"Action, comrades action" Social movement learning and knowledge generation in the anti-apartheid struggle during the decade of resistance 1980–1990

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Author's declaration

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

Signature

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the learning and knowledge-generating capacities of social movements during the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s. The geographical context of this study is the metropolitan area of Cape Town, South Africa, where activists were engaged in collective action against the apartheid state. Social movements as sites of learning during the anti-apartheid struggle have received little attention, and there is a scarcity of literature on activists' learning as a dimension of political mobilisation in South Africa. Most studies emphasise the socio-political dynamics of activism with little attention paid to the learning and knowledge generating capacities of the anti-apartheid movements. The 1980s witnessed an increase in the mass mobilisation of communities and workers inside the country, with increased isolation of the apartheid state internationally because of sanctions, in the area of sports, culture and the economy and an increase in insurrectionary political violence – both at street level and in the form of underground guerrilla warfare. To stem the tide, the apartheid government attempted numerous reforms, and when those did not work, they resorted to brutal violence against unarmed, non-violent mass protests and cross-border raids on the military training camps of the liberation forces based in friendly African states.

Social movement learning is a growing area of interest in adult education research (Foley 1999; Holst 2002; Hall and Clover, 2005; Kapoor and Choudry, 2010; McFarlane, 2011; Ollis, 2012; Choudry, 2015; Ismael, 2015; Choudry and Vally, 2018; Earl, 2018). A common theme that emerges from the literature is that the intellectual work of movements goes unseen, and that the voices, ideas, perspectives, and theories produced by activists are often ignored in academic accounts. The conceptual framework for this study draws on the work of Paulo Freire's 'conscientisation' (1974), and Griff Foley's 'learning in social action' (1999). During the anti-apartheid movement,

activists acquired critical skills and knowledge that empowered them to understand how the apartheid state power worked to deny them their rights; social movements provided the space to challenge power relations, contesting the Apartheid state hegemony and to develop counter narratives that guided their praxis. Through the process of raising consciousness, activists and the oppressed at large became aware of the systems and structures that had an impact on their lives.

This research draws on phenomenology to understand activists learning and knowledge generation capacities. The study design involved interviewing twenty activists drawn from a purposeful sample of one hundred activists who were active in the political and underground movements and across ideological divides. This study used semi-structured interviews to allow activists to reflect on their personal experiences and to uncover their learnings. A great deal of learning in the anti-apartheid movement was informal and unconsciously acquired, and the unconscious learning only came to the fore upon reflection.

The data is discussed under two headings: 1) 'Learning to become an activist' and 2) 'Learning through and in activism'. Understanding the processes of 'learning to become an activist' traces the primary drivers for their early activism. These included their micro-level experiences of the brutality and injustice of apartheid and poverty which created an impulsive urge to oppose the system. It is out of this experience that a common purpose and solidarity emerged. Macro-level struggles in communities, factories and schools contributed to 'moments of rupture' that became important networks to strengthen mobilisation and linking activists to different organisations. Exposure to political education prepared activists to engage in social protests and develop thoughts on what a democratic South Africa could look like. Political education was therefore an important vehicle in the fight for ideological dominance.

'Learning through and in activism' is the process of unpacking the learning content and processes that took place in movements. This learning enabled activists to develop frames that they used to translate local and single issues into a more comprehensive critique of the apartheid power establishment. The learning included beliefs and values that guided action and offered an alternative view of society, and these were grounded in the experience of struggle. Learning also included understanding how to recruit and build political organisations where activists could expand their capacity and fuse solidarity and develop movement identity.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in three areas. Firstly, it draws on the activists' lived experience to shed light on the motive for engaging in the anti-apartheid struggle. Secondly, through a process of reflection, activists brought to light the skills and knowledge that they acquired whilst engaging in struggle. Thirdly, the study accepts that political violence was a part of the 'repertoire' of action and strategies of the anti- apartheid struggle (given the context of apartheid brutality), and it therefore extends activists learning to include prisons and military underground as spaces for learning. This study concludes that learning in the anti-apartheid struggle was primarily informal, drawing on critical pedagogy, and took place in non-formal education spaces.

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter One

Introduction and background

1.1   Introduction

This research investigates the learning and knowledge-generating capacities of social movements in Cape Town, South Africa, during the anti-apartheid struggle. The period 1980–1990, which is the focus of this research, saw an increase in the mass mobilisation of communities and workers inside South Africa, accompanied by insurrectionary violence both at street level and in the form of underground guerrilla warfare as well as the increased international isolation of the county through sanctions. To stem the tide of protest movements, the apartheid government attempted numerous reforms. When those did not work, they resorted to brutal violence against unarmed, non-violent mass protest and cross-border raids (Crary, 1986) on the military training camps of the liberation forces stationed in other countries in Africa. This was the context of 'learning in social action' for South African activists.

Research is not divorced from the socio-political environment or the belief system of the researcher. Haraway (1988, cited in Kostka and Czarnota, 2017, p.368) argued that researchers speak from a particular 'location in the power structure' and do not escape the 'class, sexual, gender and racial hierarchies of the world system'. My personal exposure to the injustice of apartheid began in the mid-1970s when, as a primary school pupil, my family task was to walk my mother (RIP) home from her monthly resident's association meetings. I recall sitting outside the meeting room, waiting for her to finish, and listening in on the issues being discussed. This allowed me to rub shoulders with the local community leaders at an early age. These were the same community leaders I would rebel against in the 1980s when they decided to participate in the management committees of the whites-only council and the tricameral parliament, a system designed to co-opt the Coloured and Indian communities into being junior partners of the apartheid state. As a primary school pupil, I would also witness the brutality of the security forces against unarmed school children during the June 1976 national schools uprising that started in Soweto. My two brothers, Charles, and Ernest were student leaders at Uitsig High school, and this gave me insight into the student protest; they themselves were brutally beaten up by the police during a student march to the local white police station in Parow, a white

residential area. I recall being smacked in the face by my primary school head teacher when I wanted to organise my class to go outside and acknowledge the high school protest march, passing our school. My exposure to workers' struggles came in 1979, with the Leyland motor manufacturing strike in Cape Town. My eldest brother, Poekie was one of the shop stewards and during the strike the committee met at our house. So, in a sense, the events of the 1970s were important to my own political conscientisation, although my understanding was limited to shouting slogans like 'Black Power' and throwing stones. It is also interesting to note that my early political conscientisation was primarily through family members.

I entered Florida High school in Ravensmead during the time of the 1980 schools boycott and was immediately taken up into the local student and youth mobilisation and protest. It was during these early days that I was thrown into the proverbial 'deep sea' learning to organise meetings, public speaking and organise awareness programmes during the school boycotts. As an Afrikaans first language speaker I also had to learn and develop writing and speaking proficiency in the English language to interact with the black township- and middle-class English medium schools. I joined the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), a national high school student body, Azanian Student Organisation (AZASO), a national University body and South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), a national youth body and served on the leadership of these bodies. I served on the Student Representative Council at the University of the Western Cape and was the Chairperson of the United Democratic Front in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. My focus was primarily on education and training, facilitating political discussions, preparing organisational discussion papers, and addressing public meetings and the political underground. As an activist I was on the radar of the security police and was detained regularly between 1983–1989 under the internal security legislation and state of emergency regulations. With the banning of COSAS in 1985 I was declared a listed person under the security legislation. Whilst in detention I participated in preparing and facilitating political education classes for fellow detainees, especially for those who were not politically active before their detention.

I therefore approach this study as an activist who has contributed to the processes of learning and education in the anti-apartheid movement and has observed how activists learn and generate knowledge collectively. I experienced the brutality of

apartheid, learnt about the laws that oppressed us, developed tactics and strategies to advance the cause of freedom, developed political programmes to educate activists and linked local community struggles with regional and national protests.

1.2   Context of this research

The geographical context of the study is the metropolitan area of Cape Town, South Africa, where activists were engaged in collective action against the apartheid state in the 1980s. Social movements as sites of learning during the anti-apartheid struggle have received little attention in the literature. Limited published literature includes the work of Shirley Walters 'Education for democratic participation' (1989) and 'Social movements, class and adult education' (2005). Walters (2005) proposes that social movements are 'privileged locations for the creation of new knowledge' (p. 60), and that knowledge was produced through debates over meeting agendas, campaigns and demonstrations and exchanges over strategies and tactics. Walters (1989) explains how the 'participatory democratic practices' in organisations were shaped by the origins and purposes of organisation, the members' biographies, and members' theoretical understanding of their actions. For Walters, the form of social movement learning is in part determined by the material conditions of class structure from which the activists emerge. There is a scarcity of literature relating to activists learning as a dimension of the political action in South Africa. Most studies have emphasised the socio-political dynamics of activism (Lodge and Nasson, 1991; A. Marx, 1992; Abrahams, 1996; Seekings, 2000a; Gerhart and Glaser, 2010), with little attention given to the learning and knowledge capacities of the anti-apartheid movement.

The study period under review is 1980–1990, a time that is commonly referred to as the 'decade of resistance' by activists. It is during this period that South Africa witnessed an increase in popular revolt on the streets, underground military operations against apartheid targets, increased internal mass mobilisation and the international isolation of apartheid because of sanctions, boycotts and solidarity (Skimmer, 2017)

1.2.1   Turning point and moments of rupture

Chief Albert Luthuli, president of the African National Congress (ANC), burned his passbook on Sunday, 26 March 1960, in Pretoria. The anti-pass campaign resulted in the Sharpeville massacre[1], when the police open fired on protestors and killed 69. This

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[1] https://humanrights.ca/story/the-sharpeville-massacre [accessed on 18/10/2021]

resulted in huge demonstrations across the country, including Cape Town, with a march from Langa to Cape Town Central. A state of emergency was declared in 1961 and 11,727 political activists were detained (Coleman, 1998). The two leading national liberation movements, the ANC, and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), were banned at this time. The banning of these movements 'disrupted the trend of mass political involvement in the fight against oppression' (Dingake, 1987, p. 62). This ushered in a new era of political mobilisation in South Africa based on a combination of non-violent protest and political violence, legal political work, and underground military insurrection.

The re-emergence of resistance in the 1970s with the establishment of the Black Consciousness movement, the labour strikes in 1973 and the national education uprising in 1976 created fertile ground for the rebuilding of social movements in South Africa. The rejection of apartheid education, the rise of the labour movement, coupled with the rise of the civic movement, became the main drivers of the resistance movement in the 1980s, leading up the negotiated settlement in the early 1990s. The civic movement and the education crisis in the schools allowed for local micro level issues to be integrated into the national struggle. In the early 1980s, labour strikes (Beitel, 1995) consumer boycotts (Smith, 1989) rent boycotts and the 1980 class boycotts in Cape Town (Molteno, 1987) created solidarity across sectors and communities.

1.3   Apartheid reform

In 1948 the National Party won the elections in the Union of South Africa and introduced segregationist policies, enforcing racial segregation in residential areas, schools, and public life. As a result of national and international mobilisation against apartheid, the South African government started various reform initiatives to appease the international community and to win over local reformist leaders. Amongst these were: the Wiehahn Commission, the Rickert Commission, the De Lange Commission and constitutional reform.

1.3.1   Wiehahn Commission

With the mounting pressure from the international community, the 1976 student uprising, labour strikes and the changing political landscape in Southern Africa (the independence of Mozambique and Angola) in the mid-1970s, it became clear that the

National Party government could not continue to rule without taking in account these developments. In 1979 the government appointed the Wiehahn Commission to investigate the plight of African workers. The Commission's recommendations included expanding training and employment opportunities for some African works and relaxing the enforcement of laws in workplace cafeterias and restrooms (Danaher, 1987, p. 247). The most important reform emanating from the Wiehahn Commission was the legalisation of African trade unions in 1979, this allowed for greater bargaining power with their employers and allowed government to ensure order and predictability in the labour market.

1.3.2   Rickert Commission

A second set of reforms was initiated with the appointment of the Rickert Commission in 1979 to examine influx control – the 'system of state controls on the movement of Africans workers from the rural to urban areas' (Danaher, 1987, p. 248). The report was an attempt to increase the effectiveness of influx control in the urban areas within the 'bounds of apartheid.' The report itself stated that the goal was 'more effective control of migration than in the past and the avoidance of much of the friction' (Danaher, 1987, p. 248). A further outcome from the Rickert Commission was the division of Africans into privileged permanent 'insiders' and rural and migrant 'outsiders' (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, p. 14). To build up the status of the urban 'insiders,' the Koornhof Bills, named after the Minister of Co-operation and Development, became law in the form of the Black Local Authorities Act of 1982. This act had the implication of 'conferring increased power on township community councils' to manage electricity, water, garbage removal, health services deemed as African 'own affairs' (p .14). Further restrictions for the urban 'insiders' came with the Black Communities Development Act 4 of 1984, giving permanent urban residents freehold property rights in segregated African 'group areas' (p. 16) like Langa, Gugulethu and Nyanga in Cape Town. This was part of the greater reform scheme to co-opt black communities living in the urban towns of South Africa.

1.3.3   De Lange Commission

Government reforms also extended to educational reform. One example of education reform was commissioned in 1980 by the Human Sciences Research Council under the leadership of Professor de Lange. The De Lange report made far reaching

recommendations that included the establishment of a single education department (unifying the various administrative departments). It further recommended 'racial integration at local and regional level' and that universities be given the 'freedom to admit students based on academic rather than racial standards' (Danaher, 1987, p. 250). The Botha government rejected the recommendations of the De Lange report because government wanted to retain racial and ethnic divisions. The result of this commission was that government reaffirmed its support for 'Christian education' and the 'national character of education' that each population group should have its own schools' and education authority. (p.251)

1.3.4 Constitutional reform

By the 1980s the struggles in the communities and the education and labour sectors were increasing and the apartheid government started to look at constitutional reforms to win over public support from sections of the oppressed communities and to restore the country's reputation after the international damaged caused by apartheid. These proposed reforms included legislative reforms to accommodate minorities in central government (Brauns & Stanton 2016). The reform strategy was based on the idea of including the Coloured and Indian minorities into a tricameral parliament[2], making provision for a White chamber, a Coloured chamber, and an Indian chamber. The three chambers could independently legislate on 'group affairs' but could also collaborate on 'matters of common interest' (Danaher, 1987, p.251).

This constitutional reform made no allowance for the black majority to participate in the central government, and the intention was for the majority to continue to exercise political 'rights' in the ten ethnic homelands,[3] better known as Bantustans. In parallel with these reforms the Apartheid security apparatus was regrouping under the State Security Council. The strategy of the securocrats was based on 'winning the hearts and minds' (WHAM) and they did this by identifying the troubled townships where infrastructure projects and social programmes could help to undercut local political mobilisation. (Gerhart and Glaser 2010, p.32)

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[2]

https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv02005/06lv02007.htm [accessed on 18/10/2021]

[3] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/homelands [accessed on 18/10/2021]

1.4　United front against apartheid

In June 1983, 200 organisations met in Pretoria to form the National Forum to rally against the Koornhof Bills and constitutional reforms and in July 1984 they adopted the 'Manifesto of the Azanian People' (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, p. 48). The National Forum was anticapitalistic and was 'inspired by the revolutionary consciousness' of the black working class and adopted the principle of 'non-collaboration with the oppressor and political instruments' (p.49).

Two months later in August 1983, the United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in Mitchell's Plain,[4] Cape Town, with 565 organisations uniting. As in the case of the National Forum, the UDF also initially set out to oppose the Koornhof Bills and the tricameral parliamentary reforms. The UDF was ideologically diverse, embracing community, education, religious, women's, labour, white-liberal and progressive organisations all broadly aligned with the Freedom Charter[5]. Many affiliates came from youth and student organisations, although civic and women's organisations were also a major part of the Front. The main organisational focus of the UDF campaigns was at local and regional level. This was noted in a booklet published by the University of Cape Town SRC in 1983:

> Organisations affiliated to the UDF will run campaigns around certain aspects of the new constitution that affect their membership in a direct way. This is to ensure that the UDF does not simply become a political protest group but is able to build and strengthen non-racial democratic organisations as an alternative to apartheid itself (Lodge and Nasson 1991, p. 52).

In 1984, as part of the campaign against the constitutional reforms, the UDF launched a Million Signature Campaign, a campaign initiated by the UDF to organise and express the political ideas of the excluded majority, although they never achieved the total due to police repression of the campaign.

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[4] Mitchell's Plain was one of the largest Coloured townships in Cape Town which made the launch of the UDF in this area a strategic decision given that the tricameral government focus was on co-opting coloured people into central government.
[5] https://www.thoughtco.com/text-of-the-freedom-charter-43417 [accessed on 18/10/2021]

1.5   Transition to Democracy

With the increase in protest and political violence in mid-1980s a state of emergency was declared in 1985-6. The state of emergency[6] was characterised by mass arrest, beatings, torture and pollical assassinations. Despite the harsh repression the resilience of the labour movement was self-evident with 743 strikes in 1986 involving 424, 340 strikers (Seekings, 2000). The government responded by banning sympathy strikes and banned seventeen organisations in 1988 (Dwyer & Zeilig, 2012). At the time of the second general elections for the tri-cameral parliament In September 1989, the writing was on the wall, the county was politically unstable, and the Apartheid government was under pressure from white business to provide 'stable conditions for capital accumulation' (ibid, p.208). The internal conditions were further exacerbated by the defeat of South Africa by the Angolan and Cuban military during the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in May 1988, which shifted the military balance in Southern Africa (Scholz, 2016). In 1989 the government started with the release of political prisoners and ultimately released Nelson Mandela in 1990 and unbanned seventy-two other liberation organisations, including lifting the restrictions on the United Democratic Front (UDF)

With the unbanning and release of Mandela the African National Congress became the political representatives of the liberation movement, leading on the 'talks about talks'[7] and the political negotiations with the National Party government. The return of the ANC from exile begged the question, what is to be done with the internal mass movement primarily led by the UDF and other social movements. The UDF continued with its activities in 1990 and was officially disbanded in 1990 in solidarity with the ANC. The decision to disband the UDF was argued for primarily by UDF affiliates that was closed to the ANC, like the student and youth movement. The contrary view was that the ANC has not yet established itself inside the country organisationally and it would be better for the UDF and ANC to co-exist during the transition period. The ANC almost immediately after its return from exile started to talk to the government, meaning that its focus was not on engaging with local community-based organisations or even national bodies. During the negotiations, the mass democratic movement on a local level was isolated from the political decision-making process. This was alien to

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[6] https://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/multimedia.php?kid=163-582-8 9accessed on 18/10/2021]
[7] https://ourconstitution.constitutionhill.org.za/country-on-a-knife-edge/ [accessed on 18/10/2021]

local activists who had a history of participatory decision making, they were now confronted by the ANCs 'democratic centralism' style. The foreignness of this approach to the mass democratic movement was articulated by Dr Boesak (2009), a founding member of the UDF. He argued that the spontaneity of the UDF flew in the face of the dogma of 'democratic centralism.' Under democratic centralism he writes:

> a vanguard leadership is required to control the spontaneous and decentralised actions of the masses…the task of thinking about political transformation could not be left to ordinary people, but required a select group of the political elite to plan and execute the process…a select group of intellectuals had the task of thinking and acting on behalf of the masses (p.178)

The vanguard leadership role of the ANC required compromise with white capital resulting in Nelson Mandela having to exercise political control over the demands and aspirations of the mass democratic movement, like the labour movement on the economy, the sports federations on the springbok rugby symbol and a sunset clause protecting job security for the white civil service. The transition phase was marked by a Mandela euphoria, and the marginalisation of local political participation, allowing the post-apartheid landscape to be 'imagined through the prism of the character of its leaders' (Habib, 2013, p.3). Scholars like Fine, Innes & Davis (1990) argued that a failure of the independent left in South Africa to build a political and organisational alternative in the workplaces and townships was the reason behind the failure to counter the direction of the transition led by the ANC,

In April 1994 South Africa had its first democratic elections, it marked the moment when the leaders of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement 'entered the corridors of power' (Ballard et al; 2006). The late 1990s saw the resurgence of social movements in South Africa focusing on local government service delivery, education, and health rights. There was a growing protest movement in the post-apartheid era with an average of more than 8000 'Gatherings Act' incidents per year since the mid-2000s (Bond, 2010, p.1).

1.6   Research aim and questions

The primary aim of this study is to document what learning processes and knowledge practices were developed by the anti-apartheid movement. It seeks to contribute to the developing body of knowledge on the learning and knowledge-generating

capacities of grassroots movements engaged in social action (Foley,1999; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010; Ollis, 2012; Choudry, 2012, 2015; Ismael, 2015; Walters 2015; Choudry and Vally, 2018, 2020). The study further seeks to document and make explicit what activists learned as well as the social practices underpinning these learning processes and knowledge production. This will be achieved by reflecting on individual moments of confrontation, connecting learning and struggle.

The overall aim for this research is to explore the learning process of activists in the anti-apartheid struggle. The three research questions are:

1. What were the driving forces behind activists' engagement in the struggle?
2. What did activists learn from social movement participation?
3. How do activists learn in social movements?

1.7   Research rationale

Laurence Cox (2014a) discusses the theoretical basis for seeing 'social movements as significant knowledge producers and sources of epistemological innovation' (p. 956). For Cox it is not whether' social movements are producers of knowledge but 'rather how to interpret this' (ibid) In the literature numerous studies have analysed the ways in which social movements produce knowledge (Hall, 2006; 2009; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010; Cox, 2014a). Hall (2006) makes the point that 'knowledge-generating capacities' of social movements account for much of the 'power claimed in these movements' (p.230). It is therefore important that scholars deepen their understanding of learning within the context of social movements. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) made a seminal contribution to social movement learning by recognising the creative and central role of learning processes in what they termed 'cognitive practice' (p. 45). Through the notion of cognitive practice, they emphasised the creative role of 'consciousness and cognition in human action.' Meaning is derived from the context within which social action takes place.

Social movements according to Chesters (2012) are bearers of knowledge about the forms of oppression and injustice, expressing political claims, identifying social and economic grievances, and bringing new or neglected issues to public prominence. These movements are at the forefront of debates about social injustice, including how gender, race and class divisions are reproduced. The knowledge produced by social movements are therefore not only challenging those in power but

also the structures that are at times reproduced in the social movement itself. Social movements are taken as objects of knowledge to be researched by scholars, rather than as knowledge producers. This approach reduces social movements to phenomena that can enhance the career of academics. Chester (2012) further argues that activism produces 'critical subjectivities' whose 'contextual and situated knowledge' is both independent of the academy and valuable. This dichotomy challenges the ontological and epistemological basis from which the researcher engages in scholarship.

The literature on social movements has been dominated by Euro-American studies and the 'African context is underrepresented' (Hall and Turray, 2006). Kapoor (2011) warns of the dangers of assuming the 'portability' of the Euro-American dichotomy in Southern contexts. Drawing on activist's life experience in Cape Town, South Africa, allows for an understanding through their own 'epistemic lens' (English and Mayo, 2012). Local experience also adds to a rich tapestry of locally framed learning narratives and support. Foley's (1999) 'learning in social action' and Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba (1995) notion of a 'context rich approach' in analysing the African phenomena. This is further supported by Choudry (2012), who writes that social movements must be 'situated in social dynamics and concrete conditions', micro histories he argues are 'part of the history or histories mode of existence'. This engagement with micro histories through interviews gives a 'voice to the previously unheard' (Foley, 1999, p11). It is this context that this study seeks to contribute to social movement learning by drawing on activist's personal experiences.

1.8   Design for the research

This research draws on phenomenology to understand activist learning and knowledge-generation capacities of the anti-apartheid movement. Data was collected from activists who were engaged in the 1980s' anti-apartheid struggle by conducting semi-structured interviews to collect data. The study design involved twenty activists; these were drawn from a purposeful sample of one hundred activists. To ensure representivity the sample was drawn from various organisational who were active in the political and military underground and across political ideology.

The collected data was coded and using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) thematic analyses method, and themes were identified through an inductive process.

Five themes were identified: political awakening, learning in struggle, learning content, knowledge resources and learning methodology. The interview data was verified using digital archival resources to provide the reader access to historical moments and events referenced in the research.

1.9 Organisation of dissertation

This concluding section describes the focus of the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to social movement scholarship and social movement learning. It provides an overview of the South African social movement landscape and reviews the contributions of several scholars to social movement learning.

Chapter 3 introduces the conceptual framework for the research drawing on Freire's conscientisation and Foley's 'learning in action'.

Chapter 4 describes the research design and how data was collected. It describes the process of data coding and how themes were identified.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the findings of the research, analyse the data, and identifies the key themes. The data is presented with direct quotes supporting the themes. Chapter 5 deals with 'learning to become an activist' and Chapter 6 discuss 'learning in-and-through activism'. Further analysis is provided by a discussion of the relevant literature.

Chapter 7 reflects on how the research questions were dealt with in this thesis as well as the contributions of the study and areas for possible future research.

Chapter Two

Social movements, learning and knowledge production

2.0   Introduction

At its core, learning in social action is a liberating act, a political act, the pedagogical is not only the structure within which learning happens 'but also a basic unit of power relationships' (Rincon-Gallardo, 2019, p. 11). Critical pedagogy theorists (Freire, 1970; Foley, 1999; Giroux, 2011) see learning as praxis, a process of acting and reflecting on the world that awakens critical consciousness and leads to freedom. Social movements focus on 'really useful knowledge' that 'enable[s] people to make sense of the causes of hardship and oppression…with a view of challenging them' (Hughes, 1995, p. 99).

