights of Man'. This also meant that decolonization is a much more profound activity than simply obtaining independence. For that reason, more than just calling for declarations of rights or independence that built on the dominant view of the human, he engaged in a form of 'oration', not about dignity of Man, but about the condition of the *damnes* and their struggle for liberation. Fanon starts his 'oration' in his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* and it is one that continues through his books up through *Wretched of the Earth* (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p. 124).

Maldonado-Torres argues that contemporary hegemonic human rights discourse operates as part of coloniality because of its (European, modernist) understanding of the human, and because "there is a pattern in which the definition of human rights leads to the creation of experts who are designated to speak to the colonized and other marginalized people about the rights that they possess" (p. 130). There thus needs to be a decolonization of the human rights discourse – and Maldonado-Torres suggests that Fanon's analysis of what it means to be human "offers a basis for building a decolonial humanism and humanities that counter the coloniality of human rights" (p. 117).

Universal/radical humanism

As we have seen, Fanon argues for a complete rupture of the Manichean White/Black world. An inclusive humanism prefigures that every human being is inherently important: it defies

all hierarchical or dualistic division (e.g. black/white, where white is seen as inherently more important, or more 'human', than black). As mentioned, some writers regard Fanon as partisan, or as an advocate of the dignity of a particular group of oppressed people (i.e. identitarian politics). This type of argument sees Fanon's work as specifically focusing on race issues (Mbembe, 2012). My view is that such arguments undermine a critical and holistic reading of Fanon, especially the fifth and last chapters of his book, BSWM – a reading which, I would argue, a number of Fanonian scholars have undertaken.

Negritude marks an important emancipatory step in Fanon's writings. In Chapter Five of BSWM, Fanon recognises the importance of this movement, but is critical of its partisan perspective, especially its identification with the black race. According to Gordon (2002), Negritude grew out of an exchange between francophone blacks in Paris and black Americans in the US and its objective was to rehabilitate the image of black people and affirm blackness. It constituted two different branches: one group was politically radical, the other was more of a cultural movement where politics was categorised as an aspect of culture. The latter was later redefined by Senghor, when he clearly positioned blackness as completely distinct from whiteness. He did this by categorically assigning emotions as the domain of blackness and reason the domain of whiteness. With this distinction the black finds a place in the world of emotion, far separated from the world of reason (Gordon, 2002). For those who support it, Negritude can become the initial starting point for black emancipation. However, this has been critiqued, including by Fanon. Fanon is against a divided humanity, a view manifest in both BSWM and WE. According to Imbo, he believes that Negritude reproduces the same fragmented humanity that it is fighting, as it is

> politically impotent because it does not bring about any change in the power relations. Cultural pride merely for the sake of difference is an instrument in neither cultural nor political battles of liberation. Fanon's work, in contrast, has become virtually a road map for freedom fighters around the world, an instrument to help people of the world in forging their own sense of identity. (Imbo, 1998, p. 37)

Thus, Fanon's position on Negritude and his stance on racialised Manicheanism shows that he is critical of essentialising race theory because it makes being human an impossibility since it continues to confine humanity to specific (racial) categories. As Sekyi-Otu (2003) states: "All his principal texts speak with horror and fury and indeed sorrow of a thing (race)

that, notwithstanding the baneful efficacy with which it has re-ordered the world, does not deserve the place it has come to occupy in human affairs" (p. 9).

> He is speaking profoundly of the brutally narrowed compass and categories of our moral and political argument, reasoning, and imagination, from the moment the salient and defining feature of our being becomes our ascribed racial identity and membership. (Sekyi-Otu, 2003, p. 7)

Fanon's works thus challenge racism's ambitious to dehumanise people, classifying them into an entity describable in racial terms and provincialised in the logic of Western thinking (Gordon, 2002). To return to Sardar's (1986) foreword to BSWM; he tries to highlight the ontological basis of Fanon's work by arguing for his belief that dignity has nothing to do with wanting to be equal to the white people and their civilization:

> it is not about assuming the attitudes of the master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table. It is about being oneself with all the multiplicities, systems and contradictions of one's own ways of being, doing and knowing. It is about being true to one's Self. (Sardar, 1986, p. vi)

Fanon unambiguously insists that a mere artefact, or a thing such as racism creates, must not be permitted to provide the final vocabulary for our self-understanding and moral reasoning (Pithouse, 2003). Neither must other 'categories': the Fanonian idea of revolutionary humanism transcends the ideas of blackness/whiteness, tribal affiliation or religious domination, since god, the West or whiteness control the destiny of humanity through a false definition of being (Ibid.).

In Chapter Three of WE, Fanon's concept of nationhood specifically invokes a universal humanity. According to him, national liberation is a universal politics concerning humanity as a whole and is not limited to the specific nation-state, because his idea of the formation of a nation is not reducible to the formation of a nation-state. As Neocosmos (2016) explains: "For Fanon, the core process in national construction is precisely the formation of a people and thereby the changing of social relations and of personal consciousness also, as the effectuation of a nation is premised on this process" (p. 117). If Fanon's conception of a nation and nationalism is non-identitarian in nature, then it speaks to an emancipatory politics of becoming (Ibid.). Fanon's idea of nationhood is thus modelled on the politics of inclusion; but he argues that, after independence, "it had gradually evolved from an organisation that

enabled popular expression into an apparatus of control" (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 121). As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, Neocosmos argues that present nationhood is based on the politics of exclusion.

Readings of Fanon thus appear to concur my interpretation of Fanon's thought as grounded in a universal humanism that is only possible through a revolutionary change of the present Manichean world of 'us and them' to one in which everyone matters. Some argue such a position is not consistent with violence as a strategy of emancipation. The following section thus looks briefly at the debates around Fanon and violence.

Violence and spontaneity

Whereas, clearly, Fanon has a great deal to say beyond violence, he is frequently discussed only in relation to violence. For example, one of the most referenced critics of Fanon is Hannah Arendt in her book *On Violence* (1969), where she condemns Fanon as a theorist of violence. Three positions on Fanon and violence are common to a number of writers: 1) they criticise Fanon for his position on violence and seem to do this without considering his context; 2) they believe Fanon did not support violence unreasonably, but that he realised that violence was the only viable option at that time; and 3) they hold that the type of violence which Fanon supported was not meant to be destructive, but creative, to bring about genuine (ontological) change.

However, one cannot understand what Fanon means when he endorses violence without looking at the context in which this endorsement is made. WE was written during the Algerian war of liberation. In the work, Fanon describes the nature of violence and the barbarism of French colonialism, and the response, or resistance, of the Algerian liberation army (Pithouse, 2003). As Mbembe (2012) describes, for Fanon the Algerian war:

> had taken on 'the look of an authentic genocide', 'an exercise in extermination'. It was the 'most horrifying', 'the most hallucinatory [war] that a people has conducted in order to destroy colonial oppression', a war that was responsible for the imposition, in Algeria, of a 'bloody' and 'ruthless' regime of violence. The war was characterised by the large-scale 'generalisation of inhumane practices', which led many of the colonised to believe that they were 'witnessing a veritable apocalypse'. (Mbembe, 2012, p. 20)

Pithouse (2003) argues that in his discussion of violence, Fanon gives an account of what happened, not what he desires. It is evident from the first chapter of WE that Fanon endorses violence – this cannot be denied; but we need to evaluate this violence relative to the circumstances in which it was evoked. His "endorsement is given within the context of an ethical position that requires the person who has decided to resist armed domination by force to recognise the full humanity of the enemy before acting" (Pithouse, 2003, p. 109). In other words, violence against the colonialist is in the Hegelian sense an act of mutual recognition, a demand (by the colonised) to be recognised as a human being, but with the dialectical requirement that the other's humanity also be recognised. The sentiments towards violence that most readers refer to are not only evident in Chapter One of WE. Frequently, these readers cite sections in the foreword and afterword of the book, which are not the words of Fanon (Gibson, 2007). For example, people often use Sartre's foreword to argue that Fanon endorses violence.

To understand the spontaneity of those whom Fanon regards as the agents of liberation, we should try to understand the nature of anger, which is translated into violence. Fanon describes this anger as the fury against Western perpetrated anger (Sardar, 1986). This anger is not a random, misdirected and spontaneous phenomenon, but, according to Sardar,

> an anger borne out of grinding experience, painfully long self analysis, and even longer thought and reflection. As such, it is a guarded anger, directed at a specific, long term desire. The desire itself is grounded in self-consciousness: when it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of desire – the first milestone on the road that leads to dignity. (Sardar, 1986, p. vi)

Gibson states that Fanon "emphasized the importance of thinking, "the force of intellect" in the development of political agency" (Gibson, 2007, p. 35). It seems possible that the blurb on the back of WE (which remained in place for decades, and which reinforced Fanon as a philosopher of violence) was a marketing ploy by the publisher (Ibid). Fanon is also aware of the dangers of spontaneity based on hateful feelings and revenge, because

> For Fanon the weakness of spontaneity is its immediacy, its reactive action, a reaction against brutality that leads to counter-brutality and also a brutality of thought. And though there is no immediacy without mediation and no spontaneity without prior thought, the weakness of spontaneity is when it fetishizes immediacy. Reduced to

> Manichean reaction it invariably becomes expressed in a politics of hate when what is needed is a nuanced analysis. (p. 2)

This section investigated Fanon's two seminal books (BSWM and WE) in order to capture the central thesis of his work and show how his work is useful in thinking through the African post-colonial crisis. The last part of this section focuses on the emancipatory nature of Fanon's thinking by showing that his work seeks universality and was never limited to violence, though it did not completely deny it.

4.3 Freire

4.3.1 Who is Freire?

Paulo Freire was born in Recife in the Northeast region of Brazil in 1921 to a middle-class family. The global Great Depression of 1929 forced his family to move to the less expensive town of Jaboatão dos Guararapes. His father died in 1934 when he was only 13 years old (Gadotti, 1994, p. 37). The death of his father, together with the economic crisis, condemned him to poverty and hunger such that even his studies were interrupted (Macedo, 2007 as cited in Gadotti, 1994). After going through this experience, Freire, at a tender age, declared his intention to struggle against the hunger faced by millions of Brazilians.

In 1943, he enrolled in law school at the University of Recife, where he also studied philosophy and psychology. Freire never practised law, but became a teacher. A year after enrolling at the university, he married Elza Maia Costa de Oliveira, a fellow teacher, who played an important part in his life and work until her death. He was later appointed as director of the Pernambuco Department of Education and Culture of Social Service of Industry (SESI) (Collins, 1977). Apart from this work, he also participated in movements for popular education in the 1960s. One of these movements was the 'Bare feet can also learn to read' campaign of Rio Grande do Norte. This campaign gave Freire a chance to practise his evolving teaching methods and skills. He was able to teach a total of almost three hundred farm workers how to read and write in only forty-five days (Souto-Manning, 2010). Due to this success, Freire was invited to implement a national literacy campaign by the Brazilian president, Joao Belchior Goulart, which sought to make five million adults literate (Souto-Manning, 2010).

In 1961 the president who had appointed Freire to teach was forced out of power and the new regime did not approve of Freire's revolutionary methods of education. As a result, Freire was imprisoned for seventy days, after which he was exiled and settled in Chile, where he published the famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (PO). While in exile, he worked with the World Council of Churches and, in this capacity, with some of the newly liberated African countries or national liberation struggles (Freire, 1994/2014). Freire said that he felt a special connection to Africa: "As a man from north-eastern Brazil, I was somewhat culturally tied to Africa, particularly to those countries that were unfortunate enough to be colonized by Portugal" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 94). Freire read a number of writers on colonisation and its effects on people, including work by Fanon and Amilcar Cabral. During his time with the World Council of Churches, Freire visited Zambia, Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola, and Cape Verde. He met with the MPLA, FRELIMO, and PGAIC (Freire, 1994/2014).

In 1980 Freire was allowed to return to Brazil, where he continued teaching. He also helped establish the Social Democratic Workers Party, running their literacy project. When the party took control of the city of Sao Paulo in 1988, Freire was appointed Municipal Secretary of Education (Darder, 2018) and directly applied the education methods that had worked successfully with adults to millions of school children during his short tenure (Freire, 1994/2014). The Paulo Freire Institute was created in 1991 to give scholars a platform to debate his pedagogy. He died in 1997.

Freire thus lived through and experienced a very different historical and geographical context, although both he and Fanon dealt with the issue of colonisation and the post-colony in Africa, albeit in different ways. Because Freire lived until the late 1990s, he also experienced the shift to neoliberal hegemony, something which deeply trouble him.

4.3.2 Freire's work and thought

In my discussion, I focus on Freire's major work, PO, and the much later PH. Although aware that Freire wrote other publications, I am confident that these two books capture his central thesis, because in PH, written more than twenty years after the publication of PO, Freire claimed that this earlier book still reflected his key thought and politics. PH gives a brief background to the conditions that led Freire to write PO, and also reflects on and responds to the neoliberal context which had emerged by this time. The understanding of

Freire's epistemology and ontology discussed below is based on a close reading and my interpretation of his text. In my analysis, PO largely sums up Freire's main ontological thesis.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (PO) (Freire, 1970/1993) was written whilst Freire was in exile. Before his exile he had already written his first book, *Education as the Practice of Freedom,* which reflected a liberal, democratic style. According to Freire himself (Darder, 2018), it was while in exile in Chile that he shifted to the left when he came into close contact with both liberation theologians and Marxists, which impacted on his intellectual, pedagogical and ideological formation. He learnt, in Chile, that the fundamental contradiction is not between human beings and nature, but takes place in the economic, political, and social spheres. It was here, during his exile, that Freire read Fanon's WE, and, as discussed earlier, rewrote PO. Freire's hands-on literacy experience in Brazil and his profound learning process in Chile combined to form the seminal ideas of his pedagogical project (banking education, problem posing education, generative themes, culture of silence, conscientisation, cultural action) (Darder, 2018, pp. 14-16).

Pedagogy of the Oppressed is a response to the deplorable situation of the poor in post-colonial Brazil and to the humiliation which they experienced, which not only deprived them of material needs, but also of their humanity. The first chapter (pp. 25-51) of this work serves to summarise the objective of the book, and lays the foundation of his thought. Freire begins by asserting that human beings have the potential to do good and to realise their full humanity, and striving for full humanity is their ontological vocation. However, being fully human is made impossible by oppression, which dehumanises both oppressed and oppressor. Thus, ending oppression is "the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion" (p. 29). Freire argues that it is only the oppressed themselves that can take on this task:

> This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only the power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both…the oppressor, who is himself dehumanised because he dehumanises others, is unable to lead this struggle. (pp. 26, 29)

However, sometimes the oppressed will not try to emancipate themselves because they do not realise that they are oppressed: "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness" (p. 33). Moreover, even if they do realise that they are oppressed, they still might not take action because they are afraid:

> The oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination within which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risk it requires. (p. 29)

Even if they become aware of their oppression and of their 'fear of freedom', their struggle might still not be a humanising one. This is because as long as their reference for what it means to not be oppressed is the oppressor, they will yearn simply to replace the oppressor. If they do this, of course, oppression continues, and thus so does dehumanisation: "If the goal of the oppressed is to become fully human, they will not achieve their goal by merely reversing the terms of the contradiction, by simply changing roles" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 38).

Thus, in order for the oppressed to take on the "great humanistic and historical task" of liberation of all, they need to realise that they are oppressed, to overcome their fear, and to understand their historical vocation to emancipate everyone – in other words, that emancipation/humanisation is a collective/universal task, not an individual one. The starting point is thus an awareness of the situation of oppression – without this, the process of humanisation cannot begin: "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognise its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (p. 29). This is the role of the "pedagogy of the oppressed" – to help the oppressed to critically discover, "that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization" (p. 30). Freire calls this process 'conscientisation'. However, becoming aware is not sufficient – the oppressed must act. The process of liberation, and thus humanisation, "can be done only by means of praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 33). Once this process is completed, the pedagogy of the oppressed becomes a pedagogy for all, pointing to a universal humanism. The oppressed are not seeking to free only themselves, but seek the freedom of all humanity, the humanisation of all.

Freire also highlights the issue of violence as intimately associated with oppression. He argues that this violence of the oppressor has been practised from one generation of

oppressors to the next. It has become an ethos that controls the thought and consciousness of the oppressor. This consciousness "tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination" (p. 40). Although he recognises that the oppressed are always accused of being violent in their struggle for liberation, to Freire, the violence of the oppressed is a response to the violence which is initially imposed on them by the oppressor, and holds within it the potential for love:

> Consciously or unconsciously, the acts of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressor) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. (p. 38)

Freire then looks at the role of revolutionary leaders in the process of humanisation/ emancipation. He points out that revolutionary leaders should not use 'libertarian propaganda' or simply 'implant' a belief of freedom in the heads of the oppressed. He encourages dialogue because he is convinced that "the oppressed …must fight for their liberation [because their liberation] is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own *conscientizacao*" (p. 49). The revolutionary leader must learn from the people, as the people must learn from them: Freire calls this co-intentional education.

Freire discusses the issue of true solidarity, drawing on Hegel's dialectic of recognition:

> Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture. If what characterizes the oppressed is their subordination to the consciousness of the master, as Hegel affirms, true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these "beings for another." The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category [eg. class, race, sex] and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor—when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love. (p. 31)

Chapter Two (pp. 52-67) is a critique of the formal educational system, which generally functions to promote the dominant, dehumanising and oppressive ideologies. Freire calls this 'banking education', which limits the student so that their scope of action "extends only as far

as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits… Narration (by the teacher) leads the students to memorise mechanistically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers', into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher" (pp. 53-54). He brings to the fore a scenario where a teacher (in my understanding, a teacher is a symbol of the dominant and imposing group) decides which relevant information to give to the students (i.e. the controlled poor masses), who are simply recipients of the information. Students are expected not to think, but to memorise, record and to give back what the teacher has deposited, unaltered. Such a relationship leads to adaptation, which is dehumanising and ultimately creates a rich environment for control and domination by the oppressor. The rest of the chapter discusses Freire's belief that true liberation can be achieved through 'problem-posing education', which, according to him,

> is a humanist and liberating praxis, [which] posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. To that end, it enables teachers and students to become subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism (p. 67).

Chapter Three (pp. 68-105) concerns the necessity for of dialogue. Freire starts by pointing out the necessity of communication and the centrality of the word in communication. The 'word', for Freire, is tantamount to the transformation of the world. The word is not just a spoken word, but it is related to reflection, and reflection holds the foundation and substance of praxis. He interprets the word as essentially communal, pointing to the dialogical process, which, as a social artefact, it facilitates. Freire also shows that such a dialogical process is only possible in an environment where everyone is free to express themselves. He sees dialogue as a learning process and a means to the realisation of full humanity:

> The word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible…Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (p. 68)

Apart from the word as the basis upon which dialogue is built, Freire suggests that dialogue is not possible in the absence of love for both the world and the people. However, love alone does not suffice unless it is accompanied with humility, hope and faith in humankind: "It would be a contradiction in terms if dialogue – loving, humble, and full of faith – did not

produce this climate of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world" (p. 72). Humility allows partnership in dialogue, and faith in the potential of humanity to recreate the world. Hope becomes the driving force of the whole process and trust the glue that holds the process together towards its completion. Humility, trust, hope and love are components of dialogue, which itself constitutes revolutionary praxis, allowing "people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestion and those of their comrades" (p. 105).

In Chapter Four (pp. 106-164), Freire argues that human beings, unlike animals, are able to reflect on their actions – it is through this practice that they are able to be creative and transform the world. This reflection and action is meant to change the world made corrupt by "the praxis of the dominant elite", a praxis that denies the people "the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts" (pp. 106, 107). The praxis of the dominant intends to make the people follow leaders' prescriptive commands; revolutionary praxis, in contrast, encourages the full participation of the masses in their emancipation. Hence, Freire says:

> the revolution is made neither by the leaders for the people, nor by the people for the leader, but by both acting together in unshakable solidarity…to simply think about the people, as the dominators do, without any self-giving in that thought, to fail to think with the people, is a sure way to cease being revolutionary leaders. (p. 110)

Freire's argued that oppressive historical conditions are the creation of people; this means it must be possible for people to change them. There is no history without humankind because humanity creates history and history belongs to the people.

Freire perceives the process of emancipation as better understood if dialogical cultural action (pp. 148-164) is contrasted with anti-dialogical cultural action (pp. 119-147). The latter refers to a scenario where conquest, superiority and domination define the order of things, as a tool of manipulation and subjugation of the oppressed, whereas dialogical cultural action is built on cooperation between the leaders and the people. It defines a situation where people work together in a bid to create constructive partnerships that seek to benefit not only those involved, but all humanity.

Pedagogy of Hope

Pedagogy of Hope (PH) (Freire, 1994/2014) was written more than twenty years after PO (i.e. in a very different historical context of that when he wrote PO), and largely affirms the arguments he made in PO. In it, Freire reflects back on PO, why he wrote it, how it was received, and what happened subsequent to its publication. The first chapter draws on insights that had compelled Freire to formulate PO. Freire argues that even if PO had not achieved its goal, there is still hope for this achievement. Such faith is substantiated by the opening words to PH, where Freire argues for the necessity and reality of hope, even in circumstances that are seemingly characterised by despair. He cites the ferment of rebellion against an oppressive leadership that swept across Brazil, championed by the youth, as an illustration of the irrepressible nature of hope. In PH, Freire (1994/2014) is, unwaveringly, expressing the irreplaceable and ontological position of hope in the struggle for freedom. He shows that hope in the struggle for freedom is not just an ideal, but is a concrete reality – the possibility of change always exists. His inclination towards praxis (reflected action) leads him to draw connections between theory and practice. This is why he argues that mere hoping lacks concreteness if it is not accompanied by practice. To simply hope is to confine one's mind to a crippling idealism, which might, in the face of formidable obstacles and limitations, lead to hopelessness, which is essentially hope without an effective compass and an ideal emptied of practice.

Pedagogy of Hope explains the foundation upon which PO is built. It traces the sum of experiences Freire encountered on his journey towards putting the building blocks of that work in place, and provides the background influences informing it. For instance, he describes the influence of his work at SESI. In this organisation he worked in the division of education and culture and this led him to take formal education from its traditional confines to the families that sent their children to school. His interactions with the families was enriching because, retrospectively, he began understanding the different tapestries and experiences that he had before treated with cursory attention. To use his words, he became more convinced of the "kinship" of processes that make society what it is and that there is a connection among all the experiences that people have throughout their lives.

In PO, Freire also addresses the context within which he was writing – i.e. the early 1990s. Freire expresses concern about both neoliberalism and post-colonial Africa, including specifically South Africa, as follows:

> Today, I fear that some men and women, rightly disturbed, some intellectuals in revolt who sought me out in those days [i.e. when he was in exile in Geneva], may now be among those who have allowed themselves to be tamed by a certain high-sounding neoliberal discourse... The competent run things and make a profit, and create wealth that, at the right moment, will "trickle down" to the have-nots more or less equitably. The discourse upon and in favor of social justice no longer has meaning, and if we continue to hold that discourse in this "new history" of ours, we shall be mounting obstacles to the natural process in which it is the capable who make and remake the world. Among these persons are to be found those who declare that we no longer have any need today of a militant education, one that tears the mask from the face of a lying dominant ideology; that what we need today is a *neutral* education, heart and soul devoted to the technical training of the labor force. (Freire, 1994, pp.135-6).

Freire also reiterates his deep concern about what he terms the authoritarian left – i.e. those leaders who claim the authority to lead the struggle against contemporary forms of oppression. Freire argues that the leaders distrust the thinking of the people, and this leads to an emphasis on content: "It is precisely the authoritarian, magical comprehension of content that characterizes the 'vanguardist' leaderships, for whom men's and women's awareness is an empty 'space' waiting for content" (1994/2014, p. 105). And because it is the revolutionary leaders/educators who knows the content,

> They feel they belong to a special group in society… which "owns" critical awareness as a "datum". They feel as if they were already liberated, or invulnerable to domination, so that their sole task is to *teach* and *liberate* others. Hence their almost religious care – their all but mystical devotion – but their intransigence, too, when it comes to dealing with content, their certitude with regard to what ought to be taught, what ought to be transmitted. Their conviction is that the fundamental thing is to teach, to transmit, what ought to be taught. (1994/2014, p. 105)

For Freire, this happens in the classroom, in the trade union, and in the slum, where it is "imperative to 'fill' the 'empty' consciousness that, according to this individual, the workers [or slumdwellers] do not have" (1994/2014, p. 106). Freire criticised the arrogance of what he called the "authoritarianism of intellectuals of Left or Right", those who

> claim to be able to 'conscientize' rural and urban workers without having to be 'conscientized' by them as well; to criticize an undisguisable air of messianism, at

> bottom naïve, on the part of intellectuals who, in the name of the liberation of the working classes, impose or seek to impose the 'superiority' of their academic knowledge on the 'rude masses' – this I have always done. Of this I speak, and of almost nothing else, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* And of this I speak now, with the same insistence, in *Pedagogy of Hope.* (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 69)

4.3.3 A brief summary of Freire's ontology and epistemology

Freire argues that the way the world is designed (both at the time he was writing PO, and at the time he was writing PH) dehumanises us through oppression; that both humanisation and dehumanisation are alternatives, but our vocation is the former. He believes that a dehumanised world consists of the oppressor and the oppressed, but both are dehumanised. Since the oppressor initiates and then promotes the oppression that is responsible for dehumanisation, s/he is not in a position to stop oppression or initiate emancipation. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the oppressed, who suffer the oppression, to free both themselves and the oppressor. Freire says that the emancipatory process is not easy and the oppressed need to be aware of the nature of oppression, or they might want to be like the oppressor, and simply invert a relationship which will continue to dehumanise. However, once the oppressed are aware of the underlying complexities of oppression, they will fight against it, but their victory will no longer be theirs alone, but will be a victory for all. The ultimate objective is to live in a world where the oppressed-oppressor binary no longer exists, and to allow human beings to continuously become. According to Freire, the oppressed, by themselves, may not know that they are oppressed. He deploys an external force, 'the teacher', who is responsible for a conscientisation process. However, he does not explain the source of the teacher's awareness of the reality of oppression.

4.3.4 Readings of Freire

As is the case of Fanon, there are various readings of Freire's work, and among these, there are a number of critiques of his ideas. Here, I consider key debates related to Freire's thought and work. In my discussion, I focus on critiques and debates related to his political philosophy, as opposed to those focusing more narrowly on technical aspects of his method or pedagogy. Unlike Fanon, who died shortly after completing WE, Freire lived for many years, and was thus aware of, and able to comment on, reactions to his work. Thus, in this discussion, I also draw on Freire's own responses to these critiques, many of which are contained in PH.

From the outset, it is of paramount importance to mention that it is through PO that Freire became known internationally. This makes it a significant text to understand not only his thought, but also the portrayals of him by both critics and admirers (Schugurensky, 2011). A reader of Freire should be aware that most of his admirers and critics alike have focused on this book without realising that his work is not limited to it.

Schugurensky (2011) maintains that PO did not become famous on its merits alone, but also because of the historical circumstances which coincided with its publication. The book was published in the late 1960s at the moment when radical critiques of education were taking place in the US and in Europe. It was during the 1970s that, through what were called reproductionist theories, education came to be understood as a tool of reproducing domination. Through PO, "Freire was able to offer not only a critique but also an alternative. Indeed, his approach recognized both the possibilities and limits of education, going beyond voluntarism (education can do anything) and paralysis (education can do nothing)" (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 120).

Pedagogy of the Oppressed's main thesis was centred on social transformation at a time when there were many movements and activities advocating for change, including anti-colonial resistance, resistance to military coups and other socially related conflicts. Apart from the historical environment of that time, there were also prominent theorists and their work (such as Althusser's structural analysis or Illich's *Deschooling Society*), which appeared to be pessimistic of possible social change due to the powerful, dominant system. It was also a time when most publications on education focused exclusively on content, methodology and curriculum, without considering the political and social issues of their time. During this period, according to Schugurensky (2011, p.121), Freire's writings "ignited the imagination of keeping a vision but in the sense of dreaming possible and attainable dreams and acting upon them" (p. 121). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* called for an education to change society through human agency.

Other factors that made this book famous are highlighted in the critiques that were levelled against Freire's thinking. It is important to note that most of these criticisms are, in fact, based on PO and either ignore, or are unaware of, how Freire learnt from and responded to some of them.

Schugurensky's work, *Paulo Freire* (2011), remains one of the most important overviews of how Freire's work has been received and critiqued, and I thus use this work as the basis for

my initial discussion. He divides critiques of Freire's work into seven main categories. Of the seven categories, I will unpack the three which I consider to be most compelling and relevant to the current discussion. The first is that Freire used sexist language (which problematises my reading of an inclusionary, universal humanism as underlying his work); the second relates to precisely universal categories and dichotomies, including that Freire did not sufficiently define the oppressed, or oversimplified the complexities of multiple oppressors and oppressed; and the third claims that despite his assertions, Freire was anti-dialogue, manipulative and authoritarian. After discussing each of these in detail, I move to considering how decolonial writers have read Freire, focusing on the work of Zembylas (2018) and Walsh (2015).

I start my consideration of the three key categories of critique identified by Schugurensky (2011) with two reasons why I do not take the other criticisms seriously, before considering these three in more detail. Firstly, I find it strange that a theorist can seriously portray Freire's writings as lacking originality, or claim that they are contradictory. His writings acknowledge the fact that he was well read and borrowed from many theorists, but to say he overdoes this to the extent of contradicting himself and failing to establish his own position is an unfounded claim and shows ignorance of the content of his writings. Freire has in fact made quite a number of original contributions, but one that stands out, in my view, and supported by Schugurensky (2011), is his ability to establish the symbiotic relationship between education and politics and his realisation that no education is neutral.

On the second issue, it makes little sense to say that by embracing both Marxism and Christianity Freire's work is contradictory, considering the fact that he did not simply follow the dominant Catholic Church, but rather a radical Catholic theology (Liberation theology) that is closely related to, or even inspired by, Marx. One could state that, if he were highly influenced by his faith, then his affinity to Marxism would be inevitable. Viewed in this way, any confusion and contradiction between Christianity and Marxism is not an issue worth discussing. Schugurensky (2011), in fact, highlights very positively how Freire's writing can be understood as interdisciplinary, in that he is capable of crossing boundaries of academic fields and schools of thought by the way he carefully selects "theories that complement and combine ideas in a novel way so as to illuminate a particular issue and eventually produce a new and useful synthesis" (p. 155). Finally, accusations of Freire's ideas as cultural invasion are implausible, because the last chapter of PO specifically condemns this very practice.

On sexist language

Of the three criticisms in Schugurensky that I select to discuss in more detail, language is criticised on two fronts – vagueness and sexism – with the main focus being on sexist language. This was read as being exclusionary. When PO was written there were thus reactions from women who expressed their disappointment about his exclusive use of language. Freire acknowledged this view as important and used inclusive language not only in his later books, PH being one, but also in the 1993 edition of PO. His willingness to change the sexist language was not simply meant to please women critics, but intended to be consistent with his plea for a world that is less wicked (Freire, 1994/2014). For Freire, it is much more than changing the use of language, as he explains:

> Changing language is part of the process of changing the world. The relationship, language-thought-word, is a dialectical, processual, contradictory relationship. Obviously, the defeat of a sexist discourse, like the defeat of any authoritarian discourse, requires of us, or imposes upon us the necessity, that, concomitantly with the new, democratic, anti-discriminatory discourse, we engage ourselves in democratic practices, as well. (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 58)

bell hooks (1994) is insightful about Freire's sexist language, saying that she was strongly influenced by Freire's writings, and was very aware of the sexist language he used. For her, this use of language has been "a source of anguish for it represents a blind spot in the vision of men who have profound insight" (hooks, 1994, p. 49). However, she argues that this use of language should not, in turn, blind us from seeing the objective of Freire's writings:

> Freire's sexism is indicated by the language in his early works, notwithstanding that there is so much that remains liberatory. There is no need to apologize for the sexism. Freire's own model of critical pedagogy invites a critical interrogation of this flaw in the work. But critical interrogation is not the same as dismissal. (hooks, 1994, p. 49)

hooks is very critical of those feminists who categorically dismiss the work of Freire on account of the sexist language. She believes that he has an irresistible liberatory perspective, which she appreciates to the extent that she realises that the sexism in Freire's language does not define his drive against all forms of oppression: "To have work that promotes one's liberation is such a powerful gift that it does not matter so much if the gift is flawed" (hooks, 1994, p. 50).

Universal categories and dichotomies

Some theorists, among which Taylor (1993) and Ellsworth (1991) (both cited in Schugurensky, 2011) are included, consider that Freire does not adequately explain what he means by the oppressed. There are criticisms that he over-simplifies reality by reducing it to binaries or dichotomies, which he conceptualises in universal terms (categories), and that his explanations lack context, rendering his descriptions abstract, vague and metaphysical. However, it should be noted that the very book (PO) which these critics accuse of being vague and metaphysical is seen by some writers as inspirational and relevant to their lives, as hooks describes here: "I want to say I felt myself included in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* one of the first Freire books I read, in a way that I never felt myself – in my experience as a rural black person – included in the first feminist books I read, works like *The Feminine Mystique* and *Born Female*" (hooks, 1994, p. 51). She finds hope and insight from a category – the oppressed – that others regard as so vague as to be meaningless[4]. In addition, Freire himself is critical of those who relate to the oppressed only as an abstract category.

Related to the perceived lack of explanation of the oppressed among certain theorists is the claim that Freire reduces everything to class, while disregarding other aspects such as gender and race. For example, certain theorists, amongst whom, according to Schugurensky (2011), are Taylor and Ellsworth, consider that Freire does not adequately explain what he means by the oppressed. In response, Freire (1994/2014, p. 79) argues that the word 'oppressed' is self-explanatory, that readers have been able to identify themselves with the term not only in their experience of class, but also their race and gender. Freire acknowledges that he was preoccupied with class in PO*,* but in his later publications "he expanded his conception of oppression by recognizing the interconnected relationships of racial, gender and class discrimination" (Schugurensky, 2011, p. 158). Freire continued to argue, however, that oppressive relations of gender and race need also to be considered in relation to the lens of class:

> Things have not changed a great deal between 1973 and 1994, when it comes to an all but systematic refusal on the part of antiracist and antisexist movements, even serious movements, to admit the concept of social class into a comprehensive analysis either

[4] It is interesting to note that Fanon has been critiqued on exactly the same grounds – i.e. of over-generalising the African context far too broadly, including in relation to apartheid South Africa – and has been defended in precisely the way hooks does Freire – that black South Africans completely identified with the experience of the black that he was describing (More, 2017).

> of racism and sexism themselves, or of the struggle against them. And the same is true for the struggle against the thesis of unity in diversity (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 148).

Those who critique him as being abstract seem to suggest that Freire is "incapable of a dialectical manner of thinking" (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 77). Freire, however, argues that he is deeply dialectical. In his view, one cannot think about the universal without the specific, and the local or specific can also only be understood in relation to the universal. Similarly, one cannot understand the regional apart from the local, or the global without the regional. Hence, the Freirean universal cannot be understood apart from the concrete, because it is out of the concrete that the universal is derived.

Anti-dialogue, manipulation, and authoritarianism

Some critics have argued that Freire's process of education for emancipation, which takes place through dialogue and conscientisation, can be manipulative or authoritarian. The actual criticisms seem to be harsh, because they categorically dismiss the overall intention of Freire. The claim is that this process is actually anti-dialogical and elitist, since the so-called dialogue is initiated by leaders. According to Margonis (2007), it is considered elitist because the dialogue is informed by an established revolutionary narrative. Indeed Taylor (as cited in Schugurensky, 2011) suggests that conscientisation can be subjected to manipulation, indoctrination and brainwashing. As discussed above, Freire was deeply concerned about how some of those who claim to be liberatory (the "Authoritarian Left", or "vanguardist leadership") try to enforce a particular understanding and analysis. Taylor's argument cannot be said to really reflect the work of Freire, but instead, reflects (some of) those who claim to implement it. As can be seen in my discussion on PO, Freire strongly rejected this claim.

Those who regard Freire as manipulative have misread what he means by conscientisation. It is not meant to control or manipulate the people, but to help them to break the circle of oppression. This is done by helping them to confront "their own fear as a representation within themselves of the power of the oppressor" (Aronowitz, 2012, p. 263). The objective of this pedagogy is to enable the oppressed not only to overcome their material oppression, but also to attain spiritual freedom. According to Aronowitz:

> Freire posits the absolute necessity of the oppressed to take charge of their own liberation, including the revolutionary process which, in the first place, is educational…Freire enters a closely reasoned argument against vanguardism which

> typically takes the form of populism…Freire makes a sharp distinction between political strategies that 'use' the movements to achieve political power and fighting for an authentic popular organization in which the people themselves are the autonomous sources of political decision. (Aronowitz, 2012, pp. 264, 265)

To the extent that Freire acknowledges some of his shortcomings, he also recognises that the weakness of some of the critics is that they base the criticism of his work on the thought of those who follow him rather than on his actual writings: "I cannot accept responsibility, I must say, for what is said or done in my name contrary to what I do and say" (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 78). He also argues that some of the critiques are based only on one of his works, but the criticism is directed at his whole body of work: "Certain criticisms may be valid for one or another text, but without foundation if extended to the totality of my work" (Freire, 1994/2014, p. 79).

Decoloniality and Freire

Like Fanon, Freire's work has been reassessed in the light of the decolonial turn. However, unlike Fanon, many writers have critiqued Freire's work from a decolonial perspective, rather than seen him as an important decolonial theorist. Whereas these writers do offer a fresh perspective (albeit, I would argue, a deeply flawed one), they also draw on older critiques, already mentioned above.

Zembylas (2018) suggests that Freire's views on emancipation and transformative agency are fundamentally shaped by a Eurocentric modernist framework. He believes that Freire's thinking is in tension with decolonial thinking for a number of reasons, including that he privileges reason and dialogue (over, for example, the affective) as a means of constructing knowledge, and is thus grounded in liberal views and masculine notions of rationality; that his critical pedagogy discourse "not only entails problematic dualisms (eg. oppressed/ oppressor; empowered/disempowered; dominant/subordinate), but also fails to imagine alternative manifestations of criticality that goes beyond rationalistic and teleological assumptions" (p. 9); and that he privileged the teacher's knowledge, seeing the student's knowledge as a form of false consciousness. In addition, "Freire situates the work of liberation in the minds of the oppressed, whereas decolonial projects position the work of liberation in the structures of colonization that needs to be dismantled" (2018, p. 2) (clearly, this is misreading of Freire's work). Zembylas also critiques Freire for emphasising class at the expense of race and gender. I have discussed this critique above.

Margonis (2003), by contrast, argues that Freire's work constitutes early post-colonial theory influenced by Fanon and Memmi. However, he notes that a number of other writers contest this view, claiming that Freire's thinking was profoundly located within a western enlightenment metanarrative, which his pedagogy then reinforced. He creates a vanguard-like teacher guilty of cultural invasion and creating and cementing (western) bourgeois cultural hegemony.

Walsh (2015) presents a far more nuanced critique. A longtime friend of Freire, she speaks about a journey away from his critical pedagogy to a more decolonial position, but one which still values Freire; and suggests that Freire himself was beginning upon a similar journey in his later work. Her study of the way indigenous communities and other communities such as the Zapatistas try to live a life opposed to both capitalism and colonialism, made her see Freire's method as inadequate. She acknowledges Freire's critical pedagogy as presented in PO as political and emancipatory but she questions the extent to which it can adequately be seen as very useful to decoloniality because of its exclusive focus on class and its origin as a Western method. An adequate 'theory' of decoloniality seeks to oppose the imposition and the provincialisation of knowledge and method which characterises the West.

She does not categorically dismiss Freire, acknowledging the efforts Freire made to be self-critical. From her reading of PH, she suggests that if Freire was alive, he would be engaging with decolonial theorists. Looking at PH, she saw an evolving Freirean thinking open to both criticism and to oppression beyond class (I would question her reading of this, given my own reading as presented above). She also acknowledged the influence of Fanon's work on Freire's thinking, so that Freire could not be dismissed as simply Eurocentric in his influences.

4.4 Fanon and Freire: A theory of emancipatory politics

As I argued in Chapter One, I believe there are striking similarities between Fanon and Freire's thought. I am also convinced that their similar theoretical position is not a coincidence, but the result of, inter alia, similar theoretical influences. As I have discussed in this chapter, both theorists were influenced by the work of Gramsci and those he drew on (including, clearly, Hegel), from whom they derived an understanding that dialectics can be used as a process through which the oppressed can reasonably respond to the Manichaean world. This theoretical relationship between Fanon and Freire is not only based on the

common sources which inspired them, but, as I have shown, Freire specifically read Fanon's WE[5]. In PH, he relates how Spanish workers were inspired or stimulated by PO, as he had been by the work of, inter alia, Fanon:

> All of this stimulated them [Spanish workers], as I had been stimulated by reading Fanon and Memmi back in the days when I was putting the final touches on *Pedagogy*…Perhaps, in the process of their experience with *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – as they read of the educational practice to which I was holding – perhaps they felt the same emotion with which I was taken when I plunged into *The Wretched of the Earth* and *The Colonizer and the Colonized* – the satisfying sensation with which we are taken when we find a confirmation of the 'why' of the certitude we find within ourselves. (Freire, 1994/2014, pp. 131-132)

In my reading of Fanon and Freire, I would suggest the following similarities:

1. Both understand emancipation as an ontological process, since colonisation and oppression lead to dehumanisation.

2. Both writers see emancipation as the task of those who are oppressed. This rests on an absolute assumption of the ability of the oppressed to think.

3. Both understand oppression as a profoundly violent phenomenon; and that there is thus an inherent potential for violence in the process of emancipation as a response to this. In contrast to Freire, who is often equated with love, Fanon has been (mis)read as primarily a theorist of violence.

4. For both, the struggle to be more fully human can go horribly wrong, because, in their bid to become fully human, the oppressed/colonised (Black) may mistakenly believe that to do so means becoming the oppressor/coloniser (White). Emancipation is something vastly different – it is the emancipation of all through the end of oppression and a world of binaries.

[5] As I was finalising this thesis, I became aware of a piece written by Catherine Walsh, specifically considering Fanon's influence on Freire: Walsh, C. (2013a). Introducción. Lo pedagógico y lo decolonial: Entretejiendo caminos [Introduction. The pedagogical and the decolonial: Weaving paths]. In C. Walsh (Ed.), *Pedagogías decoloniales. Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir* (pp. 23–68). Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala. Unfortunately, there is no English translation of this, and I was thus unable to read it.

5. Both argue that there is a need for the oppressed/colonised (Black) to become aware of their oppression, their internalised image of the oppressor/coloniser (White). Self-consciousness is thus an essential step in the process of emancipation. Both identify the importance of dialogue in this process of consciousness; one in which a militant intellectual/teacher should participate. There is thus always a role for those who are not of the oppressed group in the process of emancipation – but both Fanon and Freire insist that emancipation is ultimately the task of the oppressed, and the role of the militant intellectual/teacher is thus carefully defined, since it can also go 'horribly wrong' (no matter how 'left' the militant intellectual/teacher is).

6. For both, emancipation is the creation of a completely new world shaped by a new humanity – it is a complete rupture of what is. Emancipation is also, always, universal – not individual. At the time of their deaths, neither believed that full emancipation had been achieved; but for both, being human is never a complete project but an unfinished and open process.

In the following sections, I specifically compare and contrast their understandings of emancipatory praxis, considering their conceptions of the process and outcomes of emancipation – in other words, what emancipation is, and how it happens. In this discussion, I relate their arguments to the literature I reviewed in the previous chapter.

4.4.1 The process of emancipation

Fanon and Freire understand emancipation as an ontological process, since colonisation and oppression lead to dehumanisation. For Fanon, emancipation is freedom from a racialised Manichaean colonial world, a world divided into compartments, two zones that are opposed to each other and defined by race (Fanon, 1963, p. 29, 30, 31). In the Manichaean world, black people are objectified by white people: "At times this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the natives, or to speak plainly it turns him [*sic*] into an animal" (p. 32). This is a world where "[T]he black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man" (Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 83). Fanon refuses to be regarded as less human because of the colour of his skin; but neither does he wish to be considered human because of the colour of his skin. He unapologetically declares: "All I wanted to be is to be a man among other men" (p. 85). His categorical rejection of being reduced to non-being is powerfully expressed when he declares: "No to degradation of man. No to exploitation of man. No to butchery of what is most human in man: freedom" (Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 173). Freire's belief

is that oppression not only takes away the humanity of the oppressed, but also of the oppressor. Both the oppressed, "whose humanity has been stolen" and the oppressor, "who have stolen it" are dehumanised (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 26). Whilst Fanon does not specifically say the White is dehumanised by racism, his analysis does suggest he believes that Whites are psychologically damaged by the process.

Both writers see emancipation as the task of those who are oppressed. Fanon is convinced that neither the coloniser, nor the people who are the benefactors of colonisation, like the native middle class or intellectuals, can play a pivotal role in emancipation because they are compromised by the system (Fanon, 1963, p. 89). He highlights two groups (peasants and *lumpen-proletariat*) that constitute the majority of the people who can drive the decolonisation process. He calls for collaboration between the leaders and the people, but stresses that the latter must play a pivotal role. The leaders who want to take part in this emancipatory process should learn from the people. Freire's conviction is that the oppressed understand better the pain of what it is like to be dehumanised (1970/1993, p. 29), because they are the ones who suffer oppression daily. Like Fanon, Freire also argues that leaders who want to take part in this emancipatory process should learn from the people.

Both draw on Hegel's argument about the need for mutual recognition as the basis of freedom. The oppressed must both demand and give this recognition. As Hegel says, someone may be recognised as a human being, but unless s/he has stakes her/his life, "he has not attained the truth of his recognition as an independent self-consciousness" (Hegel quoted in Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 170). This recognition of self as human rather than 'thing' is thus an essential step in the process of agency. Thus Fanon asserts that "the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself" (1963, p. 28) (i.e. when the native claims he is the equal of the settler" (p. 34)). Gramsci asserts the same thing:

> Because, basically, if yesterday the subaltern element was a thing, today it is no longer a thing but an historical person, a protagonist; if yesterday it was not responsible, because "resisting" a will external to itself, now it feels itself to be responsible because it is no longer resisting but an agent, necessarily active and taking the initiative. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 337)

Demanding recognition leads to the potential of violence; and the understanding of the inherent potential for violence in the struggle for emancipation is shared by Fanon and Freire. In recognition of the decolonisation process as a 'violent phenomenon', Fanon notes that the

natives do not have a choice but to return the violence of colonisation with violence. He states graphically that "'the native's back is to the wall, the knife is at his throat (or, more precisely, the electrode at his genitals)" (Fanon, 1963, p. 45). In other words, the natives use violence not because they love it or enjoy it, but because it is a rational response to the violence of colonialism, and because it is an assertion of humanity and a demand for this to be recognised. For this reason, "[T]he colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence" (p. 68).

However, according to Fanon, the colonised sometimes "lacking the will or the resources to engage in counter-violence with the enemy, instead of directing their anger at the oppressor, invariably turn the violence inward upon themselves" (More, 2017, pp. 8-90).

In this sense violence is redemptive because "the native's violence unifies the people" (p. 74). Fanon also insists that the full humanity of the other (the colonialist) be recognised before acting (Pithouse, 2003, p. 109). Freire, like Fanon, recognises that violence is a tool used by the oppressor to maintain dominance. He does not ever justify the use of violence, but a close reading of his writing suggests that he understands why Fanon stresses it as an emancipatory route. Freire highlights that the exploitation of the oppressed constitutes violence, because it interferes with a person's "ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 37). Therefore, violence is always initiated by the oppressor – it is not the oppressed who initiate hatred, but those who oppress. When the oppressed react to the violence of the oppressor, they are called wicked or barbaric. When the violence of the oppressor prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human, to demand the recognition of their humanity.

For both Fanon and Freire, this process of emancipation is risky. Drawing on Hegel's argument that "it is solely by risking life that freedom is attained" (Hegel quoted in Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 170), Fanon argues that "human reality in-itself-for-itself can be achieved only through conflict and the risk that conflict implies" (Ibid.). Freire argues that the struggle for freedom will not begin "as long as [the oppressed] feel incapable of running the risk it requires" (1970/1993, p. 29). Part of the risk is that the struggle to be more fully human can go horribly wrong, as both Fanon and Freire recognise. Fanon argues that, as the colonised realise the need to be free, they "will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in [their] bones against [their] own people" (p. 40), and will want to take the place

of the settler (p. 41). Freire, likewise, points out that during the initial stage of the struggle for liberation the oppressed aspire to be the oppressor, who is their only reference of what it means to be free.

Thus, for both these thinkers, the recognition of emancipation as something more than simply becoming the oppressor/coloniser is essential. As discussed, it requires a recognition of the humanity of the colonialist and the need for the struggle to be emancipatory for everyone's humanity. Yet this awareness is not always present. There may then be a need to become self-conscious of one's own humanity and oppression. Freire shares Fanon's concern that the oppressed may not even be aware that they are oppressed (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 28). Thus, they need to become aware of their oppression, their internalised image of the oppressor, and their fear in the face of predicament (p. 29). Fanon and Freire's thinking in relation to consciousness clearly resonates with Gramsci's understanding of 'common sense' and 'good sense'. As we have seen, Gramsci argues that common sense is "a wide range of pre- or non-critical beliefs and ideas operative in everyday life" (Thomas, 2015, p. 11), specifically manufactured by the ruling class. Fanon clearly reflects this understanding in his argument that in the capitalist colonising country, "a multitude of moral teachers, counsellors and 'bewilderers' separate the exploited from those in power" (1963, p. 29). Because of this hegemony, the subaltern a fatalistic and mechanistic view of the world. Thus, for Gramsci, and important step in emancipation is recognising the hegemonic nature of common sense, in order to create 'good sense'. Clearly, an important issue is how this happens.

Both Fanon and Freire see this as an educative process. Freire says it is necessary to 'conscientise' the people through education: "in the end everything depends on the education of the masses, on the raising of the level of thought, and on what we are too quick to call 'political teaching'… political education means opening their minds, awakening them, and allowing the birth of their intelligence" (p. 159). Through conscientisation, the oppressed will be able to critically look at their situation and understand the possibility of becoming more fully human. Freire is clear that all people of capable of this intellectual and imaginative work. Fanon is also insistent that this process must depart from a realisation that the people are reasonable, and should be treated with respect (Fanon, 1963, p. 146) – like Freire, he is critical of the leaders who assume the people know nothing and elaborates the problems of this process thus:

> We often believe with criminal superficiality that to educate the masses politically is to deliver a long political harangue from time to time. We think that it is enough that the leader or one of his lieutenants should speak in a pompous tone about the principal events of the day for them to have fulfilled this bounden duty to educate the masses politically… To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. (p. 159)

Fanon and Freire's thinking in relation to consciousness resonates with Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, which "must be a criticism of 'common sense' basing itself entirely, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that everyone 'everyone' is a philosopher" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 330). Gramsci is insistent that this requires "superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought" (Ibid.). Clearly, this is remarkably similar to Neocosmos' argument of excessive thought. For Neocosmos, emancipatory politics is a complete and radical ideological break with what is; "the politics of what may seem to be impossible" (p. 191), because it is beyond what exists, excessive rather than expressive:

> The idea that in addition to an analysis of the existing, of the world as it is, it is also possible, indeed imperative, to develop an understanding of an idea of excess over what exists, of understanding the thought of a different future in this existing present – of the 'what could be' in the 'what is'. (p. 191)

As we have seen, Neocosmos is insistent that people think:

> They are, in other words, capable of reason, of thinking beyond their social location and conditions, of thinking in excess beyond the simple given extant of the social division of labour and its corresponding social identities. (p. 27)

Thus Neocosmos does not seem to be suggesting the need for some kind of (external) educative process as Fanon and Freire (and Gramsci) do. However, Neocosmos does recognise that people do not necessarily think in emancipatory ways, although they all have the capacity to do so (Neocosmos, 2018).

The other element in Fanon's writing that is similar to Freire's is the importance of dialogue in the process of emancipation and the level at which this has to take place. This is a dialogue between parties involved in the emancipatory process – especially, in Fanon's mind, between the leaders and the people, or town and rural folk: "The men from the towns learn their lessons in the hard school of the people; and at the same time these men open classes for the

people in the military and political education" (1963, p. 101), and, "The political education of the people proposes not to treat the masses as children but to make adults of them" (p. 146). Freire, as we have seen, understands that dialogue is between people who can learn from each other, and is the most essential component of his pedagogy of the oppressed. Neocosmos' insistence on emancipatory politics as *collective* thought presupposes some kind of dialogue.

4.4.2 The outcome of emancipation

The understanding by Fanon and Freire of the ontological process of emancipation, in the face of the dehumanisation of oppression and colonisation, leads them to advocate for a completely new world; one shaped by a new humanity. Fanon understands emancipation as the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men (Fanon, 1963, p. 27). This requires a complete change of structures and the introduction of a new humanity (pp. 27, 28). Moreover, he states that "Total liberation is that which concerns all sectors of the personality" (p. 250). Faced with a world designed to promote dehumanisation through the oppressed-oppressor contradiction, Freire anticipates a world beyond the binary. Such a world will constitute, in his words, a "new person", "New beings", "New man" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 31, 36, 38).

Both writers believe emancipation relates to all – it is a universal, not an individual process. Fanon believed that universality is inherent in the human condition (Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 3), and rejects race as a defining canon of humanity. In fact, any form of limitation imposed in the form of race or class or ethnicity is ontologically harmful to what it means to be human. There is one humanity shared by all. Like Fanon, Freire advocates for the same universal humanism, but argues that it is "the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 26) not simply to liberate themselves, but to liberate those who oppressed them. As we have seen, Freire's humanisation is the people's vocation, and is a transition from an exploitative and dehumanising Manichaean state of the oppressed/oppressor. It is a process through which the dehumanising binary is superseded:

> The man or woman who emerges is a new person, viable only as the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is superseded by the humanization of all people…the solution of this contradiction is born in the labour which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor nor oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom. (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 31)

In achieving freedom, then, the oppressed achieve the freedom of all humanity, the humanisation of all. This echoes the humanist Marxist tradition Gramsci was drawing on, in the idea of a class (the proletariat) which acts on behalf of everyone in its struggle to end capitalist exploitation. It also resonates with Neocosmos' understanding of emancipatory politics: "Political emancipation can only be a universal project, not one restricted to certain strata, classes, races or groups, and thought and undertaken by leaders in power with or without popular support" (2016, p. 22). This is why Neocosmos reject identity politics, politics based on the representation of specific interests.

Fanon and Freire, however, see human beings as essentially unfinished. Fanon says: "I am endlessly creating myself…I am a part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it" (Fanon, 1952/1986, p. 179), asking us to see humanity as an unfinished project that keeps recreating itself. Similarly, Freire repeatedly speaks of human beings as always in the process of becoming.

Whilst both Fanon and Freire understood this unfinishedness in ontological terms, it was also an historical reality at the time they were writing. As discussed, at the time of writing WE, Fanon was deeply concerned about the failure of anti-colonial struggles. He believed that too often, the post-colonial state simply continued the work of the colonial state, with the national elite occupying the positions that had been occupied by the colonial bourgeoisie. This meant that the ontological transformation that characterises true emancipation had not happened, with serious consequences:

> He believed that the liberation struggle had not healed the injuries and trauma that were the true legacy of colonialism. . . . He warned against the descent of the urban unemployed masses into lumpen-violence. As soon as the struggle is over, he argued, they start a fight against non-national Africans. From nationalism they pass to tribalism, negrophobia and finally to racism. They are quick to insist that foreign Africans go home to their country. They burn their shops, wreck their street stall and spill their blood on the city's pavements and in the dark or dusty alleys of the shantytowns. (Mbembe, 2012, pp. 25-6)

Monga (1994) argues that protest in postcolonial Africa is driven by anger against ongoing oppression; clearly, this anger is not always expressed in emancipatory ways. This resonates with Mamdani's argument, as discussed in the previous chapter, that 'non-revolutionary' postcolonial violence was "animated mainly by distinctions crafted in colonial law" (2005, p.

2). As discussed, Mamdani argues that colonial processes of rule, including the creation of an urban bourgeois 'civil society' and the tribalised rural, have shaped the post-colony. Fanon clearly recognised this possibility, and indeed described how it begins to happen in the period leading up to independence:

> During the period of unrest that precedes independence, certain native elements, intellectuals and traders, who live the midst of that imported bourgeoisie, try to identify themselves with it. A permanent wish for identification with bourgeois representatives of the mother country is to be found among the native intellectuals and merchants. (1963, p. 143)

After independence, the African bourgeoisie simply move into the spaces occupied by the colonial bourgeoisie. Although new (civil society) structures and institutions may be created, these are in no way liberatory: "Too often, in fact, we are content to establish national organisations at the top and always in the capital: the Women's Union, and the Young People's Federation, Trade Unions, etc." (1963, p. 157). In his final chapter of WE, he thus urges African revolutionaries to replace existing (European inspired) states, institutions and societies with entirely new ones, in an attempt to create a 'new man'. Fanon problematised the political party in the struggle for liberation, particularly when this identified itself with the tribe (i.e. Mamdani's second part of the bifurcated state) – which, he argued (along with Mamdani), was used by the coloniser to create divisions. In this case, post-independence, "we no longer see the rise of a bourgeois dictatorship, but a tribal dictatorship" (Ibid.). Thus Fanon understood that 'civil society' and tribal society as constructed by the colonialists fostered an incomplete liberation. The lumpen-proletariat in the urban space, and the peasant in the rural – those he identified as potentially bringing about real change – are precisely those not part of the colonial construct of 'civil society'. As Gibson (2012) suggests:

> He was not particularly clear what form those new concepts would take, but in terms of his dialectic, their source would be those who did not count: those who were not recognized and who were outside the class system. (p. 51)

There is thus clearly synergy between Fanon's analysis of the colony and the post-colony and that of Mamdani. As discussed above, there has been some critique of Mamdani's position, by, for example, Myers (2008), who argues that Mamdani does not sufficiently recognise the role of hegemony in the colony. Fanon appears to support Mamdani's contention that the colony was primarily a space of force, in his argument that, in contrast to the colonising

country, where control is exercised through hegemony, the colony is controlled by "the policeman and the soldier" (1963, p. 29).

4.5 Conclusion

Within this chapter's main objective to present a close reading of key texts of Fanon and Freire, to compare and contrast their ideas, I argue that there are striking similarities in their ontological and epistemological understandings, and therefore, in their understanding of social change and emancipation. Through an analysis of the similarities, it is possible to draw out a theory of emancipatory politics drawn directly from the work of both Freire and Fanon, and how this relates to the literature presented in Chapter Three. In the next chapter, I present CLP's life history, before considering this in relation to my review of the literature and to Fanon and Freire.

Chapter Five: Data Presentation and Inductive Analysis – CLP's Life History

We do not believe in the common-sense knowledge of the world as it is – we believe in the crazy nonsense of the truth that is its rupture/disruption. (CLP, 2011, quoted in CLP, 2013b, p. 1)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the life history of CLP, as determined from my document analysis, interviews and focus groups, and from my own observations, and seeks to answer the first two research questions:

1. What is the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why did the organisation shift its practice?
2. Which theoretical influences contributed to the shift?

As discussed in Chapter Two, in case study as a narrative, there are narrative elements such as characters; where and when things happened (setting/context); what happened (themes), and; how the story is arranged (plot) (Rule & John, 2011). In constructing CLP's life history, I had to take these different elements into account.

The nature of narrative accounts is that they are about experience and the interpretation of this experience by a 'teller' of a story, who is therefore of primary importance. Each teller of a story selects which events or elements to highlight, in what order, and has his/her own interpretation of these events (including causality). The interpretation of events can also shift over time. In 'telling' this story, then, I weave together the different accounts gleaned from the interviews, focus groups and documents (and in the final period, also from my observation – my own story). It is also important to note that all organisations and relationships are dynamic. My study attempted to understand the life history of an organisation over a particular period of time (1994 to 2017) as it shifted and changed within a particular evolving context. What I report on here will almost certainly change in the future.

As Rule and John (2011) discuss, choosing how to arrange a narrative case study is important. Whilst most case studies are arranged chronologically, they can also be arranged thematically, or combine chronological and thematic arrangement. In this presentation of the case of CLP's life history, I have chosen to use this combination, using chronological order

as the primary arrangement, followed by the thematic. As Rule and John point out, choices need to be made regarding both:

> A chronological arrangement of a case study raises the issue of periodisation. Is it possible to identify periods within the case study? Are these periods determined by internal events [such as leadership changes] or external events [such as the evictions of shackdwellers or an introduction of a neoliberal policy], or a combination of both? Periodising the history of a case is an act of constructing meaning. It is a way of saying, "these years/months of the case belong together for these reasons", and this shapes the way that we make sense of the case as a whole. (2011, p. 123)

In looking at CLP's life story, and trying to make sense of it as a whole, I discerned five periods:

1. The formation of CLP: 1994–1997
2. The 'conventional' NGO: 1997–2001
3. The beginnings of change: 2001–2004
4. The shift: 2004–2007
5. The consolidation of the shift: 2008–2017

In my analysis, these periods were determined by both internal and external events. A key internal determinant was that CLP has, since its inception, operated on a three-year cycle. At the end of each cycle, the organisation undertakes an external and internal evaluation and reflection process, which feeds into planning for the following three years. As will become clear from my presentation, these moments create spaces for deep reflection and rethinking. However, as will also become clear, CLP is an innately reflective organisation, and is thus constantly thinking profoundly about its context and its relationship with it. External events are thus always also potential moments for deep reflection and rethinking. In keeping with the life history approach, I used critical event analysis as suggested by Webster and Mertova (2007). They propose that the researcher consider the following seven key characteristics as a guide in identifying a critical event: it occurred in a particular context; it impacted on the people involved; it had life changing consequences; it was unplanned; it reveals patterns of well-defined stages; it was only identified after the event; it was intensely personal with strong emotional involvement. In this study, this kind of analysis is complicated by the multiple stories threaded together: the contextual story of South Africa; the individual stories

of the organisation recounted by the people involved; and the integrated life story of CLP itself. Thus a 'critical event' might related to the whole or only a part (one individual story).

In my analysis, whilst there is a constant process of reflection and action, two events emerged as critical ones; an event related to the work of the organisation in its period as a 'conventional' NGO (which seems to have helped lead to the shift), and the xenophobic violence of 2008, which seems to have marked the beginning of another period.

Using this periodisation helps show how the organisation changed over time, the connection between internal and external events and the organisation's practice. It thus includes the elements of temporality, causality and interpretation which constitute part of the narrative approach. I am aware that in presenting this life history, I am taking on the role of storyteller. My own ordering, and periodisation, is in this sense positioned; however, I took measures to ensure that my ideological positioning did not result in biased or untrustworthy data collection or analysis. I used a timeline in the interviews and focus group discussions, which created an artefact against which the conversation could happen and the life history of the organisation could be chronologically constructed (See Annexure 5 for completed timelines). Whilst my periodisation is in a sense constructed, the actual ordering of events complies with the chronology presented in the timelines and documents. In the presentation of the data, I included everything recorded on the timelines – in other words, I have not selected specific events and excluded others. However, my role as researcher has required me to honestly analyse the data as presented by a variety of sources, and identify which events or influences to 'privilege' in dealing with the issue of causality (i.e. why it shifted its practice).

In my thematic arrangement, I was mindful of what Rule and John (2011) argue:

> A thematic structure entails identifying the main themes or issues within a case and using them to organise and present the case. Themes may arise from a variety of sources: the key research questions and purposes; the conceptual framework; the data themselves; or a combination of these. (p. 123)

My themes vary across the different periods, but are broadly framed by my research questions, but also by the research styles I used. I have thus included 'context' as a specific theme in all of the periods covered, drawing on my RQ1, as well as Rule and John's (2011) assertion that case study research must pay particular attention to the relationship between a case and its context. In this sense, the theme of 'context' within each period presents the

‘foreground’ (i.e. “present reality that informs people’s lives” (p. 42)). ‘Relationship with others’ also, inter alia, tracks the context-case relationship. Informed by both RQ1 and RQ2, themes related to the work of the organisation and the intellectual resources it was drawing on are included in almost all periods (the exception is the founding period). I also include the theme ‘conceptual understandings’ in the shift and post-shift periods, in order to track the particular ‘underground’ discourse created and used by CLP and the grassroots movements and formations it worked with, as per Rule and John’s (2011) four lenses for context-case analysis. (Other cross-cutting themes, inductively derived from the data collected, are presented in the next chapter.)

The organisation’s life history was constructed from the data sources shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Data sources used

Documents	**Articles in PACSA Newsletters:** *Church Land: A Challenge and Opportunity* (Philpott, 1995) *The Church: Landowner and Landless* (Bang, 1995) *Church Land: A Joint Initiative between AFRA and PACSA* (Philpott & Zondi, 1996) *Conflict and Church Land* (Zondi, 1996) **Evaluation reports:** 2001 Evaluation document (Hallowes, 2001) 2004 Evaluation document (Hallowes, 2004) 2007 Evaluation document (Hallowes, 2007) 2010 Evaluation document (Hallowes, 2010) **Funding reports:** Progress Report June 2013 (CLP, 2013a) Project Progress (Narrative Report) January–June 2016 (CLP, 2016a) Project Progress (Narrative Report) July–December 2016 (CLP, 2016b) Project Progress (Narrative Report) January–June 2017 (CLP, 2017a) Project Progress (Narrative Report) July–December 2017 (CLP, 2017b) **Occasional papers:** *From Hunger to Justice: Food Security and the Churches in Southern Africa* (Butler, 2005) *Land in South Africa: Gift for all or Commodity for a few* (Philpott & Butler, 2004) *Learning to Walk: NGO Practice and the Possibility of Freedom* (Butler et al., 2007) **Other:** *2008–2010 Planning Document* (CLP, 2007) *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010) *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b) *Padkos Digest,* volumes 1 and 2 (CLP, 2012; CLP, 2014b) *Centres and Peripheries* (CLP, 2014a) *PAP 2014* (CLP, 2014c)
CLP external evaluator	David Hallowes (David H., Interview 31/1/2017)

CLP staff/board members	Graham Philpott, Director (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017) David Ntseng, Programme Manager (David N., Interview 21/2/2017) Mark Butler, former board member, now a close associate (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017) Remaining staff (CLP focus group discussion 23/2/2017)
Abahlali baseMjondolo	Focus group discussion (AbM focus group discussion 01/03/2017)
Observations	Meetings between CLP staff and Rural Network and Nquthu Women's Group
CLP website	www.churchland.org.za This includes almost all of the *Padkos* email list postings. However, others were retrieved directly from emails.

As stated above, CLP works on a three-year cycle. Each cycle ends with an evaluation of CLP's activities over the last three years, followed by their planning of the next three years. The evaluation reports thus provide extremely useful data, and have been drawn on extensively. As can be seen, one person (David Hallowes) was responsible for undertaking the evaluations in 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010. Since the final period is rather one of consolidation than further profound change, I did not use evaluation reports after the 2010 one.

5.2 The formation of CLP: 1994–1997

The data used to construct this early part of CLP's life history is drawn primarily from five documents, four of which I obtained from the archives of the Alan Paton Struggle Archives at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These are four articles published in the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) newsletters and written in the 1995 and 1996, two of them by Graham Philpott. They discuss the processes through which CLP was founded. The fifth document is the CLP 2001 evaluation document. I have also drawn on what interviewees said about this early period.

The Church Land Project (as it was then called) was formed three years after apartheid was officially ended and the redistribution of land was on the top of the national agenda. This process of redistribution sought to contribute towards reconciliation and rebuilding of the shattered South African nation (Philpott, 1995). Since it was assumed that the Church possessed a lot of land, it was thought appropriate for it to contribute towards this initiative. As a result, in June 1994, a conference was held by PACSA to find ways in which the Church

could contribute towards land reform. The conference determined that the Church lacked "vision and clear strategic policies for the use of church land" (Philpott, 1995, p. 7). In September 1995 another meeting was called in response to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration's investigation into church-owned land (Philpott & Zondi, 1996). This meeting was meant to show that the Church was committed to finding a solution for reconciliation between landlord and tenant on church land: "Furthermore, the Church [needed] to deal with its own history of participating in the alienation of the land from the people" (Philpott & Zondi, 1996, p. 7). To support the initiative of the Church, PACSA organised another meeting in November 1995 to talk about the theological and ethical consideration of land use in relation to the current land reform process (Philpott & Zondi, 1996).

Drawing from the fact that the Church was perceived as one of the largest property owners, PACSA felt it was necessary to hold a subsequent two-day consultation workshop between clergy and tenants (Bang, 1995). This consultation was meant to build on the previous initiatives. The objective was to move from a conflictual 'land grab' witnessed during the apartheid era to a partnership and more reconciliatory land redistribution done in trust. An unfortunate aspect of this process was that, given that "women have borne much of the pain of forced removals and the like, there were very few women to share their experiences at the forum [the space being dominated by white males]" (Bang, 1995, p. 6).

As a result of all these meetings, consultations and workshops, it was decided that a joint initiative between PACSA and AFRA (a land rights NGO founded in 1979 (the same year as PACSA)), would help put a human face to the church land situation. AFRA was well known for its expertise on land issues, and PACSA specialised in church development and social justice issues. The initiative would focus "on appropriate strategies for land reform of the land owned by the Church within KwaZulu-Natal" (Philpott & Zondi, 1996, p. 11). Phumani Zondi and Graham Philpott from AFRA and PACSA respectively were to lead the project (Philpott & Zondi, 1996). This project was meant to respond to i) landlessness and poverty, ii) the uncertain position of the Church in dealing with the land question, and iii) the frustration of residents on church land. It would also help in setting up a "forum for strategic thinking and planning concerning church land" (Philpott & Zondi, 1996, p. 11). This joint initiative was important because it was meant to resolve the contradiction in which the Church found itself as both a beneficiary and a critic of others who benefited from the spoils of apartheid (Zondi, 1996).

Critical to the 1996 context was the conflict on church land, where communities on this land realised that they were nothing more than tenants, and began to question the Church, whose mandate was supposed to be "the voice of the voiceless" (Zondi, 1996, p. 7). The need for the Church to give land back to the communities was, according to Phumani Zondi, inevitable. In 1996, then, the joint initiative was formalised into a project called the Church Land Project, before being established as an independent organisation in 1997 (Hallowes, 2001).

In my interviews, only Mark specifically referred to the creation of the organisation as already an attempt to do something different:

> This organisation, even that original AFRA/PACSA project, the reason that we put time into creating it was already because we thought, man, there must be more interesting ways of working with these issues than what we are seeing around us. I mean that was why church land was picked as a focus area, was because we thought, maybe, maybe that'll be a space within which we can explore alternatives, work differently, and so on. So I think from the beginning it was always an organisation looking for a break from old traditions or ways… (Interview 6/2/2017)

5.3 The 'conventional' NGO: 1997-2001

At its inception as an independent NGO, CLP was a small organisation with only four staff members, of whom Phumani Zondi and Graham Philpott were senior staff, with Graham as coordinator. The other two staff members were David Ntseng and Zonke Sithole (Finance Manager, who is still with the organisation). The organisation had five board members: two representatives each from the CLP founding organisations, PACSA (one of which was Mark Butler) and AFRA, and a representative of an ecumenical NGO, the KwaZulu-Natal Council of Churches (KZNCC). Due to CLP's small size, considering its responsibility, the organisation hired specialised persons on contract to support it on the technical side, even if they did not share CLP's values and identity (Hallowes, 2001). The 2001 Evaluation Report notes that the co-ordinator was taking considerable strain, such that some internal duties were not completed on time. Despite Mark's analysis, David Hallowes (former evaluator of the organisation, including during this period) argues that during the period 1997-2001, "CLP were pretty much working within the fairly normal South African NGO paradigm" (Interview 31/1/2017).

5.3.1 Context

During this time, CLP was working in a context that was shaped by people who had been dispossessed of their land by both the colonial and apartheid regimes. The Church was also implicated because it, too, had benefited from this sad historical reality (Hallowes, 2001). While some churches had used this land for their economic gain and interest, some had used it for the good of communities. With the new constitution (of 1996) calling for human, social, economic and environmental rights, this was an opportune time for the Church to right the wrongs of the past by participating in the land restitution and redistribution process (Hallowes, 2001). The CLP was to play a mediatory role in this process.

5.3.2 Purpose, values and practice

Even in this early period, CLP was relatively unique, in that it was neither a religious nor a secular organisation, but worked between these two 'poles'. It worked with both church and secular organisations, but saw itself as an independent non-profit organisation with no affiliation to any ecumenical church organisation. Remaining small was part of its identity and helped it to avoid "administrative bureaucracy, enabling flexible and adaptive responses to contextual change, retaining commitment and being effective" (Hallowes, 2001, p. 22).

According to the 2001 evaluation report, CLP sought to improve the lives of people, but in their analysis, if the redistribution of land was to help with poverty alleviation and make people's lives better, then land rights needed to be linked with development. Its work on church land was not limited to seeking redistribution of land, but was also about making sure that the process was moral and just (Hallowes, 2001). Its work at this stage was underpinned by six fundamental values:

1. A commitment to social justice and participation;
2. Learning and reflection: understanding and learning from other parties;
3. Testing its approaches;
4. Professionalism, expertise and excellence;
5. Being people-centred, working with the broader meaning of land, concern for the people's voice, needs and the meanings that they attach to the land; and
6. Respect for others: respecting boundaries of responsibilities between itself and other stakeholders, and between church and community; supporting communities,

not acting on their behalf; respecting the autonomy of others (Hallowes, 2001, pp. 23-24).

CLP's practice in this period is evident in its four core strategies, which are clearly influenced by the fundamental values and its positioning of itself as independent:

1) The facilitation of dialogue, which helped in "building institutional relations and linkages at all levels" (Hallowes, 2001, p. 21);
2) Initiating debates through contextual theology; this was done by facilitating critical reflection in land forum groups on the relationship of the ministry of the Church and the land;
3) Undertaking research on church land, which demanded inventories and audits (some of this work was sub-contracted, inter alia, to affiliates of the National Land Committee (NLC).
4) Working with communities on church land, allowing them to organise and have the capacity to negotiate with other partners (Hallowes, 2001, pp. 21-22).

CLP saw it as their primary role to increase dialogue between the Church, government and the communities, with the objective of creating trust among these parties (Hallowes, 2001). Evidently, CLP was successful in its bid to portray itself as independent, and in its attempt to live up to its value of not acting on behalf of communities, as Hallowes reported in his evaluation:

> CLP has developed a strong relationship of trust with the **communities** it has worked with. They recognise CLP as autonomous of the interests of the church as land owner as well as of government and other stakeholders. They also regard them as impartial in circumstances of conflict or tension between different community groups. CLP's patience in working through the issues is particularly valued. In some cases where CLP has 'exited' from a particular situation, communities have requested that it return. Exit may be taken as a progress indicator where communities have developed sufficient resources to sustain development. The request to return would indicate that the exit came too early for the communities and this is corroborated by the sense within communities that developmental processes are incomplete. CLP, however, does not control its exit in the context of DLA [Department of Land Affairs] commissioned projects. At Maria Ratchitz, for example, the community committee now regrets that it preferred the bid of another consultant to carry out development

> facilitation. This case illustrates both the vulnerability of communities in their relationships with consultants and the value which CLP brings to that relationship. At the same time, consultants operate within the constraints of their contracts with the DLA unless they effectively subsidise the project. Individual agencies can make a difference but the problem lies within the overall framework of land reform. (pp. 25-26, emphasis in original)

What is also evident is that in the evaluation report, at least, very conventional NGO language was being used – the language of stakeholders, progress indicator, exit, development processes, development facilitation, consultants, and contracts. This could, of course, be ascribed to the author, David Hallowes, rather than the organisation itself. However, the fact that CLP never rejected any of his evaluation reports, and continued to use him as an evaluator over many years, suggests that they were comfortable with the language at this point. This argument is supported by what Graham himself said in his interview:

> Our first period had this notion, this phrase: We wanted to establish ourselves as a centre of expertise on church land in South Africa. And so it was very much, we would work with a limited number of communities, within KwaZulu-Natal, living on church-owned land, who wanted to get ownership of the land. But we would also do research work and policy work across the country. So we wanted to become known as the organisation dealing with church land, and we would be experts on it. (Interview 1/2/2017)

It is clear that by the end of this period, CLP were expressing concerns about the land reform process in the country. These concerns, however, appeared to be related to technical rather than political issues.

5.3.3 Relationships with others

In this period, in line with its facilitative role (as outlined), CLP worked with four main partners: the government, the Church, communities, and individual and ecumenical NGOs. It worked with the government primarily through the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), the branch of government that was responsible for land distribution, but not development. The DLA saw church land as the same as any other private land potentially available for redistribution. The facilitation of dialogue between the Church, the communities living on the land, and government that CLP saw as its duty was meant to shape an understanding of

development relevant to the land owned by the Church. The Church Land Programme helped to bring forward some elements of church land which the government took for granted (Hallowes, 2001, p. 11). For CLP, land had to be understood not simply as a commodity, but as identity – a 'storied space'. Inasmuch as land is a physical space, it is "also beyond the physical space where stories are lived, told, retold, and created where life and death is all together" (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017).

Apart from making government understand a different concept of land, the Church itself needed to realise that it had a duty to give some of its land for redistribution. CLP's responsibility was to make the Church understand broader issues around the land and how it could contribute to the issue of land justice:

> We worked with church denominations, with their structures, trying to identify the land they owned, and we had this package that we would talk about, the inventory of their land, and audit of specific properties, development policy. And that was tied to, round about 2000, the notion of Jubilee. We would talk to the churches about how important it was as we approached the Jubilee to be informed. So who we worked with was some specific communities living on church-owned land, a lot with church hierarchy, and church institutions, and a lot with other NGOs across the country. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

The specific communities with which CLP worked comprised people living on the church land or those who claimed the church land. Some people were happy living on church land and considered the Church their protector, while others were unhappy, and considered the Church an obstacle. CLP saw as its role to help the communities be aware of their rights with respect to land and also to make leaders aware of the interests of the communities (Hallowes, 2001).

Other organisations CLP worked with were the NLC and the South African Council of Churches (SACC), along with AFRA and PACSA. Although CLP had a good relationship with AFRA and PACSA, there were clashes with the NLC and SACC because of matters involving responsibilities and roles. The only interest which the NLC had in church land was "in the potential for the church land to be used in a way that contributes to thinking on the national land question and in the Church's participation in advocacy for land reform" (Hallowes, 2001, p. 15). It saw the intervention of CLP as of little significance. Like CLP, the NLC's engagement was on national policy, the technical level and the community level. The

NLC saw CLP's work as limited to a technicist approach, centred on inventories. It believed CLP to be subordinate to church structures, and thus not able to take independent radical positions (Hallowes, 2001). The SACC saw itself as having been involved in initiating CLP, through its relationship with PACSA and AFRA, and as the facilitator of CLP's access to Church leaders. As this point, SACC was arguing for a structural relationship between CLP and itself, a question with which CLP was grappling (Ibid.).