The context of the South African social movement pre-1994 is located within the anti-apartheid struggle against a racist state supported by a brutal security force. The objective of the oppressed majority was to overthrow the apartheid power holders at a political and economic level, drawing on mass mobilisation, the international isolation of the apartheid government and armed resistance. This chapter explores the literature on social movement and social movement learning and knowledge production as integral parts of activism. It starts with an overview of the theories underpinning social movement studies and provides an overview of the South African context. The contributions of several social movement learning authors are presented with two South African experiences: 'informal learning in prisons by political activists' and 'learning experiences in the context of political violence.' These illustrate the informal and non-formal context of activist learning.

2.1   Social movement scholarship

Social movements are based on collective action and are typically engaged in social and political mobilisation that informs the learning content and provides rich environments for knowledge production. The systemic forces that give rise to the grievances that social movements express are diverse and complex (Miller, 2017). These includes the pathways to democratisation in Eastern Europe (Glenn, 2001), service delivery protest in South Africa (Ballard, Habib and Valodia, 2006)), the Arab

Spring movement focussing on democracy and justice (Bayat, 2017), the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, occupation protest calling for genuine democracy (Lee and Chan, 2018), the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA protesting against policing of African Americans, the occupy movement and climate crises movements in England (Earl, 2018), and protest triggered in Turkey by plans to redevelop Gezi Park in Taksim (Gul, Dee and Cunuk, 2014). Social movements produce knowledge about the issues they seek to mobilise around, and part of this process involves developing solutions and ways to change the current situation. Learning therefore deepens in the context of community action. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) wrote that social movements develop 'counter expertise' and that these movements are platforms from where 'new knowledge' including world views are developed (p.45). Snow, Soule and Kriesi (2004) in their Introduction to the *Blackwell companion to social movements*, note that,

> Social movements can be thought of as (italics original) *collectivities acting with some degree of organisation, and continuity outside of institutional or organisational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organisation, society, culture or world order of which they are a part* (p. 11).

Social movements are typically a contentious form of social and political resistance based on collective action (Miller, 2017). Della-Porta and Diani (1999) note that social movements have four characteristics 'informal interaction networks… shared beliefs…and solidarity… collective action focussing on conflict… use of protest' (pp.14–15)

Social movements are described by McAdam and Tarrow as 'inherently complex and multifaceted permitting any number of viable analytic perspectives' (2019, p.19). Theoretical debates about social movements have evolved since the late 1950s in response to forms of collective action in North America and Europe. The earliest systematic approach to the study of social movement theory was the collective behaviour school or 'crowd psychology,' focusing on large-scale mobilisations in the streets as a sign of social dysfunction and irrationality (Poletta and Japer, 2001; Eschle, 2004; Ellis and Van Kessel, 2009).

The theoretical and methodological shortcomings of the Collective Behaviour School was the basis for the development of the Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) that understood collective action as 'rational and organised action dependent on contextual resources' (Chesters and Welsh; 2011, p. 7). RMT tends to explain the

'how,' but not the 'why' of social movements' emergence and development. According to McCarthy and Zald, RMT examines the 'variety of resources' that must be mobilised, the dependence of movements on 'external support for success' and tactics used by authorities to control and incorporate movements (1977, p. 1213). The innovative approach shifted the analysis away from structural factors towards organisational questions. This shift was driven by the growing influence of economics and business cycle theory in the US academy (Tarrow, 1989). This shift also had methodological implications with the pursuit of a certain kind of empiricism within American sociology that sought to produce objective and generalisable knowledge about social and human phenomena broadly equivalent to the natural sciences (Chesters and Welsh, 2011). RMT operated at two levels (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, p. 45): the mezzo level (how money, materials and technology is combined into strategic and tactical action) and macro level (institutional and societal resources available). The result of this approach is that the success of social movements is seen in terms of organisational effectiveness and the deployment of resources. The main critiques of RMT are its indifference to the political and ideological content of movements (Dalton et al., 1990), its over-emphasis of economic and rational calculation (Chesters and Welsh, 2011), its negligence of social and cultural factors (Welsh, 2000), and the assumption that movements only move within a given politico-institutional terrain without allowing for the possibility that they might systemically critique capitalism or cultural codes (Melucci, 1996).

Political Opportunity Structures (POS) theorists emphasise changes in the political context and particularly within state structures (Tarrow, 1994, 2011), and this 'create[s] and limit[s] opportunities for mass struggle' (Piven and Cloward, 1979 cited in Ballard et al, 2006, p.5). The key is to understand the context within which mobilisation is possible and to identify the 'broad structural openings and instabilities' to which actors may respond (Ballard et al., 2006, p.6). Tarrow defines political opportunity structure as 'consistent, but not necessarily formal, permanent or rational dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure' (1994, p. 85). McAdam (1996) identified four dimensions of political opportunity: the relative openness or closure of the political system; the stability or instability that undergirds the system; the presence or absence of allies; and the states' capacity for repression.

Changes in political opportunity structure therefore include shifts in any four of the dimensions. In addition to this, POS theorists also points to the formation of 'protest cycles' or 'mobilisation waves' (Tarrow, 1989). These protest cycles expand because of an increase in mobilisations from which actors 'learn from and improve upon existing models of collective action' (Ballard et al., 2005, p.6). Although the political opportunity structure paradigm offers insights into the opportunities for action and suggests possible forms of movements, it is weak in explaining the rise of new movements on their own (Ballard et al, 2005). Movements are also developed because of informal networks and can start in response to conditions on the factory floor or student representative councils at schools because of conditions in the classroom.

New Social Movement (NSM) theory is rooted in the European traditions of social theory and emerged in response to what was considered the inadequacies of classical Marxism for analysing collective action (Buechler, 1995). The theoretical debate about social movements have evolved since the 1970s in response to new forms of collective action in the global north. NSM theory noted that there was an emergence of mass movements that was not based in the politics of the old left or labour movement (William, 2010). The NSM theory explained the role of movements in post-industrial societies and is also seen as an inevitable outcome of changing social, economic, and political relationship during this period (Flynn, n.d.). The European experience of the 1960s challenged Marxist theories that was predicated on class conflicts arising from the factory floor, this was the basis of what was known as the 'Old Social Movements'. NSM theory was used to explain the emergence of new struggles organised around environmental issues, anti-nuclear power protest, student uprisings and so forth. The NSM school starts from the basis that there have been substantial 'changes to recent activism, responding to structural shifts in late modernity' (Eschle, 2004). NSMs are framed as movements that organise in 'socially embedded, diffuse, horizontal networks and [are] primarily concerned with culture and identity and aim to constrain state and economic power rather than to gain access to it' (Melucci, 1989, p119). NSM bridges approaches of 'old' and 'new' social movements, bringing together movements for liberation, independence, and freedom that often-sought change and to overthrow the state with the 'self-limiting radicalism' of NSMs (Cohen, 1985 cited in Ballard et al., 2005, p11). A major critique of NSM is that the term 'capitalism' has largely disappeared from social movement theory. This

is evidenced from the leading social movement journals like the journal 'Mobilisation' (North America) and the European based journal 'Social Movement Studies,' where, according to Hetland and Goodwin (2014), concern with capitalism had virtually disappeared. Hetland and Goodwin (2014) conducted a content analysis of titles and abstracts of articles published in the two journals and found that of the 183 article titles and abstracts they analysed from the Mobilisation journal, the word 'capitalism' only appeared once and the words 'class conflict' and 'class struggle' did not appear. The same applies to the 'Social Movement Studies' journal where of the seventy-one article titles and abstracts reviewed, the word 'capitalism' appeared in one title and three abstracts, and the phrases 'class conflict' and 'class struggle' did not appear (Hetland and Goodwin (2014, p. 87). In the era of austerity, Della Porta (2015, p. 6) argues that to understand recent protest around neoliberalism it is important to bring 'attention to capitalist dynamics' back into social movement analysis.

Classical Marxism analyses the relationship between the economic base and cultural superstructure. Marx argued that the economic base was the driving force of society and that it influences the character of the superstructure. The superstructure in turn works to maintain the existing economic structure and to 'disguise or legitimate the real conditions of economic exploitation' (Jones, 2006, p. 29). Classical Marxism was primarily concerned with the preconditions of revolution by examining the 'structural conditions of the capitalist system' (Melucci, 1980, p.199). The development of Marxism was intimately linked to the development of oppositional struggles across the globe, ranging from revolutionary struggles against imperialist wars and capitalism itself, to anti-colonial movements and the emergence of new forms of popular assertion (Barker et al., 2013). Although Marxism used the term 'movement' it did not develop an explicit theory of social movements. Marxism formed a framework for interpreting the world, and that framework had an impact on how social groups interacted. Gramsci brought a new interpretation of Marxism with his concept of hegemony that recognises that popular democratic struggles are an integral part of the working-class struggle. Gramsci's perspective accepts that the structural changes in society, politics and economy are displacing the working class as the key actor in social transformation and that new kind of issues and actions are emerging to contest the shape of society (Barker et al., 2013). Marxism was thus not only an ideology but also a habitus and a system of practical social relations that influenced protest

movements across Western Europe (Berger, 2019). The New Left developed a Marxist framework for the new social movements that emerged in the 1970s. The left-wing protest movements – like the peace movement, environmental movement, women's movements, and movements in the developing world – were all induced by Marxist ideas. The same is true for the recent anti-globalisation and Occupy movements.

Historically three main moments in the history of social movements can be identified: 1) the working-class movements of the industrial societies, 2) the new social movements early 1970s and 3) the third generation of movements known as the anti-globalisation movement (Wieviorka, 2005). Globalisation, writes Smith, refers to the increasing expansion of global markets and the subordination of national economies to the global free market' (2009, p. ix). Worth and Kuhling (2004) characterise the anti-globalisation movement as a form of counter-hegemony that engages with the ideology of neoliberalism. The anti-globalisation protest has drawn attention to the 'contradictions and exploitative excesses of consumer society' (Worth and Kuhling, 2004), while rearticulating consumption within broader 'global inequalities', potentially destabilising hegemonic consent.

The banning of the liberations movements in the 1960s in South Africa and the emergence on the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in the early 1970s were the drivers behind the proliferation of domestic new social movements. The BCM played an influential role in the re-emergence of the labour movement with the Durban strikes in 1973 and the Soweto student uprising. The mass democratic movement in South Africa was all inclusive, incorporating organised labour, student and youth movements, white progressives, and liberals, religious and sports organisations. A principal element of the broad strategy was the international isolation of apartheid both at a sport and economic level.

2.2   South African social movement context

The field of social movement studies have been dominated by Western scholarship with little attention being paid to Africa. African protest operates on a continuum of anti-colonial struggles to the pro-democracy movements in the 1990s. Since the 1990s, South African and continental case studies of social movements have challenged the assumption of homogeneity underlying the dominant social movement theories

South Africa has a rich history of social movements challenging the political, social, cultural, and economic hardships through mobilisation across social classes, ethnicity, gender, and geographical location (Karis and Carter, 1972; Mermelstein, 1987; Gerhart and Glaser, 2010). The history of resistance in South Africa from the early twentieth century involves complex interplay between national liberation organisations and social movement struggles. Abrahams (1996) argues that the national liberation movement (primarily the ANC at the time, whose leadership was almost entirely comprised of the emerging African middle class) had no mass membership. This lack of mass membership meant that the political strategies and tactics that the ANC advocated were influenced by the social class position of the leadership. The anti-apartheid movement were particularly prominent across the country and internationally in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s when the national liberation movements like the ANC, PAC and BCM were banned and many leaders in prison and exile. These movements adopted innovative organisational and educational processes to encourage women and men across class and racial categories to participate in the anti-apartheid struggle (Walters, 2005). For example, during the student boycotts of the 1980s, alternative education or awareness programmes were an important medium to educate students about the history of apartheid and anti-apartheid struggle. These school-based programmes included debates, discussions, invited speakers, drama and poetry readings, films, and songs.

After the banning of organisations in the early 1960s there was a period of political lull until the early 1970s. The black trade union movement remerged with the mass strikes in 1972–1973 that began in Durban (Davies et al., 1984). South Africa has a history of unionism that dates to the 1920s with the establishment of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa 1919 (Davies et al, 1985). The labour, movement gathered momentum with the government's decision in 1979 to permit African workers to belong to unions. According to Gerhart and Glazer (2010), three distinct trade union traditions have developed. This first tradition includes those who had their origin in the BCM in the 1970s, grouped under the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). The second tradition encompasses unions with a shop floor tradition, stressing strong factory-based organisation and avoiding political alignment, organised in 1979 under the Federation of South Africa Unions (FOSATU). The third tradition includes community unions that developed in the 1980s. These unions

emphasised community mobilisation and included the South Africa Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) and the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU). The mass strikes of this period had a major influence on popular struggles, especially the development of the BCM and the 1976 nationwide student uprising. The period of the 1980s saw the emergence of more radical trade unions leading to the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in 1985. COSATU was founded on five principles 'non-racialism, one union one industry, worker control, representation based on paid-up membership and cooperation at national level' (Gerhart and Glazer, 2010, p. 86). The political and economic aim of COSATU was explained by Cyril Ramaphosa[8], general secretary of the Mineworkers Union 'The political struggle is not only to remove the government' but also to ensure that the 'wealth of society must be shared among all those that work in this country…We all agree that the struggle of workers on the shop floor cannot be separated from the wider struggle for liberation' (Gerhart and Glazer, 2010, p. 87).

On 19 October 1977, known as 'Black Wednesday'[9], the government in South Africa banned certain newspapers and declared illegal 19 BC organisations and detained several activists (SA History Online). This action was followed by a brief period of political lull, but this was ended with the establishment of local civic originations in Cape Town. Although ideologically different, the leading civic organisations in Cape Town were the Federation of Cape Civic Associations (FCCA), a Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) affiliate, the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC) and Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA), all formed in the early 1980s. These organisations emerged out of the rent-increase protests, consumer boycotts and forced removals in Cape Town at the time. The consumer boycotts provided a link between community and labour struggles when the workers and unions at Fattis and Monis, a food manufacturer, called for a consumer boycott.

The political character of the community struggles was captured in the CAHAC first annual general meeting in July 1982:

> Are we fighting for lower rents to stretch our poverty wages a bit further? Are we fighting for better-looking homes to which we can invite our friends? Will we fight rents today, bus fares tomorrow and

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[8] Current president of the Republic of South Africa
[9] https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/black-wednesday-banning-19-black-consciousness-movement-organisations [accessed on 20/11/2021]

> possibility electricity the day after? We must see increasing rents, bus fares and electricity charges as being only the smoke. Our work must be geared to extinguishing the fire which causes the smoke. Our goal must be to eliminate from society all causes of our hardship. (Adler & Steinberg,2000. p.67)

The civic organisations began as small, ad hoc groups in isolated local communities to tackle local problems. The building of regional structures allowed local civics to link up with regional and national movements. Seeking concluded that the predominant civic strategy in the 1980s 'had been limited in that civic struggles should be preparatory to or provide the basis for political struggles' (2000b, p. 82). The emergence of the UDF in 1983 was a culminating point for the re-emergence of popular struggles and responses to the state's reform agenda.

2.3   Social movement learning

2.3.1   Defining social movement learning

Social movement learning is still emerging (Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002) and a key characteristic of this body of literature is the 'advocacy for a social and critical orientation to learning' (Martin, 1999). Social movements write De Smet are 'sites of learning, of the production of practices, knowledge and self-consciousness' (2014, p. 5). De Smet further explains that every emancipatory movement has an implicit 'theoretical and practical pedagogy of revolt' which 'governs relations of assistance, learning, and power between internal and external forces' (2014, p.11). The primary purpose of learning in social movements is to raise the level of consciousness and understanding amongst activists. For Kilgore (1999), understanding learning in social movements requires not only a concept of the 'group as a learner and constructor of knowledge', but also an understanding of the centrality of the 'group's vision of social, justice' that drives it to act (p.191). These learning experiences create a rich environment for learning by and for members of the public (Hall and Clover, 2005; Hall, 2006). Activities taking place in social action are educational, although this learning is largely informal and often incidental and not recognised as learning (Foley, 1993). This idea is aligned with Paulo Freire's (1970) proposition that 'education is before, is during and is after' (p.68). The intentional integration of education into social movement is important to grasp the 'crucial significance of critical revolutionary praxis' (Chovanec et al., 2008, p.195). Hall and Clover (2005) define social movement learning to include 'persons who are part of any movement and those outside of the

movements because of the actions taken and Hall (2006) specifically refer to people who are 'not participating directly', operating outside of the movement (p. 231).

The essential element in this definition is that learning is not restricted to social movements participants only but also includes people outside the movement. This learning is an output from social movement campaigns, protest, and public media. For example, during the anti-tricameral parliament protest and campaigning in South Africa, the public became aware of the continued injustice of apartheid reforms as well as the reasons that the democratic movement was opposed to participation in the tricameral parliament. Paula Allman (2001) writes that ideas or thoughts can 'become part of our consciousness when we receive them from external sources…[but] reception depends upon our active engagement with them' (pp.165–166). In approaching the intentional integration of education into social movements, it is important to grasp the 'crucial significance of critical revolutionary praxis but action and reflection are crucial to effective engagement and mobilisation' (Chovanec et al., 2008, p. 195). Research into learning in social action is situated at the theoretical intersection of social movements and adult education (Chovanec et al., 2008). Adult education has historically been the backbone of social movement learning and made contributions to theorising in social movements through 'descriptive writing, documenting practice, shared stories and a growing body of analytic and theoretical writing' (Hall, 2006, p. 234).

2.3.2 Adult education and activism

South Africa has a rich history of adult education since the night school movements in the 1960s, the literacy movement in the 1970s and the demands for a people's education in the 1980s. It is a history of 'amazingly complex relationship between adult education and political trends' (Aitchinson, 2003, p.44). The adult education movement responded to the need for literacy and basic education amongst the black majority. In this context it has been the site of educational struggle and has been used as a rallying point by NGOs, university departments and progressive organisations in South Africa. Whilst political work was suppressed by the apartheid government, adult education became a pivotal tool in the conscientisation process of workers and communities. The trade union movement was one of the most significant adult learning institutions in South Africa. Trade unions invested considerable resources in organised education programmes and the most 'pervasive and significant processes of learning' within the

union movement was associated with the workers' involvement through 'organising meetings, taking collective decisions and engaging in collective action' (Cooper, 2006, p. 24)

The field of adult education is complex, dynamic, and ever changing (Clover, 2004), and can be used to explain the learning processes in social movements, with the vision to transform society through collective learning and action. Welton writes that adult education helps people to reflect upon how 'ideological systems and societal structures hinder or impede the fullest development of humankind's collective potential' (1993, p. 14). Holts (2002) suggests that radical adult education and learning must explore more deeply the focus of revolutionary movements and organisations. According to Foley (1993), informal learning in social action is an aspect of learning that has not been addressed by adult educators. He observes that 'it is a dimension of political action that has often been ignored by political activists' (1993, p. 39). Adult education has witnessed an increasing professionalisation of the field with a shift in focus to 'instrumental conceptualisations of education away from the movements' (Niesz et al., 2018). Martin (1999) writes that adult education and training are increasingly governed by the 'goals of the labour market', which makes it necessary to consider the 'links between adult education, national community, democracy and civil society' (p. 8). This concern is supported by Foley (1998), when he argues that the problem in adult education research scholarship is its tendency to 'instrumentalism, psychological humanism, abstraction and idealism' (p.12), as well as a general under-development of sociological analysis. In contrast, social movement learning researchers view learning through social, political, and critical lenses, often drawing on critical theory or social movement theory. Writing from a Marxist perspective, Apple (1995) argues that education is more than an 'expression or function of economic institutions', and that education emerges through 'struggle and contestation'. Choudry (2015) argues that adult education overlooked the importance and nature of learning in social movements because their 'practice is viewed as political and educative' (pp. 80–81).

2.5   Social movement learning: Understanding the field

Social movement learning is a growing area of interest in adult education research, but Hall and Turray (2006) argue that there is little sustained attention by adult education or social movement scholars. One of the challenges is the 'breadth of

approaches' and the 'diverse context' of social movements (Butterwick et al., 2011). Several approaches to social movement learning and knowledge creation have been developed in the literature (Foley, 1999; Eyerman and Jamison,1991; Hall, 2006; Choudry, 2015). What is clear is that learning is not restricted to formal educational systems and that multiple knowledges have legitimacy.

In his book *Learning activism: The intellectual life of contemporary social movements,'* Aziz Choudry[10] (2015) sets out to discuss the forms of activist's knowledge, learning and research concerned with exposing the 'contradictions, cracks and fault lines in the structures and systems that produce and reproduce inequality, injustice and environmental destruction' (p.1). Choudry's starting point is that 'learning is social,' meaning that the everyday practices in struggle contribute to 'constructing alternative forms of knowledge' (p. 81). It is the understanding of this learning and knowledge production that contributes to our understanding of social movements. This is consistent with the ideas of Eyerman and Jamison (1991), that 'cognitive practice' recognises the creative and leading role of learning in social movements. To expose the 'contradictions, cracks and fault lines,' it is important that researchers draw on 'ideas, insights, and visions' produced during the process of people collectively trying to change things and reflecting on their experiences as well as the knowledge about 'systems of power and exploitation [being] developed' (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991, p. 8). Reflecting on his own activism, Aziz Choudry wrote that:

> From time to time some of us were arrested, and through defending ourselves in court, tried to use proceedings for political purposes. We learnt about the law, police tactics and strategy and ourselves (2015, pp. 3–4).

In analysing activists' knowledge, it is important to foreground the 'worldviews generated through projects of change' (Choudry 2015, p. 8). Choudry (2015) suggests that we need to understand how people produce knowledge and learn whilst engaged in struggle, and this is in line with Foley's call (1999) for more case studies. Supporting this approach, my study illustrates how activists 'generate various forms of sophisticated knowledge and engage in significant learning and research' (Choudry 2015, p.9), through practice. Choudry goes on to warn that activism can be 'fraught

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[10] Hamba Kahle' Aziz Choudry. Rest in Peace maqabane

with many tensions and contradictions' (p.10), and that to confront this we need to address 'questions of power' in the movement. These contradictions and internal struggles arise over the 'direction of campaigns and movements strategies and tactics, priority issues and the words, phrases, images, symbols, and targets' (ibid, p. 11). Although healthy debate and discussion is to be encouraged, it is important that in developing the alternative vision activists needs to be conscious that in 'challenging the hegemonic power and practices' it is possible that its 'own political culture of democratic practice and collectivity can be corrupted' (ibid, p. 10). Choudry (2015) continues that political education is the basis for 'unmasking the central issues of power and inequality in the system' (p.11). Social movement learning (SML) is central in the organising and building of an organisation. SML for Choudry (2015) is key to 'creating counterpower' to resist and transform capitalist exploitation and oppression, colonial relation, racism, and patriarchy (p. 11). In writing about knowledge that is produced in social movements, Choudry (2015) argues for a 'genuine dialogue with activists' (p. 63). This, he believes, will enrich social movement scholarship by 'building upon ideas, literature and discussions within movements,' and will foreground and value the importance of insurgent skills and knowledge, what some called 'struggle knowledge' (p. 56).

In their book *Social movements: A cognitive approach'* Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison (1991) observed that there was something fundamentally missing from the sociology of social movements, 'something that falls between the categories of the various schools and is left out of their various conceptualisations' (p. 45). The authors recognised the creative and significant role of learning processes in what they call 'cognitive praxis' referring to the 'creative role consciousness and cognition in all human action, individual and collective' (Eyerman and Hamison, 1991, p. 3). The cognitive praxis in social movements plays a significant role in transforming 'groups of individuals into social movements' (Eyerman and Hamison, 1991, p. 4). therefore, they contend that cognitive praxis is the 'core activity of social movements' (Eyerman and Hamison, 1991, p. 55). The outcome of social movements is 'neither predetermined nor completely self-willed' (Hall and Turray, 2006), meaning that it is derived from context. Examples of these cognitive praxes include the debates over meeting agendas, strategies, demonstrations, slogans, and specific organisational activities. A good example of this is the strategy and tactics developed in the South African civic

movement in the 1980s. Seekings (2000) documented the development of a 'conscious strategy of mobilising and organising' (p. 52). He argues that this was used to link local issues to broader national issues and writes those civic leaders understood action around civic issues in terms of a 'broader strategic framework, with the goal of affecting fundamental shifts in patters of political mobilisation and ultimately the transformation of the political system and urban political economy' (Seekings, 2000, p. 52). The key feature of the civic strategy was the transformation of the political system into a non-racial democracy. Local community issues around rent arrears and service delivery was integrated into the national liberation struggle. The strategy was primarily focussed on mass action, organisation building and informal political education. After the 1976 uprising there was a recognition that civic issues 'were not ends in themselves' but could be used to organise and educate people politically (Van Heerden, 1982 cited in Adler & Steinberg, 2000, p.65). The role of alternative community media was crucial in building the national perspective of the civic movement. In the words of one of the civic leaders:

> although *The Eye* will concentrate on issues affecting the everyday lives of people in Pretoria's surrounding townships, we will also publish 'outside' news to show how other communities have dealt with similar issues…The burning issues of the community must be highlighted to keep in contact and give them a means to express common grievances (SASPU National, September 1981, p. 3).