5.3.4 Intellectual resources

In this period, there appears to have been a strong theological influence on the organisation's thinking. During their interviews, both David N. and Graham highlighted as key documents those produced by the Justice and Peace Commission, in particular the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace document *Towards a Better Distribution of Land* (1997), which highlighted that the

> responsibility given to humans to 'subdue' and have 'dominion' over creation in the Genesis accounts are easily misunderstood. Rightly understood, they refer to the rule of a wise king concerned with the well-being of his subjects and are an injunction to 'care for creation so that it will serve them and remain at the disposal of all, not just a few'. (PCJP, 1998, as cited in Butler, 2005, p. 2)

The document provided an argument for CLP to use in its own understanding of land redistribution in the South African context:

> The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace put out a document on agrarian reform. And that for us in those early years was an important resource, where it provided, here's from a global perspective the Church position, drawing on the Catholic social teaching understanding of land reform in a broader context of agrarian reform. And a strong focus on family-sized farms and small-scale farms. Which was at odds in many ways with the whole land reform direction in South Africa. So it provided us theological language but shaped and formed by the Catholic Church's connection with movements in Brazil in particular, but other parts of the world as well. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

It is clear that from the start, CLP was drawing on liberation theology in its understanding of, and arguments about, land, including in its contextual bible studies with the church leaders to reflect on issues of land. Liberation theology is unapologetically informed by the everyday

experiences of the people. It draws on both Christian theology and Marxist socio-economic analysis, with particular concern for the poor and freedom of the oppressed (Cook, 1998). David N. identified a number of liberation theologians as having influenced his own thinking, as well as that of the organisation:

> Here I have this right from the beginning [indicating timeline], Pontifical vicar of Justice and Peace. Because, this one here also comes in, all of these guys, Boff, Leonardo Boff, they all come here, because it's all part of the theological foregrounding of the work of CLP, liberation theology. Especially because, at this point, we were working quite a lot with churches here. So there was a lot of theology being practised. My own early studies were mainly based on liberation theology, Leonardo Boff, Bonino, Gutierrez, the whole range of them, but, this is here, this is here from 1997 that way… (Interview 21/2/2017)

In addition, Graham mentioned Walter Brueggemann, a renowned Old Testament biblical scholar. Breuggemann's conviction is that, to a people, the land is not simply a meaningless piece of geographical landscape, but a place which is pregnant with historical meaning, a space where identity is grounded, vows have been made, it is a space where things of significance to people have happened (Brueggemann, 1977). He argues that deprivation of a place of belonging is a source of despair. There is an uncontrollable need in all of us for a space where there is true freedom and belonging without fear of being displaced. Inasmuch as the land is important as a place of material production, it is, more importantly, connected to identity. This line of argument is evident in what Graham had to say:

> The theologian Brueggemann, who is, in terms of land stuff, he's well known… And so, I think the book he had was titled something like *Land as Gift and Promise* [*The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge in Biblical Faith*]. And so it helped us to grapple with and understand land beyond just as an entity…Eish, there's another phrase that came up here [writes it on timeline]. We made this distinction between land as entity or land as identity. And all land reform programmes seemed to be dealing with land as an entity, as a parcel of land with commercial intent. Whereas learning from the theological stuff, and rooting it more in our struggle history, in the politics of our struggle, there was much more sense of land as identity. We talked about land as 'storied space', it's a physical space but also beyond physical, it's a

> space where stories are lived, are told, are retold, are created, where life and death is all together. (Interview 1/2/2017)

However, Graham was careful to distinguish between theology-as-written 'influencing' the organisation and theology as emerging from the context with which CLP was engaging:

> So is there a theological influence? Yes, it is, but that theology is influenced by actual struggles, and then emerging in something like the Justice and Peace document. And so it's a theology that has emerged out of that struggle that helps inform and broaden a sense of what land is about. (Interview 1/2/2017)

It is perhaps important to note that Graham, David N. and Mark had all studied contextual theology prior to the formation of CLP, and this positioned them in particular ways and probably influenced CLP.

Graham also mentioned an organisation called PLAAS (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies) based at the University of the Western Cape (founded in 1995), together with two writers connected to PLAAS, Stephen Greenberg and Ben Cousins, as an important resource. From my interview with Graham, and later from my personal research, I found out that PLAAS is well known for "undertaking high-quality research on land and agrarian reform, poverty, and natural resource management in South Africa and the Southern African region" (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies [PLAAS], n.d., 'About us'). The institute's webpage points out that, apart from research, the organisation also undertakes "training, provides advisory, facilitation and evaluation services and is active in the field of national policy development". In checking the bibliography of the works of Stephen Greenberg between 1997 and 2001, I discovered that he had written four publications: two on the plight of farm workers (1998 & 1999) and another two on sustainable or people-driven rural development (2000 & 2001). This is clearly consistent with CLP's concern that land reform be connected to development. Some of these publications are linked to the NLC. Ben Cousins had published about ten works within the same period. Almost all the works are associated with land reform, tenure reform and rural livelihoods.

5.4 The beginnings of change: 2001-2004

As the previous section has shown, during the 1997–2001 period, CLP operated as a relatively stable 'conventional' NGO in terms of its practice (although its thinking appears to

be have been, at least to some extent, in tension with this). The period following, discussed here, however, is one in which CLP began to tentatively question the land reform process and its role in it in a more obviously 'political' way.

5.4.1 Context and analysis

The 2004 evaluation document (Hallowes, 2004) discusses a number of contextual events that caused CLP to reflect critically on the context, and thus laid the foundation for change. The first was the founding of a social movement called the Landless People's Movement, which showed that people were not satisfied with the land redistribution process. The second and third events focused on how government was promoting legislation and development programmes that did not benefit the poor, but were in fact pro-capital. The fourth event was an organisational crisis. All of these prompted CLP to rethink and reflect on its practice.

The Landless People's Movement (LPM) emerged in 2001, formed by different representatives of local landless formations, consisting of both landless rural dwellers and urban people who lived in shacks (Bhambra & Sillian, 2009). This movement's presence intensified pressure and "renewed debate within the prophetic tradition on the necessity of strengthening the voices of church people affected by land issues" (Hallowes, 2004, p. 9). The LPM became an affiliate of *Via Campesina,* an international global grassroots farmers' organisation founded in 1993: it coordinates organisations of small and middle-scale producers, agricultural workers, rural movements and indigenous communities (Borras, 2008). During the interviews (31/1/2017), it was only David H. who mentioned the LPM as an important land movement in 2001. Graham (Interview 1/2/2017) suggested *Via Campesina* as one of the organisations which CLP used as a resource, but did not mention its connection to LPM. It is possible that at the time David H. conducted the 2004 evaluation, and wrote his report, CLP did consider the emergence of LPM as an important contextual event, and this is what he recalled in his interview. The LPM has since become a fairly contentious organisation, and perhaps the story has been 'rewritten' by the others I interviewed in the light of later events (which as we have seen is a characteristic of storytelling).

The second event to which the 2004 evaluation report refers is the introduction by the ANC government of two pieces of draft legislation on land reform. The first was the *Communal Land Rights Bill* (CLRB) (2002), which allowed for the 'privatisation' of the previous homelands, giving almost total control to 'traditional leaders'. This legislation was criticised

by some civil society organisations because it called for the redistribution of land already occupied by black people. The second piece of draft legislation was called the *Land Redistribution and Development Bill* (LRAD), which concerned the redistribution of commercial land and promoted the market as a mechanism for redistribution. According to Eddie Makue (as cited in the 2004 evaluation document) the LRAD seemed to have received less opposition from the Church than the CLRB, highlighting the willingness of some branches of the Church to work with the elitist government programmes (Hallowes, 2004). These two pieces of legislation raised "questions concerning the continuing marginalisation of black-occupied areas *within* the broader economy, the extent that they continue to act as a labour reserve and as the last refuge for those made 'surplus' to the market" (Hallowes, 2004, p. 6). CLP recognised that the government's restitution process had failed to create sustainable livelihoods on the land (Philpott & Butler, 2004, p. 16).

The third event was the increasing protest action against the government, one of the most notable being the 2002 protest against the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The protests were not necessarily signs that there was a growing distance between the state and 'civil society', but signified a divide in civil society's allegiance to the government (Death, 2010). Some NGOs were aligned to the capitalist-oriented ideas of the government, while others took a more radical position, which prioritised the poor over capital. The ecumenical NGOs such as SACC were also divided between these positions. Makue (as cited in Hallowes, 2004, p. 7) highlighted that there was a shift in the Church's engagement with the state, from critically engaging to merely partnering with the government. This event marks the capturing of some civil society and church organisations by the government. The third and second events are clearly not mutually exclusive.

The fourth event the 2004 evaluation document discusses is related to the organisational crisis CLP experienced with the departure of a key and senior staff member, Phumani Zondi. His departure left a gap in the organisation and it "consumed much of the organisation's energy and time during the first year [of the period under review] but it also forced CLP to confront some important organisational issues, particularly concerning the location of authority" (Hallowes, 2004, p. 16). During his interview (1/2/2017), Graham pointed out that although this was an unfortunate event, it was also an opportunity to see things differently and reconsider the organisation's practice. This is further affirmed by the evaluation report:

> There is now a strong sense that the organisation has come through a crisis with greater strength. Phumani's ability to see and work with the political at local level has been particularly missed. There is, however, also a sense that his departure has opened the space for new possibilities. The programme period that started in crisis has thus ended with a sense of positive energy and creativity in which CLP has initiated important new interventions. (Hallowes, 2004, p. 16)

Graham argued that it was within this context that CLP had to make a choice: whether to negotiate with government for land delivery within the confines of the current policy, or to build a critical voice. David H. pointed out that "they started getting increasingly critical of their land programme, because…the government land reform programme…was a mess as far as I understand it, and it remains a mess" (Interview 31/1/2017). David N. added that the land reform process was also "incredibly slow" (Interview 21/2/2017) and CLP became increasingly aware that the people's views and contributions were not valued, for they were treated

> more of [like] beggars in a way, if I am putting it crudely…they are never people, they are something else, depending on the eyes of the one interacting with them at the time. They are poor, landless and lots of names…And we really had to ask ourselves these questions that, what is it that we are not doing, that allows this to happen? And what all that we are really doing to be accomplices in this process of not getting land back in the hands of black people. (David N., Interview 21/2/2017)

This concern was echoed by Mark (a CLP board member at this time), who said that CLP became uneasy that the process of land redistribution was not done "in ways [in] which people see their dignity in struggle" (Interview 6/2/2017).

5.4.2 Purpose, values and practice

The process of re-evaluating their purpose and practice had thus begun, although it was only at the end of the period, in its strategic reflection in 2004 that the fundamental adjustment occurred. As has been seen during this period, CLP started to build a critical voice, challenging the government and the Church on land issues. In 2004, they published their first occasional paper, *Land in South Africa: Gift for All or Commodity for a Few* (Philpott & Butler, 2004), which drew on some of the theological resources discussed in relation to the previous period, but was now overtly critical of the government's land reform policy and

programme. The paper was well received as a valuable resource for church leaders and activists. CLP also began to engage with very different organisations and movements, using these as intellectual resources in their re-evaluation process.

5.4.3 Intellectual resources

From the interviews I conducted, it is evident that around 2003–2004 there was a shift in the intellectual resources that CLP was consulting and/or drawing on. We have already witnessed that in the 'conventional' period (1997–2001), CLP used literature from PLAAS, the Justice and Peace Commission, Brueggemann, among others. Some of those readings highlighted that land is not only a geographical place, but signifies people's identity. The resources CLP began to draw on in this second period were diametrically different from those of 1997–2001 in that they started looking at other countries where there had been land redistribution and specifically focused on how communities and grassroots organisations struggled for land and sustained their livelihoods on the land. It is important to note that the resources which CLP began referencing after about 2002 were based mostly on social movements led and run by communities (grassroots organisations). Almost all of these were agrarian based and were seen to be working independently of their respective government land programmes. They were to become a key resource in the period of change (2004–2007).

5.5 The shift: 2004–2007

The previous section was an explanation of how and why CLP began to question the land reform process and its role in it as a conventional NGO. According to its website,

> The 2004 strategic planning process opened a new direction for CLP, giving focused attention to practice and reflection on practice. This has had a profound effect on the manner in which CLP approaches its work, leading to an open-ended commitment to "walking with communities towards the realisation of the choices that they make". (CLP website)

Thus, after 2004, CLP underwent a profound change from conventional NGO to one that chose to work outside of the prevailing order. By 2007 the process of changing their practice was at an advanced stage. The 2007 evaluation report, reflecting back on the previous three years, comments:

> CLP has opened itself to the politics of the poor and its practice is guided by an active solidarity with people in the struggles that they define and take forward on their own terms. It is from the space of people's struggles that CLP is now interrogating its relationships with other stakeholders. (Hallowes, 2007, p. 3)

Subsequent to the adoption of this new approach in 2007 (which it calls *animation*), the organisation appears to have gone through a process of refinement and consolidation, rather than one of any fundamental shift; although, as I will discuss, I have identified one further period in CLP's life history, prompted, I maintain, by a 'critical event' in 2008 – the xenophobic violence which swept the country.

5.5.1 Context and analysis

The 2001–2004 period that saw a growing uneasiness within CLP concerning the land reform process was because of proposed (neoliberal) legislation and increasing grassroots protest and resistance in the face of this. In 2004, the government introduced the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative (ASGISA), which consolidated the neoliberal capitalist policies introduced in GEAR in 1996. In CLP's analysis, these sets of policies gave birth to a 'developmental state', one that uses welfare to stop the poor from challenging the capitalist project in which the majority do not benefit (Hallowes, 2007). During the same year, the SACC led churches into partnering with the government, with a memorandum of understanding being signed by the Church with both the national government and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). According to CLP, this partnership was not mutually reciprocal, but, instead, it made the Church follow the government's lead. In CLP's analysis, the Church, in such a situation, would fail to live up to its mandate of being in *critical* solidarity with the government. In short, the Church accepted co-option into the state project. It is important to note that some member churches refused to be co-opted, including individual church leaders such as Bishop Rubin Phillip[6] of the Anglican Church (Hallowes, 2007).

At the same time, general protest against the ANC government and its policies grew, including in the form of the 'second wave' of social movements (discussed in Chapter Three), such as *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, the shack dweller movement formed in 2005.

[6] Bishop Rubin is an Anglican Bishop who has dedicated his life to work with the poor. He was awarded the Bremen International Peace Award in 2009 for his work in the struggle against apartheid, and his ongoing solidarity with displaced people, victims of persecutions and detainees. He has worked closely with *Abahlali baseMjondolo* over many years, and is a comrade of CLP.

However, in addition to these broader events, in his interview, Graham also recounted an event that he experienced, which he believed required the organisation to reflect very deeply on what it was doing:

> What prompted the need for a change was when we realised that what we were doing was problematic, that what we were doing was going against the very things that were intended and was actually causing problems. So during this phase of research on land and facilitating transfer of land and everything, there was one stage where we actually just did the figures and we worked out, how many hectares of land, church-owned land, were we able to ensure were transferred in ownership, to how many black households; and how many millions of Rands of grant money were we able to secure from government departments to support that process and developments around it. And it was a very successful process. There was lots of land, to lots of black households, and lots of money made available. So in terms of indicators, it was there, we were successful. But in the process of doing it, we became aware of dynamics that were happening that actually horrified us. So one phrase I put here somewhere [indicating timeline] is, these are my words, *if we succeed, it will be my worst nightmare.* Because what was taking place was [pause] A couple of real examples: There was one meeting that we facilitated between a church, Land Affairs and a community, and the land was to be transferred. And we sat through, it went on for a long period of time, and I remember one meeting that was a number of hours getting towards the end of the culmination of this process. And it was a successful meeting, we get agreement from the leadership from the church, community and DLA/government. After the meeting was finished, we start walking back to our cars, from the church hall. And some women, from that place, talk with us as we are walking, saying can we just have a bit of discussion. So we said, "sure, what's the question, what do you want to know". And their message to us was, please, can you make sure that this transfer of land does not take place. Our whole intention is to transfer land from the institutional church to black households, and now you, as women from this place, are saying to us, please don't transfer it. That's why we're here, that's our whole intention. Why should we not transfer the land? And their comment was, "if you transfer the land, our families are going to suffer. Because when you transfer the land, the powerful men from our community will take control of that land and use it for their cattle. And we as women are using that land to grow food for our families, and whilst it's owned by the Church,

> they've allowed us to use that and we grow food for our families, and that is how we support our families. If you transfer ownership to the community, the powerful individuals – men – will take ownership and control, and we will lose access to the land, and we will not be able to support our families". And that was, for us, our worst nightmare. Our intention was, land is transferred to a black community. And in doing that, we were masking the power dynamics within the community, because we assumed there was this thing called community, and it was a myth. There were divisions and powers within it… In other places where we were working, we realised that as land was transferred, what was taking place, was the educated and often businessmen from the area – so there'd be retired principals, retired teachers, retired nurses, and businessmen – they would gain control of the land that had been transferred. And the poorer households, particularly women-headed households who were uneducated, could not speak English, were the ones who were left more vulnerable than when they lived under the Church's ownership. And that became our worst nightmare. How is it that land reform, transfer of the ownership, the legal entity is taking place, and yet the lives of those that we were concerned with are worse. And it's particularly black women, uneducated, who are dependent on the land, who are now being denied access. And for us that became [a] very important point, [it] was the need for us to shift in our practice. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

Graham was the only person I interviewed who recounted this story, one which clearly had a powerful impact on him. At this point, he was the director of the organisation, and it seems possible that this personal experience during the practice of the organisation at that time constituted a critical event, in Webster and Mertova's (2007) understanding, outlined in the introduction to this chapter. As discussed above, they propose that the researcher consider the following characteristics in identifying a critical event: It occurred in a particular context; it impacted on the people involved; it has life changing consequences; it was unplanned; it reveals patterns of well-defined stages; it was only identified after the event; it was intensely personal with strong emotional involvement. The event recounted by Graham seems to meet almost all of these criteria.

Interestingly, when I asked Mark whether he could recall any specific event/s that caused the organisation to rethink its practice, he responded thus:

> I think there are two things to say. And the first one is the sort of disappointing answer to that question, which is that there doesn't have to be, in a sense that, I think one of the reasons why CLP is uniquely cool, is because they are just relentlessly reflective. So for them, an event that is big, would, I think, from my experience, a lot of other organisations wouldn't count as an event at all. But CLP takes very seriously that, whatever, some *gogo* said she felt uncomfortable in a meeting, and that matters, people will sit and think about that – what's going there, what does she want to say. They reflect on their practice all the time… I think what I'm trying to say is that, because of how they work, because they are reflective and because they take people seriously, their work is eventful all the time. It's not like there was one big thing, where this thing happened and it forced a rethink. It's that they work intelligently all the time. So they're going out every day and they come and say, but we need to take this seriously, and so on. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

Here, Mark is in a sense denying the idea of a single 'critical event' which caused a shift; but also acknowledging the possibility that what might be considered trivial, or even unacknowledged, by others can lead to radical rethinking within the organisation – including "some *gogo* said she felt uncomfortable in a meeting" (which seems to be indirectly pointing to the event Graham was recounting).

5.5.2 Purpose, values and practice

By the time of the 2007 evaluation, CLP's understanding of its purpose and role had clearly shifted to certain degree. Whilst the organisation had always spoken about a commitment to social justice and participation, being people-centred, having a concern for people's voice, supporting communities, not acting on their behalf (i.e. the fundamental values underpinning their work as discussed above) (Hallowes, 2001), it was no longer talking about its role as a mediator facilitating dialogue between different stakeholders, or as an expert. The evaluation report says: "CLP aims to support movement building" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 6), and that its practice is "aimed at supporting people's action for change" (p. 7). This suggests a greater commitment to taking sides. However, the real shift was in terms of its practice. *Learning to Walk*, the occasional paper which prompted this study, discusses how CLP came to reflect on its practice, and attempt to change it:

> Our analysis and reflection always seemed to come back to the challenge of our own praxis. With regard to this, two things were becoming clear.

> Firstly, we could not "know" any answers except by taking very seriously the fact that our prevalent NGO practice either silences ordinary people or carefully rehearses with them what they could/should say, so that what is heard – even when it is done in the name of "giving voice to the poor" – is actually the echo of our own voice!
>
> Secondly, if CLP was going to be a productive part of a broader process that actually had (and built) the possibility for transformation, freedom and humanity, then our practice as an organisation needed to nurture and learn from the difficult task of building *actual* movements of *actual* 'poors', taking *self*-conscious, *self*-defined and *self*-initiated actions. Given the power imbalances between the resourced NGOs and the weak, emerging movements of the marginalised, we recognise that these were clearly going to be difficult and subtle tensions to work with – but it seemed to us they were necessary tensions to confront, and a worthwhile possibility to hope for. (Butler et al., 2007, p. 8 emphasis in original)

By this point, CLP defined its five strategies as: animation; dialogue; reflection and learning; maintaining an information resource on church and land; communication and advocacy. Whilst some of these seem similar to the strategies of the previous period (e.g. dialogue, reflection, and, to some extent, being an information resource), there is clearly something very new in the strategy of animation – a strategy which reshaped the 'older' strategies.

In 2004, CLP ran a workshop to introduce its staff to the concept of animation. Animation is an approach which seeks to support people's action for change. It is a method in which an organisation, such as CLP, works in solidarity with existing struggles, rather than leading them, in which the animators understand people as thinking beings, capable of deciding their own destiny and realising their potential through social groups (Lewis, 1973). Staff confessed their uncertainty with the process due to its openness, because it would make them step into the unknown (Hallowes, 2007). Despite this uncertainty, the organisation took the step, identifying animation as its core practice, and explaining what it means by it:

> [Animation] involves an iterative process that applies the learning and action cycle in people's specific situations and with the intention that they mobilise themselves to act to change that situation in ways that they decide. CLP has a clear and firm organisational commitment to this core practice. Consequent to this, people's movements, organised groups of the marginalised, and those acting in solidarity from

> within institutional spaces are the key groups with whom CLP interacts. (Church Land Programme, n.d., 'Reflecting on our practice')

If it was to adopt animation as its working ethos, CLP had to give up some of its previous roles and positions. The first change was that "research on land inventories has been transformed by shifting the social context of production – from a tool of advocacy directed at the Church to a product and instrument of people's struggle" (Director's note, 2006, as cited in Hallowes, 2007, p. 9). A second idea they had to give up was their perception of seeing themselves as 'the centre of excellence'. A third element that they needed to change was the role of being a mediator and choosing instead to be in solidarity with the poor (Hallowes, 2007, p. 10). Using the common phrase related to liberation theology, CLP's declaration signalled a "preferential option for the poor", working with actual movements of the poor, as Hallowes explains the transition here:

> Animation replaced what was previously described as 'working with communities' so as to express CLP's approach to a practice aimed at supporting people's action for change. It represented an act of recovery in two senses. First, CLP felt that the politics that informed its analysis had been lost in its practice of engagement at local level. Thus rural 'voice', democracy and mobilisation were integral to CLP's avowed project but not evident as outcomes of its work. Second, it consciously referred to approaches developed in the struggle against apartheid, referencing *Training for Transformation* in particular, and tied to the broader political project of people's power. It has also drawn on the wider international experience, particularly the engagement of church-based organisations in facilitating the emergence of the Movimento Sem Terra (MST) in Brazil. (Hallowes, 2007, p. 7)

David H., in his interview, pointed out that CLP, from its inception, had always been a learning and reflective organisation, an organisation that listens, reflects, is open to learning and dialoguing (Interview 31/1/2017). All these elements which defined its identity were now viewed through the lens of animation. Reflection and learning through animation were rigorously used to reassess CLP's practice. This enabled the organisation "to enter the space of reflection without defensiveness and to be open about their own vulnerabilities and uncertainties" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 7). Animation forced CLP to be disciplined when listening to the communities and to inculcate deep seriousness when learning from people. As Graham said in his interview,

> The regular NGO, you put your energy into your own stuff; for us as CLP, animation [means you] work alongside and put [your] energy, with politics of dignity... into the emancipatory practice. Thus the place. We have to be looking and learning very carefully about the nature of the practice in that place. (Interview 1/2/2017)

Animation, as CLP's core identity, sought to redefine how the organisation worked with communities and other partners. It critically sought to engage with communities, fearlessly exposing their divisions and conflicts. This is only possible through listening to those voices which are not usually considered important. This listening process or strategy exposed structural rottenness, which is accountable for the reproduction of societal inequality, and "It also releases people from the construct of community made to fit with development and so opens the potential for conflict with the agents of development, previously including CLP itself" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 8). Graham highlighted that this way of working did not mean that everything the poor or communities said was right, because some issues needed to be made open to debate (Interview 1/2/2017). What is considered more important is that the poor have a say and have a decisive will to shape their destiny on their own terms, without the prescription of the "experts". In this sense, dialogue (CLP's second strategy in this period but reshaped by animation compared to earlier periods) may take the form of direct debate with people at local level, where CLP also expresses its own view on issues raised, as Hallowes explains:

> Dialogue thus works in recognition that all actors are fallible, including the poor and CLP itself. They are located by specific interests, although their actions are not necessarily reduced to expressing those interests, and they must act on partial information – that is, information that is always incomplete and constructed in relation to the interests governing its production. For the poor, access to information is particularly restricted and sourcing information is a critical aspect of dialogue, but it is dialogic in so far as it is located in process and rendered contestable. (Hallowes, 2007, p. 9)

In terms of its strategy of reflection and learning, CLP had always been reflective, but the adoption of animation necessitated that reflection become irreplaceable and vital: "In 2004, reflection was seen as 'the integrating principle of CLP's strategies'" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 10). Reflection is necessary not only for programme strategies, but also for internal administration, to support a 'family spirit'. Through the process of animation, reflection

cannot be fully understood without practice – the two are intimately connected. As already discussed, CLP had already created specific spaces for itself to reflect, through its three-yearly evaluation/strategic planning processes, but this was now built into its every day practice through the process of accompaniment.

Accompaniment is a process of critically reflecting on their practice in the field, where a CLP staff member, or close associate, accompanies another staff member as an observer who watches closely whatever is happening. After the event, they reflect on whether the process was done in a way that allowed the people to express themselves. The 2007 Occasional Paper considers four events in which an accompaniment was done, and presents the results after reflection on what happened in the field (Butler et al., 2007, pp. 13-23). What makes accompaniment important is that it is a way of monitoring whether CLP is realising their radical intention in the way they work with communities.

CLP also tried to create spaces for critical reflection with local activists, whilst realising that sometimes communities are so located in crisis, such that they need immediate action. CLP also attended the spaces of reflection of others, for example, the night-long camps held by *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, based on their belief that the poor are the producers of knowledge. It is through these reflections and participation that CLP learned from these groups. Animation challenged CLP to listen to these groups and learn from their practice.

If animation is about listening and learning, it also supports an open debate. This position problematises the place of advocacy. Although CLP questions some positions taken to stimulate further reflection on an issue, it can neither decide for the people, nor impose its position on them. CLP's 'voice' can better be heard through the way it listens and questions for clarity. At this time, for instance, CLP declined to "engage in the Land Summit organised by the Department of Land Affairs, but supported local groups who chose to do so to assist that they speak for themselves" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 12). Hallowes (2007) explains this approach:

> CLP does in fact engage across a number of sites but is insistent in interrogating the connection to real sites of struggle: "Our choice is to be formed by people's struggles and to bring that back into those sites." CLP does also talk directly to the media but prefers to facilitate direct access for people to speak for themselves. Local respondents confirmed that "if CLP is given 10 minutes, they speak for three and ask a

> representative of the community to take seven, something that is rare for most NGOs these days". (p. 12)

From 2004, CLP tried to strengthen their communication channels by making their information available on their website and producing resources that communities can use to help them understand the circumstances around them. This was against the background that the elite normally hide information from the people so that they can use the lack of knowledge as a reason to suppress them. CLP began distributing pamphlets in both English and isiZulu, since the communities and movements with which CLP work are in KwaZulu-Natal. Contextual bible study materials were also produced. As discussed earlier, CLP produced two significant occasional papers in this period. The first, *Land in South Africa: Gift for All or Commodity for a Few?* (Philpott & Butler, 2004), was published in 2004; the second, *From Hunger to Justice: Food Security and the Churches in Southern Africa* (Butler, 2005), was published in 2005. As already discussed, one of the most important documents in which CLP declared its decision to change its practice and explained how and why it did this, is the occasional paper published in August 2007, *Learning to Walk – NGO Practice and the Possibility of Freedom* (Butler et al., 2007). As the first CLP document that I read, it influenced my decision to focus this study on the life history of CLP. In the paper, the writers give a brief story of its

> practice-in-transition over the last few years… a recollection of important moments and insights on our journey to change who we are and what we do. Actually, there probably isn't a 'beginning' to that journey that we could nail down – and certainly there's no end in sight! In the process of confronting our practice we have uncovered very old questions and insights, as well as current and urgent ones. But a strategic planning event in 2004 was probably a seminal moment. (Butler et al., 2007, pp. 1-2)

5.5.3 Relationships with others

As is evident from the preceding discussion, CLP's shift led to a change in its relationships, resulting in working more closely with grassroots structures and movements of the poor. During the initial stages of the shift, CLP had begun turning to grassroots movements in other parts of the world and now began to engage with similar movements that had only just started to emerge within the South African context.

According to the 2007 evaluation report, in the 2004–2007 period CLP started working directly with communities, not on behalf of them, as they had done before. The communities' choices were of paramount importance and more central to CLP's practice than the objectives of 'stakeholders' such as the Church, NGOs and the government. During this period, CLP started working closely with three grassroots structures: *Abahlali baseMjondolo* (AbM), Ladysmith Watersmeet Widow's Organisation (LAWAWO), and the Rural Network (RN). *Abahlali* emerged in 2006 as a movement of shack dwellers and by the time CLP made contact with them, almost 36 settlements in the Greater Durban area were part of the movement. The movement insisted on speaking for itself, and practised open democracy, which allowed all its members to have a say during their regular meetings (Hallowes, 2007, p. 6). Ladysmith Watersmeet Widow's Organisation was constituted of women, mostly widowed, who faced eviction from either their land or houses by family of their late husbands. This network of women was working around the KZN Ladysmith area. The livelihood project that they had established was meant to assert their independence as women (Hallowes, 2007, p. 6). The RN group were organised community members struggling against the violation of their rights, including illegal evictions, assault and murder, and the systemic bias of the criminal justice system against the poor (Hallowes, 2007, p. 6). CLP also continued to work with people living on church land. Interestingly, nothing is mentioned in any of the interviews or in the staff focus group discussions about the women's group, LAWAWO, possibly because it subsequently collapsed due to misappropriation of funds by elected office bearers (Butler et al., 2010). In contrast, almost everyone highlighted that CLP had started working with *Abahlali* in 2006, the year it emerged. Some, like David H. (Interview 31/1/2017), noted that CLP also worked with RN. Pertaining to *Abahlali,* David H. highlighted that

> between here and there [2006] I think they [CLP] came across *Abahlali*. And I think that was a major revelation for them in terms of the potentiality of a politics of the poor. So they were already talking about a politics of the poor here, and then I think the engagement with *Abahlali* galvanised that. (Interview 31/1/2017)

Graham felt that their connection with *Abahlali* helped CLP during their shift, stating that "the shift to connect with *Abahlali* was out of recognition that in fact what we were doing was problematic. So we needed to find other groups that we could learn from" (Interview 1/2/2017).

However, CLP did not stop working with other organisations or institutions such as the churches and NGOs, but the working relationships were regulated by the beliefs embodied in their principles of animation. The CLP staff focus group specifically pointed out Anglican Bishop Rubin Phillip as one of the few prominent clergymen with whom CLP continued to work closely and who appreciated its new way of doing things. Bishop Rubin asserted that CLP was the only organisation that he knew of which held the commitment to the poor from a faith base. According to the 2010 evaluation report, due to the way CLP worked, it had gained credibility with church leaders (Hallowes, 2010). Even the way CLP related to funders was affected by animation because, in this approach

> the organisation loses control of most of the elements of project management. Walking with people means that CLP must accommodate itself to their rhythms and initiatives rather than fitting people to project imperatives and the commonly used indicators of time frames and quantity are then inappropriate. It abandons the certainty of numbers by which performance and impact are given the appearance, if not necessarily the substance, of verifiable achievement. (Hallowes, 2007, p. 26)

Despite the potential risk in terms of funding brought about by its shift, CLP was evidently able to secure sufficient funding to allow it to continue to operate, suggesting good relationships with funders.

5.5.4 Intellectual resources

A key theorist associated with CLP during this time was Paulo Freire. This was attested to in the CLP focus group, all the interviews, and in the 2007 evaluation document (as well as the 2007 *Learning to Walk*). In many cases, Freire was directly related to the concept of animation, and hence, CLP's shift in its praxis, David N. illustrates here:

> If you look at the chart, I have 2004, theorist being Paulo Freire, and one of the concepts coming out of Paulo Freire's work is that of animation. Amongst many things he says and he talks about, he advocates, animation stands out as one of the key concepts, practice, that had a major impact in CLP…. His book, his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. That is the book we used because it summed, in a way, for us … our context – to have a function as an organisation, we work amongst disadvantaged communities, and the assumptions that we make about disadvantaged communities are such that, when one engaged Paulo Freire, there was a need to rethink and review

> those assumptions. And begin to see them as the authors of their own books, authors of their own lives, as it were, and drafters of their own future. Because, you know, otherwise, traditionally as NGO activists we were not different from teachers who are coming with banking education as it were. Then having to move from the context to where people are and together in a disciplined way, learn from them; and whatever we have to contribute, it strengthens what they have to then get to a stage where they want to be. So through that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, that's where one understood, to some extent, what is an activist and what should the activist be and we adopted at the time from him, and from the Latin American context, things that he was describing. He felt, well to say, from now on we would be animators. And therefore CLP's core process is animation. If one asks, what does CLP do? We do animation, because you become, we provoke the energies that people have, we provoke the inner power that people have so that they can use it to their own benefit, than us saying what they should and shouldn't do. (David N., Interview 21/2/2017)

David N. said that the organisation also drew on a book called *We Make the Road by Walking* (a 'dialogue' book between Freire and Myles Horton) (Mark also referred to this book). David N. also identified liberation theology, mentioning theorists like Jose Bonino and Leonardo Boff, although he did not talk of Freire in relation to liberation theology. Graham (Interview 1/2/2017), CLP staff (Focus group 23/2/2017) and Mark (Interview 6/2/2017) talked in particular about Hope and Timmel's *Training for Transformation* as useful resource books for the organisation, with Mark recounting:

> Paulo Freire was … a useful thinker to catch some ways that people were talking about, but from my own experience, although for the organisation it was a moment of … consciously working in some ways in new ways, from my own work, it was a return to old ones. You know. So Paulo Freire is important, and one of the… ways in which his ways of thinking had been important in this region was the *Training for Transformation* booklets that Sally Hope and Anne Timmel put together. And I mean those were done in Zimbabwe in the early mid-80s. And that was central to my own work in the 80s. Ja, so when we came back, it was the same booklets, the same old booklets came out. So in some ways it was a return, but it needed to be returned to that kind of work because, I think, after, well, before and after 1994, a lot of organisations kind of got caught up in a way of working that turned out to be not cool. And … I think sometimes they'd always done crap work and sometimes it's because,

you know, we had expectations of what a democratic state would be like after the struggle, and so on. Which, I don't think we were completely crazy, but it turns out they weren't, they were wrong. So we needed to return to older ways of working that didn't assume those. So, so, I think that … the kind of Freirean stuff was helpful, for me anyway, because a lot of the emphasis was around the kinds of things that were really important for CLP refinding its feet in this context, making a break with the ways it was being pushed to be part of the state kind of oriented system. So in my head anyway, some of the key things that Freire and that approach emphasised was, one, start with where people are, and take that seriously. I think that that approach immediately challenges all of these kind of vanguardist ways of thinking that, you know, ag, people have got their cute little struggles, but they don't have the correct analysis, they don't have the capacity, they don't know how to say things right. We need to, you know, *we've* got the stuff to bring to *them*. And I think a lot of civil society organisations, I think a lot of Leftist political activists do not respect where people are. They don't, they're not prepared to start there. Because often it's not sexy. Actually, where ordinary people are, doesn't fit cool-sounding lefty rhetoric and slogans that have been dreamt up by people who've got the right 'theory' (quote unquote). So often it's not really very sexy to actually shut the fuck up and listen to what people actually say… because I think what people are really good at is doing enough capacity training so that people say what you want them to say.

So I think that's one of the fundamental things that a Freirean approach helped people understand, that there is another way of working. Which is, just start with where people are at, start with their realities and start with what's real in their lives rather than fantasies in our heads about what a revolutionary outcome might look like, what people actually think. So I think starting with where people are at and respecting their thinking, their critical thinking, in it really mattered. And I think the Freirean approach, also was never, I mean Paulo Freire himself was not, he was not an anarchist, he wasn't critical of the state as such. But I think the approach always emphasised people's self-reliance. Now, sometimes that tradition becomes interpreted only as a sort of, like a sort of economic self-reliance, but [unclear] I think it's intellectual self-reliance. So people's thought, people's politics, people's struggle, is strongest when it's on the resources the people themselves have. And it always weakened when outsiders come and say, hey we'll help you, and here's the theory you

> need, here's the t-shirt you need, here's the whatever what-have-you. And then suddenly people don't feel like they can take their own struggle forward on their own terms, because now they're dependent on these outsiders. And I think the Freirean tradition, that was another key part of it – start where people are at; and then as they take their struggle forward, encourage them to be self-reliant, in their thinking, in their politics, in their struggle. And then they're strong on their own, then they are less likely to be taken in by NGO workers or activists who offer them this or that and try and buy their struggle. So I think there were couple of, just basic elements of the Freirean approach that were really useful for the organisation, CLP, trying to break with patterns that it was uncomfortable with, and seeing if there was some new possibility. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

In the focus group with the CLP staff, *Training for Transformation* was also referred to in relation to Freire, as was the concept of animation – although the usefulness of Freire was seen as going beyond it:

> Freire [from] time to time would be quoted not specifically just because of the animation part. But we also know the theory behind animation and also goes back to the thinking of the theorists around the practice of animation. Also related to *Training for Transformation* of the old ladies [Hope and Timmel] who came with that concept. So we do from time to time refer to Freire beyond animation theories. (CLP focus group, 23/2/2017)

However, it was only Graham who specifically linked liberation theology, Freire, the Brazilian context of social movements, and the resource book:

> [The Landless Workers' Movement, *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* (MST)] history comes out of the base communities, activities of the Catholic Church. So liberation theology was very influential in formative stages of that movement. And that drew on Paulo Freire. So it was in discussion with actual movement globally and thinking about the history and we learnt Paulo Freire and for some of us this resonated with our own histories of Paulo Freire and how it was used here in South Africa back in the 70s and 80s. And so for some of us, we even went back to re-read Paulo Freire and…and also it came in those books *Training for Transformation.* And we found a way to find the language with the concepts to begin to articulate or talk about that. And Paulo Freire himself uses language, the word *animation*, and both coming up from the

> Brazilian context. But we remember it in the South African context and the notion of animation and in particular in political practice of that time and that is why we set our own history in context. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

Whilst it is clear that there is general agreement on the usefulness of Freire in CLP's shift in praxis, there seems to be some disagreement about the extent to which Freire *prompted* the shift. In his interview, David N. suggests that Freire directly influenced the shift. When I asked him "is there maybe an incident that you can remember, that made you realise that there is a need for a change?", his response was, "Yes. If you look at the chart, I have 2004, theorist being Paulo Freire and one of the concepts coming out of Paulo Freire's work, is that of animation". Graham, however, was careful to emphasise the difference between a practice emerging from experience and reflection on it, and a practice derived from theory:

> I think there is a sense in which, making the shift for us, in a sense it wasn't because we read a good book…Oh here is another practice, let's try this. So we weren't attempting to apply a model. We were horrified by our practice, and having been honest enough to say we cannot sustain this, we have to find another way. And we set ourselves out on a journey, to say, we've got to find another practice. And in that questioning, and trying to find another practice, we came across the word *animation* going back to Paulo Freire, and read some Paulo Freire. But we read other stuff as well, so I don't think we have ever consciously said we are Freirean. We have never consciously said how do you apply Freire in this context. Some of us haven't even read Freire. And so the notion that we are Freirean in our methodology… we'd say, no I don't think so. Freire has been an important resource and a helpful thinker, because of his own practice, our own practice, and finding words and concepts to articulate that. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

This is somewhat different from what both David N. and Mark said – both specifically referred to reading Freire at the point of questioning their practice and searching for something different. However, it is consistent with the idea of Freire, and the shift, being a *return* to something, specifically the politics of the UDF moment of the 1980s (something which the 2007 evaluation report also argues). Mark and Graham both spoke of a yearning for the 1980s emancipatory struggle, which was lost in the post-apartheid period. For Mark, the shift was "like the rediscovery of traditions that are not so much new" (Interview

6/2/2017); Graham highlighted that, as CLP started thinking about their practice and reading widely, they began

> comparing it to our own history in South Africa, and going back to a stage in the 80s of the UDF, and looking at this type of politics, which resonated with us, it was a yup, we begin to see our own struggle better, and we're in this position we are in, in the year of 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, it is trying to understand, this is not the freedom that we longed for, this is not the freedom that we expected to be living after 1994. Now why is that? And those thinkers, writers, helped us to think that through. And find ways to articulate it. But for myself, that's why I wrote it on the side a bit, at this stage also reading some of this, and thinking back to the 80s, took me back and read again Biko, from his own reflections and writing, reading, ja, *I write what I like* was one thing, but I came across minutes and articles that he'd written, as part of the student movement and the black consciousness movement, particularly in relation to the churches. So going back and reading that stuff, just reminded me, yup, there was a whole other dynamic in our struggle history as well, beside that phase around the 90s of negotiations. And then again, Rick Turner was really useful there. (Interview 1/2/2017)

Mark also specifically referred to the UDF, and the political traditions aligned to it, as being brought into CLP through those involved with the organisation:

> I think a lot of us shared a connection with a kind of moment of UDF politics in South Africa's struggle history, where there was a lot of political theory being read and done in practice. In CLP, a lot of us also came from a kind of South African version of a mixture of black and liberation theology, thinking about some of those issues as well, and kind of brought the two together… Certainly, I can think, certainly David Ntseng, Graham and myself, very much have that in common. (Mark, Interview 6/7/2017)

Thus, to some extent, the thinkers and theorists that CLP drew on in this period of shift were from the 1980s period, or resonated with that, to help the organisation think through its own politics, and hence its praxis. Graham, David N., David H. and the CLP documents all mention the ideas of *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, and its president, S'bu Zikode. According to Graham, CLP had started becoming aware of Abahlali through reading an early piece by Zikode, then president of the movement, and had immediately become aware of how the movement resonated with the thinking of the organisation in its shift:

> I also wrote here Zikode. Because in fact some of his early… of the early presentations and speeches, I remember using them for us as CLP here, that was before we even were in a close working relationship with them. One of his early ones was about, *We are the Third Force. Abahlali*, when they first started their activities in resistance, they were labelled, they said there's a third force behind them. It was this whole assumption that black poor people can't think for themselves. There's somebody else behind it. And S'bu wrote a piece saying, we are a third force. And just the beauty of it, just reminded me again – and the politics of it, reminded me again – of some of the politics of the 80s. And the sense of, I wonder if there's a resonance here, of a certain type of practice, a certain type of politics, that has the tradition that we lost in the 90s. And we as CLP became so busy as an NGO, and being the centre of expertise, that we had forgotten, and left that political tradition in our practice. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

David H., as mentioned earlier, argues that *Abahlali* were 'a major revelation' for CLP. In addition to drawing on *Abahlali*'s thinking through engaging directly with it, and on the writings of S'bu Zikode, CLP also drew on those writing about the politics of *Abahlali* – Raj Patel was mentioned by Graham and David N., whilst Richard Pithouse was referred to by almost everyone.