Sharing and learning from experiences was therefore crucial to developing the national civic movement. For Eyerman and Jamison (1991), cognitive praxis emerges over time; it goes through a cyclical development moving from 'discovery/articulation through application/specialisation to diffusion/institutionalisation' (p. 57). This process should not be understood as a mechanical cycle but is meant to suggest a 'congruence' between various kinds of social learning processes. The problem for Eyerman and Jamison (1991) is that knowledge in social movements has become 'disembodied' and relegated to a largely 'marginal, ephemeral or super structural level of reality'. They believe that learning is central to 'movement identity formation' and that social movement knowledge should not be 'static, ready-formed packages' (p. 46). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) argue that empirical sociologists neglect the cognitive praxis of social movements because it cannot be 'easily reduced to empirical data' (p. 47). They further argue that movements are engaged in a constant process

of generating counter expertise. Part of the strategic role of social movements is 'naming the system' to identify what kind of changes are needed to overcome inequalities. Eyerman and Jamison (1991), with their work on 'cognitive praxis', have positioned social movements as producers of knowledge and argue that they are not merely social dramas, instead they are the social actions from which 'new knowledge, including worldviews, ideologies, religions, and scientific theories originate' (p. 14).

Collective action is the practice field of social movements that informs the learning content and provides rich environments for knowledge production. Angela Miles (2005, cited in Hall and Turray 2006) notes that 'when people are engaged in a collective struggle that they define themselves they also decide what and why they need to learn' (p.76). Social movements produce knowledge about the issues they seek to mobilise around, and part of this process involves developing solutions and ways to change it. Therefore, learning deepens in the context of community action. Knowledge creation is a 'collective process' and the product of a series of 'social encounters' within and between movements and, even more importantly perhaps, between movements and their established opponents (Eyerman and Jamison, p. 57). Deborah Kilgore (1999), by drawing on the learning theory of Vygotsky and NSM theory of Melucci, devised a systematic theory of 'collective learning', which she believed was more appropriate for studying social movements and groups engaged in collective action than theories of individual actions. She argues that social movement learning requires not only an understanding of the 'group as a learner and constructor of knowledge,' but also an understanding of the 'centrality of the group's vision of social justice' that drives it (Kilgore, 1999, p. 191). The relationship between individual and group learning needs to be brought into focus as we develop an 'epistemology of group learning' (p.196). Cunningham (1998) rejects the notion of the 'individual' as the starting point for social and educational analysis, because its results in the 'phychologicalisation' of adult education and, consequently, in a neutralisation of the social aspects of learning. Anderson et al. (2019) argue that learning requires a 'deeply political pedagogy that transcends individuals' and is concerned with the 'how' of emancipatory learning and collective processes of change' (p. 523). They argue for a 'shift' away from individualised 'entrepreneurial tendencies' and towards the wider economic context (Anderson et al. 2019. 524). This is in line with the Choudry (2011) argument that critical scholarship should strive to engage concretely with social

struggles and the knowledge produced in these contexts for both political and intellectual reasons. The social justice vision of activists engaged in collective action is central to collective learning, including the individual and group social values activists bring (Choudry, 2011). A theory of collective learning provides a lens to clearly define the interplay between individuals and groups and open an avenue for 'local learning communities' within the larger 'field of meaning making' (Kilgore, 1999, p. 200). Collective learning provides a framework in which to examine 'how people construct shared visions' of social justice and 'learn to and act together to promote shared vision' (Kilgore, 1999, p. 201).

Social movement scholars have used the concept of 'framing' to convey their understanding of the 'shared mental experiences' of members (Payerhin and Zirakzadeh, 2006). Frames are 'collective patterns of interpretation' (Rucht and Neidhardt, 2002), that challenge the established meanings, and can be seen as both 'carriers of meaning and makers of meaning' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 1997). Collective action frames are important for social movements because it references ideas, concepts, norms, and ideologies around which mobilisation takes place. Social movements contest ownership of specific social or political problems and 'impose their own interpretation on these' (Della Porta and Diaini, 1999, p. 70). Frames are interpretive packages that activists develop to mobilise potential recruits and foster a 'sense of injustice, identity of collective efficacy' (Polletta, 1998, p.23). These frames help participants to understand what is wrong at a cognitive level. Naming the injustice serves as an 'accenting device that either underscore[s] or embellish[es] the seriousness of the injustice of a social condition' (Snow and Benford, 1992, p. 37). By providing a diagnostic function, frames explain why problems exist and convince members to use political tactics to overcome the injustice. Movements like the UDF, the National Forum, COSATU and other movements successfully framed the struggle against injustice in South Africa to transform individual agency into collective action, whether it was workers on the shop floor or students and teachers in the education sector.

Tracey Ollis (2012) outlines a 'pedagogy of activism' and the process of becoming an activist. Drawing on empirical research conducted in Australia, she explored the 'embodied learning of activists' as they learn to become activists (2012, p. 2). She outlines the 'rich learning of activists' as they work informally and socially

through the 'practice of activism' and introduce a typology of activism that 'contrasts learning between lifelong activists and circumstantial activists' (Ollis, 2012, p.10). In assessing the learning of lifelong activists, Ollis' research found that lifelong activists believe that they have learned their skills and knowledge through being 'involved with other activists or learning through practice' (Ollis, 2012, p. 69). On-the-job training and mentors played a significant role in honing their skills – for example, 'the acquisition of knowledge about systems of governance and social change' (Ollis, 2012, p.73). The learning of lifelong activists took place over an extended period. The experience of 'circumstantial activists,' in contrast, was characterised by 'a heightened pitch of emotional intensity' ((Ollis, 2012, p.114), and there was a sense of urgency in their learning. They were suddenly thrown into unknown situations, and they described their experience as a 'huge learning curve' or a 'steep learning curve' (Ollis, 2012, (p. 119). The common denominator between lifelong and circumstantial activists learning is that they learnt through 'socialisation with other activists' ((Ollis, 2012, p.125). Circumstantial activists experienced a 'significant and rapid process of learning and identity formation' over a brief period' (Ollis, 2012, p. 134). This categorisation is relevant to my research period of 1980–1990. The lifelong activists in Cape Town were drawn from underground cadres who were imprisoned in the 1970s and could provide political guidance and history to the 1980s generation. Due to increased police brutality and repression several parents and people from the faith communities became 'circumstantial activists,' providing support for political prisoners and detainees and engaging in low-risk political mobilisation to expose injustices.

Several researchers have extended social movement learning by exploring the interplay of learning, gender, class, and race in the context of struggle. Shirley Walters (2005) makes the case from the example of South Africa, that learning is in part determined by the 'material conditions of class structures' (p. 63), from which activists emerge. This is illustrated by Walters (2000) reflecting on the experience of the United Women's Organisation (UWO)[11] in Cape Town and explains that the class and cultural alliances among women were significant and that the ecology of the apartheid city meant that UWO branches adopted a distinct profile in terms of race, language, and class difference during the apartheid era. For example, a branch with mainly progressive white women did a popular history project on the effects of the Group

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[11] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/united-womens-organisation-uwo [accessed on 20/11/2021]

Areas Act No. 41 of 1950[12], whilst a branch in the black townships march to the local shop against hikes in bread prices. Walters (2000), as a white anti-apartheid campaigner herself, reflects that white activist were able to produce sophisticated policy briefs and research papers as well as creating huge networks of organisations. Learning within this class of activists involved workshops, retreats and reading theory together. In contrast to the white activist's experience, black activists' learning was primarily drawn from rallies, funerals, and demonstrations. Leaflets and speeches were the dominant forms of learning in that context. Vieta (2014), drawing on Foley's (1999) 'learning in social action' framework, explored the informal way in which workers in Argentina learned the skills and values needed to self-manage Argentina's new worker cooperatives. Marcelo Vieta interpreted the findings through the perspective of class-struggle analysis and social action learning theory, and this helped to understand how the 'new skills and values' needed were acquired through 'informal and experiential learning' Vieta (2014). A class struggle approach considers how 'workers' subjectivities transform in praxis' as they struggle within and against the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system (Lebowitz, 2003, cited in Vieta, 2014). This approach resonates with Foley's (1999) argument that the process of learning in social movements is a 'contested activity' (p. 1), and that learning brings to light 'relationships of domination in society and the very social issues that are being struggled over' (Foley's (1999, p. 131). Holts (2002) appeals to adult educators to return to a deeper reading of Gramsci, and he argues that there has been 'insufficient attention to its socialist roots' (p.45) in the past several decades of social movement and civil society theorising.

Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor (2010) argued that the 'dynamics, politics and richness of knowledge production' (p.1), within activist's context are often overlooked in the literature and movements themselves. They further argue that the intellectual work of movements goes unseen as to the 'politics, processes, site and locations of knowledge production and leaning' in activists' settings (p. 1). Learning from the 'ground up' allows the researcher to document and articulate the knowledge production, informal learning and education work that takes place in everyday activism and highlight 'interconnection/dialectics between knowledge and praxis/action' (p11). The authors argue that the 'voices, ideas, perspectives and theories' produced by

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[12] https://www.thoughtco.com/group-areas-act-43476 [accessed on 20/11/2021]

activists are often 'ignored, rendered unviable or overwritten' with accounts from the academia;' (p.13) My study responds to this by bringing to the fore the intellectual contribution of activists and recognising the 'lineages of ideas and theories' that have been forged outside universities.

Anderson et al. (2019) affirms the importance of 'organic intellectuals' in the tradition of Gramsci to enable mutual learning for 'political organising and knowledge building' (p. 524). They argue that these organic intellectuals play a critical role as 'facilitator-organisers' of counter-hegemonic struggles. Anderson et al. (2019) argues that the two critical components of learning for transformation include that the 'facilitator-educator' must avoid 'vanguardist tendencies' and 'strengthen collective forms of intelligence through horizontal approaches to learning' (ibid, p. 524). This is based on the recognition that 'counter hegemonic leadership' is strongest when distributed, 'when intellectual power is collectivised and capacities cultivated equally' Anderson et al., 2019, p.525). This supports the arguments that collective processes of learning are themselves and 'act of resistance' (p. 525). In conclusion the authors argue that movements must 'develop approaches that go beyond learning amongst like-minded and political actors' to help better understand difference, identify common experience, develop empathy, transform conflict and unearth roots of oppression' (Anderson et al., 2019, p. 527).

2.6   Milieus of learning

Learning is often discussed in relation to a binary between formal and informal learning spaces. Anderson et al. (2019) argue that different pedagogical methods and tools must be used in diverse contexts, and that these different pedagogical processes are 'united by a worldview and political commitment that consider all spaces of interaction as sites of learning' (Anderson et al. 2019, p.522). Michael Newman (2000) focuses on learning and education that occur when people with a 'shared history or political interest act on their environment to gain more control over their own lives' (Newman 2000, p. 267). Such learning can take place in various educational 'milieus,' such as: incidental learning, non-formal learning, and formal learning. Incidental learning takes place in action, is empowering and incidental to the action taken by the community or activists (Newman 2000, p. 26). Non-formal learning occurs when people are aware of the potential for learning and make a conscious decision to learn from their experience (Newman 2000, p. 26). Formal education is systematic and structured.

Wain (1987) expands on these definitions of learning by defining formal education (hierarchical, structured, graded), informal learning (attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge from daily experience) and non-formal learning (any education outside the established formal system).

2.6.1 Informal learning

Several scholars theorise informal learning (Foley, 1999; Schugurensky, 2000; Ollis, 2012). The study of informal learning in social movements is still emerging but plays a significant role in strengthening social action. Foley's (1999) seminal work, 'Learning in social action', argues that 'this is learning that enables people to make sense of and act on their environment, and come to understand themselves as knowledge-creating, acting beings' (p. 64). As a subsystem of learning, informal learning is located outside the formal institutions and can be derived from a variety of experiences such as book clubs, film festivals and political engagement. Informal learning is obtained unconsciously or unintentionally, as opposed to formal learning, which is intentionally constructed. Garrick (1996) further writes that learning from experience is not neutral or independent of social context, meaning that a person's social standing can influence their access to learning opportunities.

Marsick and Watkins (1990) introduced incidental learning as a subcategory of informal learning that includes, amongst others, 'task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction and sensing the organisational culture' (p. 120). Although a distinction is made for research purposes, there is a 'fluidity of the boundaries' between the different subsystems of learning (Dugiud et al., 2007, p.41). For example, activists can attend formal learning in the form of a school or university, and they can participate in non-formal organisational education and training as well as participating in protest actions where they learn how to protect themselves against riot police gas canisters or police brutality through informal learning methods.

In social movements a great deal of learning is informal and unconsciously acquired through daily interactions in different social settings and results in what Polyani termed 'tacit knowledge.' In a biographical case study on developing knowledge resources informally in the workplace, a respondent summarised his unconscious learning by saying 'I don't have a clue, honest…I don't have a clue…how do I know what I know…' (Martin, 2015). This confirms Reber's (1985, cited in Jarvis

1987) proposition that 'learning takes place largely independent of awareness of both process and acquisition and the content of knowledge so acquired' (p.45). This unnoticed learning only comes to the fore upon reflection. This study uses semi-structured interviews to unpack this informal learning and attempts to understand the learning processes of activists.

A central theme in the informal learning literature is the 'rationale for and the practice of recording previously unrecognised learning experience' (Rachel, 2002, p.56). Rachel is critical of the assumption underlying informal learning, especially in the workplace, that the learner is an 'autonomous and competitive individual' (p.57). She concludes that such an approach does not address the ways in which gender, race and ability play out in people's lives and she warns that the notion of an individual learner depoliticises learning because it focusses on the individual process. Consciousness raising is a collective process grounded in group defined processes that are linked to working for a better existence and 'not the sum of its competing parts' (Rachel, 2002, p.57).

Informal learning and non-formal learning are illustrated in a study of a housing project in Cape Town (Victoria Mxenge Housing Project). Salma Ismael (2015) explored the 'creative and critical' role of social activism and informal learning. The study documents local women's' experiences of the Homeless People's Federation and illustrates the role that popular education can play in social change. The pedagogy in the Victoria Mxenge project was collective and it employed a 'political framework and encouraged consciousness raising through participatory struggle, mobilisation and advocacy' (Salma Ismael, 2015, p.XX). The objective of the project was to motivate poor women living in informal settlements to build houses. Drawing on popular education methodology, the pedagogy worked towards 'consciousness-raising, valuing local women's knowledge, collective decision-making, and participation at all levels' (ibid, p. 116). Women learned collectively through social activities and learning networks, which included an international study trip. The women learned three main skills: spatial concepts (spatial arrangement and design), numerical skills (measurement of land, cost of building) and cognitive skills (financial and technical skills) (p.118). With the help of an architect who provided technical expertise, and the integration of technical expertise with local knowledge resulted in 'innovative house designs and creative cost-cutting measures' (Ismael, 2015, p. 118).

This case confirms the argument by Duguid et al. 2007) that informal learning can take place within formal and non-formal settings, and that informal learning is not a 'homogenous category' (p.43)

2.6.2   Spaces of political pedagogy

The distinction between formality or informality of learning has traditionally been determined by the site of that learning. Learning through social action takes places in a variety of non-formal learning sites and practices. Learning takes place on a continuum from structured education and training in organisations, political campaigns, and social protest on the streets, to political education in prison and underground military operations. Zhang and Zhao (2018) identify three theoretical traditions related to space-oriented analysis of movement mobilisation: 1) space as built-environment (impact on movement mobilisation); 2) the human ecology (relation of organisms or groups); and 3. critical geography (spatially constituted injustice). In addition, the authors argue that place is often attributed to 'symbolic meaning that constitutes the basis for memory, identity and ideology construction' (Zhang and Zhao (2018, p.98). Borrowing from critical geography, scholars elaborate on how distinct aspects of spatiality shape social movements. For the purpose of this research, I will also look to how it creates space for, or restricts, social movement learning.

Social movement learning literature primarily focus on the legal spaces where learning takes place through organisational programmes and nonviolent mass mobilisation. Earl (2018) extends the idea of learning spaces to include learning taking place in 'public space', drawing on the Occupy movement in London. She defines 'public space' as areas 'designated for public use' that allow for 'freedom of passage through the place where people can meet, assemble, and travel without contravening the laws' (Earl, 2018, p.14). The anti-apartheid campaign and protestors attempted to use this 'public space' as articulated by Cassie Earl, but unlike the situation in Western liberal democracies, the democratic use of 'public space' was not extended to the oppressed masses in South Africa. To understand the apartheid government response to mass protest we need to draw on Gramsci's concept of hegemony (1971). At a political level, the state exercises direct domination through the 'apparatus of state coercive power which legally enforces discipline on those groups who do not consent either actively or passively' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). The apartheid state exercised their 'coercive power' through their security legislation and apparatus by imprisoning

opposition activists and the security forces (army and police) that suppressed protest in the 'public space.' The banning of liberation movements in the early 1960s, the continued reinstatement of state of emergencies between 1985–1989 and the brutal suppression and killing of activists resulted in the establishment and growth of guerrilla armies that operated in parallel with the nonviolent mass movement. These spaces created their own challenges for activists and expanded activists learning from the 'public space' to spaces of suppression and illegality.

Aziz Choudry (2019) in his edited collection *Activists and the surveillance state: Learning from repression*, reflects on the knowledge produced through confrontation with the security state practices. In the next section my research goes further to document the learning 'experience of activists in prison' and 'activists undergoing military training.' These two examples provide insight into alternative learning spaces, syllabus and learning methodologies specific to the South African context. Interviewees for this study reflect on similar experiences in Chapter 5 and 6.

2.6.3 The University of Robben Island

Robben Island[13], an island rock in the icy waters of the Atlantic Ocean close to Cape Town, was the main incarceration place for long-term political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe[14] and Neville Alexander[15]. Robben Island is an iconic space in the South African political landscape loaded with symbolic meaning and it is fondly referred to as the University of Robben Island, signifying its intellectual contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle (Mbeki, 1991; Buntman, 2003; Desai, 2012). Prisoners incarcerated there were aligned to varied ideological formations such as the ANC/SACP, PAC, BCM, APDUSA/NEUM. Sedick Isaacs, (cited in Desai, 2012) recalled that in the early years, from 1964 onwards, there were debates across organisational boundaries in the communal cells, but that these open debates declined as they became increasingly acrimonious, and were replaced with a form of political education, held within the confines of the various ideological alignments.

In a book *Learning from Robben Island: The prison writings of Govan Mbeki* (1991), Harry Gwala, a long-time prisoner on the island writes that:

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[13] https://www.britannica.com/place/Robben-Island [accessed on 20/11/2021]
[14] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Sobukwe [accessed on 20/11/2021]
[15] https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dr-neville-edward-alexander [accessed on 20/22/2021]

When comrade Govan was incarcerated on Robben Island a crying need was felt for a theory that would correctly interpret the world. Such a theory was the labour theory as propounded by Marx, and Engels and developed by Lenin.

This was the basis for the development of political education on the island, especially amongst ANC/SACP aligned prisoners. Govan Mbeki played a key role in developing education material that was circulated amongst prisoners for discussion. Prisoners relied on memory when recalling the history of struggle and this was aided by Govan Mbeki, who was doing his honours degree at the time. According to Colin Bundy, Mbeki's 'political theory and practice were inseparably fused' (Govan Mbeki, 1991, p. xviii). For Michael Dingake (jailed between 1966 to 1981) the prison was 'a laboratory of a major political experiment…the political fibre of the oppressed' (1987, p. 203). Education on the island had three parts: literacy skills, academic education, and political education. In the early days political education was less formalised but in the 1980s a full-blown course of studies was devised, material prepared, and study groups set up. This was partly a function of the increase in prisoner numbers after the student uprising of 1976 and 1980.

A change in prison policy in 1980 allowed access to newspapers (although still subject to censorship) and the prisoners' study programme through the University of South Africa provided 'both content and cover' for political education (p. xxii). The political education programme was divided into a two-part syllabus, Syllabus A – history of the ANC – and Syllabus B – a materialist history of the development of society, including the rise of capitalism. Education material was circulated and discussed through 'clandestine structures and essays that were dictated to scribes and would be copied and stored' (Desai, 2012, p. 5). According to Enver Daniels, one of the favourite materials to write on was 'Sunlight soap wrappers' and Monde Mkunqwana recalls that 'those cement pockets would be transformed into exercise books' (Desai, 2012, p. 7).

Neville Alexander, reflecting on his imprisonment on the Island between 1964–1974 says that: 'we had some of the sharpest and keenest brains in the country together in a small place' (Villa-Vicencio 1996, p. 13). Alexander himself completed an honours degree in History and read widely on Hegel, Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare. He recalls that:

We taught one another what we knew, discovering each other's resourcefulness. We also learned how people with little or no formal education could not only themselves participate in education programmes but actually teach other a range of different insights and skills (Villa-Vicencio 1996, p. 14)

Buntman (2003) identifies at least three processes on Robben Island that were critical to South African politics. Firstly, the prison was critical in shaping and enhancing individuals in terms of their educational, political, organisational, and administrative skills and understanding. Secondly, political prisoners cultivated their organisations and used the island for the 'active maturation of the banned liberation movements.' Thirdly, released prisoners were given guidelines and mandates regarding what political activity they should pursue after their release (pp.147–149).

2.6.4   Direct confrontation – Protest and guerrilla warfare

Gramsci (1971) distinguished between a war of manoeuvre, referring to direct confrontation between the insurgents and the state and a war of position, where the liberation forces contest the terrain of hegemony. In South Africa various forms of direct confrontation were used, these included roadblocks, direct confrontation with the security forces and underground guerrilla warfare. These were all conscious tactics applied by activists as 'spontaneous expression[s] of anger or frustration' (Harley, 2014, p.267). There was an interplay between violent and non-violent tactics in the broad anti-apartheid movement, with a clandestine presence of armed activists with sustained links to the above-ground movements. Seidman (2015) alludes to this when he writes that South Africa's 'visible popular movement was deeply entwined with a clandestine guerrilla struggle' (p. 224).

Sparg, Schreiner and Ansell (2001) documented the political education lecture notes and contributions of Jack Simons (Comrade Jack). He was a political education instructor in MK[16] Novo Catengue Camp, Lusaka, one of the African National Congress military camps (Turok, 2010) in exile during the late 1960s to 1980. In their study, interviews were conducted with militants who were involved in political education structures of the military wing (Sparg et al, 2001, pp. VIII-IX). From the discussions the authors conclude that Comrade Jack instilled in his students the basic

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[16] https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-1098 [accessed on 20/11/2021]

Marxist ability to think critically, using class analysis to unpack racial tensions and conflict, telling his students that underneath the 'race' factor they had to look for interest groups – capital and labour. Chris Hani Chief of Staff of MK and one of the interviewees, reflected on this period and explained that there was 'general demoralisation and frustration in the camps' in the 1970s. The activists were critical of the leadership moving around the globe on solidarity work and they questioned the 'imbalance between external and internal work' (Sparg et al, 2001, p. 5). It was during this period that Comrade Jack started to organise study groups intended to improve the 'quality of political understanding' (p.6). Hani explained that the basic purpose of the lectures, was to 'politically sharpen comrades who were involved in the activities of the movement (p.6).

Ronnie Kasrils, a leader in the South African Communist Party and MK in exile and later a cabinet minister in Mandela's government, provides further insights into Comrade Jack's method, 'he'd posed the question very well and there's the contributions from participants' (ibid, p. 9). This approach was a radical departure from the 'authoritarian rote learning' of Bantu Education[17] that the 1976 generation of students had been fighting for before they were exiled. Later, Comrade Jack himself reflected on these classes, and wrote that the object of the classes was to get 'students to study,' and not to give the 'teacher the opportunity to exhibit his wisdom and eloquence. The students not the teacher should do most of the talking' (Sparg et al, 2001, p. 31). This is consistent with Freire's approach that sees the teacher as facilitator of learning. Albie Sachs, a victim of an apartheid security letter bomb in the 1980s expands on Comrade Jack's approach to learning. He says that Jack was 'very much against the idea of "learning a text by heart." The text you would read and study to know what the people were thinking and saying, but you had to put the book down and "argue the idea"' (p.35).

Peter Mayibuye, one of the MK militants, explains that the political education in the camps was more important than the military instruction. What made MK different

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[17] In 1953, prior to the apartheid government's Bantu Education Act, 90% of black South African schools were state-aided mission schools. The Act demanded that all such schools register with the state and removed control of African education from the churches and provincial authorities. This control was centralized in the Bantu Education Department, a body dedicated to keeping it separate and inferior. Almost all the mission schools closed down. The 1953 Act also separated the financing of education for Africans from general state spending and linked it to direct tax paid by Africans themselves, with the result that far less was spent on black children than on white children.

from other liberation armies was the understanding that the 'person behind the gun is more important that the gun itself' (Sparg et al, 2001, p. 44). Reporting to the Kabwe Consultative Conference in 1985[18], Reggie September, Secretary of the Department of Political Education, explained that political education 'is the lifeblood of any revolutionary movement. We should have a political education programme aimed at constantly improving the political consciousness, knowledge, and skills of our cadres' (Sparg et al, 2001, pp. 49–50). Practical steps to help with the political education included a circulating library that serviced the MK camps to supplement political education, the creation of reading groups, the development of a list of reading material (with special attention given to literature from inside the country) and lastly teaching aids such as films, videos, tape-recorders, and projectors.

The two examples of prison and military underground learning speak to the approach adopted by Bekerman, Burbules and Silverman-Keller (2007), which seeks to 'free up' the study of learning from 'constraining assumptions about traditional institutional arrangements and hegemonic definitions of what counts as learning' (p.1). The approach taken in this study is that the 'loci' of learning varies depending on the social context. In the South African context, formal learning was dictated by the apartheid philosophy of Christian National Education and activists' learning was informed by the daily experience of injustice and repression.

2.7   Situating my research

There is an acknowledgement in the literature that social movements are sites of learning and that the learning is mostly informal and or incidental. There is a general realisation that this learning is overlooked in social movement scholarship. This study expands the non-formal spaces of learning and knowledge production, to document *what* was learned and *how* it was learned, validating the informal learning processes. Besides non-violent mass protests, this study exposes the learning dimensions of 'activists' experience in prison' and 'activists undergoing military training' as sites of learning that played a significant role in the South African struggle. Drawing on the raw descriptions of activists of the 1980s, this study presents the *what* and the *how* regarding learning in the context of activism. This 'reflective engagement [is] required to make tacit knowledge explicit' (Jimenez, 2015). This was the learning experience

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[18] https://ourconstitution.constitutionhill.org.za/south-african-constitution/negotiating-our-freedom/the-kabwe-conference/ [accessed on 20/11/2021]

for both researcher and participants. Informal learning in this study focusses on 'political informal learning' (Biazar, 2010), because the social context is the political arena and the fight against the apartheid state was geared towards bringing about social change.

2.8   Conclusion

In this chapter the relationship between social movements, learning and knowledge generation was outlined. An overview of the development of theoretical perspectives in social movement studies is provided. This overview includes the collective behaviour school of the 1950s, that viewed protests as irrational, and the anti-globalisation movements of the 1990s that arose to challenge the climate crises and neoliberalism. A summary of the South African context is provided illustrating that South Africa has had a rich history of political mobilisation from the early 20th century, with the formation of the national liberation movements and the trade union movement. In the 1970s and 1980s, social movements emerged with the development of BCM and the labour strikes of 1973 in Durban as well as community struggles around rent arrears in the early 1980s. The literature on social movement learning and knowledge production is explored. In addition to this, different pedagogical methods and tools from a South African perspective are presented to augment the literature. The literature on social movements and social movement learning is primarily produced by scholars of the global North who operate in liberal democracies where freedom of protest is a democratic norm. Several themes and perspectives from social movement learning scholars and praxis have emerged. There are five main themes and these are that: a) most learning is informal and incidental in social movements and takes place whilst engaging in struggle, b) learning takes place in a variety of non-formal spaces (e.g., street protest, organisations, prison and military underground), c), everyday struggle constructs an alternative form of knowledge, which confirm social movements as knowledge producers within activists' context, d) learning is collective and activists draw on the methodology and tools of critical pedagogy, and e) learning helped activists to make sense of, and frame their understanding of struggle.

Chapter Three

Critical Pedagogy in Social Movement Learning

3.0   Introduction

This study seeks to expose the learning and knowledge dimensions of social movements, drawing on a critical pedagogy framework. Critical pedagogy views education theory as being intimately linked to 'ideologies shaped by power, politics, history and culture' (Zyngier, 2013, p.6). Drawing on this framework helped my research to understand how learning provided activists with the tools and knowledge to improve their own understanding and strengthen the fight for democracy in South Africa. The pedagogical is understood as knowledge practices and learning processes (Motta and Esteves, 2013), that is critical in the emergence and development of community struggles and to helping activists to learn. The conceptual framework for this study draws on the work of Paulo Freire's conscientisation (1974), and Griff Foley's learning in social action (1999). Conscientização (conscientisation) is defined by Freire as 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Freire, 1974, p14). 'Learning in social action' is an analytical framework used to understand the relationship between struggle and learning.

3.1   Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed

One of the most influential philosophers of education of the twentieth century, Paulo Freire, was born in September 1921. In the late 1960s, after being expelled from Brazil by the military regime for his literacy work in Angicos, Freire authored his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) in which he explained the means through which the oppressed are domesticated and because of this, develop a false consciousness. False consciousness is a result of power elite that shape people's experiences and is manifested in the 'internalisation by the oppressed of their oppressor's image' (Mayo,1995, p. 364). In keeping with Marxist tradition, Freire regarded 'material surroundings' as the basis for the development of 'consciousness.'

To Freire (2000), the education process was based on 'cultural action' that is concerned with the 'relationship between knowledge and material existence' (p.13). His writing is grounded in a critique of traditional education methods. Drawing on his

experiences in Latin America, he projected a vision of society as characterised by relations of power and domination. He focusses on the ideological means where those in positions of power exert control over those whom they exploit and oppress. Giroux (1985) contends that Freire has combined what he calls the 'language of critique with the language of possibilities'. Freire's work is both a critique of how education works, a system to 'reinforce systems of oppression' as well as an explanation of how the theory of education can become a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Tarlau, 2013, p.14). Freire (1970) argued that education was linked to praxis, which is an approach to learning that 'involves a combination of action and reflecting' (p.34). He further concludes that there is a 'epistemological relationship with reality.' (Freire, 1970, p.35) Glass (2001. p.17) saw Freire's theory as being based on 'an ontological argument that posited praxis as a central defining feature of human life and a necessary condition for freedom.' The concept of praxis is at the heart of Freire's philosophy and pedagogical approach. In *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, he defines praxis by saying 'but human activity consists of action and reflection; it is praxis, it is transformation of the world' (Freire, 1970, p.125).

In the traditional method of education delivery, the teacher is seen as the 'dispenser of knowledge' and the pupil the passive recipient. According to Mayo (1995), this approach results in a 'perpetuation of existing structures of oppression – asymmetrical relations of power' (p.366). Freire saw the mainstream education system as being characterised by what he called 'banking education' – a top-down approach to knowledge transmission – or what Jarvis (1987) called a non-reflective model of learning. Freire resisted 'banking education' and compared it to a depositing system where knowledge is taken for granted and the teacher deposits knowledge into the brain of hapless students. He argued that it was socially oppressive and that it assumed a world so fixed that the same lessons could be repeated ad nauseam. Under the banking system the learner is the *object* rather than the *subject* of the learning process, alienated from the content of education in the same way that workers under conditions of capitalism are estranged from the production process. Freire (1974) argues that the traditional curriculum is 'disconnected from life centred on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness' (p. 33). This runs contrary to the

approach taken by social movement activists where the subject matter of learning is social action. Freire (2000) is noticeably clear about the ideological role of education:

> There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (p. 34).

Freire (1972) critiques the traditional hegemonic conception of knowledge where knowledge is a 'gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider know nothing' (p.53). Freire presents a critical pedagogy that suggests that the existing hegemonic arrangements can be ruptured by introducing the concept 'cultural action.' He referred to non-formal activity conducted within the wide spaces existing outside the system as 'cultural action.' This 'cultural action' is developed in opposition to the elite that controls the power and is concerned with the relationship between knowledge and material existence. Freire sees that education must help people in the process of 'objectifying the world, critically understanding it, and acting to change it' (Youngman 1986 cited in Mayo,1995, p.367).

Drawing on the literacy campaign in Brazil that he initiated Freire began to create what he called 'cultural circles – a term he preferred to 'literacy classes,' since 'literacy' and 'illiteracy' assumed that reading and writing were already an integral part of the workers' social world (McLaren, 2021). He distinguishes between 'functional literacy,' the acquisition of basic reading skills, and 'critical literacy' the emancipatory process where the focus is not only not only on 'reading the word' (literacy), but also on reading the world i.e., the development of critical consciousness (Mayo, 1995). The formation of a critical consciousness would enable people to question their historical and social situation – to read their world – with the goal of creating of a democratic society (McLaren, 2021).

Freire's ideas were introduced to South Africa via the University Christian Movement and the BCM in the early 1970s. By the time the apartheid government banned Freire's works, about five hundred copies of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* were distributed to

the black universities[19] by activists from the BCM (Alexander, 1990). Alexander and Helbig (1988) summarised the main reasons for the ready acceptance of accepted Freire's pedagogy by educational activists and theorists in South Africa. According Helbig (translated from German by Alexander 1990, p. 60) Freire's anti-capitalist social theory was consistent with the insights of the liberation movements; the pedagogical situation out of which Freire's pedagogy developed resembles South African ghettos; Freire's approach to combine education/culture with conscientisation and politicisation was aligned with the Black Consciousness Movement views; and Freire's work brought with it a sensitivity regarding democratic principles. This sensitivity became integral to the practice of 'alternative education' (Alexander and Helbig, 1988).

3.2   Freire's Conscientização – Conscientisation

One of the key concepts in Freire's early work is conscientisation, consciousness raising or critical awareness, which is a process of developing critical understanding. Conscientisation is defined by Freire as 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality' (Freire, 1970, p.34). The term conscientização (Portuguese) was popularised in Brazil in the 1960s by the Bishop of Olinda and Recife, Helder Camara. Freire adopted the notion calling for a comprehensive challenge to the authoritarian and banking education methodology at the time. Torres (1990) further writes that conscientisation, in its most radical form, 'resides in the development of critical consciousness as class knowledge and practice' (p.123). Conscientisation is not only about social transformation but is also an 'invitation to self-learning and self-transformation' (Torres, 2004, p.4). It is not a once off event but, as described by Sleeter et al. (2004), a process with 'multiple avenues of insightful movements as well as difficult times of denial and pain (p.82)'.

Dialogue is central to Freire's concept of conscientisation, and a key word in the Freirean vocabulary. The dialogical encounter, as Freire called it, is the opposite of indoctrination (an irony lost on Brazilian and American critics concerned with critical race theory or Freirean 'indoctrination') (McLaren, 2021).

As Freire says in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*:

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[19] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-issues/article/abs/report-on-south-africas-black-universities/D1CED68E8CEC0B91724070822DFAAA81 [accessed on 20/22/2021]

> Since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world, which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the discussants. . . Because dialogue is an encounter among [humans] who name the world, it must not be a situation where some [humans] name it on behalf of others (1970, p. 69).

The value of conscientisation is not only about acquiring skills and the acquisition of practical skills and competence but primarily it is about empowering individuals to be able to 'critically engaging with and transforming the world' (Armitage, 2013, p.12). For Freire (1974), conscientisation is about 'gaining capacity to transform their lives' become aware of their 'ability to challenge', to 'take control of their own destinies' (p.74)

The process of conscientisation has three stages (Freire, 1974, p.75), 1) magical awareness – where individuals explain the events that shape their lives in terms of forces and power beyond their control; 2) Naïve awareness – where individuals (not passively) accept the values and social order, but still have an incomplete understanding of the lived situation; and 3) critical awareness – where individuals look more critically at their lived reality and start to question it. For Gajardo (1991, cited in Armitage 2013) conscientisation introduces notions of reflexivity into the learning process and that a conscientised person is the 'subject of the process of change, actor in the management and development of the educational process, critical and reflexive, and capable of understanding his or her reality in order to transform it' (p.13).

Conscientisation is attained through a dialogical process and critical reflection that facilitates a critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970). To Freire, learning is based on praxis, and he stated that 'discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action, nor can it be limited to mere activism, but involve serious refection' (1972. p. 47). Dialogue is not only a pedagogical tool but also a method of deconstructing the way the methods used to construct pedagogical and political discourses (Torres, 2004). Dialogic knowing, according to Armitage (2013), is the 'construction and the creation of democratic social relations by co-constructing knowledge through collaboration, whereby individuals embrace shared meanings' (p.14). From Freire's perspective

learners engage critically, bringing their 'own insights, culture, and different aspects of their multiple subjectivities; to bear on the learning process' (Mayo, 2007, p.525).

Freire's stages of conscientisation are a useful lens with which to understand the conscientisation process of activists who initially joined the anti-apartheid movement either because of a personal experience of injustice or parents who became aware of the effects of apartheid due to the detention of their children. The re-emergence of the labour movement with factory strikes, community action around rental arrears, forced removals post-1979 and the schools boycott of the 1980s in Cape Town contributed to workers, communities and students questioning the fundamental structure of apartheid, which contributed to their conscientisation process. Montero (2009) notes that as a critical process, conscientisation 'starts a process of consciousness mobilisation leading to conscientisation, inducing transformations in the modes of understanding certain phenomena' (p. 79). Conscientisation is therefore not only about developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality (Taylor 1993 cited in Nyirenda xx). Chovanec's (2006) research on the learning dimensions of the women's movement in Chile makes a distinction between 'acquiring consciousness' – the impact of the early years learning – and 'taking consciousness' – an act of agency. The concept of 'acquiring consciousness' suggest a passive process of absorbing elements like values that, although not fully developed, form a basis for the development of critical consciousness later. In the case of 'taking consciousness,' individual agency acts upon the predispositions (acquired consciousness) and opportunities presented by structural conditions. The idea of taking consciousness implies actions, engagement, and agency. Developing critical consciousness is a process, as Allman (2001) states, ideas or thoughts can 'become part of our consciousness when we receive them from external sources … [but] reception depends upon our active engagement with them' (pp.165–166). Once engaged, this consciousness becomes internalised and subjectified, it is internalised.

3.3   Freire's education philosophy and social movement learning

Any study of political pedagogy (De Smet, 2014; Earl, 2018) must be rooted in what Antonio Gramsci describes as the 'experience and popular conceptions' (Jones, 2005, p. 5) of those engaged in the struggle for social justice. Rincon-Gallardo (2019) argues that learning at its core is a liberating act, a political act, and makes the point that the

pedagogical is not only the 'structure within which learning happens', but also a 'basic unit for power relationships' (p. 11). The objective of social movements in South Africa was to overthrow the apartheid system and this was done by developing counter narratives through political pedagogy. It is worthwhile to invoke Gramsci's notion of 'hegemony' here, the 'process by which we learn to 'embrace a system of beliefs and practices' (cited in Brookfield 2005, p. 94). The National Party[20], as the custodians of apartheid, wanted to enforce (banking) the 'beliefs and practices' of apartheid through Christian nation education. The primary goal of the apartheid education system was to enforce the racial segregation of South Africa, and this intention was articulated by the so-called architect of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd when he stated:

> There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? (Boddy-Evan, 2019)

Although schools play a significant role in reproducing social inequality, their 'contradictory role in legitimating ideologies of equality also allow(ed) for resistance' (Au, 2010, p.10). This was witnessed during the 1976, 1980 and 1985 student uprisings in South Africa lead by various student movements at schools and universities. Freire's concepts are grounded in the experiences and activism of oppressed and marginalised groups, who 'do not hold power,' over the 'means of intellectual production' (Cox and Nilsen, 2014, p. 5).

According to Allman (1994, 2001), Freire's 'action-reflection-transformative action' is a dialectical process where activists reflect on the action that they have undertaken, and this process allows for learning to be captured and internalised and informs the transformative action. This is where Freire's approach is relevant to social movements, and there is a link between political struggles and learning that confirms Segarra and Dobles' (1999) notion of 'learning as a political act'. In the anti-apartheid

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[20] The National Party also known as the Nationalist Party was a political party in South Africa founded in 1914 and disbanded in 1997. The party was an Afrikaner ethnic nationalist party that promoted Afrikaner interests in South Africa. Beginning in 1948 following the general election, the party as the governing party of South Africa began implementing its policy of racial segregation, known as apartheid (the Afrikaans term for "separateness")

movement, conscientisation was developed through engagement in political campaigns and action and is central to activists learning.

Through the process of conscientisation, activists acquired critical skills that allowed them to understand how state power worked to deny them equality. Further, social movements provided the space to challenge power relations and develop counter narratives that guided their praxis. This counter-narrative was collectively produced through dialogue in 'cultural circles' where knowledge was democratised. Freire himself makes the connection between learning and social movements when he insists that: 'a radical and critical education has to focus on what is taking place today in various social movements and labour unions' (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p.53).

Paulo Freire (1970, 1972, 1974, 1985, 1998) developed his overriding ideals of education as a transformative, context-laden, grassroots political movement and 'dialogue' as a means for transformation through education and social action (Miller et al., 2011). Through the process of raising consciousness, people become aware of the systems and structures that have had an impact on their lives. Transferred to the field of urban education, Miller et al. (2011) argues that the 'meta-language' of Freire calls for us to examine how grassroots perspectives might inform change. From a Freirean perspective the educational arena is not limited to schools alone but also extends to the social context. Preston et al. (2014) argues that before transformational learning can happen, the learner must first critically reflect on an experience (trigger), participate in dialogue about the experience and learn from experience from others. The literature reveals that social movement participants provides the opportunity to learn new skills, values, beliefs and deepen their sense of identity. This enables them to resist social control. According to Mezirow (1997), transformative learning occurs when there is a transformation in the 'frames of reference', a process facilitated by critical refection. Transformative education for Freire is perceived as 'politically subjective action' (1985, p. 12), which aims to conscientise and empower the learner to unveil their oppression and mobilise for liberation. Freire (1972) argues that this liberation process should involve the political action *with* the oppressed (original emphasis) instead of carrying it *for* them (original emphasis).

Despite the international appeal of Freire's pedagogy, Bowers (2005) suggests that Freire's transformative learning maybe the 'Trojan horse of neoliberal

globalisation' (p.116). He critiques Freire's pedagogy by saying that it 'undermines the local commons by transforming indigenous ways of knowing.' He further argues that Freire's theory of conscientisation implies a 'unilineal, universalist approach to knowledge align with Western notions of progressivism' (Bowers, 2005, p.118). This is contrary to Freire's educational and political history, who was considered a revolutionary voice that disrupted the hegemony of Western educational practice by offering liberatory pedagogy for the most marginalised in Latin America. Allman (1994) argues that the misappropriation of Freire into practice is due to the lack of understanding of his Marxist roots. Freire himself advised practitioners not to universalise his pedagogy in an instrumental way, and he argued that 'the starting point for organising the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people' (Freire, 1985, p. 159).

Freire's conscientisation concept has been applied in various case studies for example Curnow (2013) *Fight the power: situated learning and conscientisation* in a gendered *community of practice;* researching the gendered processes of resistance to masculine performance in leadership and decision-making in a student activists organisation and Cassidy (2016) *Conscientisation through the context of a book club*: A*dults Experiences of Consciousness-raising*; addressing informal reading environments, rooted in critical reading and interactive discussions.

3.4   Learning in social action

There is a growing interest in the forms of learning within social movements, exploring and analysing the informal and collective learning processes (Foley, 1999; Hall and Clover, 2005; Choudrey, 2015; Earl, 2018).

In his book *Learning in social action: A contribution to understanding informal education*, Griff Foley (1999) introduced an analytical framework with which to understand the relationship between struggle and learning. Foley documented the ways in which activists learned informally. He did this by drawing on fieldwork from Zimbabwe, Brazil, and Australia and using a case study approach to construct a social phenomenology of adult learning portraying 'lived experience and the sense people make of it, rather than … analysing or generalising about it' and gives a 'voice to the previously unheard' (Foley,1999, p. 12). The theoretical framework explains the

connections between three sets of variables: learning and education, local politics and ideologies and broad social forces and changes (ibid, p. 3). He explores concepts of contestation and critical learning drawing on a Marxism that is reflexive and empirical (p.12), and a methodology based on real people's experiences. Foley merged social movement learning with a class struggle approach, using case studies to explore the ways in which social movement participants 'learn collaboratively when engaging in emancipatory struggle' (p. 11). The framework combines a sensitivity to incidental and informal processes of learning and knowledge production and draws from knowledge and theory arising from movements themselves. This approach is supported by Holts (2002), who use the concept 'pedagogy of mobilisation' to describe the learning inherent in the building of social movements. Both Holts (2002) and Foley (1999) highlight and value the incremental learning and building of knowledge that arises from actual engagement in popular struggle. Foley contends that some of the most powerful learning occurs as 'people struggle against oppression,' as they 'make sense' of what is happening to them and work out ways of doing something about it (1999, pp.1–2). There is a common thread in the literature connecting learning in whatever milieu and social movements, this is supported by Foley's (1999) notion of learning in struggle. Foley emphasises the importance of developing an understanding of learning in popular struggle and argues for 'analytic strength and political utility of holistic and materialist analysis of learning' (1999, p. 6). He calls for holistic and materialist analyses of learning in particular sites of struggle (p. 6).

Research into learning in social action is situated at the theoretical intersection of social movements and adult education. Hall (2006) makes the point that it is the learning and knowledge-generating capacities of social movements that account for much of the power claimed by these movements. Hall and Clover (2005) found that reflecting on the tacit skills being learned by activists is critical in 'strengthening and extending the power and reach of social movements' (p. 587). Foley (1993) argues that informal learning in social action is an aspect of learning that has not been addressed by adult educators and he says that 'it is a dimension of political action that has often been ignored by political activists' (p. 39). Social movement learning draws on critical theory, showing how people accept as normal a world 'characterised by massive inequalities and systematic exploitation of the many by the few' (Brookfield 2005, p. 2). Critical theory offers an alternative view that aims to involve people in the

critical analysis of the social issues where inequalities and injustices are challenged (Foley 1998). Critical theory also fosters individual consciousness as situated within larger political and economic arenas and acts as a force for social change. Foley (2001) urges researchers to examine the 'extent to which everyday experiential learning is implicit and embedded in other activities, and the extent to which it is, or can be, deliberately fostered' as well as the 'extent to which everyday experiential learning reproduces relations of exploitation and oppression, and the extent to which it does, or can, resist or help transcend such relations' (p. 85)

Foley contends that the process of learning in social movements is a 'contested activity,' and that it occurs in the very struggles over power and meaning, exposing the relationship of domination in society and in the very social issues that are struggled over. He goes further by arguing that we need to recognise the 'complex, ambiguous and contradictory character' of movements and struggles. Analysis of these complexities provides a necessary basis for future strategies (Foley, 2001, p.1). Similarly, Conway (2002) describes the social movement she researches as 'complex and contradictory ensemble of practices, discourses and identities' that was constantly emergent, always in process, always in the making (p.13). Foley's work focussed on how the political economic contexts of a given struggle shape education and training, the ideological and discursive practices of social movement actors, and the extent that such practices contribute to or undermine learning in action (Della Savia, 2011).

The experience of the ERT's Argentinian Worker Cooperatives provides a good case study of how workers used informal learning to transform the power relations at the workplace. Vieta (2014), drawing on Foley's (1999) *Learning in social action* framework, explored the informal ways in which ERT (empreseas recuperadas por trabajadores) workers learned the skills and values needed to self-manage Argentina's new worker cooperatives. Marcelo Vieta interpreted the findings with class-struggle analysis and social action learning theory. This approach helped to clarify how the 'new skills and values' needed were acquired through 'informal and experiential learning.' A class struggle approach considers how 'workers' subjectivities transform in praxis' as they struggle within and against the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system (Lebowitz 2003, cited in Vieta 2014). This approach resonates with Foley's (1999) argument that the process of learning in social movements is a 'contested

activity' (p. 1), and that learning brings to light 'relationships of domination in society and the very social issues that are being struggled over' (p. 131).

Although Foley's framework is used in several studies (Gouin, 2009; Vieta, 2014; Langdon, 2016), it is not without criticism. Gouin (2009) writes that Foley's theoretical framework falls short of offering an analysis that can contend with the complex realities of society and social struggle. She makes the argument that we need to look at systems of domination like patriarchy and race and not only at ideology. Gouin contends that it is important to understand how the capitalist class structure is dependent on other relations of ruling. In privileging capitalism, she argues, Foley falls short of 'affirming social justice struggles as areas that foster complex and contradictory learning.' Gouin proposes an antiracist feminist's theory to bridge these short comings. Gorman (2017) further argues that to develop a theory of informal learning in struggle, we need to integrate learning from feminist, anti-racist and disability studies writing that describes the choices and constraints people are faced with.

3.5   Discussion

Both Freire and Foley believe that learning is a political act and that learning – whether in schools or in society at large – serves a political agenda. Paulo Freire rejects the notion of the neutrality of knowledge and insists that the pursuit of social justice and democracy should not be separate from the practice of teaching and learning. Critical pedagogy sees learning as praxis, a process of acting and reflecting on the world that awakens critical consciousness and leads to emancipation. There is synergy between Freire's conscientisation and Foley's *Learning in social action*. For Foley (1999), some of the most powerful learning occurs as 'people struggle against oppression', as they 'make sense' of what is happening to them and work out ways of doing something about it (p.15). This aligns with how Freire sees the conscientisation process, which is as 'learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements if reality' (194, p.33). The concept of 'praxis' is at the heart of Freire's philosophical and pedagogical approach. Freire sees learning as being based on praxis, stating that 'discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action, nor can it be limited to mere activism, but involve serious refection' (1970, p.129). Foley constructed a social phenomenology of adult learning drawing on the 'lived experience [activists' praxis] and the sense people make of it.' He advocates

for the importance of developing an understanding of learning in popular struggle and argues for 'analytic strength and political utility of holistic and materialist analysis of learning' (Foley, p. 36). The value of conscientisation is not only about acquiring skills and competence but it is also, and primarily, about empowering individuals to be able to 'critically engaging with and transforming the world.' (Anderson et al, 2019, p 91). Foley says that it is in this process of engagement that we need to recognise the complex, ambiguous and contradictory character of movements and struggles. Freire himself makes the connection between learning and social movements when he insists that a radical and critical education must focus on what is taking place today in various social movements and labour unions' (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p.23).