In this period, although CLP was establishing relations with South African social movements, such as *Abahlali*, it was also exploring movements in other parts of the world. Almost all those interviewed, and the CLP documents, referenced *Via Campesina* and the Zapatistas (an autonomous movement in Mexico) and a Zapatista spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos, as key. In my view, the use of the writings of these movements relates to how CLP was not only thinking about land rights, but also about a radical perspective of development – a development thinking run and sustained by the people. Both *Via Campesina* and the Zapatistas are autonomously run agrarian grassroots movements, although, since *Via Campesina* operates in each country through an affiliated organisation (rather than setting up new structures), the extent to which it can been seen as a radically different political project is uneven across specific countries (and is certainly debatable in the South African context). The Zapatistas subscribe to libertarian socialism, which is anti-authoritarian, rejects socialism as state-centred, and rejects the ownership and control of the economy by the state (Starr, Martinez-Torres & Rossert, 2011). Furthermore, this movement is anti-neoliberal and seeks indigenous control of resources. Political affiliation is also rejected because the Zapatistas do

not want to be associated with anything that is statist in nature. Starr et al., describe the Zapatistas' movement as having

> contributed concepts and inspiration that have directly and visibly shaped the emergence of the movement confronting global summits, participatory media, indigenous movements in the Americas, and local movements across North America and Western Europe. Since appearing as a guerrilla army in January 1994, the Zapatistas have worked to elaborate the practice of autonomy as a response and an alternative to globalization. When the Mexican government betrayed the 1996 San Andrés Agreement, which would have granted limited autonomy to indigenous regions of Mexico, the Zapatistas decided to construct political autonomy unilaterally. (Starr et al., 2011, pp. 104, 105)

It was thus the kind of politics which the Zapatistas were engaged in which were important to CLP:

> In this shifting of our practice, um, we didn't know what to do; we literally stopped what we were doing in some places, we didn't know what to do. And so we initiated a process for ourselves of, okay, we've got to think this through, of how do we do this differently and what does it look like. So drawing on Freire was a beginning. Some of the early influences there also was from the Zapatistas, and Subcomandante Marcos. And in fact it was Mark, Mark Butler, who introduced into our thinking, into reflection sessions, some of the writing of Subcomandante Marcos. And again, the notion of an autonomous politics, and the agency of people themselves, suddenly became, it resonated with us. So, is this what animation could lead to, you know, is this what we wanted to see? (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

The linking of Freire, the Zapatistas and the 1980s struggle when talking about resources drawn on in this period, was also done by Mark in his interview:

> A long time ago I read Freire, and over the years because of my connection with people in Adult Education, I read, I think I've probably read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I know I've read the one that's a conversation with him and Myles Horton [*We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on education and social change*]; but there too, it's like over a long period of time because his work was being drawn on in the 80s. It is worth…just to add to the mix of things that came together in that sort of

> 2006 period. Politically, for me it was also very, very useful to read and learn about the Zapatista struggle. Just because, there too, this was a moment of real militancy in the real situation, people thinking it through, but thinking it in their own heads and breaking with the ways in which outsiders had told them to think about their struggle. So they just opened up also, like, really new ways of thinking, politically, that connected with these much as older traditions that I'm comfortable with. So I think that their work, and their struggle, were very important to me, too, because they of course made a very profound break with any idea that thinking the state is going to save us. And that was helpful in our situation as well, where it's perfectly clear that the state can't save anybody. (Mark, 6/2/2017)

In the occasional paper *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007), the authors also specifically refer to the importance of the Zapatistas in relation to CLP's rethinking of its position regarding the state:

> [Our analysis of the South African context] made it necessary to re-think some of our fundamental assumptions about the relation between freedom, the state and political power. For many of us, our tendency had been to assume that the interests of justice and freedom were more or less compatible with the new democratic state. But the reality of post-apartheid South Africa raised a more generalised question as to whether state power as such – and here we include all the apparatus that goes along with it (like representative democracy, political parties, etc.) – might not invariably be an oppressive and alienating force over people. This was a new question for us and the debates it opened up are far from closed or concluded. It has been very useful and interesting to see that this question has also emerged within movements in different parts of the world, and the struggle of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, has been especially relevant and helpful to CLP. John Holloway is a writer who has been very influenced by, and interested in, the Zapatistas. In an interview during 2006, he said:
>
>> Although no one talks much about the Revolution these days, everyone knows we need one. But what will we do with this revolution? Take state power again? ... Substituting one state power for another just repeats the same problems over and over again and eventually exhausts the revolution. This is the old way of thinking about revolution and it doesn't work anymore. We have to find a new way. There is no alternative. (Butler, 2007, p. 8)

Another movement mentioned was the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* – Landless Workers' Movement (MST), a Brazilian social movement whose objective is to make sure the poor access land through land reform and it strives for sustainable ways of life. The MST, adopting

> a strict ideological and structural plan growing out of liberation theology, Leninism, and Marxism, among other sources… has organized 1.5 million landless workers in 23 of Brazil's 27 states. Since 1985 it has legalized 2,000 settlements housing 350,000 families, and another 180,000 families are currently encamped awaiting land. The settlement communities range in size from fewer than 100 to 5,000 people and involve a land area larger than Italy. (Starr, Martinez-Torres & Rossert, 2011, pp. 108-109)

Both David N. (Interview 21/2/2017) and Graham (Interview 1/2/2017) indicated this group as one of their intellectual resources, although they each date this slightly differently (Graham indicating that they first used this resource around 2004, whilst David N. specifically said 2005).

5.5.5 Conceptual understandings

It is significant that after the introduction of animation, CLP not only changed the meaning of terms that they had used before, but introduced some new terms and gave up others. Some of the important common terms that had underpinned the practice of CLP from the start, such as reflection, learning and dialogue, were not abandoned – they were reconceptualised within the context of the concept of animation. Some of the terminology they did stop using had been in used relation to being seen as a 'centre of excellence' or as experts in what they were doing. This was because being an expert presupposes that those with whom you will be working need to learn from you. By the 2007 Occasional Paper (Butler et al., 2007), as CLP started working from the viewpoint of communities, not programmes, the following expressions started to appear:

- "*dehumanisation"* (p. 15), referring to Freire's concept of how people are dehumanised in the process of oppression, and thus oppression needs to be overturned in order for people to achieve full humanity;
- "*speaking less and listening more*" (p. 17), referring to the position that CLP was taking as part of their practice/praxis;

- "*democratic processes and informed spaces*" (p. 14), referring to "where ordinary people get a chance to take control of what is happening on their own terms";
- instead of being "*for the people"*, we will be "*with the people*" (, p. 26), referring to their working ethos as an organisation; and
- people being the "*agents of their own history"* (p. 21), referring to people not needing an advocate, having the agency to act on their own behalf.

The word 'praxis' starts to be more prominently used than the word 'practice', referring to the animation process which calls for action informed by reflection and reflection informed by actions. Graham (Interview 1/2/2017) also suggested the following terms, concepts and phrases as being prominent during this period:

- '*those who suffer it*, *lead it*', referring to people who suffer injustices as the best candidates to fight against such treatment;
- '*nothing about us, without us*' (this phrase was mentioned also by David N. who says that it was used around 2007), referring to the practice in which government or NGOs tend to speak and act on behalf of the people, assuming that they know what is best for the people, this phrase tries to highlight that the poor can speak for themselves and is drawn from *Abahlali*.
- '*agency*' and '*people think*', asserting that people are able to think through their situation and know what is best for themselves.

However, from among all the new language making its appearance, David N. (Interview 21/2/2017) pointed out that the most prominent concepts and phrases used in 2004 were '*animation*' and the phrase '*making the road by walking it'* (from the Zapatistas). These two concepts are intimately related, because animation challenged them to learn and listen and be guided by the people engaged in a particular struggle in a particular situation, rather than having a clear idea of what needed to be done in order to achieve a predetermined goal. Other phrases that David N. mentions are '*people united shall never be defeated*' (this is self-explanatory and an old struggle slogan) and '*living politics*' (drawn from the thinking of *Abahlali* and the politics associated with the everyday struggles of the people), both of which refer to the strategy and nature of the politics of people. Another, '*struggle as a school*', refers to the struggle of the people as a process of learning. Since CLP was prepared to learn, it is not surprising that some of the words that they used in their documents might be

associated with the terms used by *Abahlali*, or the leader Zikode – for instance, the phrase '*nothing about us without us*'.

The CLP staff focus group identified the terms '*people's sovereignty*', '*animation*' and '*living politics*' (although this last term is connected on their timeline with '*living learning*' in 2009).

5.6 Consolidating the shift (2008-2017)

The previous section focused on the shift and the processes which constituted it. After CLP had adopted animation it started to consolidate and deepen its convictions and beliefs regarding its new praxis; but what seems to distinguish this period is the extent to which the organisation consciously thought through what it understood as emancipatory politics. Having shifted its praxis to one of solidarity with grassroots struggles required it to more precisely think through the nature of those struggles. Given its reflexive nature, the organisation continuously engaged with what was happening in South Africa, as is evident from extensive contextual analyses of its various documents (far too extensive to cover comprehensively here), and I would argue that this engagement further influenced how CLP understood itself and its role.

5.6.1 Context and analysis

National events in the 2008–2010 period required the organisation to rethink or at least think more deeply about one aspect of the praxis that it had developed in the period of its shift, its role in an overall emancipatory project. One event which is not mentioned in any document or by any other respondent but Mark, was the country-wide xenophobic attacks of 2008. Mark argued that these attacks required CLP to clarify its understanding of emancipatory politics in relation to 'the people':

> The particular issue we faced was, we were committed to ways of working, where we start with where people are at, people are leading their own struggles from the bottom up, not from top down where civil society or government tell people how to act, people's own thinking guides their actions, and it's kind of out of order. Right, so you have all these criteria, and then in 2008, we have this wave of xenophobic violence across the country. And it fits all those criteria. And so then we have a crisis… [The] xenophobic violence forced us to say, what are the principles that we have, where we

> can separate the good from the bad stuff, because the xenophobic violence was grassroots, from the bottom…so we had to think through what are the principles behind the crisis so we would know the judgement we should make. So in that case that included the true plan for the struggle and that had to be universal. So like, in that case, I mean the list included all the things, but it also included that the truth claims of the struggle had to be universal. And that's where something like xenophobia fails. Because it's a set of claims for *us* to exclude *them*. Right, so it isn't true for all, only for my group. So it was trying to work through the difficult stuff, because, you know, you work with real people in real struggles, it's beautiful and it's ugly. There's truth and there's lies, there's good stuff and bad. So you can't, it's silly to be romantic about the people's struggle because it is good and bad. But you have to be principled of how you work that out, how do people know. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

In thinking about what Mark had said in relation to Webster and Mertova's (2007) 'critical event' criteria, this event does seem to have been a critical one for him – and according to him, required CLP to be more explicit in their understanding of emancipatory politics so that they could better understand what constitutes good practice by separating out 'the good stuff' (as they came to call it) from the bad, by focusing on the principles and values underlying their practice and the nature of emancipatory politics. They needed a basis from which to question or challenge what was happening.

Other significant events confirmed CLP's emerging analysis of the state. The year 2009 witnessed the physical attack on the Kennedy Road settlement in Durban, the shack settlement where *Abahlali* had first emerged, and where its offices were located. By this stage, CLP was working closely with the movement.

> On 26 September 2009, violent attacks by an armed group left two men dead and an estimated thousand displaced at the Kennedy Road shack settlement in the South African city of Durban. What has been made public about that night is that members of an armed group self-identified as ruling African National Congress (ANC) supporters, some mobilizing ethnicity, chanted anti-ImiPondo slogans. The headquarters of Abahlali baseMjondolo… was dismantled, then ransacked. Elected movement leaders and their families, fifty-seven parents and children in total, their homes destroyed by armed men, went into "hiding". Movement activities operated "underground". Thirteen Abahlali members were arrested. Until July 2010, five

> remained, ten months later, in Westville prison yet to see trial. (Chance, 2010, pp. 1-2)

Ultimately, all charges were dropped against *Abahlali* members.

This attack was focused on in a late 2009 seminar arranged by CLP, "Democracy under Attack". Graham says of the attack that it was "Absolutely horrifying. And any notions of, you know we're in a romantic democratic era of South Africa was gone – absolutely gone" (Interview 1/2/2017). To help its understanding of this attack within the context of South Africa, CLP turned, inter alia, to Fanon (I discuss this in more detail below):

> some reading of Fanon at that stage was the reading of how to understand the nature of the South African state. And that was almost some of the way in, was his writings about the post-colonial state. And how what happened in those struggles for liberation, independence, in Africa was not necessarily a change of the colonial state, but just a change in personnel…And that became, aha, a way to understand the dynamics of what was taking place. Because that was 2010, around about then, 2009 had been the year of the attack on *Abahlali*. How is it… that the so-called democratic state, that the ANC specifically, could actually lead such a brutal attack on formations of the poor? How's that possible in such a short period of time? And the reading of Fanon in the midst of all of that was a really important resource. And then from that into reading his other writings and work… (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

The 2007–2010 period also coincided with the preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup being hosted in South Africa. During this time, CLP held a seminar with people from different groups to appraise the context and people's responses to it. It was noted that, considering the resources invested in this event, government, together with the rich and powerful, were not paying attention to the needs of local people. Moreover, the Jacob Zuma administration, which had ousted Mbeki as President of the country, was no better than the previous regime, but was, in fact, responsible for growing corruption and mismanagement within ANC and the government. CLP pointed out that such a situation was ripe for 'elite looting' (Butler et al., 2010). This corruption included the DLA, where officials used their positions to acquire land for themselves at the expense of poor people. The reshuffle of the cabinet by Jacob Zuma had a significant impact on government land policy. Land and agriculture were split, with land reform being left to the Ministry of Land Affairs whilst agriculture was seen as falling within the commercial sector, which thus could not be

touched. CLP described land reform within this context, not as a failed promise, but as a myth.

To help them think through the events of this period and how to respond to them, in May 2011, CLP held the 'Fanomenal event', to bring together "a number of thinking militants engaging the politics of Frantz Fanon" (*Padkos* notice 6, 25/2/2011):

> Frantz Fanon died fifty years ago but his radical humanism remains as rich, powerful and relevant as ever. A fighting thinker and a thinking fighter, Fanon's written work emerges out of his deep involvement in popular struggle against racist colonialism and oppression, and for genuinely humanising emancipation.
>
> For us this discussion is a practical matter – a question of praxis and living politics: what are the ways in which Fanon's radical humanism and fighting spirit might still be relevant, helpful and challenging for the praxis of the people engaged in, or connected with, grassroots emancipatory struggle here and now? (Ibid.)

The event brought together some of the most important Fanonian scholars in South Africa at that time: Mabogo More, Itumeleng Mosala, Michael Neocosmos, and Richard Pithouse, and included the internationally acclaimed Fanonian scholar, Nigel Gibson.

A critical event attracting wide condemnation and confirming CLP's analysis of the state in the light of the *Abahlali* attack, was the Marikana mine massacre. On 16th August 2012, 34 miners at the Marikana mine were killed when police opened fire on protesting mine workers. The event attracted wide condemnation, and supported CLP's emerging analysis of the state in the light of the attack on *Abahlali*. On 30th August, CLP sent out a set of 'resources' of commentary and analysis on the massacre on its *Padkos* email list. Staff of CLP also participated in a memorial service for those who died at Marikana. The *Padkos* notice stated:

> At the end of Bishop Rubin's address at the memorial service, he made a call for others to join him in making this simple declaration:
>
> In the name of God, will all good people join me in this small declaration today?
>
> To the powerful in the state, in business, and in the armed forces, we declare:
>
> - the police will no longer shoot, hurt, silence or intimidate our brothers and sisters when they struggle for justice;

- we no longer accept an economy that creates obscene wealth for a few on the backs of exploited and abused workers.

To the poor and the workers we declare:

- do not stop struggling for justice, we are with you;
- carry on defending the fundamental humanity and dignity of every single human being.

We at CLP we join with Bishop Rubin in making that declaration and invite our Padkos readers to do likewise. (*Padkos* notice 26, 30/8/2012)

5.6.2 Purpose, value and practice

The 2008 xenophobic attacks forced CLP to distinguish between 'the good stuff' and 'the bad stuff'; in other words, to carefully think through its principles, values and beliefs. In the discussion that follows, I present a close reading of two documents related to this, namely *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010) and *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b), the latter composed of edited extracts of three CLP documents.

***Finding our Voice in the World* (2010)**

What makes *Finding Our Voice in the World* of 2010 different from the 2007 Occasional Paper is its pronouncement of a declaratory position of CLP's praxis, now overtly discussed within the concept of emancipatory politics. The document is a product of a reflection process by CLP staff. Each staff member prepared and facilitated a reflective session on both their own and CLP's work, through the lens of animation. *Finding Our Voice in the World* is drawn from this reflection (*Padkos* notice 2, 15/11/2010). There are two important things which the document highlights. The first is the nature of the politics which CLP intends subscribing to, and the second is the strategy through which this politics will be manifest.

The appropriate politics, which CLP deems relevant, is emancipatory politics. The document describes this politics as the "art of the impossible". It is a type of politics that does not follow the logic of the status quo, or "the world-as-it-is", and works against the possible options which are provided by it. All these options of the status quo had already been used by CLP, but had never worked. The position which it takes here, is one which is deemed impossible by the status quo because it defies that logic. This is a position which is normally taken by those whom the status quo considers unimportant:

> The world-as-it-is is structured by an underlying architecture of institutions and ideas that seem to work together to uphold the state of things in the interests of those who benefit from it. It's like a secret code of collaboration to create a certain mentality so that the people are more-or-less indoctrinated to accept the abnormal as normal; to accept it as 'reality' outside of which there is no serious alternative. The Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, elaborated important elements of this in his analysis of hegemony. (Butler et al., 2010, p. 2)

Expressed in this sense, emancipatory politics is the "rupture with the state-of-things (the world-as-it-is)" (p. 3). The document links emancipatory politics with Jacques Rancière's distinction between 'politics' and the 'police' (what is), Alain Badiou's idea of "politics at a distance from the state" and S'bu Zikode and *Abahlali*'s "living politics". In CLP's analysis, then, 'development' and 'delivery' "are directly contrary to the principles of emancipatory praxis" (p. 3)

The document explores the concept of "having faith in nothing":

> we bring 'nothing' because we deeply believe that nothing other than the struggles of the people themselves create the possibility for really changing the world – changing it away from what it is, and towards what it should and could be. We have seen and learned enough to know by now that anything else, any promise that some outside power or project will free the people, or will develop the people, or will fundamentally change the world, is a lie. And we know that the effect of that lie is to continuously make the people avoid the terrible but liberatory truth that change, rebellion, transformation is in their hands. In short, we have a theory of change in the world, and we continue to build our confidence in this. Our 'theory of change' assumes the people are the agents of human liberation. Our praxis as CLP assumes this, and must therefore assume a faith in the struggles of the people. Our praxis cannot continue the lie that some other power or agent, let alone little CLP, can 'deliver' real change and freedom.
>
> However that faith is not a blind faith that romanticises 'the people' or assumes every grassroots action to be emancipatory. It is possible – indeed necessary – to make principled judgements around these questions and to begin to discern the good stuff. (p. 3)

The "principles of good stuff", which the organisation was developing for itself, explain the nature of the emancipatory politics that CLP had decided to support, and are listed in the document:

i. It is the counting of the uncounted, the speaking of those who should remain silent, the thinking of the un-thought who are not supposed to think.
ii. It emerges from, and proceeds within, a properly/radically democratic base, which may have nothing to do with liberal democratic norms but has everything to do with a pre-figurative politics where 'everybody matters, really' (i.e., egalitarianism is axiomatic and practised throughout).
iii. It makes universal truth claims – that is, they are true for everyone, everywhere.
iv. It is announced/contained/made in out-of-order militant actions (this last one is really not separable from the previous one, nor even from the first one – so we're calling this a list of 3 principles!). (p. 4)

This a politics embodied by the poor for their own freedom and for those who are oppressing them. It is exclusive in the sense that it is the poor who are fighting for their liberation and inclusive because the liberation is not only for those who fought for it, but for everyone (universal truth). *Finding Our Voice in the World* seeks to clarify that, when CLP says it brings nothing this is not to say it does not bring material or intellectual resources to the communities with whom it works. It means the resources are simply part of the support, not a controlling device of grassroots communities, nor a guarantee of their freedom. CLP means that it brings no preconceived ideas of what needs to be done. It is up to the people to create "a new future and new possibilities through their own action" (p. 4). The 'nothingness' for CLP does not mean they are coming to support the agency of the people blindly, but based on "the project of egalitarianism". This means, as explained, that it is a project that seeks to promote the dignity of everyone, where everyone matters. Yet, CLP is aware that even some grassroots organisations can take up an elitist character, because elitism is not exclusively a trait of the rich and powerful, but an attitude of superiority and interest among groups. The principles of good stuff try to address this.

The document raises a question CLP was confronted with, concerning its own voice in the world, and uses this to explore what they mean by *voice* and what they mean by *world*. The organisation is very critical of the belief that the voice has to be the voice of organisations like the government or civil society, and not the people. Because of this, they "consciously

commit to listening rather than speaking – for us, the 'voice' that matters is the speaking of those who should not speak, the counting of the uncounted" (p. 6). The voice of CLP is rather their praxis – "praxis has less talking, more listening and solidarity" (p. 6). In summary, the voice of CLP in the world is to remain faithful to their principles:

> that our voice is that of subjects to a truth;
>
> that those who suffer it, must lead its resolution; and
>
> that our world is that universe possible only in and through the militant clash between the world-as-it-is and the resistance of those who don't count in the world-as-it-is. (p. 7)

When referring to the "world that matters", CLP do not mean the *world-as-it-is.* The world-as-it-is reflects our present world, a world of inequality and poverty, a world that needs to be resisted by the poor because "only their struggles can liberate the world and humanise themselves and the oppressors" (p. 6).

What CLP Believes

What CLP Believes (CLP, 2013b) begins by categorically expressing that they are against speaking for the people and goes on to acknowledge some previous documents as central to CLP praxis and which adequately explain it. Specifically mentioned is the CLP 2007 Occasional Paper and the 2010 *Finding Our Voice in the World*. The document includes extracts from three other documents. The first is 'A CLP Confession of Faith', the second is 'The Land Question: A Statement of Belief' and the third is 'CLP: Summation of Our Principles and Politics'. I will focus on the extracts from the first and third documents because they are the most relevant to the discussion.

'A CLP Confession of Faith' (2011)

This confession is a further declaration, or affirmation, of 'the principles of good stuff'. It states the creed of CLP: "CLP, as an organisation believes that it no longer doubts for a second…

- that people demonstrate their sovereignty through the struggles they lead;
- that we are not alone – and that the more our praxis is connected to popular and genuinely political rebellion, the less alone we are, and the more ordinary and democratic the struggle becomes;

- that things happen beyond our control and our effort, and beyond our resources and words;
- that faith in truth keeps us going on an uncertain path – and a sometimes messy ride;
- that people (in CLP and beyond) are our most important asset;
- that love, respect and fidelity are key: love of rebellion and of the people, respect because everyone matters really and we express this in our action and our listening, fidelity in being true;
- our faith in a praxis that places ourselves against the world-as-it-is;
- that thought, especially collective processes of thinking, [is] are key to liberatory action;
- that the will of the people is the will of God;
- that liberation of the poor and the oppressed is liberation of everyone – it is our liberation/salvation;
- that our faith is the certainty of truth, that fidelity to truth is a matter of action, and that this faith is a sufficient basis for acting concretely in the world.

We do not believe in the common-sense knowledge of the world-as-it-is – we believe in the crazy nonsense of the truth that is its rupture/disruption." (CLP, 2013b, p. 2)

'CLP: Summation of Our Principles and Politics' (2013)

This document lays out what CLP understands regarding what politics is, but also what it is not. Assessed also are the concepts of civil society and the state in relation to this.

In relation to politics, the document says the following:

CLP recognise that there is a fundamental split between:

- a living politics and a dead politics;
- emancipatory politics and state politics;
- liberatory politics and party politics.

CLP is committed to a living, emancipatory, and liberatory politics.

CLP is pretty much finished with the dead politics of the state and the parties. (CLP, 2013b, p. 5)

The document uses Rancière, Badiou, Zikode, and Selmeczi's understanding of politics. Rancière's position states that authentic politics is one with an emancipatory perspective; the rest are nothing but 'the police'. The document states: "For him [Rancière], politics is the clash of the logic of egalitarianism with the logic of the police. For Badiou, emancipatory politics is always a rupture with what is – it is the void of the situation" (CLP, 2013b, p. 5). Zikode defines politics "as the movement out of the places where oppression assigned us" (CLP, 2013b, p. 5). The document argues that "dead politics" (state politics and party politics) compartmentalises the thinking of people in a bid to control them. By contrast, a "living politics", like emancipatory politics, is part of people's everyday lives, independent thinking, language and struggle. Such a politics does not undermine the dignity of the people, but upholds it. It is not a 'police' politics imposed by the powerful, but one which is open-ended (for the CLP, a "making our path as we walk" kind of politics – for the Zapatistas, an "asking, we walk" kind of politics) and a brainchild of the people. This type of politics emphasises that politics is *thought* – everyone thinks. Another perspective of living politics is based on Anna Selmeczi's concept of "Proximity and Distance"– *Proximity* to the life struggles of the people, but *Distance,* or at-a-distance, from the state.

Of civil society, CLP argues that it works within the "order of how things are in the world" (the world-as-it-is). Therefore, it is part of state politics, because if it works within the possible options provided by the state of affairs, it would simply be putting people in their place, which maintains the status quo. This is common in cases where civil society is perceived as the

> important bearer[s] of knowledge, of skills, of resources, of the power to access and represents "the community", or "the poor", or "the people", and so on. Civil society tends to think for..., and to speak for.... It often assumes it has the solutions, processes, strategies, and theories – and that its role is to mediate these to 'beneficiaries'. It does so by workshopping, capacity building, facilitating, running 'teach-ins', info sharing, etc. The real effect of this work is to relentlessly try and convince the people that they cannot think for themselves, that they cannot think their own politics, and that they cannot take effective action in the world. (CLP, 2013b, p. 6)

In this sense, civil society separates itself from living politics, as it takes agency away from the people. The document draws on the ideas of Neocosmos, who points out that "civil society is not really about organizational form [e.g. NGOs] – it is more a domain of state

politics where citizenship, rights and rule of the law are assumed" (CLP, 2013b, p. 6). What civil society does is make people obedient to the logic of the state.

> Although militant people's movements are put under pressure to label themselves "civil society", they are not (until and unless they can be co-opted) – and certainly the mass of the people live and struggle outside that domain where rights and the rule of law hold. In many ways, civil society is to the neo-liberal state, what the missionary project was to colonialism. (CLP, 2013b, p. 7)

Concerning the state and democracy: when CLP says civil society is part of the state, they mean more than the government, though the government is of course part of the state. For CLP, the state refers to the way things are (the world-as-it-is). Civil society allocates the people within the status quo, or within the order that the powerful and dominant has decided. The state of the world as it stands promotes inequality and oppression of the majority of the people. Whoever works within this order promotes the values of the order. This state needs to be ruptured, not reformed. The order or status quo is supported by representative democracy in which people voluntarily give up their agency to the elite. On the contrary: "For us democracy is more the principled form of political practice deployed by the people themselves. Its essential principle is that everybody counts, really – and its practice is centred on the truth that everybody thinks" (CLP, 2013b, p. 7). If civil society thinks it can think and represent the people's needs, it will be thinking just like the state. However:

> a real democracy comes from a living politics: when the people are not represented but present themselves; when the real issues and struggles of the life of the people are not sorted out by experts other than the people themselves; when making history and the exercise of power is not given away, but remains in the minds and hands of the people. (CLP, 2013b, p. 7)

Referencing a piece by Peter Hallward on Fanon and political will, CLP emphasises how even truly democratic processes can be subverted:

> Clearly a real democracy is a 'bottom-up' politics. But that does not guarantee that antidemocratic tendencies are impossible at the grassroots. A radically-democratic and principled praxis must always be maintained through open assemblies and the possibility of rupture from below. We know that even the most militant rupture can degenerate into structures and practices of power over people and lose its real

> democratic heart. Even in social movements, when 'democracy' is thought of as putting people into structures to represent the masses, then even if the process of electing appears 'democratic' it is sliding into the representative kind of democracy and easily allows leaders who trample on the people and on democracy proper. So, here too, it is not organizational form that is decisive but political principle – the axiom that everyone matters. (p. 8)

The two documents discussed show CLP's analysis of its purpose, as it emerged from its contextual analysis, in relation to its values. How did this play out in CLP's praxis over this period?

In the timelines completed by those I interviewed, and in the CLP staff focus group, people were asked to note the activities of the organisation. On the whole, what people noted reflected their own, individual, work – but the timelines also reflect what people saw as key activities of the organisation. One key activity repeatedly referred to was *Padkos*. As explained in Chapter One, *Padkos* is an Afrikaans term meaning 'food for the road', or 'food for the journey':

> CLP has often spoken of its work as a journey, and we are inspired by Paulo Freire's phrase that "we make the path by walking". The journey of our work is deeply rewarding, and our main guide and inspiration remains the struggles of the people. But it is also …a long and demanding journey. As we continue together, we all need *padkos* – sustenance and food for thought along the way. (CLP, n.d., 'Padkos')

Padkos began after CLP's 2010 evaluation and planning processes, as a way "to share resources, thoughts and conversations with others who join us on the journey of our work in the world" (CLP, 2012, p. 3). The organisation is clear that *Padkos* is one way in which it responds to requests from board members and others to hear from and learn with CLP about its thinking and work (CLP, n.d., 'Padkos') – in other words, it is part of CLP's 'voice in the world'. *Padkos* has become an important part of the life of the organisation.

Padkos consists of various kinds of events, for instance, where different people are called on to run discussions or give presentations, but also written pieces by a wide range of thinkers, including movements, academics, or CLP itself. These events and written pieces are circulated via an email list; but also posted on CLP's website (See Annexure 4 for a complete list of *Padkos* mailings from its inception to the end of 2018; as already discussed, many of

these events relate to Fanon.). The *Padkos Digest* (CLP, 2012; CLP, 2014b) brings together, in a hardcopy form, some of the mailings sent out on the *Padkos* list, including the CLP 'blurb' (as they call it) which introduces each mailing, and all resources attached. Two volumes of *Padkos Digest* have been produced: Volume 1 contains the first 22 *Padkos* mailings, and was sent to list members in late 2012; Volume 2 contains the mailings from number 23 to number 45. Over time, *Padkos* has been extended, and includes the Bioscope (introduced in 2013), where different films on issues related to emancipatory politics are shown, and Intermission (introduced in 2014), events hosted at CLP or elsewhere, involving, as described by staff, "music gigs, poetry, also under the *Padkos* umbrella. We have got like the Rainbow [Jazz club] in Pinetown. We had music groups, we had poetry and we had a big gig at Pizzology [a local pizza restaurant]" (CLP staff focus group, 23/2/2017). In 2015, Palaver was also added:

> People. . .wanted to have a space to talk and engage with. . .So that's what Palaver was. When we sent the reading out there [on the *Padkos* email list], then we would normally at the bottom say, you have space for us to discuss. So Palaver was this space. *Padkos* is *Padkos* Palaver, *Padkos* Bioscope, it is all under the same umbrella. (CLP staff focus group, 23/2/2017)

These various *Padkos* sessions frequently involve activists from the movements or communities with which the organisation was working.

During the 2008–2010 period, CLP's work on the ground continued to prioritise working in solidarity with movements of the poor and/or communities and groups engaged in struggle, but also prioritised creating spaces within which these formations where they could critically reflect and learn (David N., Interview 21/2/2017). One example of this during this period was support CLP gave to members of *Abahlali* and RN to participate in a formal certificate programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Those involved held monthly reflections on what they were learning in classes, and what they were learning in their grassroots struggles. These sessions were recorded by CLP, and ultimately published by them in 2009 as *Living Learning* (Figlan et al., 2009).

While creating spaces for reflection and discussion within the organisation had been an important part of CLP's praxis related to its shift, it also became an increasingly important part of CLP's work to create such spaces with others, within the organisations and movements with which it worked, and across struggles. Thus, the organisation initiated the

Praxis for Autonomous Politics (PAP) sessions in 2014, apart from the *Padkos* events. A number of these sessions were held which it referred to as

> a response to our identifying at the beginning of the year the need for us to think more carefully and clearly about what an autonomous politics looks like. We linked some of these PAP sessions to bioscopes early in the year and our discussions helped us think beyond our current practice. (CLP, 2014c, n.p.)

CLP recognised that an important part of any project for autonomous politics was "creating and sustaining spaces for critical reflection" (CLP, 2014a, n.p.),

> And this is a practice that has been difficult. It is difficult at many levels to find/create alternative spaces and practice – difficult to sustain with groups and formations as they look to the centres, and the centres give the line; difficult when an oppressive reality is just that – oppressive; difficult in relationships with other organisations who have the answers and feel no need to be shaped by the truth; difficult with ourselves as we feel the need to deliver or perform, on time. Yet it is these very difficulties that point us again to the need for the alternative space and practice, the space for critical reflection, the space that acts and thinks and acts, the space that re-creates our space and time and connections. (CLP, 2014a, n.p.)

CLP identified a number of characteristics of such a space, including that

- it is a space that is at a distance from the politics / imagination of the centres, and is close to / shaped by a disruption of what is; by people who are angry, fearful, determined because their dignity has been trampled upon.
- It is a space that provides mutual support for each other, that is inclusive.
- It does not expect the uniform participation of all members, but allows for the rhythms and demands of life to influence the ability of members to participate – whilst affirming their equal value to the group.
- It is a space that affirms and strengthens the independence and power of women who are marginalised by what is.
- It pays careful attention to, and is shaped by, what people themselves are prioritising and planning.

- It is a space that plans, but also gives space for the re-creating and re-shaping that keeps us true to the values we have made, that is always open to a living politics.
- It is a space that lives with questions, that is a question. (Ibid)

CLP believed that such spaces were under threat:

> However, one aspect of our experience in the past quarter has been that of a sense of displacement – of spaces being minimised, a loss of good space, of foreign practices within spaces, a loss of connection with and influencing of spaces. Part of the displacement is a recognition of our own creating of spaces that are messed up, our own co-creation of the centres. (Ibid.)

Thus, holding onto existing spaces for critical reflection and learning, and creating new ones, particularly across struggles, was of growing importance; and CLP saw this as a pivotal role for the organisation:

> Our role is perhaps like some sort of 'weaving' element to encourage the people in their struggles and thinking, and to encourage them to come together and achieve power and action that was not there or possible before. It is never a role of 'doing for', but of supporting people as they take forward their own specific initiatives. (CLP, 2014c, n.p.)

This linking of struggles among people was specified in its funding proposals and reports. For example, its project objective in its 2016 agreement with one funder was, "The movements for people's sovereignty are increasingly linked with each other and across geographic and institutional boundaries, and are shaping and leading their struggles and campaigns for an improved access to land, housing and services" (CLP, 2016a, p. 8).

In addition to the relationship CLP had with AbM and RN, the organisation began to support the development of the Platform Against Evictions on the mandate of the Poor People's Alliance (PPA), which consisted of AbM and RN in KwaZulu-Natal, the LPM in Gauteng, and in the Western Cape the Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC) (Hallowes, 2010):

> Platform Against Evictions, it was a platform that was organised by CLP for all the social movements. By then it was APF [Anti-Privatisation Forum] from Johannesburg, *Abahlali* in Durban, as well as Rural Network. Because all these

> organisations, part of their day to day work was … resisting. So we provided a space, maybe twice or three times a year, where all these movements could meet. And then that space was called Platform Against Evictions. (CLP staff focus group, 23/2/2017)

During this period, CLP reported on the connections made between *Abahlali* and Bizana activists and others in Gauteng and Western Cape, who agreed on solidarity campaigns in their struggles for rights and dignity: "The discussions within the movements are part of foregrounding work that will lead to strong movement-building across the country" (CLP, 2016b, n.p.).

In its funder reports, CLP reported on connections made between the Sekwanele Women's group and the Utrecht women's group, to build a foundation for women's voice in the rural areas, and which would enable the exchange of knowledge about agro-ecological farming. There were links made between crafters from Port Shepstone and women doing beadwork from the greater Ladysmith area, which led to both groups improving the quality of their products and thus a significant change in their livelihoods as they were able to get their products to the market (CLP, 2016a). As CLP became increasingly involved in the struggles related to extractive industries, further connections were made – for example, between the Rural Network and Khwez'umkhono Environmental Justice group.

Many of the organisation's activities relied on CLP being able to accommodate activists from various parts of the province, or visiting speakers from all over the world. Thus, in 2007, CLP bought a flat next to its offices, which it called Emzabalazweni (place of struggle). Since then, it has bought a further two. The CLP staff focus group (23/2/2017) identified these acquisitions as important for the organisation's numerous activities. CLP's insistent standpoint that people should lead their own struggles was refined during this period, in that it consciously differentiated between emancipatory struggles and struggles that reflected and maintained the 'world-as-it-is'. A significant part of this reflection concerned how even those struggles which had an overtly emancipatory intent can marginalise some people, particularly women. Thus, a project objective in 2017 was that, "Marginalised people, especially women, start and lead initiatives and campaigns for justice and dignity regarding land, housing, livelihoods and services" (CLP, 2017a, n.p.). Much of CLP's work in this year (2017) thus focused on acting in ways that supported autonomous struggle, as it outlines here:

> CLP continues to support formations of the marginalised and make strong arguments in spaces within civil society for re-thinking support for people's formations. This way of practice has had an enormous impact.
>
> Firstly, dependence on civil servants was reduced as people began to look upon themselves for changing their situation.
>
> Secondly, relying on NGOs was reduced because between meetings one realised that people actually do engage and decide about what they will do next - even in the absence of NGO staff.
>
> More importantly, people whose status is lower, would not even rely on the local elite to make plans and engage on activities that were useful for them. Such achievements reinforce CLP's belief on how change happens which is based on the notion that, "Those who suffer it, lead it". This has been part of CLP, both in terms of thinking and theorising about working with communities and practice. It cannot be that people will naturally, without questioning, just follow the call from NGOs or civil servants when that call is completely detached from their context. (CLP, 2017a, n.p.)

By working in ways that consciously supported the struggle of marginalised groups, CLP argued that more communities and formations were representing themselves in struggles, for example, against fracking and against patriarchy. One the organisation's narrative reports to a funder stated that seven women leaders in the Roosboom United Churches had found ways to hold their male counterparts to account for the abuse of power in meetings and resources that belonged to the community. A further 36 women from Sekwanele and 50 from the Greater Ladysmith and South Coast areas were overcoming these more subtle modes of patriarchy by consciously increasing their self-reliance through participating in livelihood initiatives (CLP, 2017b).

At the end of my focus group discussion with CLP staff (23/2/2017), two staff members, who had only joined the organisation in 2013, spoke about recognising a very different kind of practice from that of other NGOs:

> P5: I think what was new for me when I came to work for Church Land Programme in 2013, I wouldn't say I knew much about Church Land Programme, but a few years later I began to understand better. One was that most NGOs understand themselves as organisations that are there to help communities. Hence speak on behalf of

communities, use their resources to advocate on behalf of communities. That you will find as you go into communities, as the programme staff, that whenever an NGO, once they've worked with an NGO before, you hear the language, "Now that you are here, how are you going to help us?'. Once they've explained everything that's going on in that particular community, they end up saying, "now that you are here, tell us how are you going to help us". And you can see people's faces drop every time we are trying to explain our practice, that our practice does not allow us to do on your behalf, then the faces drop and people lose faith. But with time as you work with those particular communities, confidence and trust is built because of our practice, of being patient and going through a process. That whatever we do it is a process, we don't have quick fix answers and we don't come with answers already on how we are going to help those communities. From my background, we used to run workshops for the communities, we never asked whether they wanted the workshop or not. We will call organisers in the particular community and go and run the workshop, on this day we are coming, we are running a workshop. We would do that and we go. That also became a challenge to me from my background, from the Young Christian Workers, is that it seems like we have a cycle, we do something for that particular time. Whether we succeed or not, we leave those communities, because we know we are going to run ten workshops in a community. So our success of the workshop is always depending on the evaluation form that we had produced for that particular workshop. It wasn't about the real lives of the people, how they changed, but you having met those objectives of the workshop. So it is totally different, the practice where you are in that particular community because of those lives of the particular community that need to change in some significant way. So… I just wanted to mention that, in the understanding of what I have experienced as a person who has worked with the Church Land Programme, is that I was also challenged in that practice of moving away where you know all the answers beforehand, and taking time to learn through engaging those particular communities and learning from them. It's one other key word, is learning from communities where you always know yourself to be the one who is bringing knowledge.

P2: And also, one practice in that process becomes more challenging when you are working with communities, because, as communities they always expect you as an outsider … you are coming with answers. And to communities, the process which

> CLP believes in, that the end goal is not so much important but the process towards the finish or the end result is more important. Whereas in the community, they want, they are not so much interested in the process, they are interested on the end results. So it's always contradict in one way or another, so it takes also passion as us, as a staff member, to journey with communities and at the end of the day you are all happy when you are reaching the end results. That we are all contributed to the end results. But in the beginning it becomes challenging because, when you come to the community, they always think that you are coming with a bag full of solutions.

As part of this study, as discussed in Chapter Two, I conducted one focus group in March 2017 with *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, the social movement with which CLP works closely. Towards the end of 2017 I also visited two community groups in Nquthu and in Newcastle with which CLP works in order to observe the interaction between the staff and community members. Apart from trying to understand the organisation's practice, I wanted to know whether what they claimed as their practice was in fact true on the ground – I wanted to find out what CLP means when they say they walk with the communities or movements or support them without deciding for them. I specifically asked questions related to this in my focus group with *Abahlali*. In my observations too, I looked at how CLP staff facilitated or participated in the meetings, and more generally, how they dealt with the communities that they work with.

In the focus group with *Abahlali* members, people spoke about CLP as a resource:

> So my sister explained as to why the movement started. Since then we had lots of evictions as the movement, because some of our struggle was evictions. We have challenged the government pertaining to the evictions that were happening in our communities. And doing that we are always need the support from external organisations. And obviously CLP came to part of that because during evictions it happens that some people are getting arrested, and some people are getting shot by the rubber bullets. And some people are having their homes demolished and left homeless. And in that case we definitely need to assist them. Sometimes we might not have enough resources, but external support like that organisation, that is where they are taking part, being part of our support. (*Abahlali* focus group, 1/3/2017)

However, CLP is clearly viewed as far more than a support. *Abahlali* members spoke about a wide range of organisations with which it works, but of CLP, one participant said, "we regard

CLP as our partners, comrades, because they are the one who are very close to the movement". When I asked them to tell me how they would describe their relationship with the organisation, participants very quickly distinguished between CLP and other NGOs:

> P3: You know normally autonomy for a social movement and non-government organisations are totally different, even the ideology as well. So whenever any organisation approaches us, it wants to work with us, we used to be very critical of them, because some of them they come to you, maybe to change the ideas or to impose ideas and even change the autonomy that you are using as an organisation. CLP wasn't that kind of NGO that wanted to impose things to us, but they came to us to support us. It happens most of the time that some organisations are working closely with government, are receiving funds from government to support communities. Those NGOs used to become a big problem because they want to come to your struggle to neutralise it, in such a way that there is no more conflict that is directed to the government, whilst CLP doesn't do that. I think our working relationship is still satisfying, is well up until now. Because whenever we are facing challenges, we are asking for their support, they are there even physically not just financial support. They come to our struggles, if we are going to court, they used to come to us. Even during the protest they would come. But [laughs] I don't mean to say they used to be part of protests, but they are actually aware of all of our struggles. So whenever we are getting arrested they used to provide us with bail money to get out the comrades who are being arrested, and during court cases they used to attend. And also maybe to capacitate our leaders with some leadership skills, we used to negotiate with CLP as the people who have more knowledge in some other aspects that we might need in the movement, and we used to organise classes and workshops in terms of political education. And even reflecting on our daily practice, and we used to call those classes 'leaving [living] learning' if I am right. So our relationship is quite good….
>
> P4: They are good comrades for us, every time there is a pain for us, they are not just to be there as an NGO to say, I need to change your mind, I need to remote you. They are always, even in the struggle they are always there themselves. So they are the good people which anytime that we need them, you can call them over the night, if we have any problem, they are there for us, they don't wait for us to call and go and say please, they're there. They are on good standing with us, whenever we are having any pain, they are good people, they are always there with us.

Abahlali members thus seem to particularly value CLP's continuous support for the movement. However, they also recognise that CLP does not necessarily always agree with *Abahlali*'s decisions. Yet its members seem to value this kind of engagement:

> P3: If I can describe their approach to *Abahlali*, they actually wanted to be a part of a movement, part of our struggle, whichever pain that we feel, they feel it more. They didn't come to us to impose things at some point. There are times where there could be some miscommunication and some misunderstanding, but as our comrades, we used to come on board and discuss those things and go through…
>
> P4: CLP always support whatever we do. They believe in us, that we as comrades we can do things for ourselves, at the end of the day. What we thought of that maybe we can do it, they just come and put their ideas and support us. Because at the end of the day, if you notice in South Africa there is lots of movements that fall apart because of NGOs, they come together and then they come and run them. So with our struggle it is very clear that as *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, there is nobody coming from outside from anywhere else and tell us what to do. And also we always think, and decide ourselves what we do. If you are a friend of us you can come, we can engage and we can tell you, this is what is going to happen. So their job is to come and support us…. you can't say, there is some difficult times, that maybe we won't be on the same page. But they are good comrades, they don't go outside and sit there, they come and sit in the same board room, sit at the table, then we discuss the issue, then we get on the same page.
>
> P3: Maybe I can share that there was a time where we were not in the same page. Like in 2014, we decided to vote for the DA. Then they said hawu! Why DA? But we sit down like colleagues, like friends and we explain to them that we are voting for DA. We are not joining this party, we want to vote for DA in order to make ANC deliver. Then they understand why we voted for DA, but in 2014 we said we voted for DA, we were supposed to explain deeply because they didn't understand why we decided to vote for DA. Even their board members said hawu! Why are you voting for the DA, you are the social movement while are you taking part in politics. No, we are not joining the party, we just want the ANC which is a ruling party to deliver. But they understood.

Members said that they felt that CLP had learned from the movement and its struggle, and had also helped the movement learn and teach others: "There is so much we have learned from CLP. And that they have learned from us… they are non-judgemental, they give us a chance to explore about our experiences. We are sharing experiences. They don't come like they know everything, they want us also to share what we know".

One of the meetings I observed was that of a movement being supported (logistically) by CLP, the Rural Network in Newcastle, to induct new members from the area. In the meeting, an executive member of RN, Rev Mavuso, spoke about why they work with CLP. For him, it was because of the nature of the politics embedded in CLP's practice that they prefer to work with them rather than any other NGO. He argued that CLP sees them as comrades and partners, as independent and capable of finding solutions for themselves. Like *Abahlali* focus group members, he compared CLP with other NGOs, whom he described as controlling, telling the movement what they think is best for it. According to him, CLP supports their programmes, but does not interfere or question their objectives, unless these are obviously against the good of all.

I also observed a meeting between CLP staff and the Nquthu Women's Group. I wanted to see how CLP conducted the meeting, and specifically whether or not they dominated and controlled the proceedings. The CLP fieldworkers facilitated the meeting and allowed the members to voice their concerns. They asked members how CLP could help them to fulfil their objectives. I remember in particular, them talking about the problem they faced with ploughing, since it was a farming community. CLP staff asked how the women thought they could help them access the tractor needed to plough the fields. They did not suggest the best way of doing it, but asked the women instead.

In both the meetings I noted that there were some individuals who dominated, but never the CLP staff. At the Rural Network meeting, which consisted of both men and women (unlike the Nquthu meeting which consisted of women only), I observed some men dominating and taking over the platform. Although a few women did speak, men controlled the proceedings, in particular, pastors. However, CLP staff did not intervene in any way in this, possibly because the meeting was a Rural Network meeting, rather than a CLP one. In contrast, in the Nquthu Women's Group meeting facilitated by CLP, the staff deliberately attempted to increase the participation of everyone present. From my observations and the focus group discussions, it seems CLP indeed respects the autonomy of communities and movements. As

I discuss below, CLP itself has expressed concern about the domination of leadership, and tried to think how CLP should respond to this.

Turning to the issue of theology, it is clear from the organisation's life history presented thus far, that it has always been central to CLP. However, interestingly, in the interviews I conducted it did not emerge as a dominant theme, especially in the recounting of the post-shift period, although all mentioned theology, at least at some point, in their interviews. The *Padkos* postings also do not reflect a particularly strong theological trend, although there are theological events and resources included throughout this period (including, notably, a theological reflection on Paulo Freire, presented by Graham and Mark in May 2018). However, the key documents discussed previously do show a strong theological foundation. *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b), for example, includes extracts from 'The Land Question: A Statement of Belief', which the organisation produced in 2011, and which is their "theological perspective on the land question" (p. 3). As already discussed, *What CLP Believes* also includes 'A CLP Confession of Faith'. Not only is this name clearly within a faith-based frame, but is also taken from a CLP quarterly meeting conducted in the form of a liturgy. As can be seen in the discussion on this document, the language used reflects secular theology.

The CLP staff focus group (23/2/2017) identified '*living faith*' as a key concept that the organisation was drawing on at this time. Participants said that 'living faith' had emerged as a new term replacing 'transforming theology':

> P1: Because when we were discussing it, we thought theology is more about Christianity, but in [some] places that we connect with not everyone is a Christian. So we were trying to find a word that accommodates all faith connections. But what I can also remember about 'living faith', how we arrived at 'living faith', we were talking about that usually when we talk about religion we talk about certain denominations, and there is a perception that certain denominations are better than others as well. We even made an example of the Zion churches and also the Nazareth churches, which are churches which are undermined and may not be recognised somewhere, whereas people that we work with are from those churches. And we see them living faith because of their belief system.
>
> P5: Also, to add to that, we also want to be conscious of the theology concept as something academic, where we are actually locating it within the struggles of the

> people. So that is why we also wanted to be specific to shy away from engaging in those unnecessary and nonliving kind of debates where you actually need to explain yourself to concepts of theology which are not necessarily located within the people's struggle. So it was to be clear that what we are interested in, is faith and living faith that are sustaining the comrades or the people that are in the struggle.

As will be discussed further, CLP continued relationships with the Church structures and particular individuals within the Church; and also became involved in the theology and development programme on the local campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

5.6.3 Relationships with others

As is clear from the discussion, CLP in this period was still prioritising closely working with grassroots movements and struggles. However, CLP were critically reflecting on them in a far more conscious way. It is evident from some of the CLP documents produced during this time that the organisation was adopting a position of criticality in its solidarity. One such document captures the discussion in a Praxis for Autonomous Politics (PAP) session on 'practice in formations' held in July 2014:

> A really strong politics comes from knowing that you need other people and their ideas. Movements that do not do this all the time in practice, or allow it [to] decline overtime, soon become weak and authoritarian…
>
> [There is a] Need to think more about the presence of charismatic leaders in peoples' movements – do they enable or disable autonomous power? Is it inevitable that movements inherently produce a limited number of known and charismatic leaders? Even at very local level, charismatic leaders can be operational and dominant. Sometimes it seems useful to have leaders who can 'represent' the movement – but we know that the politics of representation is always at the expense of a radical politics of autonomous peoples' power. The negative effects need to be countered actively from the beginning otherwise it always contributes at some point to the people no longer believing in themselves to make change in the world. Rather they revert to seeing their salvation in some new Messiah figure who will solve things on their behalf. At this point, the people undermine their own ideas and allow "leaders" to steal the people's thinking and ideas and present them back to the people as some sort of revolutionary solution! We need to always remind people in movements and in

> struggle that it is up to them – otherwise you can leave it too late and see that you have (re)created another monster. (CLP, 2014c, n.p.)

This concern about the nature of leadership in movements had arisen some time before this document. Already, in a 2013 report to a funder (CLP, 2013a), CLP had spoken about a "difficult but honest" meeting between the leadership of the Rural Network, community representatives and CLP. It had been agreed that CLP staff would engage with grassroots people in the various areas and communities within the Network, rather than working only with the leadership. The CLP staff focus group (23/2/2017) specifically referred to a concern about how their relationship with movements can begin to close down rather than open up emancipatory politics:

> In our planning meeting in 2014, we were exploring ways in which we can, sort of… Because we changed our focus, because there were times where we worked within the centres of movements, when we realized there was something called a centre in the movement, in the movements. And also a periphery. So, there were challenges with working with the centre that we were experiencing, both with the Rural Network and *Abahlali*. That led us to reflect deeply, to say, actually where should our focus be? And resolve that it should be the periphery. And so that is how we started forming cluster meetings, especially for us who are working with the rural communities, because they were far apart from each other. So what we can do, is to try to draw in the activists to a central place where we can meet with them, outside their normal place. That is why we call them cluster meetings, where planning would be done and what is happening in different areas, that kind of struggle where people are involved with strategies and all those things. And then task teams will be formed to be able to monitor the developments of those clusters.

The language used in the focus group discussion reflects in another document produced in that same year (2014a), 'Centres and peripheries', which explored the issue of leadership (i.e. the centre) in some of the movements and formations they were working with, expressing concern about their 'diminished practice':

> The diminished practice of movements and formations appears to be:
>
> - to recruit members,
> - to defend the legitimacy and importance of the centre,

- to apportion blame to the outsider or those away from power,
- to ensure members know and toe the line that is determined by the centre.

> This has been our recent experience as we have sought to take stock of the Rural Network and work out the next steps in our relationship with this movement. Reflections and discussions with the leadership of the Rural Network are ongoing and these dynamics will be worked out in the process, but this has certainly been disquieting. As we reflected for ourselves on this politics of the centre, we were aware of how this describes the functioning of most organisations and serves to create hierarchy and exclusion i.e. this is nothing new! For example, in church language we have words such as evangelism and discipleship which have been used to ensure converts toe the line and receive the truth. (CLP, 2014a, n.p.)

As discussed here, this is clearly an ongoing issue – an example is my observation of the Rural Network meeting, where high-talking male leaders still seemed to dominate. My focus group with *Abahlali* members also raised the issue of CLP's disagreement with the movement's decision to support the DA in the 2014 general election. Thus, although CLP retained relationships with movements and formations with whom they had started working in the previous period, the nature of these relationships was open to constant critical reflection and change.

The organisation also maintained ongoing relationships with many other thinkers and writers whose work resonated with their own thinking, as is evident from the *Padkos* events and emails, intellectual connections which will be explored in more detail in due course. Connections to theological formations and individuals also continued. Graham taught a theology course on the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, thus continuing a long-established relationship, but also attempting to create a new cadre of critical theologians (Interview 1/2/2017). He also attended the World Meeting of Popular Movements in Rome in 2017, an initiative of Pope Francis to create an 'encounter' between Church leadership and grassroots organisations. As this extended discussion in the CLP staff focus group suggests, a particular relationship that continued to be an important one was with Bishop Rubin Phillip:

> P5: There was also this bishop on issues of power [referring to the timeline]…

P3: I think he was involved in a lot of talks with *Abahlali*. He went with Graham overseas after the attacks to mobilise some support…

P1: I think his involvement is more of trying to represent the voices of the Church within the popular struggle. Even though I am not sure, this is just me [talking]. I am not sure because this is where I fail to distinguish, but since he's a bishop I would say he is representing the Church. I fail to distinguish between him and the church that he represents.

P5: Maybe you would like to use a word like 'influential figure', his presence or his voice carries weight. So usually, as a friend of the organisation he has some key role that he played when there is a need for his person and his office as the bishop. Because both, I mean he's a very well-known bishop and influencing maybe key places. So that was quite important and I think also there are also these Lent… letters that we are usually writing to the funders. You know when negotiating for funds also that plays a key role in the organisation being able to add a necessary source to come through. But also in the times of struggle in certain communities, where there is a need to have such figures in the protection of those particular victimised communities. Particularly at activists, then they are being persecuted, that is when such officers stand up and say something about it.

P1: Also his presence, it also shuns away the fact that the activists are being criminals. Because with his 'collar' in endorsing whatever the activists are doing vis-à-vis the state, [which is] trying to show that the activists are being criminals.

P5: Maybe one of the other things I can mentioned is that the Bishop would also call on the resources of CLP. When he is not sure of a particular politics of a particular issue that he needs to respond to, he will call upon the analysis of CLP to be able to respond appropriately, yes, and thinking as the organisation, be able to respond appropriately because he is well informed about the particular position.

P2: I don't think he spoke on behalf of us, on behalf of the activists, but he would support us as a church person.

P5: And endorsing what the organisation and activists were saying.

> P4: Remember when some of the *Abahlali* were in prison, he would go and visit them, showing that they were not criminals – such an important figure would not go and visit criminals in prison.

As is clear, Bishop Rubin provided significant support and solidarity to CLP's work and the social movements and formations it was working with; but he also drew on CLP as a resource.

5.6.4 Intellectual resources

As can be seen from an earlier discussion, around 2010, Fanon began to appear as an important resource to help CLP understand what was happening in the country, as well as to inform how they should respond – as Graham said in his interview, "if you had asked us in the earlier years, Fanon didn't feature" (Interview 1/2/2017). In trying to account for why CLP began to reference Fanon, Graham is clear that Fanon was arrived at only after CLP's engagement with many other thinkers and writers, and in particular, Biko:

> That leads to, and I want emphasise that very strongly, because that was absolutely critical for us, in terms of thinking it through, and then, when we came to Fanon, it was in that process of continuing to find resources to help us see our context and think it through. And some reading of Mosala, Itumeleng Mosala, a black theologian in South Africa, and to realise that people like Biko and Mosala had this kind of connection to Fanon, was interesting for me. And then some of reading of Fanon at that stage was the reading of how to understand the nature of the South African state. And that was almost some of the way in, was his writings about the post-colonial state. And how what happened in those struggles for liberation, independence, in Africa was not necessarily a change of the colonial state, but just a change in personnel. And that became, aha, a way to understand the dynamics of what was taking place. Because that was 2010, around about then… 2009 had been the year of the attack on *Abahlali*. How is it that the so-called democratic state, that the ANC specifically, could actually lead such a brutal attack on formations of the poor? How's that possible in such a short period of time? And the reading of Fanon in the midst of all of that was a really important resource. And then from that into reading his other writings and work… (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

As shown here, for Graham, Fanon was particularly helpful in understanding the attack on *Abahlali* in 2009. Mark also said that CLP came to Fanon as a way of understanding the context, although he does not make it as clear how CLP 'found' Fanon:

> I suppose in general my sense is that in the South African context, in fact Fanon has for long time, actually been very undervalued. And I think that people at around that time, so you're now talking like a decade after our '94 event, people need to think their new situation through carefully, and they're looking for tools that are helpful for what's coming up in the situation. And that situation is now ten years after so-called freedom – how come things don't feel free. So people are drawing on resources that they have, and their own thoughts and what have you. But I think Fanon is particularly helpful there, because he precisely is the militant thinker who is part of the anti-colonial struggle, very deeply enmeshed in that, but writes his most famous piece in a similar kind of moment after so-called liberation when he can see so clearly, this is going terribly, terribly wrong. But he remains committed to people's power and people's struggle, so although he sees this is going terribly wrong, he doesn't become cynical and say, oh well, therefore struggle is bad, or, he doesn't just withdraw; he remains a militant to his dying breath. And I think that appeals to people who are taking up struggles a decade after so-called freedom needing to validate the struggle and think about, fuck, why has this gone so wrong, who can help us think this through. And Fanon I think is the figure. I'm sure you'll have read chapters like 'The pitfalls of national consciousness' and so on, where… for, I think for a lot of people, that was really powerful, to find a comrade who… because people felt very kind of betrayed by comrades and the struggle, and to find someone speaking, not as someone who is outside, and criticising liberation struggles, but who was inside but also saw, with clarity. I think that's part of it. And of course he's just an extraordinarily powerful thinker. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

David N. recounted a slightly different way into Fanon:

> First, earlier, even before we even got to 2011, Richard [Pithouse] is a Fanonian scholar. Ever since we have known him, and have had engagements with him, he always read Fanon and engaged using Fanon and his life history. Another fellow who is important just like him was this guy from England, he's coming out now. He wrote a Fanon book, *From Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo*, Nigel Gibson. These guys, both

> of them, they are Fanonian scholars, at least that have spent time… when even they talk to anybody, us. CLP had this practice of having round tables, so you'll invite these fellows. And they spend mornings with us. So, when we were reminded that it was the fiftieth year, 2011 was the fiftieth year, since Fanon passed on, there was such, there was such… amongst circles of those who believe in African rebirth, and African power, black power in Africa, and emancipation of Africans in Africa, we thought, well, we need to revive discussions about what Fanon stood for and what Fanon argued in his lifetime. And we hosted an event, we had a week-long event where we invited people to talk, and we engaged with local groups and social movements on issues that he raised, you know. We had to go through some of his work, *Black Skin, White Masks*, the whole anti-colonial struggle that he was part of. And his…almost I would say, if I steal from theological vocab, his prophetic work in *The Wretched of the Earth*, you know how he described the pre- and during- and post-colonial wars and struggles. Where the role played by newly appointed African governments significantly betrayed the struggle that people have waged against colonial powers. That being fuelled by greed of the newly appointed governments, and serving their colonial masters although they are now in power, they'll still continue to serve them by even betraying some of their old [comrades] to the point of assassinations, Patrice Lumumba being one of those who died because someone was serving the interest of the colonial master. So Fanon for CLP then became such an important theorist and an important activist who also influences this journey that CLP is taking, has taken, of wanting to serve and be the reminder that life is not what is should be, and for it to be where it should be and what it should be, it is in the hands of the people. Which is what also Fanon pushes hard, that as an expert… and this tallies with what Paulo Freire says, that it is in the hands of the people, in a nutshell. If you want to teach them, at least teach them that they have the power to change the world, and so, ja, Fanon is very much important in the life of CLP and the work that CLP does. (David N., Interview 21/2/2017)

The first mention of Fanon in the CLP staff focus group (23/2/2017) is also in relation to Richard Pithouse; although they had inserted Fanon on the timeline as part of a list of theorists, theories, writers and people, all of who influenced the organisation. Staff spoke about Pithouse, Neocosmos, Gordon and Gibson as all being scholars of Fanon: "all their thinking is about Fanon and how does each struggle within the world link to Fanon". Staff

thus clearly understood Fanon as currently relevant to actual struggle, and the importance of visits by Fanonian scholars to this understanding.

As mentioned, Fanon and Fanonian scholars featured prominently in *Padkos* events, starting with the Fanomenal event in 2011. Fanon, and the work on Fanon, continued to feature prominently in the *Padkos* events and hence the *Padkos Digest*, with repeated visits by Pithouse, Gibson and noted Fanonian scholar, Gordon, through the years. Neocosmos was also referred to in interviews and focus groups. As is evident, it is very particular Fanonian scholars that the CLP has established a relationship with; and as discussed in Chapter Four, there are variant readings of Fanon. Mark acknowledged this in his interview, and emphasised CLP's particular reading:

> I suppose one of the reasons why he's attractive is because he can be read differently, and I think that's one of the dangers of some of Fanon's popularity now, as people read the bits they like or that suits them. Which is kind of how we all read, I suppose [laughs], to some extent. But in Fanon's case I think it's really important to make sure that you've got some kind of handle on the whole work, not just the phrases you like. So, and I think, certainly in the last few years, after that high point of our engagement with Fanon theory and thinking and applying it now, you can see in the last few years certain ways of so-called struggle that are being waged now in this country. People use Fanon in ways that I think it quite grossly 'misusing' what he was saying. And he can easily be misused, to justify a kind of hyper masculine violence and so on. Where obviously, he was a deeply concerned psychiatrist just noting how awful this was, he wasn't. . . So I think there is this danger now, to break him up into the kind of bits you like. His power is the work as a whole. But yes, I think that was the main thing; that, although he was seen as a great African revolutionary thinker, he also saw the truth after political freedom and … knew that it needed to go further. And so, then, I think the way in which his thinking connected with some of what … you know, when we were talking about Paulo Freire, and I said that there's a couple of basic features and the second one that I mentioned was this kind of self-reliant idea. I think politically Fanon absolutely holds that true, that it's in the people's hands, finally. Nothing else will save them except themselves. It's not easy. I think people are often shocked by how, at how clear he is on that. He does not let the people off lightly at all, he says anyone who comes pretending anything other than – this situation is your shit – it's up to you, that's relentlessly, you know, he has this… the definition of political education

> is relentlessly to put the problem back to the people. And I think that that also just kind of tied in with the situation we needed to think through, which was that it became so clear that anything other than people relying first and foremost on their own thinking, their own collective strength, was going to weaken them. Again, I'm not saying that there's no role for us in struggle, but it needs to be one where the people are strong. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

It is evident from Mark's interview that CLP's reading is influenced by the Fanonian scholars it has developed a relationship with:

> I'm not an academic and, as far as I'm concerned, my tax money pays for academics to do the work, so I look for good readers of Fanon whose interpretation feels robust and helpful to me. So, rather than the books, I mean, I think people clustered around a group like Lewis Gordon, Nigel Gibson, Richard Pithouse; they've been the ones I've found most helpful to guide me into the world of someone like Fanon, who I don't find easy to read. I've finally read the whole book and what have you, but, you know, it's not easy reading, so I absolutely use others who've done the reading, made the connections, and so on. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

Whilst Fanon was not the only thinker that CLP was referencing during this time, the frequency of *Padkos* notices, resources and presentations relating to Fanon was evident. What is striking is that some of the more 'academic' resources referred to in the interviews and key CLP documents hardly appear in the *Padkos* emailings (other than those related to the key documents themselves). In my earlier detailed discussion on *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010) and *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b), in their analysis of emancipatory politics, CLP cited Rancière (politics versus the police) and Badiou (politics as at a distance from the state). Rancière and Badiou were also written down by the CLP staff in the focus group, and by David N. on the timelines they completed; they were both specifically referred to by Mark and Graham in their interviews:

> And then there was a time when we actually drew on some, I think mostly radical French philosophers, who helped us again question, challenged our thinking on notions of change, of civil society, of the state, the agency of people, of how change takes place, and the notion of rupture and truth. And so we began with Lazarus, the reading of Lazarus, and then Badiou, talking about the event, the eventful nature of truth, and the rupture that takes place. And so, in fact one of the concepts we came up

> with was rupture from below, solidarity from elsewhere. That's what we're looking for in our practice. And Rancière, of the counting of the uncounted… And those, that mix, was really foundational for us; and I think, when I look back, that was the period we were trying to find words, trying to think through, trying to understand ourselves and trying to see what's happening in practice. And we would read, we read Lazarus, we read Badiou, we read Rancière, and it was tough, it was hard! But it was finding ways to give expression to what we were struggling with. And, one article that was useful, it was written by Neocosmos, an overview particularly of those two (i.e. Lazarus and Badiou]; and then later on Rancière, again comparing it to our own history in South Africa, and going back to a stage in the 80s of the UDF, and looking at this type of politics, which resonated with us, it was a yup, we begin to see our own struggle better, and we're in this position, we are in… in the year of 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 is trying to understand, this is not the freedom that we longed for, this is not the freedom that [we] expected to be living after 1994. Now why is that? And those thinkers, writers, helped us to think that through. And find ways to articulate it. (Graham, Interview 1/2/2017)

Clearly, Badiou and Rancière were being referenced as a way of analysing the current context, but also in thinking a new politics – but, ironically a 'new' politics that reflected something of the 'old' politics of the UDF days. This is something Mark also suggests:

> I mean it is true, when we were trying to work through and find ways of talking about, and organising the new thinking that was needed for the situation – and I think that's important – it was the situation that needed that, not some new theory that we had, how do we implement this, we were in the new situation, new challenges. And so at a point I do think that the sort of intellectual traditions that hadn't been part of the mix before were people like Alain Badiou, and Jacques Rancière, in particular. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

Another more academic resource referred to in the interviews and documents, but also appearing in the *Padkos* emailings and events, was Holloway, a writer closely associated with the Zapatistas. Holloway was invited to run an event in Pietermaritzburg by CLP in 2012, and a number of pieces written by him were circulated on the Padkos list. CLP also produced a short booklet in English and isiZulu on Holloway. In my interview with him, David N. said that Holloway has been an important resource for CLP:

> For my sake, I mean, John Holloway, his *Changing the World Without Taking Power*, his analysis of how economy functions, how we as the peoples of the world can hit back. He continues to produce quite fascinating materials. I've put just here under 2008, but throughout until today. You know he had recently produced *Crack Capitalism,* where he maintains his argument that, as people, we don't have to sit back and watch, there are opportunities we can take advantages of, and make our mark in cracking the walls of capitalism. So he's very influential. (David N., Interview 21/2/2017)

Another more 'academic' thinker who appears to be important to the organisation is Anna Selmeczi, a political theorist from Hungary based in South Africa (and now a CLP Board member). Selmeczi's article "*We are the People who Don't Count" – Contesting Biopolitical Abandonment* was the very first one to be circulated on the *Padkos* list, and the discussion on it (with her) the first *Padkos* event. Selmeczi was also asked to write the foreword to the second *Padkos Digest*. Her thinking on politics is referred to in *What CLP Believes* (CLP, 2013b), and her name was written on some of the timelines. Other academic thinkers who ran *Padkos* events included Silvia Federici, Richa Nagar, Firoze Manji (the latter who has been a frequent visitor), and Aziz Choudry. All were included on at least one of the timelines (Manji on more than one). Freire still continued to be referenced, although far less so (although CLP ran a Freire 'School of Thought' in 2018 – see Annexure 4).

In this period, it is clear that CLP was still frequently referencing the thinking of movements or movement thinkers – in particular *Abahlali* and S'bu Zikode, and the Zapatistas and Subcomandante Marcos. However, it does seem that the Black Consciousness Movement, and, in particular, Steve Biko, was beginning to drawn on in a more conscious way. To some extent, as already mentioned, this was the route to Fanon:

> But for myself, that's why I wrote it on the side a bit, at this stage [i.e. of reading Badiou and Rancière] also reading some of this, and thinking back to the 80s, took me back and read again Biko, from his own reflections, and writing, reading, ja *I write what I like* was one thing, but I came across minutes and articles that he'd written, as part of the student movement and the black consciousness movement, particularly in relation to the churches. So going back and reading that stuff, just reminded me, yup, there was a whole other dynamic in our struggle history as well, beside that phase around the 90s of negotiations. And then again, Rick Turner was really useful there.

> That leads to, and I want emphasise that very strongly, because that was absolutely critical for us, in terms of thinking it through, and then, when we came to Fanon, it was in that process of continuing to find resources to help us see our context and think it through. And some reading of Mosala, Itumeleng Mosala, a Black theologian in South Africa, and to realise that people like Biko and Mosala had this kind of connection to Fanon, was interesting for me. (Graham Interview, 1/2/2017)

5.6.5 Conceptual understandings

The intellectual resources CLP was drawing on for some of their thinking and terminology are reflected in the concepts identified by the people I interviewed as important at this time. Graham, David N. and the CLP focus group mentioned the phrase '*living learning*', Graham mentioned '*living politics*' and '*we make our path as we walk*'. David N. mentioned '*emancipatory praxis*'. Some of the terms, concepts or phrases which I derived from the 2010 CLP document include:

- '*principles of good stuff*' (CLP's beliefs about the basis of emancipatory politics);
- '*pre-figurative politics'* (the politics of doing now, in struggle, that which we are struggling for);
- '*universal truth'* (non-discriminatory and inclusive truth, truth that is for everyone, everywhere, but which emerges from specific, situated struggles on the ground, not as abstract ideas);
- '*made in out-of-order militant action'* (emancipatory acts initiated by the poor);
- '*voice, whose voice*' (a critique of organisations who do not respect the views of the poor);
- '*the world-as-it-is'* (the present order of things which is controlled by the state/the 'police'/capitalist interests);
- '*the world-as-it-should-be*' (an anticipated egalitarian world which emancipatory politics seeks to achieve);
- '*talking less – more listening in solidarity*' (this refers to the role of CLP towards the communities that it is working with, post-shift, but does not negate it's role as a critical listener);
- '*the state-of-things as they are – is the terrain of death and dead ends* (i.e. 'the-world-as-it-is').

As already mentioned, the CLP staff focus group (23/2/2017) also identified '*living faith*' as a key concept that the organisation was drawing on at this time.

This language shows how CLP was forced to find new language about its thinking – in other words, in Rule and John's (2011) terminology an 'underground' discourse to make its departure from the 'liftground' clearer. Mark spoke specifically about how and why it had to do this – to try to talk about what it was thinking and doing in a new way:

> I have never been aware, there's never been a conversation about, we should find other ways of saying the same thing. I think it's just, always just… it depends on what someone's reflection started on, what we're reading at the time, what we need to say, and so on, and we scramble, and sometimes we just make shit up to try and express stuff. And I think certainly an idea like the world-as-it-is, the world-as-it-could-be, I mean I think that that sense, of this radical splitting between this one or that one, was a huge part of how we were thinking at that time. And sometimes because language just tends to get co-opted and loses it power, sometimes you do feel, and especially because I am the one who often has a role on writing down the stuff that we are talking about, I am very aware when you reach a point, where you need to start… I mean, I can almost feel like physically smashing the walls of how language is locking us in here, we want to say something other than… Because otherwise people read it, and, ja, look, another lefty NGO. And we really wanted to say, no, there is something new here… (Interview 6/2/2017)

5.7 Research Question 1: Why and how did CLP change its practice?

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that from the time of its inception as an independent organisation (1997), CLP was a relatively stable conventional NGO. It was only in the 2000s that situations around and within CLP started to make them question their practice. CLP documents, especially the 2001 evaluation document, highlighted a number of events that led to a growing unease. Of significance was the formation of the Landless People's Movement in 2001, which signalled the fact that the people were not happy with the land distribution process. The LPM was part of the first wave of social movements that took place around that time (2000), as was discussed in Chapter Three, emerging as a response to the introduction of GEAR (Harley, 2012). Since organised labour, which used to challenge such issues in the past, had failed to do so now, social movements themselves decided to challenge these

neoliberal policies (Gibson, 2006). At first, the NGOs were involved, but as the process went on, the social movements opposed these policies independently. Hlatshwayo (2008) states that by 2005 the social movements had died out because their leaders has become elitist to an extent that they could not meaningfully connect with popular communities. Some would argue that the failure was because some of these social movements were a product of NGOs or the 'brainchild' of the leftist leaders. The CLP evaluation document (Hallowes, 2004) also identified two pieces of draft legislation, which gave the markets a direct determining power over the process of land redistribution, thus advancing neoliberal policies.

As discussed in Chapter Three, to understand the global context in which the government was working, Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004) explain the concept of developmentalism as the guiding principle used by the South African government. CLP acknowledges and affirms their argument in their 2007 Occasional Paper (Butler et al., 2007). The South African government's developmentalism did not take the plight of the poor as a priority, because it was meant to fulfil the needs of the United States' hegemonic programme, which can be traced back from World War II. The government's development programmes such as the RDP and GEAR were, to some degree, part of the global process of expanding the control of the dominant over the world's wealth. Rist (1997) has pointed out that the developmentalism strategy was designed in such a way that not only allowed the market to dictate, but also determined the nature of rule (liberal democracy), which supported these hegemonic powers. Since South Africa wanted to be integrated into the global economy, which Hart (2013) calls denationalisation, it was obliged to conform to the dictates of the main global players. As a result of this thinking, global events such as the WSSD were not trusted by other civil society formations. The participation of civil society formations in conferences such as these caused much debate on whether to attend or to demonstrate against this event, perceived as counter to genuine development.

It was within this context that Graham (Interview 1/2/2017) pointed out that CLP had to make a decision on whether to work with the government or look for an alternative way of working. CLP recognised that, even if it was not the one directly influencing policies that condemned the poor to poverty, it was nevertheless an accomplice, as expressed by David N. (Interview 21/2/2017). In its 2007 Occasional Paper, CLP had noted that not only was it an accomplice, but so was civil society in general, including the Church. As long as they continued to work within a project favouring the powerful, they were no different from the ones who make most of the decisions.