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.0   Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the research and explains the methods chosen. This qualitative study used thematic analysis to organise the data and draws on phenomenology for the data analysis. The research is inductive and informed by activists' responses to interview questions. Furthermore, knowledge is constructed by the researcher based on the interpretation of the 'spoken word' and enriched by digital archival resources and literature.

4.1   Qualitative research paradigm

Qualitative research explores a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture of everyday life (Mason, 2002). Qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011 cited in Crawford 2016, p16) as a 'situated activity' that locates the observer in the world where the researcher aims to 'understand or interpret the phenomenon' in its 'natural settings' through various data sources and collection methods that lead to interpretation. The researcher is interested in understanding how people 'interpret their experiences,' how they 'construct their worlds,' and what 'meaning they attribute to their experiences' (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). This approach allowed me to collect rich and meaningful data and further delineate the personal narrative and micro histories of activists.

Cresswell (2007) identified five qualitative research inquiries namely: phenomenological, narrative, grounded theory, ethnographic and case studies. This study used phenomenology to analyse the learning experience of activists.

4.1.1   Phenomenology

Cresswell (2007) writes that the purpose of phenomenology is to 'reduce individual experience with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence' (p. 58), or in the words of Van Manen (1990), the purpose is to 'grasp the very nature of the thing' (p. 117). Phenomenology is an empirical approach to understanding participants' experience of a specific phenomenon, and it helps the researcher to gain deeper

understanding of the meaning of the lived experience (Hentz, 2016). In the case of this study, data was collected from activists who were involved in the anti-apartheid movement. This approach allowed me to 'enter the world of the individuals and to understand their perspectives' (Slavin, 2007, p. 147). Drawing on activists' experiences and knowledge from across sectors (such as the youth, student, labour, women, and civic sectors) allowed for each activists' distinct memory to be brought to the fore and exposed the influence it had over their personal and collective development. One of the characteristics of phenomenological research is the emphasis on the 'structure of the phenomenon,' meaning the 'commonality that is present' in the diversity of the phenomenon (Von Eckartsberg, 1986, cited in Hein and Austin, 2001, p.7).

Giorgi (1989 cited in Finlay, 2009, p.8) identified four core characteristics of phenomenology: 1) research is rigorously descriptive, 2) use phenomenological reductions, 3) explores the intentional relationships between persons and situation, and 4) discloses the essence or structures of meaning. To achieve this the researcher must set aside their biases and prior knowledge about the phenomenon obtained from personal and literature sources as well as what Finlay (2009) describe as awareness of their 'critical subjectivities'. Researcher subjectivity should therefore be placed in the foreground. This is done in Chapter One, where I provide as description of my own my own involvement during the anti-apartheid struggle and identifying as an insider researcher. This 'insiderness' allowed for better access to the activists and 'mutual knowledge' of the context. Further, sharing the local language and dialect with some of the interviewees enabled me to have insight into the 'implicit meaning' of concepts and colloquial (Trowler, 2016, pp. 5–6).

4.1.2   Empirical and hermeneutic phenomenology

Most phenomenological research can be divided into two broad categories – empirical and hermeneutic phenomenology; both types differ in their philosophical assumptions. Adrian van Kaam, the founder of empirical phenomenology, described it as an attempt to return to the 'immediate meaning and structure of behaviour as it actually presents itself' (Hein and Austin, 2001, p.11). Van Kaam (1958, 1966 cited in Hein and Austin, 2001, p.12) avoided using an 'priori coding scheme' in his data analysis, and he allowed the various constituents of the phenomenon to emerge from participants' descriptions. He was guided by the notion that the descriptions obtained from

participants 'reveal their own thematic meaning-organisation if we as researchers remain open to their guidance and speaking, their disclosure, when we attend to them' (Von Eckartsberg, 1986, in Hein and Austin, 2001, p12). The second characteristic of empirical phenomenological research is that it relies on the spoken words of the participants to communicate their experience. Fletcher and Wertz (1979, cited in Hein and Austin, 2001) explained that by "empirical" we refer to (a) our reflection upon actual events and to (b) our making available to colleagues the data and steps of analysis that led to our findings so that they might see for themselves whether and how they could come to similar findings' (p.14). (See Appendix 2 for data extracts)

Hermeneutic phenomenology is primarily concerned with understanding the 'text' and treats human experience as if has a 'semantic and textual structure' (Parker 1985, p.1081). The research results are themselves 'text, descriptions offered as insights not as replicable results of structural analyses' (Hein and Austin, 2001, p.15). The researcher creates a rich description of the experience with the intention to uncover the phenomenon rather than providing an accurate analysis of participants' descriptions Hermeneutic phenomenology involves a process of 'contextualisation and amplification' as opposed to empirical phenomenology where the focus is on 'structural essentialisation' (Hein and Austin, 2001, p.16). Descriptive phenomenology uses a technique of 'bracketing off' influences around the phenomenon to get to the essence (Smith et al., 2009 in Sloan and Bowe, 2014). This involves a process of 'rigorous reflection' by the researcher and is required to make explicit in his or her assumptions. Hermeneutic phenomenologists argue that it is not possible for researchers to 'bracket' their own experience and understanding and that this needs to be acknowledged and made explicit. This research using semi-structured interviews drawing directly from the learning experiences of activists, which informs the 'various constituents of the phenomenon to emerge' from participants own words.

4.2   Situating the researcher in the research

Research is not divorced from the socio-political environment and belief system of the researcher. Haraway (1988, cited in Kostka and Czarnota, 2017) argued that researchers speak from a particular 'location in the power structure' and do not escape the 'class, sexual, gender and racial hierarchies of the world system (p.368)'. Activist research learns from and embodies movements' experience as modes of knowledge. In this way the movement becomes an 'active force in the production of knowledge'

and strives to use this knowledge for generating social change (Kostka and Czarnota, 2017, p.369).

I was an active member of the student movement in COSAS, the Azanian Student Organisation and the South African Youth Congress (community) and served on the leadership of these bodies. In addition to this, I served on the student representative council at the University of the Western Cape and was the Chairperson of the UDF in the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town. As an activist I was on the radar of the security police and was detained on various occasions between 1983 and 1990. Under the security and state of emergency legislation, with the banning of COSAS in 1985, I was declared a listed person under the security legislation.

I therefore approach this study as a person who has been involved in counter hegemonic praxis in various capacities straddling between the legal mass movement and the political underground.

4.2.1   Epistemology and ontology

The construction of knowledge is a political process (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 27), and the analysis of knowledge is also a political process. The act of interpretation underlies the entire research process. The act of interpretation is not something that occurs only at one specific point in the research after the data has been gathered; rather 'interpretation exists at the beginning and continues throughout the entire process' (Kirby and McKenna, p. 23). Usher et al. (1997) write that every research method is 'embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world (ontology)| and ways of knowing that world' (epistemology) (p. 176).

I approach this study through a social constructionist lens to interpret how activists constructed knowledge through socially embedded collective learning whilst engaging in the struggle (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2002). The social context is at the centre of meaning making in social constructionism and the attention is on the knowing that is created through shared production (Burr, 2002). Constructionism also 'emphasises the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things and gives us a quite definitive view of the world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Crotty (1998) further makes a distinction between *constructivism* for epistemological considerations focussing on 'the meaning making activity of the individual mind' and the use of *constructionism*, where the focus appears to include the 'collective generation and

[transmission] of meaning' (p. 58). In my view, social movements engaging in social justice struggles produce their own counter-knowledge to challenge the power elite and empower activists to make sense of their reality. This is in line with a growing body of knowledge in social movement studies (Melucci, 1989; De Sousa Santos and Meneses, 2020; Choudry, 2015). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) write that social movements develop 'counter expertise' and that these movements are platforms from where 'new knowledge' including world views are developed.

4.3   Data collection

In researching a particular phenomenon for this study, the interview questions focused on the lived experiences of the activists, as contrasted with abstract interpretations (Van Manen, 1990). Questions are generally broad and open ended so that the subject has enough opportunity to express his/her view extensively. Kyale and Brinkmann (2009 in Bevan, 2014) considered research interviewing to be a 'craft' that requires a researcher to obtain 'descriptions of aspects of experience' of people (p137). As a starting point, general qualitative interviewing methods provide a useful basis for undertaking interviews, and these are generally semi-structured or unstructured. Bevan (2014, p.139)) developed three domains to structure phenomenological interviewing: contextualisation (reconstruct and describe experience), apprehending the phenomenon (explore experience with descriptive questions) and clarifying the phenomenon (use elements of experience or experience as a whole).

In social movement studies interviews are used to understand the motives of participants. Interviews can be divided into structured and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews use a pre-established schedule of questions whereas semi-structured interviews rely on an interview guide that include a consistent set of questions (Blee and Taylor, 2002, p. 92). Blee and Taylor (2002) argue that semi-structured interviews are useful for personal testimonies and recollections, to scrutinise semantic context (p. 94), to show how activists understand their social world (p. 95), and to construct individual and collective identities (p. 95). Further, semi structured interviews bring human agency to the centre (p.93-96)

Qualitative research relies on interviewing as a data collection strategy that provides the researcher with data for transcript analysis. Van Manen (1997) states that reflective interview transcripts require interpretive analysis by the researcher to

produce a description of the experience of the interviewee, the data for my study is derived from the interview transcripts. Multiple tools can be utilised for data generation. Data analysis is performed by applying the 'hermeneutic cycle' that consists of reading, reflective, writing and interpretation (Laverty, 2003 in Kafle, 2011). Data gathering is a selective process in which the researcher privileges some sources and discard others (Cousin, 2009). To avoid a descriptive process the researcher needs to set aside what he/she is looking for and try to work out what the data is expressing.

4.3.1 Interviews

Interviews are used by social researchers as a method to generate data concerning the research questions (Roulston, 2010). In this research, multiple sources of data were used to explore what activists learned. Using multiple sources of data and informants ensures greater credibility for my findings. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary source of data for this study and each participant was asked to sign a consent form before the interview commenced. All interviews were audio-recorded and saved on a password-protected computer and then later transcribed for analysis. Other data sources for this study included secondary published resources and digital archival research.

The study design involves twenty participants who were interviewed in Cape Town. The length of the interviews ranged from 90 to 120 minutes. I searched for individuals who could articulate the details of their learning experiences and were willing to partake in the study. An initial sample of one hundred activists who were active in the 1980s was collated in a spreadsheet. Participants were informed that there was no financial gain and that their information will be anonymised. The informants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study for up to three weeks after the interviews were completed. The research design was approved by the Lancaster University Department of Education Ethics Board. This study required interviewees to reflect on the past and recall memories to generate the data. Using semi-structured interviews allowed me to unpack the respondents experience, interpretation, and thoughts on what was learned and how the learning occurred. Blee and Taylor (2012) support the use of semi-structured interviews in social movements studies that explore issues where it is difficult to gather data through structured questionnaires, field observation and documentary analysis.

4.3.2 Sample Selection

The purpose of a sampling strategy is to link the data sources with the wider research context and the primary aim is to help the researcher to obtain data that will answer the research question (Mason 2002). The purpose is to produce a relevant range of context that will enable the research to make strategic comparisons across the data. Sample size in qualitative research is dependent on five variables: scope of the study, topic, quality of the data, study design and use of shadowed data (Morse, 2000, 2001, in Starks and Trinidad, 2007)

Data for this study was mostly gathered through interviews by using a purposive sampling method to recruit participants who participated in anti-apartheid activism during the 1980s. Phenomenologists are interested on the common features of the experience although diverse samples might provide a broader range from which to distil the essence of the phenomenon. Sampling identifies key informants who fit into the population being researched, this presents a challenge in social movements because they do not maintain reliable membership list (Kladermans and Jackie-Smith, 2012). This challenge was exacerbated in this study because the sample was drawn from activists who participated in the anti-apartheid movement over 30 years ago. Accessing activists from this period allowed the research to develop an 'empirically and theoretically grounded argument' (Mason, 2002, p.121). A further challenge for this research was to ensure that the sample represents a wider community across the ideological, gender, religious, race and class lines that was representative of during the anti-apartheid movement. Rubin (1995 in Blee and Taylor, 2002, p. 100) suggests that in sampling respondents, the researcher should strive for completeness, drawing on people who are knowledgeable on the subject. He further argues that in choosing the respondents the principle of 'similarity and dissimilarity' should be applied. This diversity of respondents is important for this study. Respondents for the semi-structured interviews were drawn from activists who were actively involved in the anti-apartheid movement in the period under study. For this study, a diverse group of twenty respondents were interviewed in Cape Town. To ensure representivity in the sample for the period 1980–1990, the sample was drawn from various demographic groups including: students, youth, women, labour, religious, education, civics, advice offices, activists who were active in the political and military underground and others across different political ideologies.

4.3.3 Profile of Research Participants

The twenty activists who participated in the study were drawn from a sample of 100 activists who were active in the anti-apartheid movement in Cape Town during the period of 1980–1990. These names have been anonymised as per the interview agreement.

Nobom - A female activist who was active in the University student movement (AZASO) and youth movement (SAYCO) in the mid-80s. Born in the Eastern Cape she pursued studies at the University of the Western Cape. She was one of the pioneer gender activists in the student and youth movement who transformed the vocabulary from triple oppression to patriarchy. Post 1994 she served in the International diplomatic corp.

Keff - A male activist who grew up in a working-class area on the Cape Flats. He was active in the church and community youth. He self-identified as a Trotskyist. He studied at the University of Cape Town and worked as a teacher at various schools where he was expelled for his political involvement. He completed his PhD and currently work a senior lecturer a local university.

Deon - A male activist who active in the Church and community youth. He later attempted to join the MK in exile, but his travel plans were thwarted, and he had to return home. He was detained under the state of emergency regulations in 1985. He became a teacher and is currently working as a Director in the Education Department.

Mandla - A male activist who was a gangster in his younger days and had a religious conversion in 1980. He became active in the Civic and trade union movement (Food & Agricultural sector). He later joined the South African Communist Party underground structures and travelled to the Czechoslovakia for political education training. He currently works as Church Pastor and is also the leader of a Farmworkers Union.

Karel - A male activist with mixed race parents. He was an organiser for a COSATU affiliate (metal sector) and later worked with various labour support resource organisations. He currently works with a media and communications NGO providing public education around labour issues.

Desmond - A male activist originally from a rural town in the in the Boland region. He attempted to join MK in exile but was captured and tortured by the police on the South African border. He had great difficulty in reintegrating with his comrades upon his release due to suspicion that he possibly collaborated to secure his release. He was later accused to be behind the death of two MK soldiers and was called to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He was highly active in running political education classes in the youth movement. He is currently working as a Property Developer with connections to the governing political elite.

Aunty Vivie - A female activist who grew up in one of the deprived areas of Cape Town. She trained as a primary school teacher and was active in the Teachers Union, Civic and Women's movement. Post 1994 she became a Member of the Provincial Parliament and is currently retired.

Ebrahim - A male activist who was active in the Muslim community. He was key in facilitating inter-faith communication between the Muslim, Christian and Jewish progressive groups. He was instrumental in the community media and communications sector.

Cecyl - A male activist who studied at the University of the Western Cape from the Eastern Cape. He was active in the student movement and later joined the community youth structures whilst working as a junior lecturer. He was a Fulbright Scholar and currently work as a Director in the Immigration Department.

Bushy - A male activist from Cape Town and an active member in the Student Representative at high school, the local youth movement and later served in the leadership of the Provincial youth movement. He was also active in his local community working with community organisations and the community advice office. He studied at the Cape University of Technology but did not complete his studies. Spend almost a year in detention including the Xmas of 1986. He is currently employed at the HQ of the national governing party.

Marthinus - A male activist who participated in the 1980s school boycotts and later as a member of the SRC and student movement at the University of Technology. Besides his political involvement he was also actively involved in the non-racial sports organisations. He was one of the organisers in the formation of the National Sports Congress. He is currently working as a bureaucratic in the Provincial government sports departments and in the leadership of the Football Association.

Rene - A female activist who was exposed to forced removals as high school student. She was in the leadership of the Committee of 81 the coordinating structure for the 1980 schools boycott in Cape Town. She later studied at the University of the Western Cape as a teacher and became an active member in the Western Cape Town Teachers Union. She took an active part in the unification talks that resulted in the formation of the South African Teachers Union, an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. She is currently working with an NGO recording the social history dispossession of ordinary people in Cape Town.

Stephen - A male activist originally from the Southern Cape who came to Cape Town in the early 80s to study at the University of the Western Cape. He used his contacts and access to political resources in Cape Town to support activism in his hometown. He was detained and spend several months in detention where he took responsibility for political education of fellow detainees. After his academic studies he joined the Trade Union movement as Education Officer and is currently employed in the Western Cape government.

Johny - A male activist who was active in the church youth movement. He later joined the military underground Umkhonto we Sizwe. After the imprisonment of some of his detachment members he became active in the family support committees. He was later appointed as organiser for the Teachers Union. Post 1994 he worked in a Ministry as advisor but resigned. He is currently in the Provincial leadership on the South African Communist Party.

Ernest - A male activist who worked in community structures organising around residents' issues. In his early involvement he was ideologically non-aligned but later joined the Unity Movement where he was heavily influenced by the writings of I.B. Thabata, the founding president of the African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (ADPDUSA) and would later study under Thabata in Zimbabwe. On his return he became the national organiser for APDUSA an off- spring of the Unity Movement of South Africa. He is currently working with a youth training NGO on employment skills and lecturing Adult Education part time.

Slams - A male activist who became active in the struggle as a 13-year-old. He participated in the 1976 uprising and in the 1980 school boycotts. He was one of the founding members of the youth-student organisation in Cpe Town. and worked in the Workers Advice Bureau. He later worked with the emerging union movement in Cape Town like the Retail and Allied Workers later the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union a COSATU affiliate. He was arrested and imprisoned on Robben Island for 5 years for a molotov cocktail attack on the house of a prospective Member of Parliament on the eve of the Tricameral parliamentary election in 1984. Post 1994 he worked in the special projects of the Ministry of Finance and is currently the owner of an Education and Training centre in the tele-communication sector

Errol - A male activist who was active in the school SRC and the Congress of South African Students circa 1985/6. And later joined AZASO at Turfloop University. He studied International Relations and completed his PhD at Cambridge University. He writes on international political economy In Africa and SADC. He is currently in the senior management of a local University.

David - A white male activist who studied at the University of Cape Town. He was active in the National Union of South African Students and the End Conscription Campaign. He currently serves as a Member of the Provincial Parliament and was previously the MEC for Education

Lolo - A male activist who started out as a high school member of the Congress of South African Students. He joined Umkhonto we Siswe at the age of 16. He completed his studies in education at the university of the Western Cape and is on a PhD programme in the Czech Republic. He currently working as a lecturer.

Shahida - A female activist who was active in the student and youth movement. After studying physical education at the University of the Western Cape she became active in Literacy movement in Cape Town, working at the Cape University of Technology where she facilitated literacy programmes in the industrial and community sector. She is currently working as independent consultant.

The criteria to compile the list of one hundred was based on: organisational representation, activists that were known to me, my ability to access them via social media and their availability. I was also conscious of the fact that the interviews would have to be conducted in South Africa and that the willingness of interviewees to participate as well as their availability were crucial. A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify the respondents. This form of sample selection assumes that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight into a phenomenon and therefore the researcher must select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriman, 1998 cited in Ollis, 2012).

I contacted one hundred potential participants via email and social media and got twenty-five responses. A participant information sheet was circulated to a sample of one hundred. This was followed by a thank you email with a consent form and broad areas that would be covered in the interviews. The purpose of the broad interview questions was to allow the participants to prepare for the interview given that the study period is historical. This research is about asking activists to reflect on their learning experience, spanning the decade 1980–1990, which means that they had to recall their lives or certain aspects of these. This raises the issue of memory:

> How far can you ask people to recall their past on the basis of memory? What sort of biases will their memory be subject to? Is recollection of the past also affected by current or present experiences and circumstances? (Dex, 1991, p. 2).

Cortazzi and Jin (2006) also raise this issue: '...remembered accounts may be shaped by distortions of time, by rationalisations from present perspectives, and by changes in the teller's sense of identity' (p. 32). To overcome the criticism of memory lapses and possible bias in recollections, I augmented the interviews with a review of archival documentation from the anti-apartheid movement. This documentation included fliers, pamphlets, community newspapers and workshop materials to illuminate and provide historical record.

One of the interviewees captures the dilemma of having to reflect on this historical period:

> Now we rely on memory and memory is imperfect. Memory is also affected by trauma and all these things. And some nostalgia even when it comes to memory. Some things you remember and association you can make. These are the problems of memory and obviously where you cannot remember, you can also try and find artefacts and other things that will confirm the information (Keff)

Every interview session started with a few minutes of nostalgia and an update on where we (the activists) all ended up. This was followed by me restating the purpose of the research, explaining that the interview will be recorded; informing participants that they could withdraw from the research for up to three weeks after the interview and that personal information would be anonymised. This anonymisation of the interview data was well received by the respondents and allowed them to be more open and reflective in their response, this was confirmed by a participant:

> You did indicate that many of the information will be coded and it would be protected and not be easily available. It does give you an opportunity to just reflect on your life and your own contributions that you have made (Johny)

Each participant signed their consent form before the interview commenced.

All interviews were transcribed using an online software package TRINT[21]. The software provided a good standard verbatim transcript. I saved the TRINT transcripts into Word format which allowed me to edit the data. The software used a standard British accent and I had to make corrections allowing for accent differences and the local dialect used. This was done by listening to each recording several times and making the necessary corrections where applicable. Once the data had been cleaned it was uploaded on the NVivo 12 software[22] to start the coding process. The electronic capacity of the software allowed me to work with a large dataset and make the coding process or the assignment of 'nodes' in NVivo easier.

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[21] TRINT turns audio and video recording into searchable, editable, and shareable content.

[22] Accessed via Lancaster University platform

4.4.1   Coding and themes

Creswell (1998) describes coding as a systematic process in which statements are analysed and categorised in clusters of meaning. Coding helps the researcher to think systematically about what the data might be telling (Cousin, 2009).

To help the organising the data this study drew on Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within the data. Thematic analysis involves coding data for specific themes. The themes could be determined before coding begins, or could be generated during the process of analysis, derived from the data, or a combination of both. Using this method, I searched for patterns across the complete data set and not only within a single interview data set. The analysis offers an 'accessible and theoretically-flexible' approach to analysing that can be used to search for themes and patterns in the data Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.150). The qualitative analytic methods can be divided into two approaches. The first is an approach that is located within a 'particular theoretical or epistemological position' Braun and Clarke's (2012, p.58). and in this approach the researcher approaches the data from a theoretical perspective. The second approach is 'independent of theory and epistemology,' and the researcher can therefore approach the data with a level of freedom and 'provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data.' Braun and Clarke's (2012, p.152).

Themes are derived through an inductive analysis (bottom up), which is strongly linked to the data. The data is coded without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame and the analysis is data driven. The second approach is a deductive analysis (theoretical), where coding is driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytic interest and it is analyst-driven, providing a less-rich description of the data overall, but focussing more on a detailed analysis of some aspects the data. Determining the centrality of a theme relates to whether it 'captures something important in relation to the research questions,' providing 'rich thematic descriptions' of the entire data set and displaying 'evidence of the theme' from the data set. Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.153). The researcher needs to ensure that the content of the data is adequately reflected in the analysis. In that sense thematic analysis is useful when investigating an under-research area.

Braun and Clarke (2006) propose a six-step framework to conduct thematic analysis:

- Read all transcriptions to familiarise the researcher with the data (immerse in the data, repeated reading, check data against transcribed data).
- Generate initial codes (organising data into meaningful groups).
- Search for themes (refocus analysis at broader level, develop candidate themes)
- Review themes (refining, coherence, validity)
- Define and name themes (identify the essence of each theme, what is interesting)
- Produce the report (analytic claims must be grounded, overall story of the different themes).

A thematic map is used to present the overall conceptualisation of the data patterns and the relationship between them. Data that departs from the dominant story of analysis was coded as miscellaneous.

4.4.2   Initial coding

The coding process started with me reading the individual interviews (level 1) and allocating codes and associated data extracts. This was an iterative process which included reading across the entire data set (Level 2), and this yielded a list of 338 codes, collating 1680 data references to each code from the overall data set

The next step was to review all the codes for duplication, spelling errors and possible duplication of meaning where applicable the duplications have been corrected. This process resulted in a reduced list of 256 codes with 1403 data references to each code from across the data set.

4.5 Research themes

The final stage was to define each theme and link it with extracts from the entire data set to answer the primary research question. Below is a description of each of these themes.

1. Political awakening – this theme identifies the primary triggers that motivated the individual activist to become active in the broad anti-apartheid movement.