Graham, during the interview, had told me the story of the woman who came to him asking him to stop the process of the transferral of the Church land to her community – an event which as discussed I have identified as a critical event for him, and thus CLP as a whole. He had been shocked because CLP assumed the transferral was a cause for celebration, the attainment of the purpose of the organisation. The woman's story made him realise that the process was done from the elitist viewpoint, even from within the community. The Church, NGOs and the government conducted these processes on behalf of the poor, assuming that they know the best interests of the people. This woman was trying to make Graham aware that this land would ultimately end up in the hands of the powerful, the men of the community. If the process had been done from the perspective of the poor, it would have been more beneficial to the intended parties. CLP realised that what they thought was a successful land project, was actually a failure, and this horrified them. Hence, there was a need to radically change their practice.

Since CLP had been working with the government and the Church, when it started to reflect on its relations with these two institutions it realised that its own practice has been problematic: "We became aware of the dangers of reaching an analytical conclusion to speak for the interests of the poor without seriously reflecting on and criticising of our own practice" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 4). As an organisation, CLP realised that it had been part of the oppressive state: "somehow the way we were working as an NGO seemed to be in a pattern that depoliticised our contact with the landless poor, and stayed within the boundaries and bureaucracies of the official controlling system" (p. 5). It discovered within this system, there was a hierarchical relationship between NGOs and communities – an NGO's duty was to both teach and impose on the people. The same logic was true of relations with the churches and the state. There was a need "to rethink some… fundamental assumptions about the relationship between freedom, the state and political power" (p. 8). As a result of this decision, CLP came to two important insights. Firstly, it acknowledged that its practice silenced ordinary people, or persuaded them of what they should say (even when they claim to be giving a 'voice to the voiceless'). Secondly, if it was going to be of any use, it needed to nurture and learn from actual movements from below (p. 8).

The first step was to publish an occasional paper strongly condemning the land reform process, *Land in South Africa: Gift for All or Commodity for a Few?* (Philpott & Butler, 2004), which highlighted CLP's growing critique of the land reform process of that time:

> Land reform in South Africa has been effectively subordinated to an economic development model that will not ultimately transform land and agriculture along biblical, ethical lines. Under enormous pressure from powerful economic interests and ideologies – globally and within the country – the real priorities of land and agricultural reform are being directed away from the interests of the poor. (Philpott & Butler, 2004, p. 18)

From its inception, CLP had worked as a mediator between churches, communities and the government, but after 2004, it had decided to take sides – it took the side of the oppressed, working with grassroots organisations and movements. In 2004, CLP adopted animation as central to its practice. This was a way of breaking out of the generic NGO way of working with communities. From an animation perspective, people and communities are agents of whatever is happening in their lives. Animation allowed CLP to recognize that communities can rise up and face whatever challenges they encounter with the realisation that no one can solve their problems but themselves. As expressed in the interviews, CLP can only support and encourage communities to work out their lives for themselves. Closely linked to that notion is accompaniment, the process where CLP fieldworkers are accompanied by someone to assist them to critically reflect on their interaction with communities and structures. In generic NGO practice, the NGO has power over the communities, deciding for them through programming. Accompaniment checks the balance of power between the communities and members of CLP. The organisation used the phrase 'walking with the communities', in other words, learning from communities. According to Mark, the xenophobia of 2008 reinforced for CLP the need to challenge the politics of the poor if it is at all exclusive – any real politics has to be inclusive (and universal) to be emancipatory. Thus, in *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010) universality is emphasised in which everyone matters.

CLP's shift in praxis thus followed the following trajectory:

1. It refused to play the role of 'stakeholder', mediator, expert, and consciously took a preferential option for the poor.
2. Therefore, it shifted to working in solidarity with grassroots formations, not for them – to being in solidarity, not leading – because the people themselves can think, and must think and act for their own emancipation (and that of everybody else):

   > We deeply believe that nothing other than the struggles of the people themselves create the possibility for really changing the world – changing it away from what it is,

> and towards what it should and could be. We have seen and learned enough to know by now that anything else, any promise that some outside power or project will free the people, or will develop the people, or will fundamentally change the world, is a lie. And we know that the effect of that lie is to continuously make the people avoid the terrible but liberatory truth that change, rebellion, transformation is in their hands. (Butler et al., 2010, p. 3)

3. CLP needs to learn from those who are struggling, listen to them, and reflect with them.
4. Its role is thus to provide information, create space for reflection, "encourage them to be self-reliant, in their thinking, in their politics, in their practice" (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017).
5. All emancipatory struggle is grassroots; but grassroots struggle is not necessarily emancipatory. CLP therefore has a role to play also in questioning positions (but never impose or decide) from the basis of a clear understanding of what emancipatory politics actually is. CLP thus, inter alia, focuses attention on the periphery, not the centre, even in movements of the poor.
6. For CLP, this is as much a return to old, emancipatory praxis (of the UDF moment), as it is the creation of a new praxis.

5.8 Research Question 2: Which theoretical influences contributed to this shift?

It became clear to me as I undertook this study that this research question is in one sense problematic, since it assumes that CLP's shift was the result of theoretical engagement. The discussion above has made it clear that CLP's shift was rather the result of its dialectical engagement with the context, and its deep reflection on this context, its practice, and the consequences of its practice. This is something the organisation itself seems to be clear on, as was made evident by something Mark said in his interview:

> We were trying to work through and find ways of talking about, and organising the new thinking that was needed for the situation – and I think that's important – it was the situation that needed that, not some new theory that we had, how do we implement this, we were in the new situation, new challenges. (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017)

Graham also argued that rather than being 'influenced' by, for example, Freire, the organisation found synergy between what it was thinking and the thinking of others. Interestingly, this is exactly what Freire recounts about his experience of reading Fanon's WE: "the satisfying sensation with which we are taken when we find a confirmation of the 'why' of the certitude we find within ourselves" (1994/2014, p. 132).

Nevertheless, the organisation clearly did draw on intellectual resources, and it is possible to trace the influence of some of this work. CLP has used a variety of resources to clarify or better understand their practice and their context, to 'think through' and 'articulate', as they say. As has been shown through CLP's life history, the resources that they used are numerous. This section summarises these resources, discussing those that were prominently raised by almost all interviews, focus groups and documents. I categorise these resources into three sections: theological resources, intellectual resources and the thinking and theorising of social movements.

Theological resources: These resources were used during the early years of the organisation, especially for finding ways of thinking about the significance of land to the people. The Pontificate Council for Justice and Peace was raised by both Graham and David N. and in the 2004 Occasional Paper. This document emphasises the fact that land is not for the few, but should be shared among all. Almost all the interviews and the CLP focus group mentioned theology, but in different ways. What seems to be common among all participants is that they spoke of theology from a people's perspective and from a perspective that unites rather than divides. It is as if their theology has a human face and is defined through people's everyday struggles. Terms that were used are 'critical theology', 'liberation theology', 'black theology' or 'contextual theology'. After the organisation's change, i.e. from 2004, theological resources appear to have been drawn on far less; the data suggests that theological concepts were now emerging more organically – such as 'living faith'.

'Academic' resources: The two *Padkos Digests* produced by the organisation are a collection of various pieces which had been circulated on the *Padkos* email list, written either by themselves or others (see Annexure 4). Many writers of these could be characterised as 'academic' (really activist-academic), although some are more 'popular' pieces than academic texts. Many writers are not 'academic', but rather more activist. From the *Padkos Digests*, I purposefully selected writings by Holloway, Gibson, Pithouse, Neocosmos and Zikode (although I discuss Zikode in the next section). As should be clear by now, all of

these thinkers have been frequently referenced by CLP. They also appear repeatedly in the *Padkos* mailings. By 2018, nine *Padkos* postings spoke about Pithouse, and nine pieces of writing by him had been shared. Gibson had been the focus of seven notices, and four pieces of writing circulated. Five notices had been about Holloway, and eight pieces of writing sent out. Although only three pieces by Neocosmos had been circulated on *Padkos*, he had participated in and presented at three different events (Holloway had run an event only once, and Gibson twice – still significant, given that both are based in North America). Whilst Zikode has not been specifically referenced in *Padkos* notices as much as the others, he has also participated in two events, and had pieces of writing shared; and *Abahlali* as a whole are repeatedly referenced on *Padkos* (see Annexure 4).

I scanned the writings by these five thinkers to allow me to read and assess the specific elements that were intimately connected to CLP's beliefs and praxis. I looked at Holloway's article, 'The Politics of Dignity and the Politics of Poverty', and two interviews with him. I discovered that he sees the poor not as people who lack, but as people who deserve to be respected and not simply represented; he sees the need for a better society where dignity is mutual; and he does not support taking the power of the state and despised capitalism.

The book that seemed prominent (especially during the event dedicated to Fanon) is by Gibson, called *Fanonian Practices in South Africa: From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo* (2011a). Gibson examines post-apartheid South Africa through Frantz Fanon's revolutionary humanism. He wanted to show that the South Africa that was exalted as a successful democracy has recently degenerated to the level characterised as the post-colonial crisis described by Fanon in the 1950s and 1960s, founded on the narrow and exclusive understanding of nationalism and neocolonialism. The book seeks to ask how Fanon might think and act in the face of the present day post-apartheid crisis.

Three articles by Pithouse that I selected and scanned are 'Locust on the horizon', 'Ramle Prison to the world' and 'A path through the embers'. From these it became clear that, firstly, he sees the state as violent and unjust in response to the genuine demands of the poor, to the extent of criminalizing them; secondly, he views administration of justice by the state as selective, privileging dominant groups over other groups. In other words, the state is not a place of true freedom, but represents the interests of an elite.

Concerning Neocosmos' work, I read his book chapter called 'Fanon, Emancipatory Nationalism and Political Sequences' (from a book edited by Nigel Gibson, *Living Fanon:*

Global Perspectives), where he talks about how periodisation of history has been controlled by the elite and how Fanon's thinking goes beyond this. His book, *Thinking Freedom in Africa* came highly recommended on CLP's *Padkos* list (a book which I used in my exploration of emancipatory politics in Chapter Three). In his explanation of emancipatory politics he frequently uses Badiou and Rancière's ideas. From the former he uses the terms 'exception' as central to the people who speak and 'move out of place'. He uses another term from Rancière, 'rational dis-identification', which he understands as tearing away from the naturalness of place, the opening of place where anyone can be counted (Neocosmos, 2016). According to Neocosmos, Badiou sees true politics as true identification beyond representation, beyond identity – as universal. Another concept from Badiou that Neocosmos uses is 'event' – something which ruptures what is, to create the potential of something new. Although an event is local, it surpasses the local and gives rise to universal possibilities (Neocosmos, 2016). As can be seen in its life history, CLP uses Badiou's idea of emancipatory politics as a "rupture with what is – it is the void of the situation" (CLP, 2013b), and Rancière's idea of state politics as of the order of 'the police' (CLP, 2013b).

Social movements and grassroots struggles: It is significant that many resources referenced by CLP include communities that were trying to live a life beyond the status quo and outside of the state's control, in a place where everybody (already) matters, particularly after CLP began to have links with *Via Campesina* and MST between 2002 and 2004, and *Abahlali baseMjondolo* from 2006. It was a learning process for the organisation and a decisive step towards taking the side of those 'who do not count' (but do, really). As can be seen from the interviews, the evaluation reports, and the Padkos emailings, CLP frequently referenced *Via Campesina*, MST, the Zapatistas, and *Abahlali*, and their thinking and politics.

CLP (2013b, p. 5) refers to Zikode's definition of politics as moving "out of the places where oppression has assigned us…dead politics of the state and the parties is always the instruction to go back to your place". Zikode (and *Abahlali*) suggests a living politics – everyday life, thinking, language and the struggle of the people – as the politics of dignity. In the foreword to Gibson's (2011a) book, Zikode expresses the idea that *Abahlali's* politics is not a product of theorists like Fanon, but rather of the learning process of the struggle, although theories are important as supporting instruments. He is critical of the middle class, who think they can represent the poor. He also sees the state as violent and seeking to criminalise the poor.

Many of the resources discussed here seem to be against state politics, tending to support a specific group and to problematise civil society, and the idea of civil society. These resources emphasise the dignity of 'uncivil' society, as Neocosmos calls it, and 'political' society, as understood by Chatterjee, or Sen's term 'incivil' society. State politics does not allow true freedom and it can only be outside this type of politics that the possibility of a true egalitarian freedom is found. The objective of the uncivil/political/incivil society is to create a world in which everybody matters.

It is clear that CLP's shift was not caused by any particular thinker or writer; but the organisation did draw on a wide range of theological, 'academic' and movement/struggle resources, and I would argue that CLP is unusual in the extent to which it explores the ideas and experiences of others. In terms of 'academic' resources, the organisation references philosophical works from all over the world. It is clear from the interviews and focus groups discussion with staff that all of the CLP staff are engaged in this intellectual work, since all referred to a range of writers and thinkers. There was less reference to theological sources (although not theological concepts) in the CLP staff focus group than in my interviews with Graham and David; but many references were made to both 'academic' and movement/grassroots struggle thinking across all interviews and the CLP staff focus group. In terms of movement/struggle resources, CLP actively seeks links with, and resources about, a range of different struggles all over the world. These resources are invariably used in relation to actual, situated experience, and in thinking through their politics and their praxis.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the life history of CLP in which I identified five important periods. The first period dealt with the factors leading to the formation of the organisation, the second and third periods focused on how CLP worked as a conventional NGO and what led it to reconsider its practice. The fourth period concentrated on the actual shift in practice, whilst the final stage considered how this shift has been consolidated. The story of these five periods constitute the answer to my first research question, which I presented. I then used the life history to answer the second research question, which sought to assess the theoretical influences that contributed to this shift.

In order to consider my remaining two research questions, "Which particular elements of the work of Fanon and Freire impact on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and

hence its praxis?", "And what implications does this have within the current South African context?", it is necessary to understand the story of CLP and its emancipatory praxis against the broader literature on civil society and emancipatory politics, especially in relation South Africa's transition. It is also necessary to analyse CLP's story and praxis through the lens of the work of Fanon and Freire. The next chapter thus offers my analysis of CLP's life history in the light of the literature and theoretical frame.

Chapter Six: Deductive Analysis – CLP, Fanon & Freire and Emancipatory Politics

Learning to be 'Out of Order'

6.1 Introduction

My previous chapter presented the life history of CLP, and involved inductively analysing the data collected as part of this study. My initial inductive analysis involved identifying key periods in CLP's life in relation to its shift, using content analysis and drawing on Webster and Mertova's (2007) critical event analysis. I then identified key themes within these periods, again using thematic content analysis, but also deploying Rule and John's (2011) proposal of four lenses of analysis in understanding the relationship between context and case, namely background, foreground, liftground and underground (focusing in this chapter primarily on foreground and underground, since background and liftground were included in Chapter Three). Finally, I used this inductive analysis to answer my first two research questions, 1) What is the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why did the organisation shifted its practice? and 2) Which theoretical influences contributed to the shift?

This chapter presents my deductive analysis. I use five key categories that emerged from CLP's thinking as presented in Chapter Five, and which allow a deeper analysis of the liftground-underground dialectic, and consider these in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Three, and my theoretical framework of Fanon and Freire as presented in Chapter Four:

1) The order of things/the-world-as-it-is versus being 'out of order'/rupture/the-world-as-it-could-be: these concepts focus on CLP's arguments about what is – the status quo – and therefore the need for emancipatory change, and the nature of this. I consider them in the light of Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, and his notion of 'common sense' versus 'good sense', as well as Fanon and Freire's understanding of emancipation as a break with what it.
2) Conventional NGO practice: this theme examines CLP's own conception of civil society, and in particular, how NGO practice tends to support the status quo, and how this comes about. I consider this in the light of the discussion in Chapter Three on

conceptions of civil society and arguments about how civil society has generally functioned on the African continent.

3) Thinking/voice/agency (emancipatory politics): this theme considers CLP's understanding of the nature of agency (both its own, and that of ordinary people), and its assertion that the poor/oppressed are able to think an emancipatory politics, and are responsible for carrying this out. I consider this in relation to the discussion on emancipatory politics in Chapters Three and Four.
4) Supporting/solidarity/walking with/journeying/being with (emancipatory praxis): this theme discusses CLP's new praxis in relation to arguments made by Gramsci, Fanon, Freire and Neocosmos on the role of those who are committed to emancipation, but not subaltern.
5) Reflecting and learning: this theme is the foundation of CLP's praxis. I discuss this in relation to Freire in particular, but also to Fanon's arguments about the importance of the militant intellectual learning from the people.

My discussion concludes with an attempt to answer the third research question: Which particular elements of the work of Freire and Fanon impact on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and hence its praxis?

As noted in the previous chapter, CLP has had to seek language with which to try to describe what they mean – and in that chapter, I consider some of this new language. This language is also reflected in the themes themselves and my discussion of them. Interestingly, Freire pointed out the importance of language – the word – in changing the world:

> The word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible. . . There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. (1970/1993, p. 68)

6.1.1 The order of things/the world-as-it-is versus being 'out of order'/rupture/ the world-as-it-could-be

The 2007 Occasional Paper explains the nature of the order that confronted CLP as follows:

> Analysing the context through the lens of the land reform programme exposed the realities that at the true heart of this South African state project lay a capitalist restructuring and accumulation, as well as the creation of a somewhat deracialised class of 'elite'. And further, that this inevitably implicated it in ongoing exploitation,

> domination and disempowerment of the poor. For an organisation of democrats and activists, these were disturbing conclusions to arrive at only one decade after the 'end' of apartheid. (Butler et al., 2007, p. 4)

CLP's *Summation of Our Principles and Politics* document (CLP, 2013b) describes 'this order of things' or the status quo as the way things are (the world-as-it-is): "The state of the world as it stands promotes inequality and oppression of the majority of the people" (p. 7). As I have discussed, the way things are ordered in South Africa and the world promotes inequality and oppression of the majority through neoliberal capitalist hegemony. The 'world-as-it-is' is the place where the capitalist class presents its interests as if they serve everyone (McLellan, 1980). Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004) assess how this happens, inter alia, through 'developmentalism' – a concept which, as we have seen, CLP drew on in their analysis of the post-apartheid situation.

Interestingly, CLP specifically reference Gramsci in their understanding of how the world-as-it-is is created and maintained:

> The world-as-it-is is structured by an underlying architecture of institutions and ideas that seem to work together to uphold the state of things in the interests of those who benefit from it. It's like a secret code of collaboration to create a certain mentality so that the people are more-or-less indoctrinated to accept the abnormal as normal; to accept it as 'reality' outside of which there is no serious alternative. The Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, elaborated important elements of this in his analysis of hegemony. (Butler et al., 2010, p. 2)

In Gramsci's terms, the world-as-it-is is interpreted as 'common sense', regarded by people as normal and natural, and thus "force is made to appear to be based on consent" (1971, p. 80). Gramsci explains the philosophy of praxis in relation to 'common sense'

> A philosophy of praxis cannot but present itself at the outset in a polemical and critical guise, as superseding the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (the existing cultural world). First of all, it must be a criticism of 'common sense' basing itself entirely, however, on common sense in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 330)

Thomas (2015, p. 11) describes common sense as "a wide range of pre- or non-critical beliefs and ideas operative in everyday life". The need for 'development' is considered common

sense in South Africa today. The manufacture of common sense (i.e. the creation of hegemony), according to Gramsci, is the role of particular private institutions of civil society to benefit the ruling group and, as discussed in Chapter Three (and below) this is a role played by NGOs in Africa and South Africa. This order (status quo) needs to be broken; the process of breaking this order (rupture) is the task of emancipatory politics, "politics as the movement out of the places where oppression has assigned us" (Zikode quoted in CLP, 2013b, p. 5). This break is a categorical rejection of the world-as-it-is in favour of the world-as-it-could-be. While the former is identitarian, selective and oppressive; the latter is universal. It is a world in which everybody matters. This is the place where the politics of dignity is grounded beyond specific identities, a world that defines the true essence of freedom as: everyone counts. Mark calls this a breaking away from a state-oriented system, "trying to break away from a situation that [CLP] was uncomfortable with, and seeing some new possibility" (Interview, 6/2/2017). Graham describes it as moving into the unknown away from the familiar (Interview, 1/2/2017). In their thinking and language, CLP draw on Badiou's understanding of emancipatory politics as "a rupture with what is" (2013b, p. 5). Neocosmos (2016), also drawing on Badiou, explains this rupture as

> Those extraordinary decisions and actions which *isolate* an actor from their context, those actions which show that a human can actually be a free agent that supports *new* chains of actions and reactions. As a result: not every human being is always a subject, yet some human beings *become* subjects; those who act in *fidelity* to a chance encounter with an *event* which disrupts the *situation* they find themselves in. (p. 281)

CLP, as part of its agenda to change its practice, opted for a world-as-it-could-be, a world completely divorced from the present order of things. For Gramsci, Marx and Hegel, the world-as-it-could-be can be achieved through harmonising the contradiction inherent in civil society (although they disagree on how this could be done). Gramsci thought this was possible through the 'philosophy of praxis'. This type of philosophy criticises common sense (the world-as-it-is), in order that people come to recognise 'good sense' as a necessary first step to building the world-as-it-could-be. The world-as-it-is is exclusively reserved for particular group-interests, but the world-as-it-could-be is non-identitarian (Neocosmos, 2016) and inclusive because it seeks to accommodate everyone. The former is oppressive but the latter seeks to counter oppression.

Fanon and Freire saw change as impossible within the status quo because the players in the status quo (the world-as-it-is) are compromised (and dehumanised) by the system. For Fanon (1963, pp. 27, 28), there is a need for a complete change of structures and a new humanity. For Freire (1970/1993, pp. 31, 36, 38) there is a need for a complete change which will constitute new persons, new beings and new man [*sic*]. CLP specifically reference Freire's ideas when they say of the poor, "only their struggles can liberate the world and humanise themselves and the oppressors" (Butler et al., 2010, p. 6).

Fanon and Freire understand the status quo (world-as-it-is) as a Manichean colonial and post-colonial world (Fanon, 1963), a world held in bondage by oppression and characterised by dehumanisation (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 26). Sekyi-Otu (2003) explains the understanding of Fanon in terms of breaking out of order by highlighting his conception of the decolonisation process as follows:

> This is the most revolutionary moment in Fanon's portrait of decolonization, the moment when decolonization ceases to be strictly and restrictively anti-colonialist. Or rather the moment when it becomes most radically anti-colonialist precisely because its political, moral and cultural horizons cease to be concerned with white supremacy, white ethics, in a word with the white man. True decolonization, the post-apartheid, would be signalled by the return of the inward eye upon the native and universal injuries of human existence. (p. 12)

This is what Neocosmos (2016) calls a politics at a distance from the state, or a radical break from common sense or normality. NGOs can either sustain or disrupt the status quo (the world-as-it-is); CLP is one of those NGOs that seek to disrupt the world-as-it-is in a bid to create the 'world-as-it-could-be'. Its emancipatory praxis is about how to do this.

6.1.2 Conventional NGO practice

As is clear, CLP's decision to change from being a conventional NGO to a more radical one was based on the realisation that the role it was playing within the land reform process served the interests of the elite rather than of the people who were supposed to benefit. In their developing analysis, their practice operated largely within the world-as-it-is, and precisely kept it in place through, inter alia, supporting the common sense idea of development. It is also clear that CLP believe this to be the role played by most NGOs (as well as other civil society formations).

The data reveals that CLP now believes that NGOs play a major role in depoliticising, neutralising or even controlling grassroots organisations and communities. Recognising that this was the role that they were playing was an important driver of their shift. As we have seen, Graham is now critical of the years CLP operated as a conventional NGO, and the *Learning to Walk* Occasional Paper reflected deeply on this, arguing that CLP realised that it had been part of the oppressive state machinery: "somehow the way we were working as an NGO seemed to be in a pattern that depoliticised our contact with the landless poor, and stayed within the boundaries and bureaucracies of the official controlling system" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 5). In CLP's analysis this continues to be the role played by most NGOs. Referring to the existing struggles being waged by people in communities, Mark argues that some NGO workers "try to buy their struggle". Both Graham and the CLP staff in the focus group asserted that communities have been domesticated to depend on NGOs for solutions. CLP field workers reported that whenever they visit communities for the first time they are asked if they come with a solution, because of the way communities have been conditioned and controlled by NGOs.

As we have seen, David N. is of the position that NGOs can serve better if they stop being experts, and instead support communities in their struggles. This clearly links to the issue of voice and support – in other words, how does one support without controlling or speaking for people. CLP staff in the focus group pointed out that it is common for NGOs to speak on behalf of communities and use their resources to spearhead whatever programmes they deem necessary for the communities. In this, they concur with *Abahlali's* view:

> It happens most of the time that some organisations are working closely with government, are receiving funds from government to support communities. Those NGOs used to become a big problem because they want to come to your struggle to neutralise it, in such a way that there is no more conflict that is directed to the government. (*Abahlali* focus group, 1/3/2017)

Thus, it is clear that CLP understands NGOs to have played a pivotal role in maintaining the world-as-it-is, which is fundamentally oppressive. This supports studies conducted by Sen (2010), Manji and O'Coill (2002), Ransom (2005), Hearn (2001) and Englund (2006), all of which attest to the fact that NGOs have been actively involved in maintaining and supporting hegemony both globally and on the African continent, inter alia, by depoliticising grassroots organisations and communities. Chapter Three discussed a number of writers who have

shown this to have been the case in South Africa. Habib (2013) asserts that the state was able to shape the role of NGOs as partners in service delivery and policy development inter alia because the donors who had given these organisations money shifted to directly funding the state. Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004) and Ballard et al. (2006) argue that even the creation of SANGOCO was to protect the interests of the state as its neoliberal agenda emerged. Indeed, Greenberg and Ndlovu (2004) suggest that civil society, as a whole, was restructured by the post-apartheid state. Thus, many argue (Helliker, 2010; Pithouse, 2006; Neocosmos, 2016) that other civil society groupings, including social movements, have also played a hegemonic role – a concern which CLP also shares.

However, CLP clearly believe that it is possible to be an NGO which does not play this role; something which Manji and O'Coill (2002) and Hearn (2001) also assert (and *Abahlali* also asserts). In other words, the form does not determine the practice or the politics, as Neocosmos (2016) argues. CLP's analysis is consistent with Gramsci's (1971) argument that private institutions (which would include NGOs) generally operate to manufacture or secure hegemony within civil society, in a dialectical relationship with political society, to establish control over the integral state. It is also consistent with the analysis of Fanon and Freire. As we have seen, David N. compares the methods used by NGOs as synonymous to the Freirean banking method; Freire's idea of animation is the antithesis of this. Both Fanon and Freire are critical of leaders or organisations that seek to control the people and assume that they know nothing.

The link with Freire is, as we have seen, one which CLP itself made right at the start, in their section on 'Realisations about NGO practice' in the Learning to Walk Occasional Paper, where they quote Freire:

> Some of the dominant classes join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation. Theirs is a fundamental role and has been so throughout the history of the struggle. However, as they move to the side of the exploited they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin. Their prejudices include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. So they run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as harmful as that of the oppressors. Though they truly desire to transform the unjust order, they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation.
>
> They talk about the people but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be

> identified more by his [*sic*] trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favour, without that trust. (Freire, quoted in Butler et al., 2007, p. 5)

Fanon described such acts as "criminal superficiality" (Fanon, 1963, p. 159), when he refers to leaders or organisations who educate people with political speeches designed to domesticate them such that they will be faithful to the status quo.

6.1.3 Thinking/voice/agency – emancipatory politics

'Thinking', 'voice' and 'agency' constitute the basis of an emancipatory politics initiated by those who are oppressed. The 2004 CLP evaluation document conceived thinking as a categorising principle of those who prioritised the poor over capital as against those who aligned to capitalist thinking. Thinking starts to take a power-oriented character when CLP's *A CLP Confession of Faith* (cited in CLP, 2013b) sees thinking as both liberatory and oppressive – liberatory in the possession of the poor, but oppressive when used on behalf of the poor by the powerful. The organisation's *Principles of good stuff* (Butler et al., 2010) sees thinking as essential in determining the freedom of the oppressed, "the thinking of the un-thought who are not supposed to think" (p. 9). CLP's *Summation of Our Principles and Politics* (cited in CLP, 2013b) sees thinking as a deciding principle of the nature of politics. Politics is dead, state or party-oriented if it is controlling and used as a vehicle of policing. But it can be emancipatory or living if everybody has room to express their thoughts. In CLP's analysis, NGOs (and civil society in general) are thus generally part of a dead state politics, precisely because they work from an assumption that people cannot think:

> Civil society tends to think for..., and to speak for.... It often assumes it has the solutions, processes, strategies, and theories – and that its role is to mediate these to beneficiaries. The real effect of this work is to relentlessly try and convince the people that they cannot think for themselves, that they cannot think their own politics, and that they cannot take effective action in the world. (CLP, 2013b, p. 6)

If civil society organisations think they can make decisions on behalf people and represent their needs, they would be thinking exactly like the state.

In contrast, CLP's "essential principle is that everybody counts – and its practice is centred on the truth that everybody thinks" (CLP, 2013b, p. 7). Mark's view reflects an ontological understanding of thinking, thinking as the state of being. He also points out that Freire uses

this (ontological) perspective. For Mark, the Freirean tradition starts from where "people are at and respecting their thinking, their critical thinking in it". It is a driving force of the struggle owned, directed and determined by the people.

From early on, CLP appears to have been concerned with the concept of 'voice', as is evident from early evaluation reports; both their own voice, and those of the communities and organisations with whom they work or act in solidarity. The 2001 report (Hallowes, 2001) thus highlights that CLP was "concerned with the people's voices, needs and meaning that they attached to the land" (p. 24). In terms of their own voice, the 2004 evaluation (Hallowes, 2004) document quotes Graham as suggesting that CLP had to decide whether to work with the government policies or "build a critical voice". The idea of a 'critical' voice comes up again in the 2004 Occasional Paper, *Land in South Africa: Gift for All or Commodity for a Few* (Philpott & Butler, 2004), which states that CLP had started to build a critical voice against the government's land reform policy. However, at this point, CLP appears to have understood that its own (critical) voice was potentially overshadowing the voice of the people; or that, in fact, it was not itself listening to the voice of the people: the 2007 evaluation commented "'voice', democracy and mobilisation were integral to CLP's avowed project but not evident as outcomes of its work" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 7).

Thus, reflecting on its practice led CLP to think about its own voice in relation to that of the people. Animation sought to critically engage with communities, fearlessly exposing their divisions and conflicts. This is possible through listening to those voices which are not usually considered important, but not necessarily by remaining silent – it is through dialogue that CLP also expresses its view: "CLP's voice can better be heard from the way it listens and questions for clarity" (Hallowes, 2007, p. 12). In the interviews, the idea of 'voice' had also come out. Graham pointed out that they started to talk about animation around 2004, and in 2009/2010 (i.e. after the shift) the CLP board had asked where CLP's 'voice' was. The board argued that inasmuch as they knew that the organisation was doing a good job, what they wanted was evidence of CLP's voice. They realised that CLP was not behaving like other NGOs: "What they did not realise is that 'our' voice is not in what we say but we should be held "accountable to finding our voice based on practice" (Graham, Interview, 1/2/2017). Mark was more critical of the board's question concerning voice; he pointed out that the board assumed that all "civil society must speak loudly in the world and speak on behalf of the people" (Interview, 6/2/2017).

David H. also spoke about the idea of CLP's voice as being most evident in its practice, arguing that it was expressed creatively in the music (compilation) CDs they produced, in *Padkos* events such as hosting seminars, films, and the like. They had their way of doing things but the "underlying ethos that counts is the people's voices as opposed to ours" (Interview, 31/1/2017).

Freund (2000), Monga (1994), Mbembe (1992) and Scott (1990) demonstrate that resistance against oppression comes from below, that is, popular resistance is informed and initiated by the people. In South Africa, grassroots community thinking was exclusively attributed to UDF successes, especially around 1984–1986. According to Neocosmos (2009), this period reflected the politics of the people as completely detached from the politics of the National Liberation Struggle (NLS). This type of independent emancipatory thinking of the grassroots is what *Abahlali* call living politics. Neocosmos (2016) sees thinking and agency as intimately connected. He argues that politics is thought and thought is practical. If people can think, it means they think beyond their present world. CLP does not talk about thinking only, but points to the fact that those who are oppressed can think their way through their situation to the point of changing it.

In support of CLP's position (on the capability of the people to think and speak for themselves) is Thomas (2018), who critiqued the Subaltern Studies group for regarding the subaltern as excluded and incapacitated. His argument is that the poor or subaltern have been speaking for themselves and have, in fact, always been part of hegemonic relations like any other group, but their voices has always been overshadowed or 'enclosed' by the dominant voices:

> It is the enclosure of subaltern classes and social groups within the relations of the integral state that constitutes them as distinctly modern subaltern social groups…instead of being unable to speak, Gramsci's historical and cultural analyses emphasize the extent to which the subaltern continuously makes its voice heard and its presence felt in contradictory and complex cultural, social and political forms. (Thomas, 2018, p.3)

Marx suggests the working class as the best people to change the world-as-it-is to the world-as-it-could-be, because they are the ones who are the oppressed (truly universal). Gramsci does not limit the oppressed to the proletariat, but included any group of people that is oppressed, through the philosophy of praxis. For Gramsci (1971, p. 330), a philosophy of

praxis should supersede "the existing mode of thinking and existing concrete thought (existing cultural world)". He argues that that this type of philosophy seeks to radically challenge common sense, which supports the oppressive hegemonic order, in favour of good sense, which is counter-hegemonic. The Gramscian (1971) idea of organic intellectuals presupposes that everyone can understand how the world really works and is related to the idea of 'good sense' as opposed to 'common sense'. As we have seen, Gramsci argues that it is important from the subaltern to shift from simply resisting (as a thing) to active, conscious agency.

Freire (1970/1993, p. 26) and Fanon (1963, p. 159) both emphasise the thinking and agency of the oppressed. It is one of the central themes of their thinking. They believe, like Marx, Gramsci, Neocosmos and others, the oppressed should play a pivotal role in their emancipation – that the oppressed do not need a saviour like NGOs, because it is in their hands to 'fight' for their emancipation.

This theme highlights that the idea of thinking and the voice evolved at different historical stages of CLP's life. At the earliest stages, thinking relates to the organisation, synonymous with how it reflects on its practice. Later in the organisation's life history, thinking is taken further and becomes related to the people as essentially central to what it means to be human. 'Voice', like thinking, evolves, taking on different meanings as well. Before the shift, CLP was looking mostly at their voice as critical, but after the shift, they recognised that the people's voice should be given priority over theirs. The findings show that people's thinking is expressed by their voice. As we have seen, people do not simply express their voice, but its expression is directed to the injustices of the 'world-as-it-is' or status quo. Such an expression of their thinking defines their politics – living politics. It is a politics which both CLP, as an NGO, and *Abahlali*, as a social movement, believe in. CLP calls this politics emancipatory politics.

What is significant about CLP is that their understanding of emancipatory politics is derived from a variety of theorists, organisation and movements. It adopts *Abahlali's* living politics or politics from below. CLP also adopts Neocosmos' understanding of politics as thought, which is not abstract but practical and egalitarian. Not only is this politics for everyone, but it is also built on the fundamental premise that everyone thinks. As I will show, almost all the characteristics of emancipatory politics proposed by Neocosmos (2016) are reflected in CLP's emancipatory politics.

6.1.4 Walking with/journeying/being with/support and solidarity (emancipatory praxis)

This theme investigates the way CLP actually works, especially with social movements and grassroots communities, after the shift. It is no coincidence that the occasional paper in which they speak about their shift is called *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007); and, as discussed, they specifically referenced Paulo Freire's phrase, "we make the path by walking", when they created *Padkos* in 2010.

CLP frequently uses language related to journeying, such as walking, accompanying, and journey. For CLP, walking with people means that "CLP must accommodate itself to their rhythms and initiatives rather than fitting people to project imperatives and the commonly used indicators of time frames and quantity are then inappropriate" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 26). Thus, CLP commits to "walking with communities towards the realisation of the choices that they make" (CLP website). The 2007 Occasional Paper sees the process that led to this decision "as a recollection of important moments and insights on our journey to change who we are and what we do. Actually, there probably isn't a 'beginning' to that journey that we could nail down" (Butler et al., 2007, pp. 1-2). For Graham, the decision to take up a new praxis resulted in a journey – a journey undertaken by all CLP staff. This practice demands the continuous reflection and open-ended thinking discussed earlier. It is a path that is made in the process of journeying. For Mark, it is a new situation and a new journey. This idea of journeying is played on in their *Padkos* email lists and events – the meaning of '*Padkos*' as 'food for the road' – and they talk about *Padkos* events or resources as that which sustains them on their journey, because it is "a long and demanding journey". However, "our main guide and inspiration remains the struggles of the people".

Frequently, *padkos* is thinking through people or their writing; but it is also thinking through music, poetry, films, and sharing actual food. A commitment to walk with the people leads to '*having faith in nothing'*; this means CLP lose their previous claim of having knowledge of people's needs, or of a solution to this, or of an end goal, or a destination; rather, the organisation seeks to learn from the people. 'Faith in nothing' means the organisation is prepared to listen and learn from the people in solidarity with their struggle (Butler et al., 2010).

The word 'support' is used in five different ways during the time that CLP was operating as a conventional NGO. The first use referred to the duties allocated to CLP as an NGO concerning church land. The second use denoted the organisation's need for external help

because of the disproportionate size of CLP compared to its workload. The third use was in relation to the nature of work that CLP did "supporting communities, not acting on their behalf; respecting the autonomy of others" (Hallowes, 2001, p. 23-24). The fourth pointed to the nature of the contribution government was giving to the land redistribution and restitution process. The final use was to highlight how the land reform process disadvantaged the poor. The use of the word after this has to be understood in relation to the shift.

Various post-shift CLP sources use the term support, all of them relating to CLP's new praxis, and how they relate to communities. The 2007 evaluation report speaks about how animation supports debates that problematise advocacy and encourages organisations like CLP not to speak for communities but support them to speak for themselves. CLP supported members of the AbM and RN to participate in an educational programme at University of KwaZulu-Natal. By 2010, CLP was referring to the fact that its praxis involved listening, learning and supporting communities (Hallowes, 2010), providing resources, but not controlling (Ibid.), and promoting the agency of the people (Butler et al., 2010). Graham uses the word support in the sense of sustaining their praxis, and the resources needed to do this when he asked: "how do we keep ourselves true to support the emancipatory practice?" (Interview, 1/2/2017).

Abahlali compares CLP with other NGOs, including the government. Other organisations, and the government, seek to either interfere with their struggle or seek to neutralise it. In their interview, they explain how CLP differs in their practice:

> CLP wasn't that kind of organisation that wanted to impose things to us, but they came to us to support … Because whenever we are facing challenges, we are asking for their support; they would be there even physically, not just financial support. They come to our struggles. If we are going to court, they used to be there. CLP does not control what we do. But they always support our decisions. (*Abahlali*, Focus group discussion, 1/3/2017)

Unlike the generic NGO practice where there is imposition of ideas and programmes on the people, CLP seeks to be in solidarity with the struggle of the people by supporting them. The support includes both physical and immaterial resources that enhance the people's struggle.

The support needed by the oppressed was explicitly expressed by both Fanon and Freire as: in the case of Fanon, education; in Freire's case, conscientisation. I think, to some extent, this

is true of Marx and Gramsci, too. What is common among all four theorists is that they recognised the necessity of education and that it would help the oppressed to be made aware of /conscious of their situation. Freire calls for dialogue between the oppressed and those around them, as long as those with whom they dialogue do not want to take over and think on their behalf. Fanon and Freire reflect, in particular, on the relationship between militant intellectuals and the people, requiring that they allow people to take a pivotal role in the process of struggle.

6.1.5 Reflection and learning

This theme reflects that from its inception, CLP has been a reflective organisation. This was highlighted by Mark when he said "I think one of the reasons why CLP is uniquely cool, is because they are just relentlessly reflecting [on their practice] … They reflect on the practice all the time" (Interview, 6/2/2017). Thus, even pre-shift documents talk about this. The 2001 evaluation document (Hallowes, 2001) identified facilitation and critical reflection as core values. The same document reports that reflection, together with learning were one of CLP's six fundamental values in its work as facilitator or mediator in its early years of formation.

The discussion in the previous chapter makes it clear CLP's shift began with it rethinking its praxis. As that chapter mentions, CLP specifically reflects on itself and its work every three years; and as we have seen, the 2004 reflection was critical to rethinking their praxis and a point when ongoing reflection was reaffirmed as an integral principle of CLP's being, as an organisation. Thus, the period of shift specifically built in critical reflection in the form of the practice of accompaniment – i.e. where staff members were accompanied by someone whose task it was to observe and then help them reflect on what had occurred (their actual practice in the field).

The point of reflection was learning. The 2007 evaluation recognised that reflection together with learning were ways of entering the 'unknown space' of their practice (through animation) without being defensive. Hence, animation made reflection irreplaceable and vital because practice cannot be understood without reflection. Graham sees CLP as a learning organisation. He mentioned learning from "theological stuff" at the time when CLP functioned as a conventional NGO. Since the shift, learning has become integral to the organisation's being. To assist in this, CLP has also adopted a practice of setting aside one day each month where a staff member reflects on his/her praxis, together with the rest of the organisation. Quite often, these 'learnings' are distributed through the *Padkos* email list.

David N. in his interview made it clear that learning is a never-ending process: "From the time we adopted the change of practice until today, we have never stopped learning from our context" (Interview, 21/2/2019). Thus, as the context shifts (whether this is internal or external to the organisation), reflection on this leads to new learnings. In the period after 2002, Graham saw the challenges that CLP faced as opportunities to rethink their practice. The 2007 evaluation (Hallowes, 2007) deployed rethinking as being fundamentally grounded in reflection and learning. Mark, reflecting on what happened during the 2008 xenophobia, highlights that this event made CLP "think through what are the principles behind the crisis so we would know the judgement we should make". In this sense thinking becomes a reflective process of correcting wrongs.

David N. speaks of thinking as an essential ingredient necessary to allow (through reflection) CLP to better regulate how it works with people. He seems to equate thinking with reflection. For Graham, thinking is the foundation for CLP to find appropriate language to express the questions that it was asking during its time of transition. During the earlier stages of the shift, Freire became an important resource to help CLP think through its practice. Moreover, the thinking of the organisation, according to Graham, was challenged by radical French philosophers, especially in understanding the state and civil society as faithful servants of the status quo. During the interviews I asked Mark about theorists who might have influenced CLP, but his response was that the thought of the people, from their situation, is more important than theory. He regarded Fanon as a militant thinker who helped CLP think through the nature of the colonial struggle and the post-colonial state. Mark explicitly highlighted, or even argued, that he preferred the thinking and theorising of real people in real struggles to abstract theories. He gave as an example the thinking of the Zapatistas.

Clearly, then, this kind of learning relates not only to learning through reflecting on their praxis, but also to learning from others, and to actively engage in reflecting and learning with others. CLP also encourages reflection and learning of those it works with. This resonates with Freire's emphasis on dialogue as revolutionary praxis, which allows "people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestion and those of their comrades" (1970/1993, p. 105), and recognises "the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts" (p. 107). Thus, for example, in 2009 CLP held a session to reflect on the attack on *Abahlali*, and in 2011 hosted a roundtable discussion with social movement militants, academics, and others to reflect on the nature of democracy in South Africa and the South African state. The

Abahlali focus group recalled how they were encouraged to reflect on their practice during the 'Living Learning' sessions facilitated by CLP in 2009. They also remember other incidents where CLP helped them to learn themselves:

> You know…you were asking a question of what we have learnt from CLP. So, it is substantial that, if you support a person, you don't do [something] for that person but at least teach that person how to do the particular thing so that if tomorrow you are not there, that person would never be stranded, but they would know which way to go. So, there is so much we have learnt from CLP. (*Abahlali* focus group discussion, 1/3/2017)

Abahlali also pointed out that CLP learnt something from them. They gave as an example the booklet *Living Learning,* arguing that the 'Living Learning' process had helped CLP learn from the reflections of *Abahlali* and Rural Network militants. The 2010 document *Finding Our Voice in the World* (Butler et al., 2010) was produced from a reflective process in which each staff member reflected on their own and on CLP's work through the lens of praxis/animation in the run up to the 2010 strategic planning. It reports that apart from creating space for reflection within itself as an organisation, CLP had also created space for critical reflection with local activists, and it was through these spaces and activities, including night vigils (in communities), that CLP was able to learn from these groups.

The theme of reflection and learning seeks to show that CLP does not simply listen and engage, but it also reflects on its practice and what is being said. In the process of listening, engaging and reflecting, its ultimate goal is to learn from the convictions and beliefs of the people. This means, for the organisation to be able to work with these groups, it needs to learn and understand these social groups or communities' contexts and lived experience and the language they use to express themselves (i.e. 'underground' discourse). Some of the language that CLP uses can be directly traced to the language used by social movements such as *Abahlali.* CLP documented some of this language in, for instance, in 'CLP: Summation of our principles and politics' (CLP, 2013b) in which it uses the words 'living politics' and 'dead politics'. These terms are taken from *Abahlali* and incorporated as integral to their understanding of politics. This is only one example of how CLP chooses to be open, listening to the voice of communities.

Both Fanon and Freire encouraged leaders to learn from the struggles of the people. Fanon, in the second chapter of WE, tries to show that unreflective and spontaneous strategies of the

struggle are not necessarily emancipatory but potentially self-destructive. As for Freire, the process of animation central to CLP's praxis is the heart of Freirean thinking. In this sense, reflection and learning of those who seek to support the struggle is of paramount importance.

6.2 Research Question 3: Which particular elements of the work of Fanon and Freire impacts on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and hence its praxis?

As emerges in Chapter Five, both Freire and Fanon have been important references for CLP since the time of their shift. It is also clear that there are differing views within the organisation about the extent to which they were directly influenced by either; but it is very clear that the organisation has found their thinking and writing deeply useful, and seen clear synergies between this and their own thinking, as David N. points out:

> So Fanon for CLP then became such an important theorist and an important activist who also influences this journey that CLP is taking, has taken, of wanting to serve and be the reminder that life is not what is should be, and for it to be where it should be and what it should be, it is in the hands of the people. Which is what also Fanon pushes hard. . . and this tallies with what Paulo Freire says, that it is in the hands of the people, in a nutshell. (Interview 21/2/2017)

The discussion in Chapter Four showed that both Fanon and Freire believed that people think their way out of oppressive situations, and are responsible for their own emancipation. Freire (1970/1993) thought it the responsibility of the oppressed to emancipate themselves, an assertion Fanon (1963) agrees with: "there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, … the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people" (Fanon, 1963, p. 159). Similarly, CLP's theory of change is that the people are the agents of human liberation. The organisation uses the term *faith in nothing*, meaning the organisation does not bring solutions or ideas (i.e. what is) to solve people's problems, but is prepared to listen and learn from the people and offer support to communities (Butler et al., 2010). It is in this way that they show their trust in the people's capability to think for themselves and find solutions to their problems. Thus, CLP believes that it is up to the people to create "a new future and new possibilities through their own action" (Butler et al., 2010, p. 4). CLP, Fanon and Freire believe that those people whom the 'state of things' does not consider as important, those who do not count, are thus the source

of emancipation. Expressed in variant ways, Fanon suggested the *lumpen-proletariat* and peasant, Freire suggested the oppressed, and CLP looked to grassroots movements such as *Abahlali*. The future of true freedom is in the hands of those Chatterjee calls the political society whom civil society has forsaken – society in the realm of the incivil or uncivil.

Neocosmos asserts that for thought to be emancipatory, it has to be collective thought and it has to be universal. In other words, any thought or act performed by the those such as the *lumpen-proletariat* and peasant, the oppressed, or the social movements such as *Abahlali*, has to be not only for themselves, but for the humanity of all – including those responsible for undermining their dignity. Fanon looked for a word beyond the Manichean divisions of black and white or inferior versus superior by proposing a new humanity: "This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others. It is prefigured in the objectives and methods of the conflict" (Fanon, 1963, p. 103). As for Freire (1970/1993), the greatest humanistic act of the oppressed is not just to liberate themselves, but also those that oppressed them. The fight against injustices witnessed in the lives of shack dwellers can only be emancipatory if "it emerges from, and proceeds within, a properly/radically democratic base, which may have nothing to do with liberal democratic norms but has everything to do with a pre-figurative politics where 'everybody matters'" (CLP, 2013, p 9). Fanon, Freire and CLP thus support a politics embodied by the poor for their own freedom and for those who are oppressing them. It is exclusive in the sense that it is the poor who are fighting for their liberation and inclusive because the liberation is not only for those who fight for it, but for everyone.

However, as we have seen, both Fanon and Freire warn that the process for the realisation of true freedom can go horribly wrong. We cannot assume that the poor will do the right thing – they can be just as ruthless as those that oppress. That is why prefigurative politics becomes pivotal when thinking about true freedom. Sometimes, the oppressed "will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people" (Fanon, 1963, p. 40). A good example is the one raised by Mark in relation to the xenophobia in South Africa, where the violence emanated from the grassroots. Freire (1970/1993) explains that this behaviour is because all that the oppressed have ever known is oppression to the extent that the idea of freedom, for them, is to be the oppressor. He reasons thus: "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness" (p. 33). It is not surprising that Fanon recognised that spontaneous and undiscerning responses of the

oppressed in struggle, divorced from a genuine and conscious need for freedom, are problematic. Graham, in his interview, repeatedly highlighted that the view of the poor can be debated and challenged as long as the debate gives them a fair voice. Mark highlighted in his interview that they had to 'endorse' the principles of good stuff to avoid identitarian struggles such as that of xenophobia. Fanon suggests the need for dialogue between those who are oppressed. For CLP, animation also encourages learning by both parties – and as highlighted by *Abahlali* in their focus group – they learn from CLP and CLP learns from them.

What is interesting about the shift from a conventional organisation to one that gave up 'solving' the people's problems is not so much in the values in themselves, but in the nature of the politics behind the values. In tracing the history of CLP, it is clear that they were critical from the beginning and they also stimulate debates. Even the choice of their literature was thoughtful, such as liberation theology, and they held regular reflections on these choices. However, this had been done within a well-controlled and dominant environment and agenda (the world-as-it-is) set by the elite. CLP's change was a realisation that the world-as-it-is needed to be, and could be, surpassed both in thought and in reality. It was through theorists and activists such as Zikode, the French philosophers Badiou and Rancière, and academics such as Neocosmos among others, that CLP found the language that helped the organisation to imagine beyond the status quo, or to speak about it – a politics away from the state of things as they stand today. For Badiou and Zikode, politics is always "a rupture with what is – it is the void of the situation" (CLP, 2013b, p. 5), "a movement out of the places where oppression has assigned us" (CLP, 2013b, p. 5) respectively. It is the "art of the impossible", a type of a politics which does not follow the logic of the status quo. The position which CLP takes is one which is deemed impossible by the status quo, because it defies its logic. This is a position that is normally taken by those whom the status quo or the world-as-it-is considers unimportant. Fanon was looking at the Manichean world, which assigns the 'black' (or the poor, in Zikode's words) to his/her rightful place. For Fanon, the decolonising process was a way of shattering (rupturing) the order because it sets out to change the order of the world. It is obviously, thus "a programme of complete disorder… a complete change of structures and the introduction of a new humanity" (Fanon, 1963, pp. 27, 28). For Freire, conscientisation is an awareness gained by the oppressed of the oppressive nature of the status quo. This awareness makes the oppressed lose interest in everything that the world-as-it-is stands for. It is not enough to be conscious of the state of the world that is dehumanising, but it is necessary to 'fight' for a better one where everything is new. Such a

world will constitute a “new person”, “New beings”, “New man” (Freire, 1970/1993, pp. 31, 36, 38).

6.3 Conclusion

The chapter sought to integrate elements of Fanon and Freire’s theory of emancipation with the emancipatory politics of CLP. The thesis has shown that Fanon and Freire’s writing resonates considerably with what CLP cherishes, and, as CLP’s life history shows, it frequently references both. However, the responses of some of the staff of CLP suggested that they believe that Fanon and Freire are important to CLP, not because they influenced the direction of their practice, but because their values and thinking reflect those of CLP, and they gave them a language to express what they intended to do. It does seem to me, however, that CLP intentionally drew on Freire (with whom they were already familiar from the anti-apartheid struggle) at the very moment of wanting to think through how to shift their practice. Fanon, by contrast, seems to have been a thinker who resonated with their already emerging analysis of the South African context – although his insights also helped them theorise this. What is also clear, is the profound resource that many other thinkers have been to CLP in developing their emancipatory politics and praxis – organic intellectuals in the struggle, in movements at the grassroots, as well as those more traditional intellectuals such as Badiou, Rancière, Holloway, Neocosmos, Gibson and Pithouse.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

As I asserted at the start of this thesis, I am concerned with the failure of African post-colonial states to change the lives of the people for the better. My previous research was premised on the conviction that civil society organisations (including NGOs) needed to pressure post-colonial governments to serve their people better. As discussed in my introductory chapter, reading *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007) made me question my ideas about what needed to be done, because it highlighted how 'conventional' NGOs actually act to consolidate the ways things are. However, *Learning to Walk* also suggested that it was possible for an NGO to profoundly question its role and shift to a more emancipatory praxis. The primary objective of this study was thus to understand the life history of CLP within the South African context, and why the organisation shifted from a practice which was complicit in supporting hegemony to one which embraced a more emancipatory praxis. I wanted to understand what had influenced this shift, exactly what the organisation understood by emancipatory praxis and how they eventually implemented it. *Learning to Walk* made specific reference to the thinking of Paulo Freire; and post-shift, CLP has made frequent reference to Frantz Fanon. I thus thought it likely that the thinking of Freire and Fanon had influenced its shift and its new praxis, and wanted to discover what particular aspects of their thinking had influenced the organisation; but I recognised, too, that it was possible that there had been other intellectual influences on its shift.

I thus set out to answer the following research questions:

1) What is the life history of CLP within the South African context, and how and why did the organisation shift its practice?
2) Which theoretical influences contributed to the shift?
3) Which particular elements of the work of Fanon and Freire impacts on CLP's understanding of emancipatory politics, and hence its praxis?
4) What implications does this have within the current South African context?

In this final chapter, I conclude this thesis with a summary of what I attempted to do in this study, at both an academic and personal level, and what I think has emerged from it. I discuss what I see as the implications of the research within the current South African context, thus

answering the final research question. I also reflect on the study as a whole, looking at its unintended findings and limitations. I reflect on the life history case study methodology I used, before presenting ideas for the potential further research that may arise from this study.

7.2 Overview of the argument

After discussing my rationale for this study in Chapter One, and presenting my research design in Chapter Two, I undertook a review of the literature related to my study in Chapter Three. This confirmed CLP's analysis that conventional NGO practice "either silences ordinary people or carefully rehearses with them what they could/should say, so that what is heard… is actually the echo of our own voices" (Butler et al., 2007, p. 8). This chapter discussed debates around civil society, especially the current conception of civil society as independent of the state or the market. I problematised the attempt to glorify civil society organisations such as NGOs as champions of democracy and the weakness of such organisation as a reason for the problematic states in much of Africa. Instead, I deployed the Gramscian understanding of civil society as dialectically related to and interdependent with political society. In this understanding, in a capitalist society the bourgeois class first secures control of political society, representing its interests as universal, in order to secure control of the institutions that organise and regulate civil society (i.e. the state apparatus), so as to ensure civil society conforms to the economic structure (Gramsci, 1971). The bourgeoisie does this through hegemony – the creation of the 'common sense' that the way things are is normal and natural. In Thomas's words:

> Just as political and civil society are not conceived in a spatial but a functional sense, so hegemony is conceived as a practice 'traversing' the boundaries between them. More accurately, hegemony is a particular practice of consolidating social forces and condensing them into political power on a mass basis (Thomas, 2009, p. 194).

Non-governmental organisations thus play a pivotal role in creating hegemonic common sense; including in Africa. I then considered arguments that the domain within which a new social order might be founded is that which is 'excluded' from what is constructed as properly civil society by the integral state, or, in Thomas' reading of Gramsci, more correctly 'enclosed' by the hegemonic social order; Gramsci's subaltern, or what Neocosmos (2016) calls 'uncivil society'. In the final part of Chapter Three, I explored in particular Neocosmos' arguments in relation to emancipatory politics. Neocosmos asserts that emancipatory politics

is first and foremost about thought: "politics is thought, thought is real and people think" (2016, p. 95). Everyone can think, but their thinking is not necessarily emancipatory. Emancipatory thought is the thinking of the people together, so it is always collective; it is always practical, it is about acting in the world; it is "always 'for all', and never for 'some'" (p. 22), so it is universal, beyond interests. Neocosmos specifically rejects identitarian representative politics. Emancipatory politics is a complete and radical ideological break with what is. Neocosmos talk about this as 'excessive', as opposed the 'expressive' which is merely what is.

Using a Gramscian framework, and in particular Gramsci's idea of hegemony and philosophy of praxis, and Neocosmos' conception of emancipatory politics as collective thought, allows us to see it is not a given that civil society organisations, even when these are relatively elite, must invariably act to cement hegemony (through silencing, excluding or enclosing the subaltern/grassroots). Non-Governmental Organisations or other civil society organisations can just as well be counter-hegemonic.

After considering the issue of 'civil society' and its relation to emancipatory politics, I then presented my theoretical framework, which is informed by the thinking of Fanon and Freire. As discussed, CLP referenced these two theorists during and after the shift. In addition, both thinkers are consistent with my Gramscian framework; and despite the fact that they were not born in Africa, both were familiar with the continent's struggles. Moreover, there has been a growing interest in the work of Fanon and Freire in relation to African post-colonial studies and emancipatory politics. In the chapter, I first looked at the thinking of Fanon through *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon, 1952/1986) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon, 1963), and the readings of and debates around these works. I then considered Freire's thinking through *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970/1993), with the support of *Pedagogy of Hope* (Freire, 1994/2014), which discusses *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and the readings of and debates associated with this book. The final section analysed the ontological argument of Fanon and Freire as a single expression of an emancipatory politics, which I then consider in relation to the literature I discussed in Chapter Two.

The next two chapters of the thesis presented my inductive analysis, presenting CLP's life history and its shift to an emancipatory praxis (and answering my first two research questions); and my analysis of this life history in relation to the literature as discussed in Chapter Three, and the thinking of Fanon and Freire as discussed in Chapter Four (and

answering my third research question). My findings are that CLP did indeed shift its praxis in profound ways. This shift was rather the result of a close critical reflection on the context within which it was acting and the consequences of its actions, than any particular theorist or theory. The nature of CLP's new praxis is:

1. It refused to play the role of 'stakeholder', mediator, expert, and consciously took a preferential option for the poor.
2. Therefore, it shifted to working in solidarity with grassroots formations, not for them – to being in solidarity, not leading – because the people themselves can think, and must think and act for their own emancipation (and that of everybody else).
3. CLP needs to learn from those who are struggling, listen to them, and reflect with them.
4. Its role is thus to provide information, create space for reflection, "encourage them to be self-reliant, in their thinking, in their politics, in their practice" (Mark, Interview 6/2/2017).
5. All emancipatory struggle is grassroots; but grassroots struggle is not necessarily emancipatory. CLP therefore has a role to play also in questioning positions (but never impose or decide) from the basis of a clear understanding of what emancipatory politics actually is. CLP thus, inter alia, focuses attention on the periphery, not the centre, even in movements of the poor.
6. For CLP, this is as much a return to old, emancipatory praxis, as it is the creation of a new praxis.

Although CLP's shift was not caused by any particular thinker or writer, the organisation did draw on a wide range of theological, 'academic' and movement/struggle resources. My study found that CLP is apparently an unusual NGO in the extent to which it explores the ideas and experiences of others. In terms of 'academic' resources, the organisation references philosophical works from all over the world (and it is clear that all of the CLP staff are engaged in this intellectual work). In terms of movement/struggle resources, CLP also actively seeks links with, and resources about, a range of different struggles all over the world. These resources are invariably used in relation to actual, situated experience, and in thinking through their praxis.

As I discussed at the start of this thesis, my assumption was that the thinking of Fanon and Freire had in some way influenced CLP. As CLP's life history shows, it frequently references both. The study has shown that Fanon and Freire's writing resonates considerably with CLP's post-shift thinking and practice; but CLP staff gave different accounts of the extent to which the organisation was influenced by them. Some staff specifically acknowledged a direct influence, most notably in relation to Freire; but others argued that because Fanon and Freire's values and thinking reflect those of CLP, they gave the organisation a language to express itself. Based on my study, I would argue that CLP intentionally drew on Freire (with whom they were already familiar from the anti-apartheid struggle) at the very moment of wanting to think through how to shift their practice, in consciously using animation. Fanon, by contrast, seems to have been a thinker who resonated with their already emerging analysis of the South African context – although his insights also helped them theorise this.

Drawing on Gramsci, Freire and Fanon reveals that the people do not need anyone to emancipate them from their deplorable situations because they can emancipate themselves. However, as these thinkers also argue, the people do not always act in emancipatory ways. Looking at CLP's experience of thinking through precisely this (that the people think, and must lead their struggle; but their politics and actions are not always emancipatory) brings us to the role of civil society organisations in any emancipatory process – to support the people in their struggles, but to remain resolutely committed to the fundamental ethics of an emancipatory politics (and thus sometimes to challenge the people). In other words, to act in critical solidarity. This, then, brings us to the implications of my study of a single NGO for a broader emancipatory project.

7.3 Research Question 4: What implications does this have within the current South African context?

This study worked from the basis that we can no longer pretend that things in the world are fine, because they are not. Mbembe (2011) and Badiou (2015) remind us of the dire and deplorable conditions to which the poor, the indigenous, foreigners, women, people of a different sexual orientation etc. are subjected in a world where they simply do not matter. Badiou (2015) says that the poor "are counted for nothing by *capital*, meaning that from the point of view of the structural development of the world, they are nothing, and that therefore, strictly speaking, they should not exist" (p. 13). Mbembe (2011), speaking of the African context, uses the word 'waste' to describe how the poor are perceived. According to him "this

logic of waste is particularly dramatized by the dilemmas of unemployment and disposability, survival and subsistence, and the expansion in every arena of everyday life of spaces of vulnerability" (Mbembe, 2011, n.p.).

This thesis is driven by my personal view that, given this context, we urgently need to rethink African politics beyond that of the state or the hegemonic politics of the powerful, to a more truly emancipatory politics; and, in this, the potential role of 'civil society' needs to be explored. Focusing on the specific case of a civil society organisation which has shifted to an emancipatory praxis is only really helpful if it can help us think through what to do in response to our current context. I would argue that the first thing we can learn from the CLP case is the importance of the dialectical relationship between context and praxis. This requires constant critical reflection on both. In *Learning to Walk* (Butler et al., 2007), CLP argues that it had "to pause and reflect on our [its] own practice, precisely and partly, to create space in our [its] work 'on the ground' for dialogical relationships with grassroots people and formations" (p. 11). The point of departure is the lived experience precisely of those who do not count. In our current South African context, then, that is where we need to begin if anything is to change.

CLP's experience also provides practical ideas on how this can be done, through consciously building into the life of the organisation a constant process of critical reflection, but with specific others. Although CLP had always been a reflective organisation, the shift involved one to exactly the lived experience of those who do not count, and reflecting with and learning from their own understanding and theorising of their struggle.

Clearly, giving the governments and other institutions of the elite, the responsibility to change this situation is not an option. A necessary step in true emancipation is a recognition that not only can the elite (including NGOs and the state) not save the poor, but that their attempts to do so are precisely unemancipatory. The poor do not need a saviour or material goods (although, as *Abahlali* say, they need things like land and houses), but rather the mutual recognition of their own humanity. This does not mean that there is no role for those who are 'counted' – it means the role shifts. As Graham said in his interview, "And so, in fact one of the concepts we came up with was rupture from below, solidarity from elsewhere" (1/2/2017).

CLP's experience calls on us to do something about what is happening around us, but also to carefully think through what we should do and how. Any person, organisation or institution

that sees the need to do something about the situation should choose to be in solidarity with the poor, and recognise that the poor are not objects, but subjects capable of thinking. However, from CLP's experience it is important not to assume that the thinking and action of the grassroots is inherently or always emancipatory. Any kind of emancipatory politics thus needs to go further than simply an assumption that people think, including thinking their own experience and struggle. Drawing on, inter alia, Fanon (and Badiou, Rancière, Neocosmos and Holloway), CLP's thinking requires us recognise that the deplorable situation that we now face is due to the failure of 'dead' politics, specifically identitarian, representative, state politics. The people of South Africa (and beyond) have been betrayed by their own governments. The present institutions of democracy seek to maintain the hegemonic power of the elite. CLP is calling for the rejection of 'dead' politics in favour of a living, emancipatory politics. This requires us to hold true to a set of principles and actions – as expressed by CLP in their principles of good stuff. This includes the insistence that everyone matters equally, in a radical universality instead of identity politics. An emancipatory politics is one that prefers to be 'Out of Order' – hence the title of this thesis.

7.4 Reflections on the study

As is clear from my research questions, I began this research with an assumption that CLP's shift in praxis had been influenced, inter alia, by Fanon and Freire. As discussed in Chapter Five, it became increasingly clear that CLP's shift was far more the result of their deep reflection on the context, an actually existing struggle, and their practice and its consequences, than of anything they were reading – this is a point that was made very clearly by Graham in his interview. Thus, the practice of the organisation from its inception, of reflecting critically (on its context, on its experiences, on its practice), was of far more importance than any particular writer or theorist. Nevertheless, as seen in their life story, CLP do acknowledge that they drew on a number of resources to help them in their reflection, thinking and language – some of these philosophers or academics – but many are actually existing emancipatory movements. This is made clear in Mark's response, when I asked him to fill in the timeline. He was the only person that I interviewed who did not want to fill in the timeline, and during the interview he explained this as follows:

> The funny thing is, and I know that's part of my hesitation about filling in the thing here, you read different people at different times … and the one thing I do not accept is that theory and theorists are things that are written in books, in English, by

> European men, largely. So for me, the things that are most important, most relevant for struggle at any point in time, are the people who are affected by, and resisting, injustice in their lives. Those are always the most important theorists. So, when I see a thing like this, I don't think I can write down the names of each militant who I've met in 1997, who was thinking about a land struggle. But that person's theory was the most important and influential to me. Very few of those people have written a book. Or made a big written theory in English, but the thinking of the people in situations is the most important theory, that's where it started. No, I'm not an anti-intellectual, I think that when those peoples' thinking can be connected productively with other theorists who have had time to write, or wrote in a different place, in a way that is meaningful – that can be very helpful too. (Interview 6/01/17)

This supports Graham's assertion that, for example, Freire did not shape CLP's practice, but rather he resonated with what it was that CLP had already come to realise in their critical reflection. Experience, and reflection on it, precedes theory. As I have discussed in Chapter Five, I am not completely convinced by Graham's claim, in that it does seem that CLP intentionally drew on Freire (with whom they were already familiar from the anti-apartheid struggle) at the moment of wanting to think through how to shift their practice; and one person I interviewed (David N.) specifically said that the organisation had been influenced by Freire. Fanon, by contrast, seems to have been a thinker who resonated with their already existing analysis of the South African context – although his insights also helped them theorise this.

As I discuss in Chapter Four, there is growing interest in the work of both Fanon and Freire. However, very little work drawing on both has been done; and even less specifically comparing their thinking. This was a contribution I hoped to make in this study. From this investigation, it is clear that there are marked similarities in the thinking of the two. To some extent this is because, as I believed, there are similar theoretical influences on both theorists. The work of Gramsci and those he drew on (including Hegel and Marx) was an influence on both, from whom they derived an understanding that dialectics can be used as a process through which the oppressed can reasonably respond to the Manichaean world of oppression. In addition, as I have shown, Freire specifically read Fanon. My study suggests the following key similarities across Freire and Fanon:

1. Both understand emancipation as an ontological process, since colonisation and oppression lead to dehumanisation.
2. Both writers see emancipation as the task of those who are oppressed. This rests on an absolute assumption of the ability of the oppressed to think.
3. Both understand oppression as a profoundly violent phenomenon; and that there is thus an inherent potential for violence in the process of emancipation as a response to this. In contrast to Freire, who is often equated with love, Fanon has been (mis)read as primarily a theorist of violence.
4. For both, the struggle to be more fully human can go horribly wrong, because, in their bid to become fully human, the oppressed/colonised (Black) may mistakenly believe that to do so means becoming the oppressor/coloniser (White). Emancipation is something vastly different – it is the emancipation of all through the end of oppression and a world of binaries.
5. Both argue that there is a need for the oppressed/colonised (Black) to become aware of their oppression, their internalised image of the oppressor/coloniser (White). Self-consciousness is thus an essential step in the process of emancipation. Both identify the importance of dialogue in this process of consciousness; one in which a militant intellectual/teacher should participate. There is thus always a role for those who are not of the oppressed group in the process of emancipation – but both Fanon and Freire insist that emancipation is ultimately the task of the oppressed, and the role of the militant intellectual/teacher is thus carefully defined, since it can also go 'horribly wrong' (no matter how 'left' the militant intellectual/teacher is).
6. For both, emancipation is the creation of a completely new world shaped by a new humanity – it is a complete rupture of what is. Emancipation is also, always, universal – not individual. For both, being human is never a complete project but an unfinished and open process.

7.5 Reflections on the methodology

As discussed in Chapter One, one of the contributions I hoped to make with this study was a methodological one. It adopted a life history, which is normally used to tell or narrate individual stories, whereas in this study I was telling a story of an organisation. I also combined a life history research style and a case study research style.

As I discuss in Chapter Two, using a case study allowed me to "generate an understanding of and insight into a particular instance by providing a thick, rich description of the case and illuminating its relations to its broader contexts" (Rule and John, 2011, p. 7). I constructed the study as a descriptive, exploratory and explanatory case study, focusing on a specific unique case (CLP). I am not aware of any other study on the phenomenon of an NGO making a conscious shift to an emancipatory praxis in the context of South Africa. I wanted to understand what happened in this case; but I was motivated to do this by wanting to know what we can learn from this case to help us think through and act in the current South African context. I recognise that there is a potential methodological tension here (since a limitation of case study research is often claimed to be that it cannot be generalised).

My study required that I consider the case in sufficient detail to give a good sense of 'what it is like' in this particular case (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), but also to understand the dialectic relationship between the case and the context over time – which a life history allowed me to do. I thus used a number of qualitative methods, including interviews, focus group discussions, observations and document analysis to generate a rich, thick description. By the conclusion of the study, I had included all staff members currently involved in the organisation other than the Finance Manager, interviewing four people in depth who had been involved in the organisation since its inception but in different ways (staff, management, governance, external evaluator), and by conducting a focus group with four out of the five members of staff who had not been interviewed. I also involved those with whom the organisation was, at the time, working most closely, including two social movements and one community-based organisation, visiting each of these in their own contexts. I collected and analysed in detail a wide range of documents generated by the organisation itself, some for their internal purposes, and others more public nature.

As I have stated, the life history methodology allowed me to construct a 'story' of CLP over a period of time, in order to carefully examine its apparent shift. The method seeks to answer the questions: "What happened? Where and when did it happen? Who was involved? How did it happen? What changed? What did it mean?" (Rule & John, 2011, p. 117). There are a number of methodological issues related to this, however. As I discuss in some detail in Chapter Two, life stories change over time (a story may be reconstructed, so that the story immediately after an event may be very different from the story as related some time later) (Webster & Mertova, 2007). How the story is told is influenced by the political or ideological

position of the storyteller – and this has a significant effect, since the method is particularly interested in establishing the meaning of events and experiences imposed by the teller.

I wanted to tell the story of an organisation, rather than an individual; and to do so, I thus needed to weave together different stories about the organisation into one whole. Not only was the story of CLP told through people, but it also unfolded through the documents that were written at different stages of the life of the organisation and through what was said during the focus group discussions. Whilst the overall story was relatively consistent across different tellers and over time (especially in relation to a general argument about why the organisation shifted, and the nature of the shift), weaving together stories that are about the individual's interpretation of events, as well as stories told at different times, is an inherently tricky thing to do. It seems clear to me that the individual histories of those involved in this study profoundly influenced the ways they made meaning about the context and about the organisation. For example, as is clear in my analysis, the UDF moment experienced by Graham and Mark, in particular, obviously affected both their own analysis of what was happening and what needed to be done about it, which then fed into the organisation. It is thus impossible to really separate out the thinking of those integrally involved in the organisation from the organisation itself. In addition, of course, unlike a transcript of an individual life history, the story of CLP that I present is constructed by me – it is shaped by my own interpretation and meaning-making, my own politics and ideology. As I discuss in my methodology chapter, and is reflected in the life story of CLP as presented in Chapter Five, I used Webster and Mertova's (2007) critical event analysis. As can be seen in that chapter, different tellers related very different events which I identified as critical events in the life of the organisation. I have based my periodization on these critical events – but clearly, this is open to alternative interpretations.

In terms of my methodological contribution then, a life history/case study approach in recounting the life history of an organisation and its changing practice is evidently possible; and the claims that the method allows the telling of subversive tales and counternarratives (Ewick & Silbey as cited in Davis 2002; Steinmetz as cited in Davis, 2002) have been supported. However, as I discuss below, a more ethnographic approach might also be important to help in the process of weaving together multiple stories and understandings. I would also suggest that critical event analysis may be more problematic in organisational life histories than is the case for individual life histories.

7.6 Possible areas for further investigation

As part of my data collection, I visited some of the communities and movements with which CLP was working at the time, conducting a focus group discussion and two observations. I did this in order to try and understand how CLP actually works with these communities – that is, to assess their praxis in practice. After my data collection process I felt there was a lot more that I could learn from these communities/movements, as autonomous grassroots organisations and social movements. The little information that I had gathered left me hungry for further inquiry into the nature and being of these groups and their politics and I was also intrigued by CLP's own reflections on them. Whereas a great deal has already been written with and about *Abahlali*, I am not aware of any in-depth work on the Rural Network; and I would suggest that this might be a useful area for investigation.

As I stated in Chapter One, one of the contributions I hoped to make with this study was to reflect on CLP's journey from the perspective of an outsider, since only CLP has written about its shift. This I think I have done. Considering CLP's 'praxis in practice' from the perspective of those with whom it works was never a key focus of my research and could usefully be further explored. As I have suggested, more ethnographic-style research could help in this regard. I discovered through doing this study that one needs to understand the beliefs and values which underpin a practice. Whilst I believe in this case that I was able to do this to some extent through the interviews, focus groups or observations, I think an ethnographic study would allow a researcher to get a deeper understanding of the organisation at this more axiological level.

Also, in relation to CLP itself, my research raised questions for me about the issue of succession within the organisation in relation to the sustainability of its emancipatory praxis – in other words, if key people were to leave the organisation, would this emancipatory trajectory continue. In my interview with him, I asked Graham whether the shift to an emancipatory praxis was also due to the beliefs of specific individuals involved in the organisation. Graham argued that what had happened to CLP was not an individual project, but an inevitable process that would have been taken up by any reasonable person; in other words, he emphasised the importance of the collective over individual beliefs. However, when I asked Mark the same question, he responded:

> it depends on the individuals 100%. Everything does. Even a movement is a group of individuals. So I think individuals matter all the time. I'm sure there's a politically correct line about, oh it's not the individual, it's the collective and so on, but for me personally I think that's silly. Of course individual's count, in CLP's case, it really matters that what they have are a bunch of completely awesome individuals, I think that matters a lot. They look after the values that matter, look after each other. (Interview 6/2/2017)

Mark was thus not convinced that CLP, in the future, would continue to think and act as it does now – but he also argued that this ultimately did not matter very much:

> Personally, I think it is crazy to start thinking that, oh! our organisation now has the task to look after that for the world. I don't have that big an ego. I'm just living my life and other people are looking after it. It's not up to me to do this stuff, I think other people are ... I also think that… there is a certain kind of logic of building organisations that makes it hard to look after those values. It's not impossible, but it is hard. And I think if you start focusing on, oooh, how do we look after and pass on those values… something subtle changes, and you start trying to do something, when it happens best if you actually just live out those values, and leave it up to people to take them. (Interview 6/2/2017)

Clearly, this resonates with a view of emancipatory politics as being always thought anew, always contingent. It would be interesting to undertake a much longer-term study of CLP over time to look at how their politics plays itself out. It would also be interesting to consider the individual-organisation nexus in more detail – do those who join the organisation do so because they already share the same politics and praxis, or do they 'learn' this over time spent in the organisation? How, in fact, do the individuals within the organisation actually shape its politics and praxis?

I am also intrigued by CLP's ongoing existence post-shift, given that it is, as are all NGOs, almost entirely reliant on external funding. Much literature on donors and NGOs suggests that they are shaped by the demands of funders; and that this is one of the reasons why NGOs tend to play a hegemonic role. In my interview with him, Mark spoke about the risk the organisation felt it was taking in terms of funding, and what it learned from its experience, at some length:

When that shift happened, I can literally remember a meeting with all of the workers at CLP, with all of us perfectly seriously sitting around a table and saying, we are going to do this. We have no idea whether a single funder will follow us, and we're going to do it anyway. If we have to find work elsewhere, and take a second job, we will do that, but this has to be done and we cannot not to do it. . . . there was no heroics about it, just a quiet affirmation, no, we will do this. And I think that filtered through into the relationship with donors, because, the irony is, it felt very risky, because obviously the way, the shift in how we worked meant – well, for donors, one of the key things it meant was CLP no longer pretends we control what the outcomes are. Because obviously, this way of working, as well, the last thing is, well, we know what's going to happen, we're just implementing it, we just go there and whatever happens, happens. And that is very uncomfortable for the kind of framework that donors were using, where they wanted outcomes and all that stuff. So it was risky.

But from early on, I think that confidence, that, no, no, no, this is simply the better way to do work, and we are going to do it, meant that we, and we were quite excited about that, actually. It was scary, but we knew it was right, we knew this was much better than the bullshit of the other way, which really doesn't work, it's spectacularly ineffective. So that meant then, from that point on, approaches to donors weren't about aaahhhh, please will you support us, our really cool work, and so on. From that point on, we just thought of donors as, look they, if there are people out there who want to be part of this work, then, cool, join us. For some people that means give us some money. But for us it was, like, we knew, there are just like good people and bad people everywhere, there are good people in the donor community, people who knew, man, this is worth supporting, being in touch with. I can remember being in meetings preparing for the boss [Graham] going to Europe on a fundraising tour, and we thought, no, it is not a fundraising tour at all. We're gonna meet all the donors, we're going to talk about the work that's going to be done and we invite them to be partners in the work. It's up to them. Because one of the silly things people do, is you start chasing donors and donor money. And you start agreeing to things that don't feel right, and people get all cross at donors who impose their agenda. What bullshit, I mean you're not like some child. People agree to things, and then it's stupid, then you're contractually obliged to do work you don't want to do, or that you know is

> ineffective and then you start lying, and NGOs just, frankly, do an incredible amount of lying. Which is silly. So it's better to go this route. (Interview 6/2/27)

CLP still exists, more than a decade after its shift – indeed it has slightly grown its number of staff. Thus CLP's experiences calls into question the analysis that donors invariably shape the work that NGOs do; and research specifically on this could potentially help deepen our understanding of how and why conventional NGOs support the status quo.

7.7 Conclusion

I began this thesis with an assertion that change was both necessary and possible; and an uneasy feeling that civil society organisations – whom I had believed needed to be agents of change through pressurising African states to behave better towards their people – might not perhaps be delivering on this. My study has convinced me that my previous analysis was flawed both in relation to the target (the state), and the mechanism (NGOs) of change. It is now clear to me that truly emancipatory change is only possible if the poor, those who "should not be there", are the agents of thinking and effecting this change. Nevertheless, my findings reveal that emancipatory politics is not simply a possibility in theory, but is a lived reality for CLP. Thus, whilst it is true that many NGOs act to create and cement hegemony, this is never a given. This organisation has thought its emancipatory praxis into being, primarily through deep reflection on the context, and how it acts in the world, often with others. This kind of dialectical process is open-ended – anyone can engage in it.