2. Learning in struggle – the aim of this theme is to capture all the learning experiences of the research participants and to highlight activists' learning whilst participating in struggle.

3. Learning content – the aim of this theme is to understand the content of the activists leaning.

4. Knowledge resources – the aim of this theme is to capture all the resources activists used.

5. Learning methodology **–** this theme aims to unpack the methodology that activists used to learn and the methods best suited to develop understanding.

4.5.1   Thematic map

The purpose of the thematic map is to visualise the themes. Figure 1 illustrates what I consider to be the themes underlying activists learning and knowledge production.

Figure 1. Thematic map
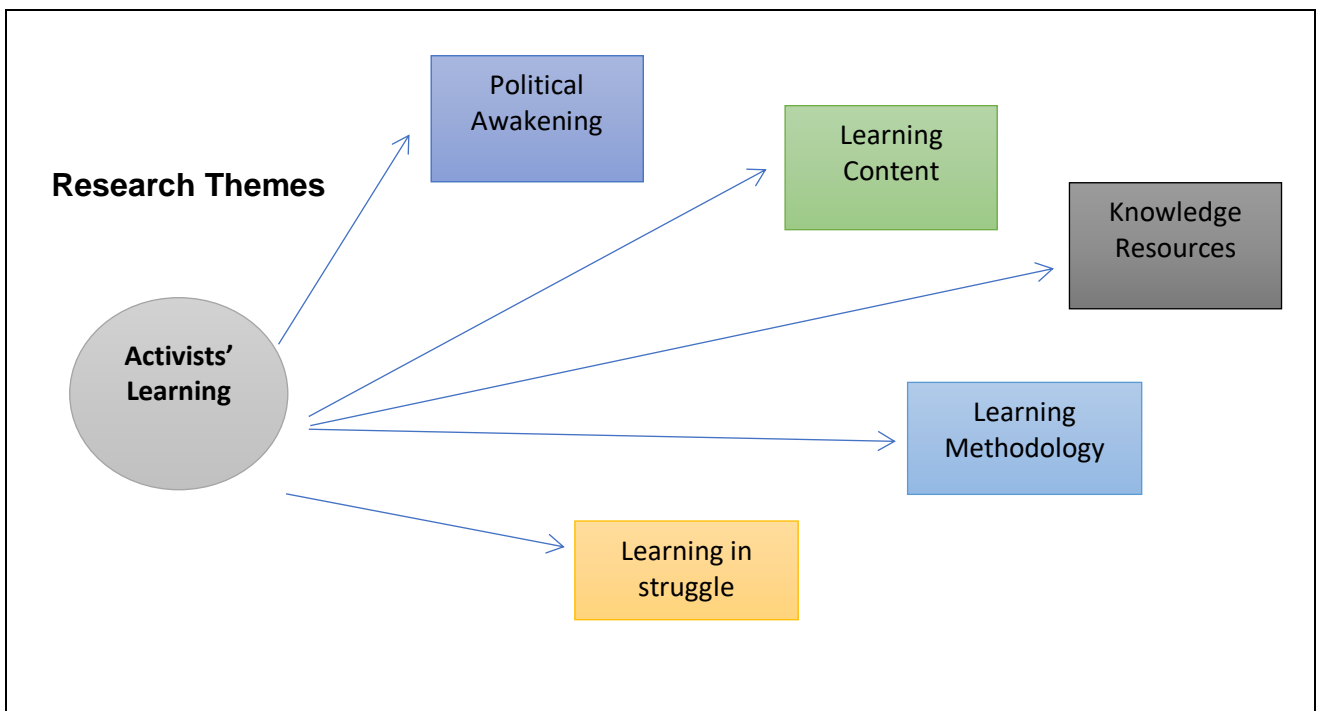
4.5.2 Themes and data extracts

Figure 2 presents the themes with sub-headings. For a full set of themes and data extracts (see Appendix 2).

Figure 2. Themes and sub-headings

Political awakening	Learning Content	Knowledge Resources	Learning Methodology	Learning in struggle
Personal experiejce	Political education	Resoiurces/Material	Reading circles	Collective action
Injustice	Organisational skills	Reflecion	Paulo Freire	Understanding
Religion/faith	Media & Communication skills		Purpose of learning	Awareness raising
Family	Internationalism	Resources Centres	Informal learning	Mentorship
Teachers	Ideology	Underground learning	Structured learning	Evidence
Apartheid	Leftist learning	Mentorship		Knowledge
Security	Sectarianism	Liberation theology		Learning spaces
Reforming Apartheid	Gender Cosciousness	Language &Understanding		Empowered
Community boycotts .	Race & Identity			Language & struggle
1976 Uprising	Class struggle			Race & dentity
Solidarity	Theory & action			Class struggle
	Security legislation			Theory & action
	Learning spaces			

4.6 Trustworthiness, validity, and reliability

Qualitative analysis is inherently subjective because the researcher is the instrument for the analysis (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). The researcher makes all the judgements regarding the coding, categorising, decontextualisation and recontextualisation of the data. Reliability and validity are significant in qualitative research, and qualitative research draw on concepts such as 'dependability and creditability.' In this study, dependability and credibility are assessed in two phases – during the thematic analysis data was coded with extracts from the transcripts, which will allow the reader to judge the trustworthiness of the reflection for themselves.

As a stand-alone method of data collection, semi-structured interviews face the critique of validation associated with all single-method procedures. Critics of qualitative interviews maintain that interviewees contribute their personal perspectives in interviews and that these personal perspectives are biased and lack validity. To overcome this criticism, I augmented the interviews with a review of digital archival documentation from the anti-apartheid movement. Flinn (2007, p. 53) makes the point

that 'community archives are the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage' and digging into history knowledge about systems of power and experimentation with pedagogical strategies and practice (Choudry and Vally, 2018).

4.6.2 Triangulation

The participants brought their personal bias to the study during the interviews. To address the potential of bias the researcher needs to find a way to validate the information that is generated, and one way to do this is through triangulation. Triangulation, or methodological pluralism (Della Porta, 2014), refers to the use of overlapping methodologies or, as Yin (2009) puts it, 'multiple sources of evidence' (p.115). The underlying logic of triangulation is rooted in the complexity of social reality and the limitation of all research methodologies. The basic argument is that reality is too complex and multifaceted to be adequately grasped by any single method (Snow and Anderson, 1991 cited in Snow and Trom, 2002). Triangulation research on social movements has used different methods, bridging quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

4.7 Conclusion

This research is rooted within the lived experienced of activists, and research sampling was draw from a diverse group of activists to share their experiences. I believe that this study will make a unique contribution to understanding the role that activists' learning played in the anti-apartheid movement. By engaging with activists who participated in struggle, the study validates the learning and knowledge produced and, in this way, responds to Foley's (1999) call for more case studies that demonstrate the relationship between learning and struggle. The research was conducted face to face, using qualitative interviews with twenty participants and these interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data was uploaded into the software NVivo 12 for coding and identification of themes. The trustworthiness of the research will be enhanced by triangulating the data sources and reviewing transcripts. Semi-structured interviews with inductive analysis, will be used allowing for patterns to be identified across the dataset. This method enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the lived experience of activists It further allowed for direct access to activists of the period and to elicit greater understanding by exploring the experiences of activists.

This approach also allowed me to mediate meaning between the voice of the respondent and the analysis. And this, in turn, enabled me to identify the essence of the learning process and get the activists' own descriptions of their experience.

Chapter Five

Learning to become an activist

Even though there were different traditions in the churches, there was a communality in terms of the struggle that has been identified and the overarching desire was to conscientize people around dismantling of the apartheid system (Johny)

5.0   Introduction

This chapter unpack the learning experiences of activists, drawing on their own life experience in Cape Town, South Africa. This will allow for an understanding of life through their own 'epistemic lens' (English and Mayo, 2012). This research will draw on Paulo Freire's conscientisation process to understand how people became activists and on Griff Foley's 'learning in social action' concept to explain learning processes and methodologies and how knowledge resources were used.

5.1   Learning to become an activist

The energy behind the social movements was drawn from volunteer activism in the student, youth, community, religious and labour unions (Adler and Steinberg, 2000; Badat, 2002; Seekings, 2002). These activists were the lifeblood of the movements and suffered the brunt of the South African oppressive machinery, including imprisonment and death. The driver for political involvement is described by the activists in their own words: 'a sense of injustice' (Desmond, a youth activist), 'poverty and community experience' (Keff, a trade union activist), and 'this impulsive urge to do something, to make something happen' (Ernest, a community activist).

This voluntary engagement was geared to effect change and to enhance democracy. According to Putnam (2000 cited in Forenza and Germak, 2015, p.233), civic engagement yield 'bonding (solidarity) and bridging (relationships) social capital' which aligns with the relational dimension of empowerment. Ollis (2012) makes a distinction between 'accidental activists' and 'lifelong activists' (p. 6). Accidental activists are those who have come to activism due to a series of life circumstances and have not been previously involved in activism in contrast to lifelong activists. This distinction is useful in the South African context where there was a mixture of activist experiences. For example, 'lifelong activists' would include those who were active in

the banned ANC and PAC, those who spent time on Robben Island as political prisoners, the student leadership of the 1976 uprising and worker leaders who was active in labour movement. In contrast to this, accidental activists include parents who supported student-youth detainees during the state of emergency and political trials of underground operatives. These activists found their way into the Detainees Parents Support Committee[23] and other civil society formations.

Being an activist is often associated with a collective identity linked to participation in a social movement and collective action (Bobel, 2007). Ruth Lister (1997) points out that collective action can 'boost individual and collective self-confidence' because individuals and groups come to see themselves as 'political actors and effective citizenship' (p.226). Deon, a youth, and teacher activist, reflected on how his activism moulded his identity.

> That formed a lot of my identity, just realising that you need to do much more and there is much more expected than just simply organising, doing this and that, forming organisations and recruiting people into the organisation, but also doing the underground work. I would say that I am defined by that. That is the only answer I really have for you. Because what you see is the product of what has been moulded over years.

Activism is a process of 'understanding, contextualising, and negotiating issues' with, and behalf of, the community **(**Alinsky, 1971 cited in Forenza and Germak, 2015, p237), and a 'skill of effective engagement with those in authority' (Huish, 2013, p.2). Activists played a vital role in analysing and theorising the suppressive conditions of apartheid and used this in framing the vision of the future. Grassroots activism at a civic-, school- and factory-floor- level produced personal and political empowerment amongst its members. Activists in the South Africa movement addressed each other as 'comrade,' denoting unity of purpose and create a sense trust. Dean (2019, p. 2) defined 'comrades' as those who 'tie themselves together instrumentally, for common purpose…comradeship binds action, and in the binding, this solidarity, it collectivises and directs action considering a shared vision of the future'. Shahida, an interviewee and ex-literacy activist, articulated the awareness-raising role of activists:

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[23] https://www.polity.org.za/article/the-knock-on-the-door-the-story-of-the-detainees-parents-support-committee-2018-02-12 [accessed on 10/12/2021]

> For me as a development activist this process is a bit deeper in that you are working directly with the constituency through teaching, building homes, setting up food gardens, etc. The focus here is for the development activist to begin to implement the alternative vision. The process of creating awareness around the injustice and then taking actions on a practical level to change this.

Deep learning took place in the movement and involved activists from different generations, political traditions, classes and ethnic backgrounds. Activists drew on a wide range of pedagogical tools to cater for diversity and educational backgrounds. According to Cox (2014, p.954), learning through discussion with peers creates a more 'democratic and egalitarian classroom environment' and widens the intellectual experience. Political education is about preparing activists to engage in social protests and to develop thoughts on what the future vision will look like. Political education is therefore not a neutral activity, or just a training syllabus, but is a powerful tool in the fight for ideological dominance. This is illustrated by Ernest, a community activist recalling the conscientisation role of political education in prison:

> In prison there was [sic] also political classes, it fast tracked knowledge and learning. The consciousness, knowledge, through that intervention, because you didn't choose to go prison, it grabbed you. But by default, I learnt other things there, which I wouldn't have learnt it I was not in prison.

Local experience adds to a rich tapestry of locally framed learning narratives and supports Foley's (1999) approach to 'learning in social action' and Mamdani's (1995, p. 2) call for using a 'context rich approach' in analysing African phenomena. This approach is further supported by Choudry (2012) when he writes that social movements must be 'situated in social dynamics and concrete conditions', and that micro histories are 'part of the history or histories mode of existence'. This engagement with micro histories through interviews gives a 'voice to the previously unheard' (Foley, 1999, p.23).

5.2   The socio-political protest as 'moments of rupture'

Struggles in communities, factories and schools can contribute to 'moments of rupture' (Wright, 2009) or crises that opens the opportunity for an alternative reality. It is important to understand why people join social movements and engage in social action. Local grievances and demands, whether it be at school or factory level, are key predictors for participation. Studying activists 'motivation and persistence' for

participation can provide an important counterweight and challenge the overreliance on rational choice theory (Croteau et al., 2005, p. 11). It should be noted that there is a limitation in researching the motives for participation because of the difficulty of capturing participants before they participate, as most studies are retrospective (Vestergren et al., 2017). The national socio-political environment did not necessarily motivate every oppressed South African to take up arms or engage in protesting Apartheid. The interviewees suggest that there were definite triggers, or 'moments of rupture' (Wright, 2009), that motivated them to join the struggle. Mandla, a trade unionist, reflects on his anger as a trigger for his own involvement:

> I would say what triggered my involvement was the injustice that took place, the unfairness. I remember my anger in 1976. Even though it was not ideologically or politically inspired, it was more anger against the system, the frustration and you can say the hatred towards the white people.

Henderson (2002), reviewing the work of Mezirow, Brookfield and Freire on transformative learning, shows that all three authors identified a 'disruptive event' that challenges the learner to 'critically reflect on beliefs, assumptions and values' resulting in the learner developing a 'new perspective' (p. 203).

A common theme suggests that for most activists, early political awakening was in the family household, this is articulated by Slams, an advice office worker:

> The impetus for my political awakening, my father was very political …in terms of his criticism of the system…he had a hate, hatred for the system that we were subjected to.

Not all household conscientisation was necessarily political but it extended to human compassion that later evolved into political activism. Aunty Vivie, a teacher, and civic activist explained that:

> I think it was my whole upbringing, it was part of my family and where we stayed, my parents taught me the whole meaning of caring. Caring was a word that was widely used in our house.

A major driver for several activists was their experience with injustice and dispossession as experienced by Lolo, an underground military operative explained that 'They had everything (parents) at home…land and cows to milk …the white people took our land' and Rene's (an education activist) empathy with the forced

removal of communities 'I think it was 1979/80…the Modderdam Road[24] forced removals …people being told that they don't belong.'

Student struggles played a key role to galvanise popular support for the anti-apartheid movement in the early 1980s. The education struggles for student representative councils being linked to community and labour struggles was a key feature of the time. Teachers played a critical role in the conscientisation of high school students, as articulated by Desmond, a youth activist and underground political operative:

> …suddenly kids were marching around the school and they're not going back to class I couldn't understand this, and my Afrikaans teacher had numerous conversations with me about why these kids are marching around the school and why it is important for me to join them.

In some incidences the violent response of the security police to non-violent protests was also a trigger, as recalled by Johnny, a Church activist and underground military operative.

> It was at that point where we were confronted by the police and I remember being caught in that schoolyard… just the sheer brutality that went on when the cops got into the school, basically just ransacked, and pulled teachers out of the classrooms and students and the normal kind of chaos that broke out.

5.3   Political protest, state repression and political consciousness

The white government realised in the early 1980s that they needed to co-opt segments of the oppressed community in the Coloured and Indian community through the tricameral parliamentary reform. Most South Africans rejected these unrepresentative institutions, and in 1984 the tricameral parliament became a focal point of resistance. Opposition to the tricameral system of parliament spread across the country and affected all sectors of society, including higher education institutions. In 1984, Cecil joined the University of the Western Cape as a first-year student. He reflected on this period by saying that:

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[24] https://digitalcollections.lib.uct.ac.za/islandora/object/islandora%3A16835 [accessed on 10/11/2021]

> There was massive opposition of the tri-cameral parliament[25] and that of course manifested itself at university. There were many meetings, workshops, rallies, just against this project. So, the environment which I entered was very politicised. So, going to university in 1984 was an important moment which made me join the broad democratic movement.

Opposition to the apartheid reform was also mobilised in the liberal and progressive white community. Fred, a white high school pupil at the time provides insight into the platforms used in the white community to articulate their dissent:

> I remember as a Std 9 [Yr11] learner going to a National Party [governing party] public meeting addressed by PW Botha [president of RSA] in my school uniform…When it came to questions time…I questioned them on the policy of the tricameral parliament.

Apartheid was enforced through various oppressive laws (Colemen,1998), particularly the Internal Security Act, No.74 of 1982, (ISA) the Public Safety Act No.3 of 1953 (PSA) and the Public Safety Amendment Act, No. 67 of 1986 (PSAA).[26] The ISA conferred wide powers of detention without trial, banning of persons, organisations, gatherings, and publications. This law was used in 1960 to declare the ANC and the PAC unlawful.[27] The PSA enabled the government to declare a state of emergency (SOE). Partial SOEs were declared in 1960 and 1985 and a national SOE was declared from 12 June 1986[28] to 1990.

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https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv02005/06lv02006.htm [accessed on 10/11/2021]

[26] I was found guilty of destruction of public property under this legislation in 1989

[27] I was detained under this legislation in 1984 for a Molotov Cocktail attack on a Member of Parliament's residents

[28] I was detained under the state of emergency in 1985 and 1986

Table 1. Detentions under emergency regulations

Year	Detail	No. of Detentions
1960	Partial state of emergency (29/3/60 – 31/08/60)	11 727 (official)
1985/6	Partial state of emergency (29/7/85 - 07/03/86)	7 996 (official)
1986/7	Total state of emergency (12/06/86 – 11/06/87)	25 000 (estimated)
1987/8	Total state of emergency (11//06/86 – 10/06/88)	5 000 (estimated)
1988/9	Total state of emergency (10/06/88 onwards)	2 000 (estimated)

The PSAA enabled the declaration of 'unrest areas,' allowing for the same powers as in PSA in specified areas. This type of formal repression resonates with Gramsci's notion of coercion, where the state uses its legislative powers to dominate the subaltern classes.

Table 4 and interview data reveals that many activists were detained in the mid-1980s under the state of emergency and internal security legislation. Formal repressive measures, like detention without trial and police brutality, were a key moment in their own conscientisation process. Reflecting on this, Johnny, a church activist, explains the role that detention played in the development of his consciousness.

> That [detention] also contributed to my awakening, to my political awareness or development, was the issue of my detention, you know the eighties. So, 1985 there was a brief detention period and during that time we also of course met the people within prison, and we were able to talk to and learn from. We were able to also share our own ideas during detention, but it was also a testing period.

A few activists also died in detention, the death of a very poplar cleric in Cape Town, Iman Haroon[29], had a major impact on Karel, a trade union organiser.

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[29] https://www.imamharon.com/ [accessed on 21/11/2021]

> So politically more directly, I would say my first lightbulb moment was in 1969 with the death of Iman Haroon in detention. But what struck me about that was the secrecy and the fear, the fear of discussing politics. I couldn't understand why they are so scared, they are adults, and obviously people are respected. That struck me and I learnt more and more about Imam Haroon and the fact that he was detained and obviously killed, murdered in detention.

For Ernest, his detention 'contributed to my awakening, to my political awareness or development.' He goes on to illustrate how during his detention he was exposed to political training, we were 'able to talk and learn…we were able to actually also share our own ideas during detention, but it was also a testing period.'

The direct conscientisation role of political education in prison is illustrated by Stephen a rural activist:

> In prison there was [sic] also political classes, it fast tracked knowledge and learning. the consciousness, knowledge, through that intervention, because you didn't choose to go prison, it grabbed you. But by default, I learnt other things there, which I wouldn't have learnt it I were not in person.

The experience of learning in prison also captured by Neville Alexander (RIP), a leading educationist and political prisoner in South Arica. He reflected on the process of political prisoners educating themselves on Robben Island:

> We taught one another what we knew, discovering each other's resourcefulness. We also learned how people with little or no formal education could not only themselves participate in education programmes but actually teach others a range of different insights and skills. The "University of Robben Island" was one of the best universities in the country; it also showed me that you don't need professors (Villa-Vicencio, 1996, p. 13).

Choudry (2019) makes the point that the lessons learnt by activists from state repression have been far less explored, and in his book, *Activists and the surveillance state*, he introduced the concept of 'pedagogies of repression' (p. 3). Ernest and Stephens' experience confirms Smith's (2007) characterisation of informal education as being based on 'conversational practices' and Bekerman et al.'s (2007) argument that learning must be freed-up from the traditional institutional arrangements and hegemonic definitions of what counts as learning. Drawing on activists' experience,

we can conclude that state repression and police brutality were not only seen as personal sacrifice, but also places and experiences where knowledge was produced through confrontation.

5.4   Developing a-non-racial consciousness

In 1948 the National Party won the elections in the Union of South Africa and introduced segregationist policies, enforcing racial segregation in residential areas, schools, and public life. Activists grew up in these segregated areas and faced the challenge to mobilise the local community against these apartheid-defined racial identities that have been ingrained in the local psyche. Bushy, a student, and youth activist recalled his early activist days.

> Look the race issue was the obvious one. When you move out of Belhar,[30] you meet black activists from Langa or Gugulethu,[31] there are white comrades from Mowbray.[32] So, the race thing happened the moment you leave your community to another structure, to another meeting.

Attending meetings at a regional or national level allowed activists from these racialised communities to interact at a social level with people from across the apartheid-defined racial boundaries. Errol, a high school activist capture this well:

> …as a kid I grew up you know as a normal boy on the Cape Flats.[33] I'm Coloured, my first exposure to black Africans is through activism through organisations. And so that's when I begin to interact with race and quite honestly in my case it didn't take me long to realise that I embraced the concept of we are all black.

Cecil, a university student activist, confirms the role organisations played in developing his non-racial consciousness by saying that 'being involved organisationally, draw yourselves together [sic] within organisations and between organisations. So, as we say, you were able to engage in a non-racial way.'

The period of the 1970s played a crucial role in transforming racial identities amongst the oppressed communities. The rise of the BCM (Mngxitama et al (2008) in the 1970s, had a strong ideological and cultural influence on activists in Cape Town

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[30] Coloured working-class township in Cape Town

[31] Black working-class township in Cape Town

[32] White middle-class suburbs in Cape Town

[33] Common reference to the resettled townships for people who were forcefully removed from the whites-only declared District Six in the early 1960s

and around the country. Karel, a trade union activist reflected on the influence BCM had in raising his own consciousness.

> So, 1976 came and I think what was important about black consciousness was the whole notion about black power and black pride and it was a good counterweight to apartheid education and the whole imposition almost culturally of inferiority. And I think for me as a young person it was in a way quite liberating, that I wasn't inferior to them.

The issue about race and how to deal with it in the liberation struggle was articulated differently based on ideological orientation. Whereas the Unity Movement and Cape Action League (CAL) advanced an anti-racist stance, the Congress Movement (an alliance between the ANC and the SACP) supported the notion of non-racialism. Desmond articulated the ideological confusion that even ANC members faced.

> Even our learning about race relations through the literature of the congress movement didn't help me to understand race relations. It didn't help me, because the teaching in the congress movement was… there is four national groups,[34] and it has a pragmatic relationship towards the ending of apartheid. Coloureds, Indians, Africans, and whites, and they pragmatically came together to end apartheid. And then in the 70s came the Black Consciousness Movement that unravelled all of that forever. And in a sense the ANC's theory of four national groups didn't hold anymore. It only held really in theory, but it didn't really hold sustainably.

The issue of race, class and gender has always been a contentious issue during the anti-apartheid struggle. Although it was generally accepted that capitalism was the basic contradiction in South African society and that it was responsible for the exploitation of the working class and rural poor, addressing racial oppression was seen as the immediate objective. This was commonly referred to as the 'National Question' (Webster & Pampallis, 2017) and considered by left-leaning perspectives (Trotskyist in the Cape Action League, Marxist academics and workerists) as 'false consciousness and inherently and ultimately a bourgeois trick to obscure class exploitation' (Cronin and Mshilo, 2017, p. 20). This concept was introduced by the Communist Party of South Africa (later SACP) in 1929 with the adoption of their (Black Republic thesis (Musson, 1989). This was further developed in the SACP's 1962 programme (SACP, 1962) describing the 1910 Union settlement as a new form of

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[34] White, Indian, Coloured, African, racial categories introduced by Apartheid

colonialism where 'power was not transferred into the hands of the masses of people of South Africa but into the hands of the white minority alone' (SACP, 1962, p.23). The SACP and ANC therefore prioritised the struggle against racial oppression as the immediate objective of the National Democratic Revolution. This conceptualisation allowed for all oppressed groups and progressive white people to mobilise under the umbrella of the anti-Apartheid movement. This is reflected in the congress movement's acceptance of the apartheid defined race categories: African, Coloured, Indian, and white. The National Question remained unresolved in South Africa and continues to emerge in post-1994 policy discussions on black economic empowerment, affirmative action, and the building of a non-racial society.

The engagement of white activists had its own challenges at an operational level. White activists, drawn primarily from upper middle-class English-speaking communities, had access to resources both politically and materially. Fred, a white student activist recalls that: 'NUSAS[35] was quite organised having winter schools and having organisational workshops…there were regular supply of formal reading packs.' This resulted in them being more articulate and sometimes taking the lead on developing strategy and tactics, which was inconsistent with the experience of black activists in the communities. Walters (2000), a white anti-apartheid campaigner, came to the same conclusion that white activist were able to produce sophisticated policy briefs, research papers and create huge networks of organisations.

5.5   Networks and developing activists' identity

Social networks are a principal element in participating in collective action and can also shape the network (Della Porta and Diaini, 2006). Individuals become involved through networking and networking also strengthens activists' attempts to mobilise for their cause, as well as creating links between different organisational groups. Adli Jacobs (2014), a founding member of the Call of Islam,[36] highlights the role that networking played in building the organisation. He writes that 'we grew up together, and our parents served on the mosque committee' (p. 2) and explains that this familial relation helped to mobilise support for the organisation in what was, at the time, a

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[35] NUSAS was a white national university-based student body operating primarily on English speaking campuses, NUSAS was part of the non-racial student alliance with COSAS and AZASO.
[36] Call of Islam was formed in 1984 and its membership were drawn from the Cape Town Muslim community. The organisation worked across religious affiliations and was active in the Mass Democratic Movement.

conservative political community. This experience confirms Carroll and Ratner's (1996) argument that networks serve as a crucial means for 'mobilising resources and sustain[ing] activism' (p.602). Fred, a white activist, explained how networking with activists from diverse communities helped him to deal with issues that he did not necessarily experience or understand.

> So, it's kind of learning from others experience or people talking to people who knew about that situation and being guided how we can approach dealing with the issue in that community.

Through participating in social action, activists developed a collective identity that was enhanced by a strong personal connection with other participants, whether family, friends, or local community members. McAdam (2003,) argues that it is not the 'prior networks or group structures' that enable activists, but rather the 'interactive conversations' that takes place in 'dense networks' (p.130). This was particularly evident in South Africa where networks in the major religious organisations – South African Council of Churches[37], Muslim Judicial Council[38], Jews for Justice etc. – developed counter-hegemonic interpretations of apartheid theology that was based on Christian Nationalism. These networks developed critical awareness amongst their members and increased their propensity to participate in the liberation struggle at various levels. According to Ebrahim, a Call of Islam activist and community journalist:

> these organisations were more than just faith-based organisation, rather it [sic] was engaged in political struggle. The Call he writes reflected on their faith and the relevance of faith to a country ruled by apartheid.

The experience of Ebrahim and other religious activists engaged in the anti-apartheid movement have synergy with Paulo Freire, who himself identified as 'a man of faith'. Smith (2004) suggests that identity is an important 'lens of analyses for political behaviour. Collective identities are shaped by 'communalities' bringing individuals into movements and by the interaction and common experiences in them (Stryker et al. 2000, p. 23).

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[37] https://sacc.org.za/history/
[38] http://psimg.jstor.org/fsi/img/pdf/t0/10.5555/al.sff.document.the19940000.025.000.pdf

Johnny reflected on this and said that:

> Even though there were different traditions in the churches, there was a communality in terms of the struggle that has been identified and the overarching desire was to conscientize people around dismantling of the apartheid system.

A study on collective identification and participation undertaken by Simon et al. (1998) found that willingness to participate in collective action was significantly related to collective identification. This collective identity manifests as the 'sociocultural and not individual locus' and is evident through language, symbols, dress code, colours, and demeanour (Gamson, 1991). Nobom, a university student leader and feminist, recalls an altercation between young student activists and the older Women's League members around their dress code.

> I remember in 1986 going to an August 9th[39] celebration with a couple of comrades … we went with our yellow AZASO[40] t-shirts, jeans and tackies and they didn't want to let us in because we weren't wearing a black skirt and green blouse, Women's League colours, we had to tell them, but this is our wear, and eventually they let us in.

This sociocultural identification was also evident in the 1970s influence of the BCM. In the case of Karel, a union activist, it helped him to deal with his own mixed-race heritage and his self-identification as a black activist.

> Black consciousness helped to liberate one…The other thing was about your appearance and your look. Look, I am not typically having black features because my father was so-called white; he was an immigrant who had a child with my mother. But I never knew him or saw him because of the Immorality Act. But still this was a kind of social, cultural solidarity about how you looked and who you were; and that for me was very important in my own personal development as a so-called political educational influence.

In Rene's case, an education activist who grew up in a so-called Coloured community, the 1976 student uprising and exposure to Black Consciousness shaped her activist outlook.

> So, when '76 happened it really for me shaped how I looked at myself, how I thought about myself, this whole idea around who is black. I think for the first time, I really thought about who is black, who is white, who

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[39] National Women's Day in South Africa
[40] AZAO was a national University based student movement organising on black campuses

is whatever and developed a resistance to coloured identity. Especially in the suburbs where I came from… the only people who had a coloured identity were the ones who were sell-outs. Even the working-class areas in the southern suburbs were more middle class in terms of being – the things that define people as middle class, would have been language, skin colour. So, class wasn't just the conditions of where you live, it was all these accoutrements of middle-class life. So, with 1976 I started becoming more aware of how coloured identity was very much a tool for dividing people.

Bobel (2007) confirms Karel and Rene's experience that social movement participation necessarily produces 'enduring changes' in the individual's identity and not only modifies how activists see the world but also the way they see themselves. As collective identity evolves, personal identity and group solidarity becomes indistinguishable. As a result of this group solidarity, boundaries are created between 'us' and 'them,' meaning those who are part of the movement and those who are not; this divide is also driven by ideological differences. Melucci (1989) suggests that the construction of the collective is a negotiated process in which the 'we' involved in collective action is elaborated and given meaning.

5.6   Community Struggles as Epistemic Struggles

Activists describe their reason for engaging in struggle as partly driven by 'a sense of injustice' which created the 'impulsive urge to do something.' Injustice writes Johnstone (2021) is always 'accompanies and underwritten' by epistemic injustice, which reinforces the dominant narrative of race, class, and gender domination. Medina (2013) notes that women and racial minorities who has been 'systematically marginalised are also epistemically demeaned' as intellectually inferior in comparison to the power holders (p.27). Approaching social struggles as epistemic struggles therefore break down the 'hierarchies and exclusions' related to the dominant representations presented by the ruling elite (Icaza & Vazquez, 2013).

 The engagement of activists in local community protest was the steppingstone to engage in organisation where more conscious strategy for mobilising and organising was developed. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) introduced the concept of 'cognitive praxis' to illustrate the intellectual processes that social movements engage in to produces knowledge about the issues that they seek to mobilise around. This 'cognitive praxis' produced 'other knowledges' (Santos, 2014) that challenged the

hegemonic worldviews of the ruling class which was an important arsenal in developing counter hegemonic capacities of activists including embracing a new 'system of beliefs and practices' (Brookfield, 2005, p.94}. This approach confirms Gramsci's argument that 'every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship' (1971, p.350). Epistemic injustice is more acute in marginalised communities because of where the communities are in relation to the political power elite. Mkwananzi & Cin (2022) argues that:

> There can be no social justice or socially just societies without epistemic justice as it safeguards the interest of the historically, socially culturally and politically ignored sections of society and removed the unjust balances between individuals so that the lives of all citizens become improved and liberated (p.5)

Anti-apartheid activists had strategies to engage with the 'ignored sections of society,' Ernest, a community activist recall how they:

> …organized door to door house meetings, street meetings, we organized zonal meetings, we organized big community meetings, we organized marches, and through all of those dynamics of organizing, a lot of learning was inherent within that because the learning was collective, it wasn't individual learning it was collective learning

During this interface with communities, they learned what the community needed, and the Civic movement provided a platform for residents to bring their own knowledge to the fore. In the words of Santos (2009), this is knowledge for emancipation rather than for the regulation of social order. Auntie Vivie explains:

> So, our civic people also learned about, yes housing, security and comfort. But on the one hand the people who joined the civic also brought their own knowledge'

Social movements play a significant role in this epistemic struggle because they foreground useful knowledge that is generated in the praxis of struggle, this new knowledge comes from praxis and becomes praxis (Freire, 1970). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) has positioned social movements as producers of knowledge that generate counter-expertise about the social world and how to change it. Coy et al (2008) also refer to oppositional knowledge that is defined as the 'production and

dissemination of alternative understandings and visions' to the dominant ones that wish to shift 'the normative centre of society' (p.57). Activists understood apartheid domination and racial capitalism as structural, systemic, and materially grounded. This alternative understanding is well captured by Desmond, a student-youth activist:

> …we learned informally in most cases what was not covered in formal curriculum, and yet it is those things which have sustained us over the years in terms of our perceptions of society, our understanding of power relations, race relations, gender relations. We learned about how power operates, the structures and institutions which sustain inequality, our oppression but also made a commitment to fight it.

Developing an epistemology of resistance **(**Medina, 2013**)** attempted to elucidate the 'epistemic aspects of oppression' and offer a way out of the epistemic injustices that accompany oppression (p.3). He calls for 'epistemic resistance' that is, the use of our epistemic resources and abilities to 'undermine and change the oppressive normative structures' (p.3). This epistemic resistance movement becomes the catalyst for reactions that stimulate processes of social change and can act as a 'means for healing an internal illness' (Mari, 2012)

This chapter shed light on the motivations of activists to engage in protest and social action and to understand the transformation of individuals and groups in the process of engagement. A key concern in social movement participation is *when* and *how* people join social movements. The answer to this can be approached from a macrolevel and a microlevel perspective (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1988). At a *macrolevel* the focus is on the socio-structural and political understanding of the contradictions inherent in society like class, race, and gender and the *microlevel* focus is on how these contradictions affect people at a local level, in other words their daily lived experiences. The identification of a turning point for activist's engagement or 'moment of rupture' (Wright, 2009) explains the motive for involvement and in most cases is driven by first-hand experiences of injustice in their formative years as activists. It concluded by contextualising the struggle for social justice as an epistemic struggle and recognising the capacity of social struggles to bring attention to epistemic and cognitive justice.

Chapter 6

Learning through and in activism

So that was a huge learning curve for us, that life of an activist and I promise you today we can achieve what we are achieving because of that learning. If it wasn't for that we would not have been able to be fighting like this because we have seen betrayal and we are no strangers to betrayal now. When it happened, we know it and we know how we have dealt with it before. So, all these experiences is [sic] actually our school or was our school. School fees was a bit high, but we paid the price (Mandla).

6.0   Introduction

Learning in social action at its core is a liberating act, a political act, the pedagogical is not only the structure within which learning happens but also a 'basic unit of power relationships' (Rincon-Gallardo, 2019, p. 11). Drawing on the evidence from activists, this chapter illustrates the political act and purpose of learning and confirms Freire's notion that knowledge is never neutral and cannot be divorced from teaching and learning. Critical pedagogy theorists (Foley, 1999; Giroux, 2011) see learning as praxis, a process of acting and reflecting on the world that awakens critical consciousness and leads to freedom. It also illustrates that social movements focus on 'really useful knowledge' (Mayo, 2020, p.43), and knowledge that enables the activists to analyse their situation to promote social justice. This study argues that learning in the anti-apartheid struggle was primarily informal, drawing on critical pedagogy, and took place in non-formal spaces spanning a continuum from social movements, street protests, prisons and in underground military camps. The informal learning approach and its substantive contribution to activists' learning and knowledge is confirmed by Nobom, a student-youth activist.

A lot of it was learned informally. And it was learned organisationally, because what we learned organisationally what we learned informally in most cases was not covered in formal curriculum, and yet it is those things which have sustained us over the years in terms of our perceptions of society, our understanding of power relations, race relations, gender relations. We learned about how power operates, the

structures and institutions which sustain inequality, our oppression but also made a commitment to fight it

6.1   Learning in social action

Resistance starts at home and at a street level when community members engage with local government on the non-delivery of services, at school level when students challenge the department of education on school maintenance and the delivery of schoolbooks or at a factory-floor level when workers experience health and safety challenges. These are often an 'expression of anger' (Harley, 2014) and Ian Martin (2003) talks about the importance 'staying angry' and goes on to argue that 'agency may be expressed as anger because in a sense, it can be expressed in no other way' p. 574. For Wade (1997) resistance is an 'act of agency' and Bosworth and Carrabine (2001) define agency as 'practical accomplishment' that can challenge or maintain prevailing powers. Agency cannot be divorced from structural factors like poverty, dissatisfaction with services delivery at local government level since these factors affect citizenship. This holds true for these street, school and factory level challenges that made the connection between local problems and the entire apartheid system. Learning to think critically about power and control and political interest is a key element of social movement learning. Learning is therefore key in developing critical consciousness as part of the counter-hegemonic struggle. The political character of the community struggles was captured by Mrs Mona, a community activist and teacher.

> The civic organisation for instance was important in terms of getting people to realise that they need to ask for more than they are happy with at this current point in time – housing issues, water, electricity, good jobs and all those kinds of things. That was what civic was all about, but you had to start right at the bottom and talk to people and organise people around those issues. So, it was important to organise around those little issues. But the realisation really came with the education and networking with other communities.

The approach taken by the civic movement gives credence to Tarlau's (2013) proposition that diverse activist groups use 'popular education to develop political consciousness and capacity for critical reflection, while also strategizing, through these educational spaces, about concrete actions communities can take to contest structural inequities and build a more just society' (p.12).

Local struggles were conceptualised as part of the wider historical, cultural, political, and economic struggles. Activists expressed their 'anger' though collective action, which was enabled by their collective identity. Activists framed injustice as 'materially grounded, structural and susceptible to transformation' through concerted collective action (Carroll and Ratner, 1996). Doug McAdam (1999, cited in Tarrow, 2011) argues that before 'collective action can get underway people must collectively define their situation as unjust' (p.111). Ernest, a community activist explains:

> So the awareness is now that this is a collective process, it's about working with people, it's about understanding where they come from, it's about knowing where you are going to, it's about understanding that you have to be patient, it's about understanding that the forging of the new society which we want to create is something that cannot just be the responsibility of a few people that you hand over power to, but it's the day to day struggles, within various spheres of society at every local, every level, where people are involved and where power is at play.

The understanding was that democracy must be cornerstone of this collective action in terms of planning, decision making and execution.

6.1.2 Framing and meaning making

Social movements can be viewed as agencies of counter-hegemony that contain structures of beliefs and values that guide action and offer an alternative view of society that is grounded in the experience of struggle. Framing establishes unity and continuity with members and with the culture from which the movement arose. Social movements are sites of meaning-making and activists are encouraged to rethink worldviews, and through this process they also challenge dominant meanings and understanding (Kurtzman, 2008). The development of collective identity in conjunction with collection action framing is illustrated by Marthinus, a sports activist:

> Because of the national struggle… we were no longer just a Cape Town one. We were no longer a lot of Coloureds, we were part of the new South Africa and a South Africa which built a new identity, and that is what laid the foundation for us.

Interaction at national level broadened his view on racial identity and motivated the need for a progressive identity.

In the literature a frame is defined as:

> Collective patterns of interpretation with certain definitions of problems, causal attributions, demands, justification and value orientations are brought together in a consistent framework for the purpose of explaining facts, substantiating criticism, and legitimating claims (Rucht and Neidhardt, 2002, p.10).

A frame defines the problem or grievance in a new way or, as Tarrow (1992, pp. 187–88) explains, frames are a 'purposefully constructed' guide to action and provide a new 'cognitive understanding' for individuals. An example of this was how gender discrimination was initially understood in the anti-apartheid straggle. Desmond, a youth activist, and underground operative reflected on the cognitive development in his understanding of gender issues.

> With gender relationship, the way we were learning in the '80s was very constrained, within a very small theoretical framework; the triple oppression of women, that's what we learnt and that we must respect women and give them rights. But my learning then about gender relations was purely about triple oppression of women. Black feminist leaders started to link the women's oppression to patriarchy … Even when they were still student leaders started introducing more complex conversations and very quickly these leaders were pushed to the margins. The moment they introduced in SANSCO[41] a workshop on patriarchy, that was the beginning of the end for them

Movements also use master frames to translate local and single issues into a more 'comprehensive critique of power,' and this allow heterogenous groups to be allied in common political struggles (Carroll and Ratner, 1996). Keff, a youth and trade union activist, reflected on how he would (re)frame the bible stories is his early activist days:

> And in fact, for me, while I loved reading, up until the '70s it was mostly bible stories. My understanding was the radical theology; I was not a passivist. I would quote "we marched down the walls of Jericho, and the Lord had intervened, and Jericho would fall!" And we would go, and we would conquer. The Lord wasn't a passivist, he took a stand against evil or wrong, so the Lord would be on your side

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[41] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-african-national-students-congress-sansco [accessed on 20/11/2021]

Johnny, a Christian activist, and Ebrahim, a Muslim activist, provide practical examples of how framing helped to win over different stakeholder groups:

> Now I am busy with this church youth and the church youth is completely different kettle of fish. It's not that you can just walk into it, and you can speak *Das Kapital* in the church, you have to translate these things and try to understand where people are coming from. There is a shift that needs to happen and it's not going to happen overnight (Johnny).

> Taking society into the religion … So then for example say we can study the, the scripture ourselves, we can study the Quran ourselves, we can open up an English version of it, then we can ask ourselves what does this mean for us? What the hell does this mean in this moment, now? What is trying, what, what is God trying to communicate to us now? At that time, we were Muslim Youth Movement people, but what we did in our little small circle of four, we decided you can't just look at the theology, you actually need to go and test this bloody theology out there, okay, because one of the other things we had, we had also come into contact with was the bible, the Christians - their document the Kairos document[42] (Ebrahim).

The experience of Johnny and Ebrahim and other religious activists engaged in the anti-apartheid have synergy with Paulo Freire who himself identified as 'a man of faith', describing his pedagogical work as beginning in the slums of Recife 'pushed by my Christian faith'. He explained

> I know that I had been sent [to the Recife slums] …Then I began to read Marx and more I did more I came convinced that we should become absolutely committed to a global process of transformation. But is interesting in my case…my 'meetings' with Marx never suggested to me to stop 'meeting' Christ. (Bell, Gaventa and Peters, 1990: pp. 245–246)

Carroll and Ratner (1996) suggest that a 'political-economy framing of injustice' provides a 'common language' in which activists from different movements can communicate and find 'common ground'.

6.1.3 Organisation building and recruitment

Social movements function as the bridge between individuals and sociocultural levels, and this is done by linking solidarity movements, and organisational layers

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[42] . https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2011/05/08/the-south-africa-kairos-document-1985/
[accessed on 22/11/2021]

(Gamson,1991). The 'movement' layer is critical because it is a necessary catalyst in fusing solidarity and organisational identification in an integrated movement identity. Learning is a crucial element in organisation building, and, according to Peter Senge (1990), learning organisations allow for space where people continually 'expand their capacity to create new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured'; where collective aspirations are set free, and where 'people are continually learning how to act together' (p. 3).

Organisational knowledge represents the modes by which social movements communicate, both internally and externally. For Nobom, a student-youth activist and feminist, the organisation:

> teaches you social skills but also organising skills and being systematic about things…In AZASO it was very much around organisational skill that you learn…it was very much about conscientizing and organising.

Rene, a teacher activist shared a similar experience and said that 'the way of raising people's consciousness was understood as more than just experts sharing knowledge…it was understanding how to organise.'

Political education played a significant role in developing activists' cognitive and organisation skills. Nobom, who was actively involved in the political education and training in the student-youth movement, shared about the political curriculum that was followed:

> There was what we called "the tools of analysis;" historical and dialectical materials and having the tools to analyse what is going on. The second was the historical component; so, you can't have tools of analysis when you don't understand your own history – so the history of resistance etc. The third component has to do with your own organisational issues, like understanding the youth, that the youth is a stratum and not a class, what are the issues of the working youth and the student youth etc. and how do you then organise. Then the fourth component was the issue of basic skills, like how do you organise, how do you write meeting minutes, what is the role of the treasurer, how do you chair a meeting. All of those skills which we take for granted but it's critical to build an organisation. You cannot assume people know what the role of a publicity secretary is and all those things. And then I think a fifth part of it was enabling us to deal with the issues of the day, so the constituent assembly, what are negotiations, what is

suspension of armed action, the violence and how do you understand the third force.

As part of developing internal democratic practices, responsibility for chairing meetings rotated and to help this process members would learn meeting procedures. According Keff, part of organising was:

> getting out to different people in the community, knowing people in the area through pamphleteering and surveys etc. We learned that by taking people along, doing it together as a group and it was fun.

Karel, a trade unionist, explained that they got maps of the areas from the city council for each community.

> We demarcated it. I think Lawrence Road to Belgravia Road. Athlone station to Belgravia and right down to I think Kromboom was the other. Each of us, say two in a team had a section to go door to door and it was amazing. So, we had our survey forms, we engaged with the youth, we engaged with the parents around community issues.

Ernest provided insight into the methodology that was used to engage with the community.

> People divided into teams, and these teams had to go out and research, research the history of the community, where we come from, how it was started, who are the stakeholders, who were the role-players, who are the political influences in the community, who were the collaborators[43].

So organisational learning was a combination of public campaign work and mass mobilisation, the loci where the learning took place, and then the underground, which was mainly a reading group and strategizing. For Rene organisation development was all about 'building unity and building strong social movements…on a grassroots level' and, according to Marthinus, a sports activist, this was driven by the notion that 'we had to go to the people, we have to take up the issues that affects [sic] them directly.' This approach is well-articulated by the American activist Angela Davis

> I wanted an anchor, a base, a mooring. I needed comrades with who I could share a common ideology. I was tired of ephemeral ad hoc groups that fell apart when faced with the slightest difficulty (Dean, 2019, p. 3).

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[43] Community members working with the apartheid state or police

Mrs Mona, a teacher, and Civic activist captured the link between activists learning and ordinary people's knowledge in her explanation: 'So, our civic people also learned about, yes housing, security, and comfort. But on the one hand the people who joined the civic also brought their knowledge.'

Activists' interaction with communities provided rich evidence of their actual experience, the impact of apartheid on their daily lives. This was based on the premise that activists believed that communities had knowledge and experience that could be integrated in their political work and in framing of the apartheid experience. This 'really useful knowledge' (Rincon-Gallardo, 2019) gained from communities was used in the development of strategy and tactics for the local civic movement. Seekings (2000b) explains the development of a 'conscious strategy of mobilising and organising around issues to achieve broader goals' (p. 52). The community activists understood action around community issues in terms of a 'broader strategic framework, with the goal of affecting fundamental shifts in patters of political mobilisation and ultimately the transformation of the political system and urban political economy' (Seekings, 2000b, p.53). The key feature of the civic strategy was the transformation of the political system into a non-racial democracy. Local community issues around rent arrears and service delivery were integrated into the national liberation struggle. The strategy was primarily focussed on mass action, organisation building and informal political education

6.1.4   Media and communications

Media and communication played an important part in the development and distribution of anti-apartheid movement knowledge amongst the members and the broader community. In the 1980s the national media outlets in South Africa could be roughly divided into two groups, with Afrikaans newspapers on the one side and English on the other. The Afrikaans newspapers included the *Rapport* and *Die Burger* and the English newspapers, the *Cape Times*, *Sunday Times,* and *Cape Argus.* Although the English newspapers were more liberal, their critique of apartheid was to further the interest of white capital, whereas the Afrikaans newspapers were squarely in the camp of the Nationalist Party government, trading as the unofficial mouthpiece of apartheid. Independent media was a rarity in the 1970s and only really emerged in the 1980s with the Afrikaans *Vrye Weekblad* and English language *Weekly Mail* as well as community-based newspapers. On 19 October 1977, remembered as 'Black

Wednesday' the apartheid government banned 19 BCM-aligned organisations and newspapers including *The World* and *Weekend World*. At the advent of the 1980s, the anti-apartheid movement started to use local community-based newspapers and pamphlets as an integral part mass mobilisation. Alternative and community media was initiated with the support from SASPU[44] National on white English-speaking universities, and journalists in the Media Workers' Association of South Africa initiated community-based newspaper like the *Grassroots*[45] in Cape Town. The *Grassroots* according to Stephen: 'was more an organising tool than a newspaper, more than just writing stories and articles and take photos and so…we used it as a vehicle to basically start organisations.'

There were several student newspapers and magazines operating on the liberal English-speaking university campuses, and these played an important part in skills training programmes for off campus communities. Rene recalls her training in Johannesburg at Wits University.

> Because I remember SASPU national. I remember they sent me up
> when I was at UWC, to Joburg to learn editing and all that. And then
> we go back, and we can get involved in the editing of *Grassroots*.

Nobom, a youth activist, confirmed the media skills development role that NUSAS activists played, explaining that 'they also teach [sic] about how you do to lay out for a pamphlet or silk-screening a T-shirt.' Media was used as an aid in organisational workshops and became an important ingredient of political work, combining 'political education with strategic and tactical thinking' (Seekings, 2000a. p23). Scholars explain the role of media and communications in social movements by explaining the construction of 'common goals and demands' (Tilly, 1978). More recent studies in media and communication are interested in understanding social practices and political structures beyond media presentations, production routines and dynamics (Sartoretto and Custodio, 2019). In the South African experience, media was crucial in producing and circulating knowledge and was used as a medium for analysis and discussion in social movements. Shaheeda, a literacy activist explains how the

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[44] South African Student Press Union
[45] http://www.thejournalist.org.za/the-craft/grassroots-when-peoples-power-and-tyranny-clashed/ [accessed on 5/01/202]

activists' skills progressed from technical capability (editing and layout) to cognitive capability, (the production of knowledge), using media.