To paraphrase CLP, then:

> I am committed to a living, emancipatory politics.
> I am pretty much finished with the dead politics of the state and the parties.
> I do not believe in the common-sense knowledge of the world-as-it-is – I believe in the crazy nonsense of the truth that is its rupture/disruption.

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Annexure 1: Individual Interview Schedule

These are possible initial guiding questions for the exploratory interviews.

I will ask probing and follow up questions based on responses.

- What is your experience of CLP as an organisation?
- What do you regard as the central or main objective of the life and wellbeing of the/your organisation?
- Specifically highlight important events that have happened in the history of the organisation from its inception to the present (fill in important people, events and theorists which characterises the life of the organisation on the timeline)
- What major sources or resources does your organisation use as references for its work and praxis?
- How does the organisation's praxis relate to the writings of Fanon and Freire?
- What specific literature of Fanon and Freire does your organisation use as a reference and why?

Annexure 2: Focus Group Interview Schedules

These are possible initial guiding questions for the exploratory interviews.

I will ask probing and follow up questions based on responses.

Questions for *Abahlali*:

1. Tell me about your organisation?
2. What sort of activities does your organisation undertake?
3. Do you work with other NGOs or civil society groups apart from CLP? If so, who and why? If not, why not?
4. How long have you been working with CLP?
5. How would you describe your relationship with CLP?
6. Can you describe specific experiences that you have encountered during your work with CLP?
7. What have you learnt from working with CLP?
8. Do you think working with CLP has been different in any way from working with other NGOs/civil society organisations? If so, how and why?
9. Do you think CLP has learnt anything from you? If so can you describe what and how?
10. Is there anything else that you want to say about CLP?

Questions for CLP staff:

The questions will be based on the timeline of the organisation from its inception until now. I will ask the staff to fill in people and events that they would consider as most influential in the life history of the CLP on the timeline. Life history is important because many organisations have a long and eventful history in which their original visions and values have evolved and emerged in different ways. A common review of the history will help this research to be able to better understand the evolution of the organisation's vision and values. I will ask the following questions in relation to the life history of CLP:

1. Describe your general experience of working with the organisation. Do you think this has changed over time? If so, when, how and why?
2. What do you regard as central to the life and wellbeing of the organisation?
3. What do you regard as the main objective of the organisation?
4. What specific intellectual sources does your organisation use as the basis of its work, or to draw on in its thinking and working? Can you locate when these sources were first introduced on the timeline, and why?
5. Since your organisation claims to have been influenced by Fanon and Freire, which specific concepts and sources of these two theorists does your organisation use, and why did your organisation choose those particular concepts and sources?
6. What specific areas of Fanon and Freire's writing do you specifically focus on or consider most important?

Annexure 3: Observation Schedule

Critical areas for observation

The observation will specifically serve to look at how communities that work with CLP generally engage with the organisation.

I will specifically observe if

- There is dialogue between CLP and the communities and the nature of this dialogue, if there is any.
- The engagement of communities with CLP does not compromise their autonomy.
- This engagement does not take away control of the communities over their projects or activities.

NB:

The observations together with the focus groups will be used to understand how CLP applies their methodology.

Annexure 4: *Padkos* Postings

This table provides details of the postings made to the *Padkos* email list, in the order in which they were made. *Padkos* began after CLP's 2010 evaluation and planning processes, as a way "to share resources, thoughts and conversations with others who join us on the journey of our work in the world". Every *Padkos* posting including what CLP called a 'blurb' – i.e. a comment from CLP. The *Padkos Digests* bring together in a hard copy form the mailings sent out on the *Padkos* list, including the CLP 'blurb', and all resources attached. Two volumes of *Padkos Digest* were produced: Volume 1 contains the first 22 *Padkos* mailings, and was sent to list members in late 2012; Volume 2 the mailings from number 23 to number 45. (NOTE that CLP's numbering appears to have become a bit confused between numbers 72 and 76!).

No.	Date	Title	Attachment
1	15/10/2010	"We are the people who don't count"	"We are the people who don't count – Contesting biopolitical abandonment" (Anna Selmeczi)
2	15/11/2010	"Finding Our voice in the world"	"Finding Our Voice in the World" (Butler et al.)
3	9/12/2010	Out of this World	"Out of this world" (CLP)
4	23/2/2011	Fighting for Justice in Rural KwaZulu-Natal	"Fighting for Justice in Rural KwaZulu-Natal" (Ntseng with Butler)
5	28/2/2011	Crises in the Food Commons	"Mozambiques food riots – the true face of global warming (Raj Patel)
6	25/3/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: David Ntseng introduces Peter Hallward, "Fanon and political will"	"Fanon and political will" (Peter Hallward)
7	4/4/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: David Ntseng introduces Michael Neocosmos, "The Nation and its Politics: Fanon, emancipatory nationalism and political sequences"	"The Nation and its Politics: Fanon, emancipatory nationalism and political sequences" (Michael Neocosmos)
8	14/2/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: Mark Butler introduces Richard Pithouse, "Fidelity to Fanon"	"Fidelity to Fanon" (Richard Pithouse)
9	5/5/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: Thulani Ndlazi introduces "Fanon and the Land Question in (Post) Apartheid South Africa" by Mabogo More: Back to Basics: Without land there is not true liberation	"Fanon and the Land Question in (Post) Apartheid South Africa" (Mabogo More)

10	13/5/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: Graham Philpott introduces S'bu Zikode's Foreword to Gibson's *Fanonian Practices in South Africa: Fanon and the living politics of Ababhlali baseMjondolo*: "…to continue the struggle to fulfil the striving for freedom and justice"	"Preface" (S'bu Zikode)
11	25/5/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: Nigel Gibson's Preface to *Fanonian Practices in South Africa: From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo*	"Fanonian Practices in South Africa Today: From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo" (Nigel Gibson)
12	7/7/2011	A Fanomenal Padkos Event: After the Fanomenal Event	"The Fanomenal Event" (CLP) "Presentation to the Paulo Freire Project, School of Education and Development, UKZN and CLP, Pietermaritzburg, May 30, 2011" (Nigel Gibson)
13	16/7/2011	Take a break!	"Crisis in the Food Commons" (Raj Patel)
14	1/8/2011	After the acquittal of the "Kennedy 12"	"Victory for Abahlali baseMjondolo – Defeat of our detractors!" (Bishop Rubin Phillip) "A Path Through the Embers" (Richard Pithouse) Dancing and tears and moving forward at Kennedy Road: A statement of solidarity to Abahlali baseMjondolo from CLP" (CLP)
15	30/11/2011	Reclaiming the L-Word	"Reclaiming the L-Word: Sappho's Daughters out in Africa" (Alleyn Diesel)
16	5/10/2011	Solidarity	"Dismayed and angered as the Hilton Festival 2011 puts on Israeli state-sponsored productions" (CLP) "After the statement was signed" (CLP)
17	22/11/2011	Dark corners of the state we're in	"Dark corners of the state we're in" (CLP) "Secrecy Bill" (Steven Friedman) "Who can we trust?" (Pierre de Vos)
18	5/12/2011	Today is "International Food Sovereignty Day to Cool Down the Earth"	"For sovereignty: Its politics and its representation" (CLP) "Climate Change and global warming are perpetrated by the Capitalists who oppress us" (Reverend Mavuso)
19	15/12/2011	Development without the poor	"Geographies of Development: without the poor" (Richard Ballard)
20	17/2/2012	Padkos Gig	-
21	2/3/2012	Thinking emancipatory politics	"What does democracy name in South African politics?" (Michael Neocosmos)
22	28/3/2012	Thinking emancipatory politics	"What does democracy name in South African politics?" (Michael Neocosmos)

23	15/5/2012	Fast in Solidarity	“From Ramle Prison to the World” (Richard Pithouse)
24	6/6/2012	Join us to hear S’bu Zikode and Marie Huchzermeyer	-
25	20/6/2012	The Traditional Courts Bill	“The Land Question: A Statement of Belief” (CLP) “Locusts of the Horizon” (Richard Pithouse) “A chief rules by people power” (Jeff Guy)
26	30/8/2012	The Marikana Massacre	“Solidarity with Mine Workers at Marikana Platinum” (Abahlali base Mjondolo) “Marikana Massacre Memorial Service” (Bishop Rubin Phillip) “The Marikana Mine Workers Massacre – a Massive Escalation in the War on the Poor” (Ayanda Kota) “African lives cheap as ever” (Sowetan Editorial) “Senzeni Na?” (Chris Rodrigues) “Umshini Wami” (Chris McMichael) “Marikana and the New Politics of Grief” (Jon Soske) “The Truth Behind the Marikana Massacre” “Facing Reality” (Richard Pithouse) “Marikana Massacre: Do not blame the victims” (Ronnie Kasrils) “Autopsies show miners were fleeing” (Baldwin Ndaba) “Liberation betrayed by bloodshed” (Njabulo Ndebele) “The cold murder fields of Marikana” (Greg Marinovich)
27	12/9/2012	John Holloway: Coming to PMB!	“An introduction to John Holloway / Umlando ka John Holloway” (CLP)
28	28/9/2012	Padkos with John Holloway	“Twelve Theses on Changing the World Without Taking Power” (John Holloway) “Against and Beyond the State: An Interview with John Holloway” “The Politics of Dignity and the Politics of Poverty” (John Holloway
29	5/10/2012	Padkos with John Holloway: Message from the Director	-
30	5/11/2012	Mixed-grill “Itacate” Padkos	“Tsunami of small rebellions: John Holloway interviewed by Yves Vanderhaeghen” Lineages of Freedom” (John Holloway)

			"On dignity, love, and philanthropy" (Mark Butler and Graham Philpott)
31	8/11/2012	Two Events and a Digest!	-
32	21/11/2012	Learning from the ground up with Aziz Choudry	"Solidarity Against Political Repression in Russia" "Learning in social action: Knowledge production in social movements" (Aziz Choudry) "The Politic of Human Dignity" (Lindela Figlan)
33	7/3/2013	Padkos event with Richard Pithouse and Bioscope Launch: "Searching for Sugarman"	"The Resurrection of Sixto Rodrigues" (Richard Pithouse) "Searching for Sugarman" (Rian Malan)
34	20/3/2013	Padkos Event with Richard Pithouse and Bioscope Launch	"The Riotous Underbelly of the New Normal" (Richard Pithouse)
35	18/4/2013	Food Sovereignty Now!	"Nyeleni Newsletter" "Sustainable Living Fair Programme"
36	29/4/2013	How many of us must die?	"Murder in KwaNdengezi: Abahlali baseMjondolo Press Statement" "Cicero Guedes is assassinated" "Andries Tatane killed again"
37	7/6/2013	Raul Zibechi and Popular Struggles in Latin America Shack Settlements	"The Urban Peripheries: Counter-Powers from Below?" (Raul Zibechi)
38	11/7/2013	An informal conversation with Prof Kathryn Oberdeck on Religion and popular working class politics	-
39	18/7/2013	Oberdeck, Gibson, Federici – great Padkos events and materials	"Finding Fanon, Looking for second liberations" (Nigel Gibson) "Religion and popular working class politics" (Kathryn Oberdeck)
40	6/8/2013	A Natural History of Food Riots	"A Natural History of 'Food Riots'" (Crystal Bartolovich)
41	14/8/2013	Silvia Federici is coming to PMB	"Silvia Federici, On capitalism, colonialism, women and food politics: Interviewed by Max Haiven"
42	19/8/2013	Padkos event with Richa Nagar and Bioscope!	"Desiring Alliance and Complex Translations in Activist Research: An Interview with Richa Nagar" "Playing with Fire – Chapter 6" (Sangton Writers and Richa Nagar)
43	5/9/2013	The Federici Event, 12 Sept: This is big, people!	"Feminism and the Politics of the Commons" (Silvia Federici)
44	10/9/2013	Final reminder: Silvia Federici this Thursday! & big thanks Richa Nagar!	"Storytelling and co-authorship in feminist alliance work: reflections from a journey" (Richa Nagar)
45	27/11/2013	What CLP Believes	What CLP Believes (CLP)

46	13/2/2014	The church/es and the evolving situation in South Africa: A conversation with Jacques Briard	-
47	19/3/2014	Twenty Years of Democracy: "the call of a world that does not yet exist" ("Zapatismo Urbano", John Holloway)	"A brief history of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation" (Raúl Romero) "Zapatismo" (Mexican Solidarity Network) "Zapatismo Urbano" (John Holloway)
48	26/3/2014	Time to Digest your Padkos with Volume 2!	Padkos Digest Vol 2 Preface and Foreword (Padkos Committee / Anna Selmeczi)
49	23/5/2014	Living democracy	"Living democracy" (CLP) "Participatory Democracy in Action: Practices of the Zapatistas and the Movimento Sem Terra" (Amory Starr, María Elena Martínez-Torres, and Peter Rosset) Educate in resistance: the autonomous Zapatista schools (Angélica Rico)
50	27/5/2014	Come and celebrate the good stuff: Event to launch the second edition of Padkos Digest, with Tony Cox (whose new album is Padkos)	Poster for event
51	10/6/2014	Learning from each other's struggles	"The pedagogy of road blockades" (Anne Harley)
52	26/6/2014	Thinking and learning an emancipatory praxis	"Christianity and Anarchism" (Mark Butler & Graham Philpott) "The new anarchists" (David Graeber)
53	21/8/2014	State Land policy palaver!	"A poorly conceptualized plan" (Stephen Greenberg) "Land reform - cloud cuckoo land or calculus of power?" (Andries du Toit)
54	4/9/2014	Pan-African heritage of struggle: Firoze Mani on Amilcar Cabral	"Despotic governments in Africa" (Firoze Manji)
55	12/9/2014	"Truthful tales shall be told" – Mafika Gwala: 1947-2014	"Poets are hurting" (Mafika Gwala) "Poetry and communism" (Alain Badiou)
56	18/9/2014	Final reminder: Heritage Day featuring Firoze Manji	"An introduction to Amilcar Cabral" (Mark Butler and others, CLP booklet) Flyer for *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral*
57	3/10/2014	The killing of another fighter for justice	"Another Abahlali baseMjondolo member assassinated" (GroundUp article)
58	10/10/2014	Padkos event: Aziz Choudry returns	"Reflections on Fanon's legacy" (David Austin, Aziz Choudry, Radha D'Souza, Sunera Thobani)
59	14/10/2014	Padkos event: Lewis R. Gordon: "Black consciousness' critique of secular theodicy"	"Introduction to I write what I like" (Lewis Gordon)

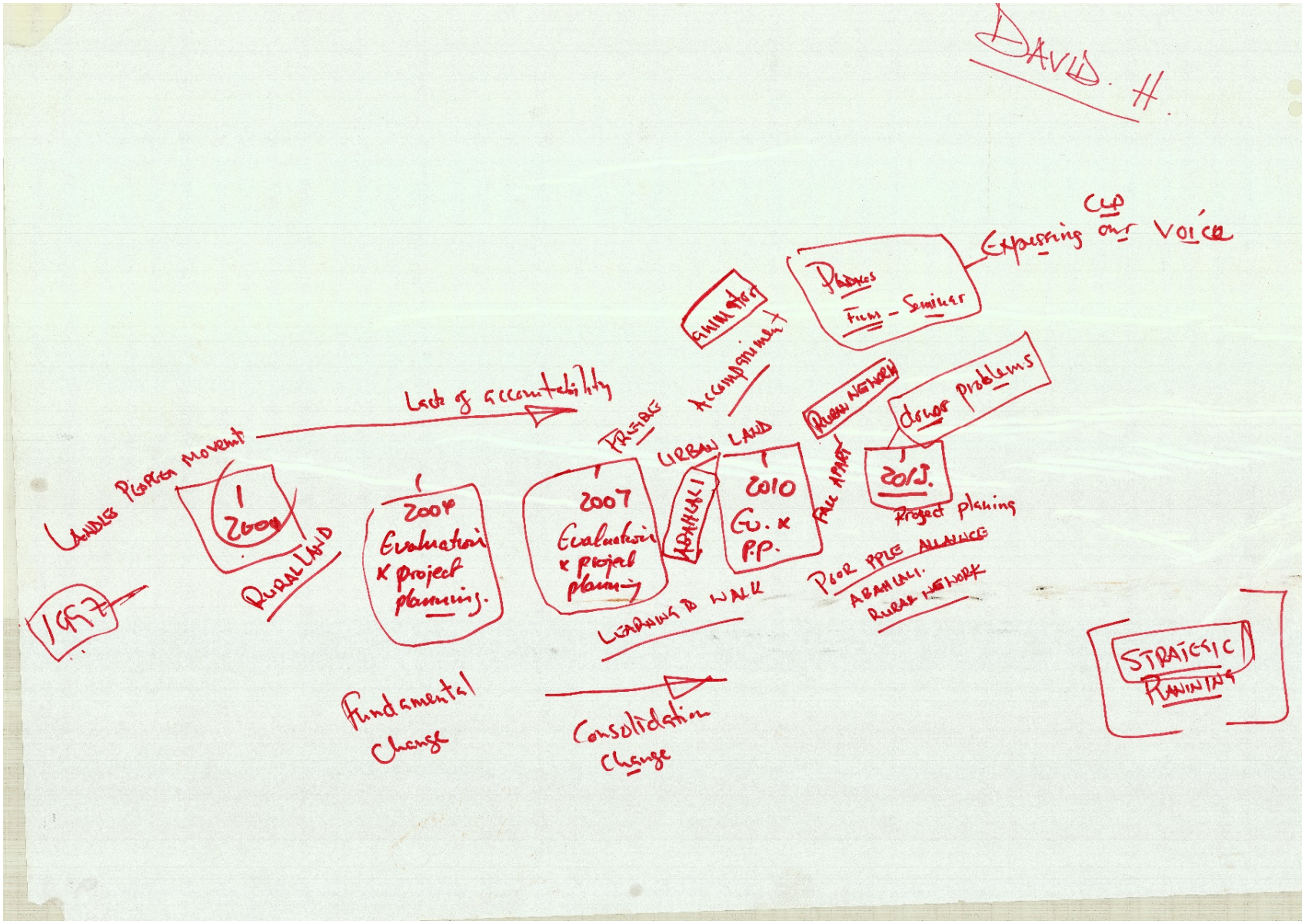
			“Lewis Gordon on Cabral 2013” (Lewis Gordon)
60	3/2015	Palaver: The farm labour question	“The farm labour question” (Andre du Toit)
61	4/3/2015	[Padkos Bioscope No 28]: Rojava: Syria’s secret revolution	“From Chiapas to Rojava: seas divide us, autonomy binds us” (Petar Stanchev)
62	18/3/2015	Justice in El Barrio	“Joining our struggles to build another world: 10 years of horizontal organising in El Barrio, New York” (Jessica Davies)
63	16/4/2015	Xenophobia	“Why has SA become so violent?” (Bishop Rubin) “Pietermaritzburg says no to xenophobia” (#Pmbsaysnotoxenophobia) Two posters for people to print out
64	4/5/2015	Our Land	“Palaver on aspects of the land question in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal: Notes from a CLP discussion of Andries du Toit's: ‘The farm labour question: Fifty-fifty shades of obfuscation’” (CLP) “The farm labour question: Fifty-fifty shades of obfuscation” (Andries du Toit) “Don’t take what belongs to us” (Robby Mokgalaka) “Land question: Significant ideological and policy shifts” (Marianne Thamm)
65	11/8/2015	Fanon Lives: 1925-1961	"No, we do not want to catch up with anyone" — an extract from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (Frantz Fanon) “Frantz Fanon: 1925 – 1961” (CLP) “The Fanomenal Event, May 2011” (CLP notes)
66	26/8/2015	Richard Pithouse on Frantz Fanon opens the Padkos “School of Thought”	“Frantz Fanon: Philosophy, Praxis and the Occult Zone” (Richard Pithouse)
67	7/9/2015	School of Thought: Part 2: Raquel Gutierrez Aguilar – Bolivia: People’s Power and State Power	“Rebuilding a Dissident Common Sense. An Interview with Raquel Gutiérrez” (Veronica Gago)
68	28/9/2015	School of Thought: Part 3: Lewis R. Gordon – What Fanon Said	-
69	27/10/2015	School of Thought: Part 4: Firoze Manji – What’s Left in Africa?	“What’s Left in Africa? Reflections on the Failure of Left, Working Class Movements to Take Root in Most of Africa” (Firoze Manji)
70	17/11/2015	Dignity and courage VS barbarism and cowardice	“Dignity and courage versus barbarism and cowardice” (Mark Butler)

71	8/3/2016	Anna Selmeczi: “Haunted by the rebellion of the poor”	“Haunted by the rebellion of the poor” (Anna Selmeczi)
72	15/4/2016	Jon Langdon: ‘Learning in Movements’	“Learning to Sleep without Perching: reflections by activist-educators on learning in social action in Ghanaian social movements” (Jonathan Langdon) “The Thumbless hand, the dog and the chameleon: enriching social movement learning theory through epistemically grounded narratives emerging from a participatory action research case study in Ghana” (Jonathan Langdon, Kofi Larweh and Sheena Cameron)
73	28/4/2016	Climate Change: The bread and butter issues of the movement	“From Paris to ?: Can the UNFCCC save the planet?” (Bobby Peek)
74	5/8/2016	“They thought they had taken power. In reality they were taken by it” (SA national elections)	“Some Reflective Comments from Padkos” “They Thought They Had Taken Power. In Reality They Were Taken By It.” Interview with Alvaro Reyes (the Workshop for Intercommunal Study), by Tassos Tsakiroglou
75	18/8/2016	Trade School – Decommodifying Learning & Teaching	PMB Trade School pamphlet
73	24/2/2017	Extractive Industries: The current state of play – a discussion with Jasper Finkeldy	“Introduction” (CLP) “To mine or not to mine?” (Jasper Finkeldy)
74	17/3/2017	Nigel Gibson: Fanon, politics and psychiatry	“Nigel Gibson” (CLP)
75	24/3/2017	Reminder: Nigel Gibson: Fanon, Politics and Psychiatry	-
-	21/4/2017	Follow up on No 75 Nigel Gibson: Fanon, Politics and Psychiatry	“Fanon: Politics And Psychiatry” (Nigel Gibson)
76	8/8/2017	The Art of Listening	“The Art of Listening” (Richard Pithouse)
77	14/8/2017	The Sweetness of Place	“Zone to defend” (Kristin Ross)
78	6/9/2017	Radical Municipalism	“Radical Municipalism: The Future We Deserve” (Debbie Bookchin)
78	4/10/2017	[Bioscope] “This Land’ with special guest Rev Mbhekiseni Mavuso	Poster “‘This Land’ is whose land, exactly?” (Marelise van der Merwe)
79	9/10/2017	Thinking freedom in Africa: Michael Neocosmos	“Introduction from Thinking Freedom in Africa” (Michael Neocosmos)
80	30/10/2017	“The Human Hopes of 2017 Revisited”	“The Human Hopes of October 1917 Revisited: On the Russian Revolution’s Centenary” (Michael Neocosmos)

81	16/3/2018	Firoze Manji on Freire – First Class in 2018 'School of Thought'	"Emancipation, Freedom or Taxonomy? What Does It Mean to be African?" (Firoze Manji)
82	11/4/2018	Anne Harley on Freire – Second Class in the 2018 'School of Thought'	"Praxis & Social Mobilisation" (Richard Pithouse)
83	18/5/2018	Thinking about Paulo Freire theo(logically): Philpott & Butler	"Paulo Freire in his words" (Sourced by (and from): Roberta Clare, Talbot School of Theology)
84	30/5/2018	Shack-dweller Movement Leader, S'fiso Ngcobo, Assassinated	"Another Abahlali activist shot dead" (Nompendulo Ngubane) "Statement on the assassination of S'fiso Ngcobo" (Bishop Rubin Phillip) Photograph of S'fiso Ngcobo
85	12/6/2018	Movements and Meaning: 'School of Thought' Featuring Mary Akutee, Erica Ofoe, Kofi Larweh, Jonathan Langdon & Eurig Scandrett	"Creative Dissent, Community Radio and Social Movement Learning: a collaborative meaning-making panel on the Yihi Katsɛmɛ - the latest iteration of the Ada Songor Salt Movement (Ghana)" (panel)
86	21/8/2018	Thinking resistance to extractive industry	groundWork information letter
87	2/10/2018	Art, landscape, and the toxic violence of mining	-
88	23/10/2018	Double-bill - Mining - notes from the archaeological and artistic records (Bioscope: A country imagined; Event: Gavin Whitelaw - Iron Age metallurgy of KZN)	"'My father's hammer never ceased its song day and night': the Zulu ferrous metalworking industry" (T. Maggs)

Annexure 5: Timelines

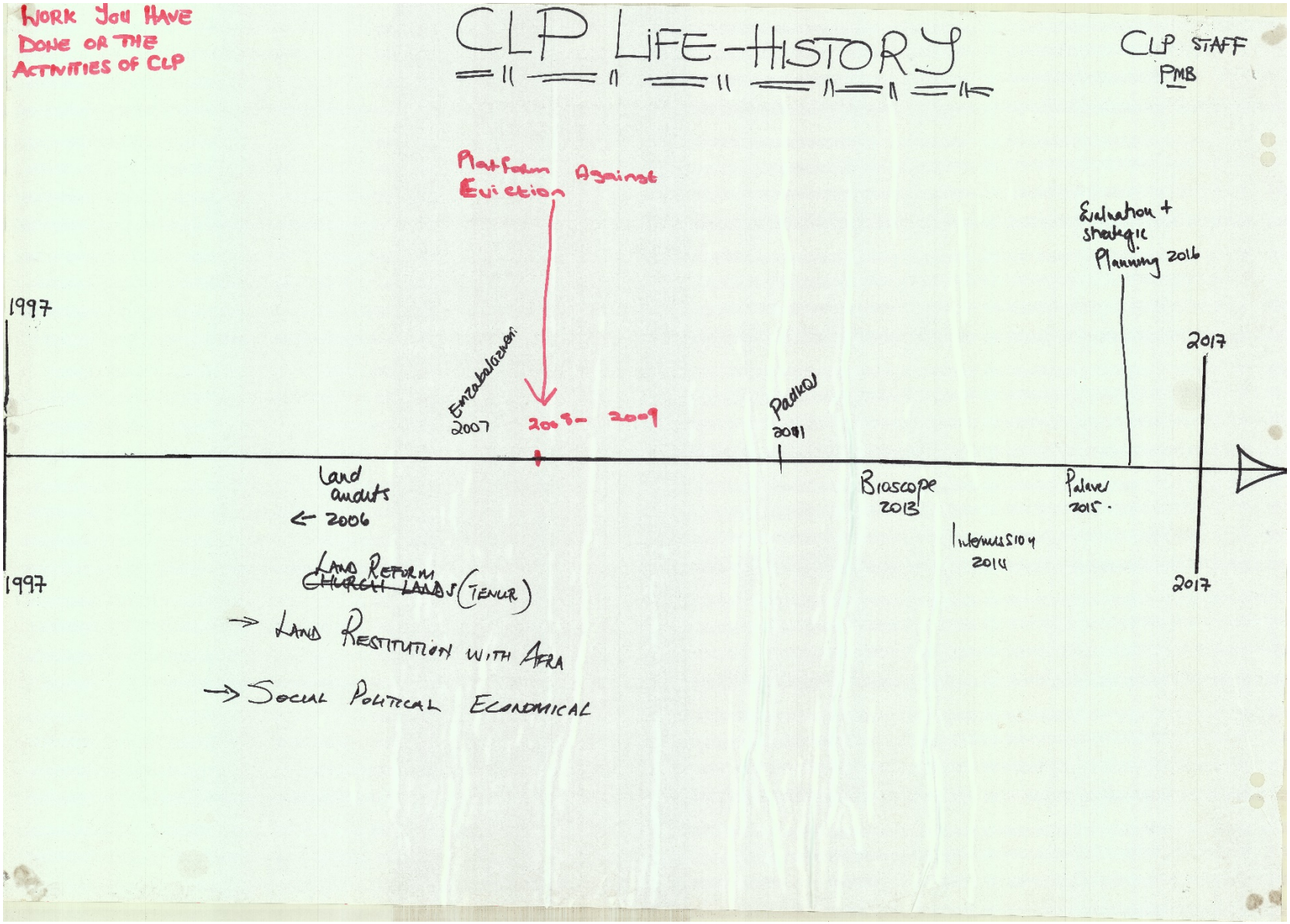
The timelines from the interviews and CLP staff focus groups appear on the following pages.

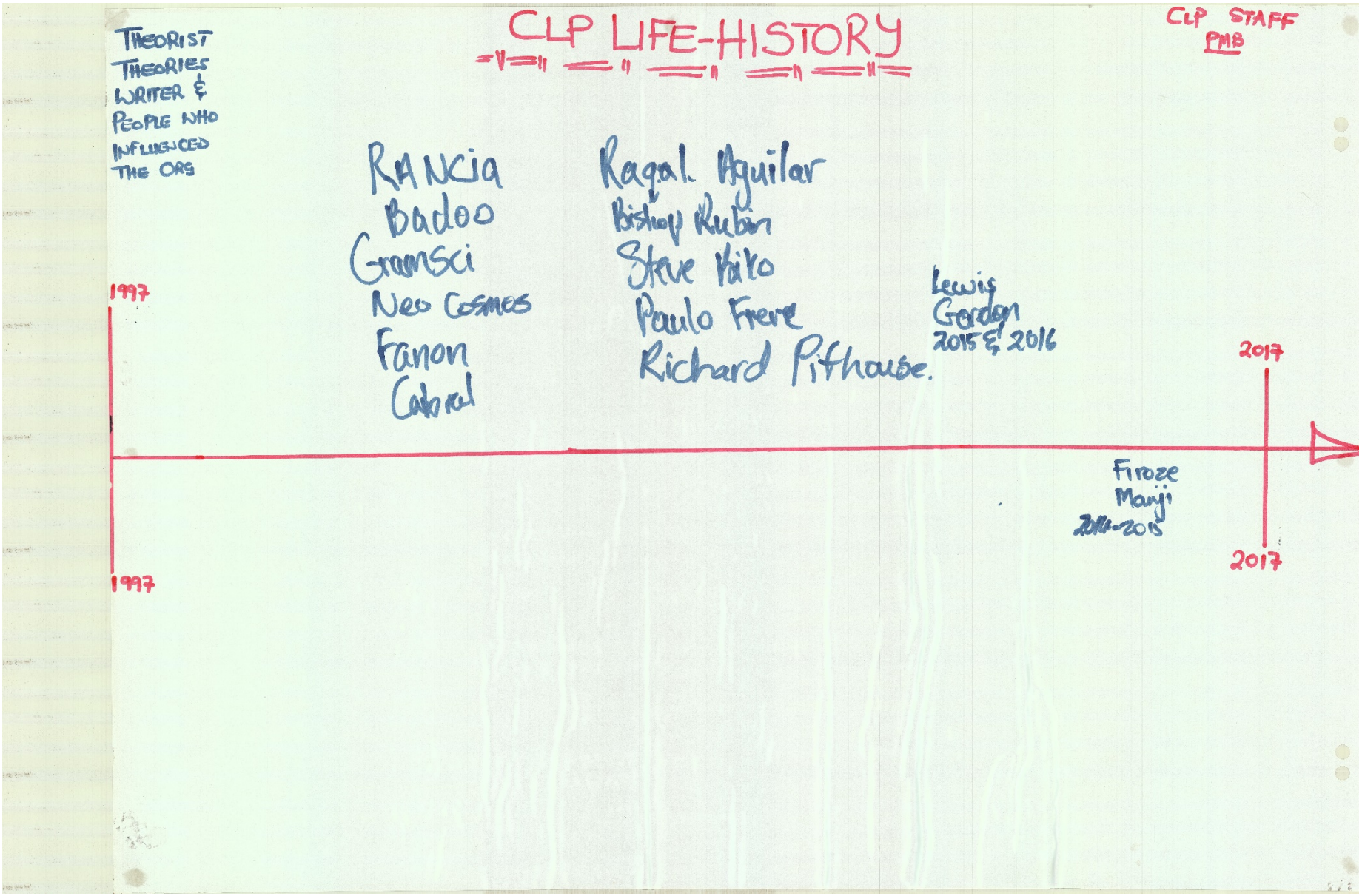

DAVID. H.
Expressing our voice
Lack of accountability
Accompaniment
Urban Land
Project planing
Fundamental change
Consolidation change
Strategic Planning

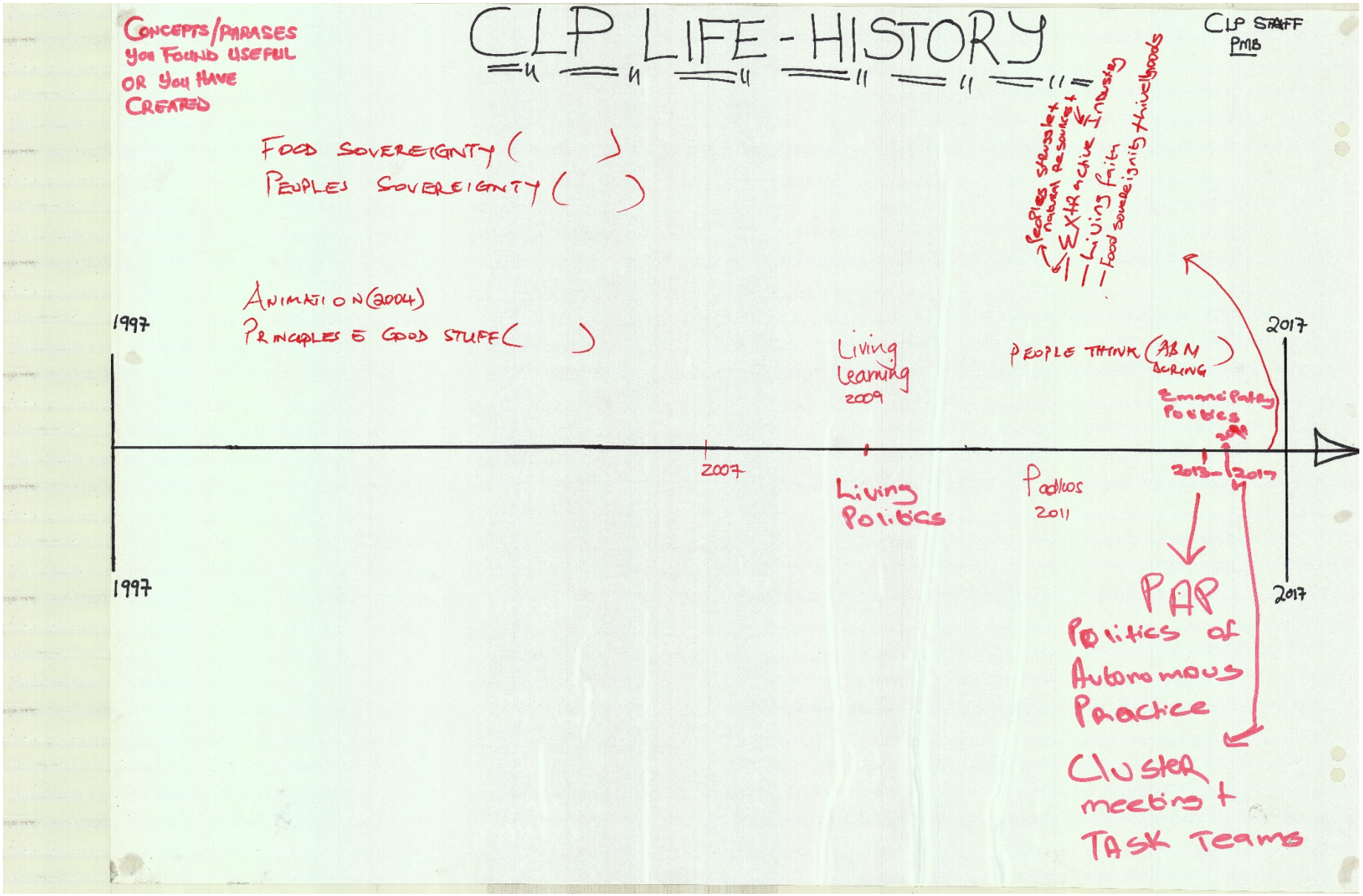
CLPs LIFE-HISTORY

Work you have done or activities of CLP	Concepts/phrases you found useful or you developed	Theories, theorists, writers, people who influenced you
		Grattan
Centre of expertise	Land Reform	
BCT edition	Storied space	
1992	1992	1992
NLC Research on church land in SA ⇒ a strategic resource	Centre of expertise	Cousins (PLAAS)
Research for denominations Inventory, audit, policy	Agrarian Reform	J+P Ag Reform
Facilitation re: Church land ⇒ Business plan (DLA)	Entity / identity	Bruegemann
	Jubilee	Greenberg
Occ. Paper 1 → land	Land in SA: Gift for all or commodity for few	
Paper 2 → food	Food security / sovereignty	Via Campesina
Shifted practice Conference of betrayed/angry	If we succeed – worst nightmare	MST
	Praxis	Freire
	Animation	Patel
	Out of order	Zapatista Sub-Com Marcos
2004	2004	2004
Church land → all land	Those who suffer it, lead it.	
L.R. → people	Nothing about us without us.	Lazarus
Occ. Paper 3 → Learning to walk	Agency	Bodian
		Ranciere
		Biko
		Turner
Rural → urban	People think	
Social movement	Civil society	Zikode
	Living politics	
Women, evictions, livelihood	We make the path by walking	
Theology course taught UKZN		
Formation of cadres – rel with UKZN	Living learning	Fanon
Padkos		
2010	2010	2010
	Principles of good stuff	Gibson
Padkos events	Proximity – at a distance from power	Neocosmos
		Mosala
		Holloway
		Cabral
Party politics + living politics	Autonomous politics	Selmeczi
Xenophobia		Manji
	Politics of dignity	Benjamin
		Winstanley
		TfT
WMPM – Rome		
2014	2014	2014

THEORISTS
THEORY
WORK
WRITERS
1997
1996
2001
2002
2004
2007
2010
2011
2012
2013
2017
EVENT
CONCEPTS
PHRASE


WORK YOU HAVE DONE OR THE ACTIVITIES OF CLP
CLP LIFE-HISTORY
CLP STAFF
PMB
Platform Against Eviction
Evaluation + strategic Planning 2016
1997
Enzabalazeni 2007
2008 - 2009
Padkaal 2011
2017
Land audits
← 2006
Bioscope 2013
Palaver 2015.
Intermission 2014
1997
LAND REFORM
~~CHURCH LANDS~~ (TENUR)
→ LAND RESTITUTION WITH AFRA
→ SOCIAL POLITICAL ECONOMICAL
2017


CLP LIFE-HISTORY
CLP STAFF
PMB
THEORIST
THEORIES
WRITER &
PEOPLE WHO
INFLUENCED
THE ORG
RANCIA
Badoo
Gramsci
Neo Cosmos
Fanon
Cabral
Raqal Aguilar
Bishop Ruben
Steve Biko
Paulo Freire
Richard Pithouse.
Lewis
Gordon
2015 & 2016
Firoze
Manji
2014-2015
1997
1997
2017
2017


CLP LIFE-HISTORY
CLP STAFF
PMB
CONCEPTS/PHRASES YOU FOUND USEFUL OR YOU HAVE CREATED
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ( )
PEOPLES SOVEREIGNTY ( )
ANIMATION (2004)
PRINCIPLES & GOOD STUFF ( )
1997
1997
2007
Living Learning 2009
Living Politics
PEOPLE THINK (A&N DERING)
Emancipatory Politics
Podhos 2011
2013-2017
2017
2017
PAP
Politics of Autonomous Practice
Cluster meeting + TASK TEAMS