> Learning materials for learning circles and for mass education through pamphlets and booklets were not always readily available. To deal with this challenge media committees were formed and had to learn how to write and produce material.

Sartoretto and Custodio's (2019) study on knowledge production in Brazilian social movements confirmed the South African experience by showing that the production and circulation of knowledge through communicative processes is a crucial aspect in the formation and maintenance of social movements' network because it 'crystallises shared goals, collective identities, and mobilisation processes' (p.61)

6.1.5   Theory, ideology, and class consciousness

South Africa, and especially Cape Town, have a rich history of leftist thought and practice. In his book, *The Cape Radicals* (2019), Crain Soudien traces the history of a small group of intellectual activists known as the New Era Fellowship (NEF). This group was established in 1937 with the objective to 'disrupt prevailing ruling-class thinking' (p. 1). They established several study circles, debating societies and cultural initiatives that functioned as 'catalyst for new political formations' (Soudien, 2019, p. 1).

Activists involved in social movements generate their own theory outside of academic environments. This theory is developed by reading widely about movements and local and international literature as well as internal discussions and reflections on their own actions (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Bevington and Nixon, 2005; Cox, 2014). The daily actions, which include demonstrations, campaigns, meetings, and direct actions, constitute the 'locus of activist theorising' (Bevington and Nixon, 2005, p.185). Direct action is informed by intense theoretical reflection, which includes questions about goals, strategy, tactics, and organisation. The fact that theory is grounded in action should not serve to 'discount the quality of the theory' (Bevington and Nixon, 2005, p.186). According to Bevington and Nixon (2005), scholars assume that activists are only interested in ideas related to 'immediate tactical issues', but they argue that activists engage in theory at 'higher levels of abstraction as well as mixing actual strategic questions with broad critical concerns' (p.187). They also play a significant role in the diffusion of ideas and values and build on their ideological

heritage. Exposure to ideas like Marxism, dialectics, development of society, class understanding, and class analysis became 'part of the activists' dogma, part of the way we speak, part of the way we start identifying who is who' said Deon, a church and youth activist. Cape Town, unlike most other parts of South Africa, had a rich multi-ideological tradition with the leading organisations being the ANC, the SACP, the Cape Action League, the BCM, the PAC and the NEUM and the trade union movement. These ideological traditions had associations with the civic, student and youth movements as well as the trade unions. Exposure to Marxist teaching, according to Karel, a trade unionist, provided the 'connection with the working class but particularly industrial workers as the vanguard of the socialist struggle.' This exposure had a similar impact on younger activists like Errol who recalls that:

> we would then start getting introduced to Marxism, dialectics, and historical materialism and so on. So that was the context that the class contradiction was the overriding framework in which our political education took shape and hence the preference towards Marxism-Leninism.

Marxism was central to the debates and understanding of South Africa (Vale, Hamilton, and Prinsloo, 2014; Vale and Prinsloo, 2014) in the 1970s and 80s and was dominated by activists from the predominantly English-speaking universities.

Organised socialist activity in South Africa can be traced back to 1890, when Henry Glasse, an English emigrant, formed the Socialist Club in Port Elizabeth (Lodge, 2021). Sociologist Belinda Bozzoli expressed concerns about South African Marxism, arguing that it was primarily an importation and adoption of Northern theory into which South African reality was fitted, leading to what she called 'locally received orthodoxies' (1981, p. 53). Real theory, according Bozzoli (1981) was produced in the North, and South Africa is not 'source of theorising' (p. 54). Sociologist Shireen Ally traced the emergence of Western Marxism among white intellectuals in South Africa to the growth of Black Consciousness and non-racial trade unions. She argues that South African Marxism was a 'reflection of power' and was the 'product of a conditioning by various social and political forces and processes that…deeply implicate it in power' (Ally, 2005, pp. 2–5). Sakhela Buhlungu (2006) critiqued the role that white intellectuals played in the trade union movement arguing that their position in the union movement 'side-lined black organic intellectuals' (p.428). Jay Naidoo

(1986), General Secretary of COSATU, spoke on the relationship between intellectuals and the federation and said:

> We ask you to put your learning skills and education at the service of the workers' movement…but we believe that the direction of the workers' movement will develop organically out of the struggle of the workers on the factory floor and in the townships where they live. Accordingly, the role of the intellectuals will be purely a supportive one of assisting the greater generation of working-class leadership. As COSATU we believe that we have generated a working-class leadership that is competent enough to debate its position and to direct the movement itself.

When Naidoo asked academia to 'put your learning skills and education at the service of the workers' movement,' he was arguing for a 'mutually beneficial relationship' instead of researchers seeing the movement simply as a 'field of research and theorising' (Croteau et al., 2005, p. XVI).

Ideological differences also created conflict amongst activists. An additional aspect of learning included learning about political tendencies, which were seen as rival tendencies. Keff, a youth and trade union activist, explained how he was expelled from his local youth organisation because of the emerging ideological difference.

> In that period and for some time I operated in Humbugs Town before I was recruited to the Western Cape Youth League. And then at some stage they expelled me; expelled myself and Trevor for trying to recruit Denver and there were a lot of other *ouens* [guys] in the youth, to the league, and two different philosophies, and it was destructive and breaking down the movements

This sectarian approach was also prevalent at Robben Island prison according to Slams, an advice office worker and political prisoner.

> Like I said I got one spank when I was on the Island [Robben Island], when I was told to stop that kind of promoting certain positions in conflict with the general policy of the organisation [ANC]. Especially the kind of heavy concentration on the workerist line. And I soon realised that the worker group must succumb to the main, and the ANC was the lead.

The experiences of Keff and Slams illustrate that ideological differences among movement participants needs critical reflection. Instead of engaging with perspectives

and allow for ideas to blossom in the movement, activist resorted to the Stalinist way by expelling their own comrades from the movement. This approach is contrary to critical transformative learning that involves a 'pedagogy of critique' (Lange, 1998).

There was also a realisation by activists that they needed to be engaged in organisations that had mass appeal to get their message across. Karel, a trade unionist, and youth member shared the thinking of a Trotskyist aligned youth movement he was part of.

> That period circa '84 coincided with the underground group, shifting its position from a sectarian position towards the masses, because we realised that the masses were with the UDF, and we were hanging out with sectarians in the Cape Action League. So gradually we withdrew from Cape Action League and joined CAYCO and the student formations of the Congress Movement. On a kind of semi-entrist orientation, but not real entrist. But it was more of a broad orientation that we need to be part of this big movement that had already emerged, and we did that full force.

This experience of activists is consistent with Newman's (2000) assertion that even though learning is emancipatory it is not so in a linear sense, it is 'complex and contradictory', and is shaped by 'intrapersonal, interpersonal, and broader social factors' (pp. 275–276).

South Africa in the 1980s could be politically characterised as racial capitalism, a situation where the working class was not only exploited by industry but also oppressed by a white minority government. Activists made the connection between their daily struggles in schools and communities and the struggles of the industrial working class. Keff recalls how the community rallied support for the Leyland[46] and Wilson Roundtree[47] strike.

> I liked that kind of stuff and then we formed support groups for the Wilson Roundtree and Leyland strikes and all of those strikes and now the issue was how do we support the working-class struggle.

This practical experience of supporting labour strikes encouraged activists to develop a class consciousness and recognise the importance of workers in the national

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[46] British car manufacturing company in Cape Town
[47] The strike erupted in1981 over the firing of workers. The campaign for their reinstatement stimulated a national boycott of Wilson - Rowntree products

liberation struggle. Errol, a high school student during the struggle, explained how Marxism became the overriding framework for political education.

> We would then start getting introduced to Marxism, dialectics and historical materialism and so on. So that was the context that the class contradiction was the overriding framework in which our political education took shape and hence the preference towards Marxism-Leninism.

Bushy explains that his class consciousness emerged out of struggle and making the connection between local popular struggles and capitalism

> But the bigger class thing, capitalism, the ruling class, those things really played itself [sic] out at the higher end of consciousness…we started thinking ideological…but it came later down [sic] in our activism and consciousness…we started seeing what we are doing in Blikkiesdorp in terms of class struggle and where it fits in.

The experience of Keff, Errol and Bushy give credence to Foley's (1999) approach where he merged social movement learning and class struggle and argued that researchers need to analyse the interconnections between political economy, micro politics, and social struggles.

6.1.6   The struggle for gender equality

The South African struggle for gender emancipation has historically been framed as a struggle against triple oppression: race, class, and gender. Nobom reflect on her exposure to the concept.

> I remember that we had an AZASO[48] workshop in August 1985 and for the first time I had a paper on triple oppression…that explains a lot of things to me in terms understanding theoretically [sic] gender oppression.

The master narrative was race and class and the oppression of women by apartheid and capitalism was considered a secondary matter. National liberation movements encouraged the political mobilisation of women to bolster the struggle against apartheid, and in April 1954, the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), a broad-based, non-racial women's organisation was founded. One of the most important national women's protests in South Africa was the women's anti-pass march to the Union Buildings organised by FEDSAW on 9 August 1956 (SAHO). Standing

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[48] https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/azanian-students-organisation-azaso [accessed on 6/01/2022]

outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria and displaying their 'courage and strength' the women shouted (Boddy-Evans, 2018)

Wathint' abafazi,

Wathint' imbokodo

Uza kufa!

Translated as: [When] you strike the women, you strike a rock, you will be crushed [you will die].

Whilst FEDSAW was launched in 1954, the Black Sash was founded in 1955 to oppose the removal of Coloured's from the Cape voters' role. Over the years it developed into a national organisation and campaigned against racial segregation and migrant labour. After the banning of the liberation movement in the 1960s, the 1976 student uprising and the imprisonment of BCM leaders in the late 1970s, a diverse group of New Social Movements emerged in the 1980s, especially in Cape Town. These included the United Women's Organisation, the Western Cape Civic Association, and the Cape Areas Housing Committee. Both Civic organisations included women from working class communities. The student and youth formations also had women's sub committees or departments. University-based activists, and especially white female activists, had an important influence on the emerging theoretical discussions on gender equality in the 1980s.

> But I think it was also the extent of the student movement and influences on the women's movement. On the one hand there was your UWO and then the influence of the NUSAS feminist (remember FEMCOM). And some of us had to then make sense and sort of like the AZASO women's group found ourselves somewhere in between.

As mentioned before, the dominant 'theory' on women's struggle in the 1980s was based on the notion of triple oppression. Women involved in the student movement started to argue for an acknowledgement that women's oppression must be understood within the context of patriarchal relations. This was articulated by Desmond.

> With gender relationship [sic], the way we were learning in the '80s was very constrained, within a very small theoretical framework; the triple oppression of women, that's what we learnt…black feminist leaders started…in the student and youth movement started

introducing more complex conversations and very quickly the triple oppression notion was pushed to the margins. This also resulted in female activists, especially in the student movement being marginalised by male student leaders.

Hassim (2006, 2017) identified a catalogue of approaches in the debates about women's liberation in South Africa – the women question approach (women's emancipation contingent upon national liberation), the radical feminist approach (primary source of women's oppression lay in patriarchy), the workerist position (working class women's organisations should be autonomous from national liberation movements), the socialist feminist position (women's organisation needs autonomy from both the national liberation and labour movements), liberal feminism (universal political rights) and queer feminism (hetero-normative patriarchy intersects with race and class).

Drawing on Hassim's catalogue of approaches, I will argue that the dominant approach in the 1980s was the Women's Question approach, especially with organisations aligned to the ANC and UDF, collectively referred to as the Congress Movement, who were adherents of the Freedom Charter. COSATU, the umbrella federation for the labour movement, noted at its founding congress resolution (2007) in 1985 that 'women workers experience both exploitation as workers and oppression as women and those black women are further discriminated against based on race.'

This supports the women's question approach and the resolution further supported education and training in the organisation to develop an understanding of the triple oppression frame. The federation further resolved to 'actively promote, within its education programme, a greater understanding of the specific discriminations suffered by women workers and ways in which these can be overcome' (2007). It was only at its third congress, in 1989, that the federation resolved to 'actively encourage the election of women shop stewards on the factory floor….and to 'consciously attempt to ensure that women are elected to leadership at all levels our affiliates and the federation' (2007). It was only in 2018 that the first woman was elected as president of COSATU (Bendile, 2018). This illustrates that the socialist and workerist approaches, although ideologically present in the labour movement at the time, had no traction in terms of the dominant narrative on the women's question. The radical feminist and queer approach had a small following in the 1980s, mostly amongst white

activists in organisations like RAPE CRISIS and the Organisation of Lesbians and Gay Activists

We can generally conclude that the anti-apartheid movement had a conservative approach to gender emancipation, and it is evident from the interviews that gender consciousness developed over time as the voice of female activists became stronger. Nobom, a student-youth activist and feminist explain this.

> I don't think we had initially a gender ideological consciousness. But in this organisation like the youth movement, they exposed us to that. […] When sexual harassment and gender policy and self-defence classes; when those things came, we were exposed to gender issues in a real conscious way. We were actually trying to lead it; women were leading it and they were pushing us as fellow leaders, but we agreed to it, and it became the workshops, the awareness, there was a Sexual Harassment Charter.

6.1.7 Social movements, political violence and informal learning

Research on political violence (Bosie and Malthaner, 2017) is undergoing transformation, and dominant perspectives like 'terrorism studies' are being challenged. There is an increasing influence of theoretical approaches developed by social movements, such as the 'contentious politics' paradigm formulated by McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001; Tilly and Tarrow, 2007). This paradigm is further developed by della Porta (2013) with her concept of 'clandestine political violence'. For della Porta clandestine political violence has the analytic advantage of singling out a more specifically sociological phenomenon, pointing towards the implication of the choice to go underground (p.5). Both concepts encompass social movements but is also extended to include a wide range of 'conflictual phenomena, including strike waves, civil wars, revolutions, and insurgencies' (Tarrow, 2011). In his book, *Power in Movement*, Tarrow (2011) provides a broad theoretical framework for understanding the place of social movements, cycles of contention and revolutions within the general category of 'contentious politics'. This emerging line of research and the shift in perspective emphases the 'contextualisation of violence,' insists that political violence emerges in the context of broader social, political, and cultural conflicts (Bosi et al., 2014, p. 2).

The liberation movements in South Africa conducted a series of mass non-violent protest and campaigns against white domination in the 1950s. The banning of

the national liberation movements in 1960 made alternative political options less viable, and the banning orders necessitated new forms of struggle to confront the apartheid regime. The banning of the movements was preceded by a non-violent anti-pass campaign, which led to the Sharpeville massacre[49], when 69 people were shot dead, 180 wounded and the state of emergency declared. After banning, these movements had to acclimatise to mobilising under conditions of illegality. The ANC launched its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe [Spear of the Nation] on 16 December 1961, with sabotage attacks (Turok, 2010).

As a subsystem of learning, informal learning is located outside formal institutions. Learning in social action takes places in a variety of non-formal learning sites and practices. The experiences of South African activists provide insights into alternative learning spaces like prisons (Mbeki, 1991; Desai 2012), military camps in exile (Sparg et al., 2001) and military underground activities inside the country (Gunn and Haricharan, 2019). Gramsci (1971) distinguish between a war of manoeuvre, a direct confrontation with the state and a war of position, engaging in the contested terrain of hegemony. In South Africa various forms of direct confrontation were used. These included roadblocks, direct confrontation with the security forces and underground guerrilla warfare. These were all conscious tactics applied by activists as 'spontaneous expression of anger or frustration' (Harley, 2014, p.269). There was an interplay between violent and non-violent tactics in the broad anti-apartheid movement, with a clandestine presence of armed activists with sustained links to the above ground movements. Desmond, an underground operative, explained the relationship between popular struggle and armed insurrection:

> …our operations were responses to the political situation, such as rent boycotts, and labour strikes, and were defensive rather than offensive. We targeted civic centres and rent offices, as they housed rental records, as well as courts, railway lines, police stations and police barracks.

Seidman (2015) writes that South Africa's 'visible popular movement was deeply entwined with a clandestine guerrilla struggle' (p. 224). Shirley Gun (2019), a white activist and MK commander, identified the type of training she received, which included training in '*coding communication'*, and 'we discussed Marxist-Leninist text

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[49] https://humanrights.ca/story/the-sharpeville-massacre [accessed on 11/01/2022]

and the political situation in South Africa' (pp. 8–20). Other training included how to set up a dead letter box (DLB), where we could receive communication from the ANC. Training also included the handling of firearms, homemade explosives, and reconnaissance. She goes on to explain that 'instructors taught politics, military combat work (MCW) and military engineering training.' The political-military approach to the training of MK operatives is articulated by Lolo, a military operative.

> The acquisition of military skill alone is not the primary thing in our army. We recognise the fact that our military line flows out of our political line. Therefore, we are political soldiers in military uniforms. The domination of the political aspect in our army guarantees our consistent revolutionary approach, enables us to be better able to know our enemy.

Political education classes were an essential element in the military training to understand the political situation, such as the rent boycotts and labour strikes. Gun (2019) writes that this understanding informed their choice of military targets in Cape Town, such as council civic centres, rent offices, as well as courts, railway lines, police stations and police barracks.

This training was also extended to activists who were active in the mass movement. Mandla, a trade unionist recalled that:

> There was surveillance, counter surveillance, how to make weapons and all kinds of bombs and fire stuff and so on. Also, the whole issue of safety and security. How to conduct yourself during an interrogation, and also the issue of debrief.

Contextualised violent actions must be considered within the wider 'repertoire of action and strategies' of a movement, 'corresponding with the changing environment and action', as a 'relational field', referring to the actors involved in the conflict and the recognition that violent interactions are 'embedded in the wider processes of political contention' (Bosi et al., 2014, p. 2). Nelson Mandela, first Commander-in-Chief of MK, during his trial in 1962 blamed the government for the change in strategy:

> Government violence can do only one thing and that is to breed counter-violence. We have warned repeatedly that the Government, by resorting continually to violence, will breed in this country counter-violence among the people, 'till ultimately, if there is no dawning of sanity on the part of the Government, ultimately the dispute between the Government and my people will finish up being settled by violence and force.

The decision by the liberations movements to resort to political violence must be understood within the context of what was happening around the world, especially in the context of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles of the time. A model developed out of the Vietnam struggle with a combination of politically directed armed struggle together with various kinds of non-violent actions. In Africa, the liberation wars of Mozambique and Angola against the Portuguese power provided a similar experience. In developing his framework of 'learning in social action,' Foley (1999) drew on case studies of learning and struggle, including the anti-colonial struggle in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe he examined the experience of 'resisting colonialism as a process of emancipatory learning' (p. 5) and traces the 'systematic political education of cadres' (p. 111). Zimbabwean cadres were sent to the Soviet Union for training as early as 1968 where political education focused on:

> The exploitative nature of capitalism…. [This education] concentrated on…. how to transform that capitalist system into a socialist system, with the emphasis on the leadership of the working class… (interview with Samuel Kikubu in Foley,1999, p. 118).

Sparg et al. (2001) provides an outline of the education and training manual that was used for political education and training in the ANCs military camps. The training program was divided into four sections: 1) scientific approach, historical materialism, productive forces, 2) revolutions bourgeois, proletarian revolutions, and national liberation, 3) socialism and nationalism, 4) strategy and the struggle for national liberation. Looking at the programme it is evident that the training was focussed on how Marxist theory relates to the South Africa experience, using a class analysis approach. The aim was to instil in the cadres the basic Marxist ability to think critically, historically, and dialectically.

This ideological training of cadres is an important part of developing critical consciousness. In this context, ideology refers to the ways in which social meaning and structures are 'produced, challenged, reproduced, and transformed in both individual consciousness and social practices and relationships' (Foley, 1999, p. 14). This approach is in line with Foley's analytical framework, which enable connections to be made between learning on the one hand and analysis of the political economy, micro politics, and ideology. The learning methodologies in the ANC military camps included study groups, lectures, seminars, posing critical questions and the study of political text. This was a radical departure from the authoritarian rote learning of

apartheid education that generations of students had experienced before they left the country for exile from 1976 onwards.

6.2   Learning practices, methodology and knowledge resources

Activists draw on a wide range of pedagogical tools to cater for diversity and educational backgrounds. According to Cox (2014), learning through discussion with peers creates a more 'democratic and egalitarian classroom environment' and widens the intellectual experience (p.966). Deep learning takes place in social movements and involves activists from different generations, political traditions, class, and ethnic backgrounds. The education and training of activists drew on various methodologies, from self-directed learning by reading books and other materials, to organised learning circles in smaller groups. The learning circles operated quasi-underground due to security considerations and played a vital role in developing activists. Slams, an advice office worker and ex-Robben Islander reflects that:

> I didn't have much politics, I had gut politics, its only when you got into the circle of reading, and you make the organic link with the experiences and the learnings that you have gone through.

The reading circles were not only used for reading and discussion, but also as a platform where activists would discuss activities in their communities and organisational work. The structure of the reading circles was very organised, attendance was by invitation only due to security concerns, and the convenors were inevitably more likely to have been 'lifelong activists' who prepared the reading text for discussion. Desmond, a youth, and underground activist, explains the modus operandi of the circles.

> So, John was the convenor of the reading circle, and he would prepare the text. The texts were normally a photocopy of a publication or book, mostly from the classics. We will have one photocopy and we all meet, and the text will go around. So, we would all read a page or a big paragraph and discuss.

To ensure that the learning process was democratic and not dictated by 'the convenor' these sessions drew on the methodologies of Paul Freire. Rene, an education activist, and Mandla, a trade unionist, reflected on the value of the workshop methodology in the learning circle.

> We were introduced to the workshop method, I was very interested in the workshop mode of learning, because we were used to classroom

kind of learning for many years, or the lecture style of learning for many years. It draws upon your own knowledge, your own experiences and then generalising that for the broader community (Rene).

There was the first time I learnt about workshops and progressive methods of learning and teaching…the senior people had this whole thing about workshops. This for me was very interesting, and of course that made for great learning because it was experiential stuff based on every individual's knowledge and collective learning, instead of the cascading method of the teacher-learner kind of thing (Mandla).

An important part of the workshop was the realisation that participants had their own experience and knowledge that they could contribute. Ricon-Galalrdo (2019) makes the point that learning at its core is a 'liberating act' and that pedagogies that liberate learning establish more 'horizontal relationships' where both influence each other through dialogue. Mrs Mona, a teacher, and community activist, says that:

The idea of workshopping or facilitating learning…and facilitation wasn't just about groupwork…it was really understanding your students are not empty vessels, they come with knowledge, and they come with experience.

Southwood (2012, p. 37) claims that 'reading is not a passive process, it involves problem-solving, active prediction' (guessing), searching and an ability to use past knowledge and experience to make sense of what we are reading. Freire proposed that education should help students to achieve a critical understanding of their own reality and to engage in transformative actions. By critical understanding, Freire referred to a 'deep examination, through dialogue with others, of the legitimacy of the social order in terms of access to socioeconomic resources and opportunities' (Sleeter et al., 2004, p.90). Learning in social movements is primarily informal, drawing on their daily struggles and experiences. This does not negate more structured learning or formally organised learning as would be the case in education and training programmes. This is confirmed by Cecyl, a student and youth activist.

A lot of it was learned informally. And it was learned organisationally, because what we learned organisationally and what we learned informally in most cases was not covered in formal curriculum, and yet it is those things which have sustained us over the years in terms of our perceptions of society, our understanding of power relations, race relations, gender relations. We learned about how power operates, the structures and institutions which sustain inequality, our oppression but also made a commitment to fight it.

Shahida, a literacy activist in the townships, explained that the learning was not always political or organisational, but also focussed on basic housing needs.

> The problem of housing, learning information was developed on what to do in a case of fire, how to apply for formal housing and to organise to pressure government to provide housing.

Underlying the learning were also issues around race, class, and language contradictions. At a local level, activists could mobilise communities in their own language, but as soon as they started to operate at a regional or national level the meetings and conversations were in English. This was difficult for the non-English speaking activists like Errol, a high school student.

> And there is now the first time I got exposed to comrades from the townships. Now the meeting is conducted in English because we don't understand Xhosa and why should I expect him to understand Afrikaans so the compromise we all speak English.

The language issue also had an impact on the campaign work of activists.

> Whilst you are in a process of activating campaigns, you are also having to learn the theory behind the campaigns. It wasn't always easy, for me, you come from an Afrikaans background, and you have a disadvantage of understanding English and having even more so the terminology that is involved in written text in a completely different century and trying to understand all of that (Johnny, a church activist).

Johnny puts a positive spin on this experience by saying:

> but then it forced you to break out of your comfort zone from having to articulate your views and positions which you were adequately able to do when you were speaking Afrikaans.

The issue of English as a lingua franca is also relevant in the discussion of the dominance of the North in the knowledge production process. Andrews and Okpanachi (2012) argue that language is a 'vehicle of knowledge' and that the dominance of the English language makes it difficult for 'other' people who have 'legitimate knowledge' to be heard (p.86)

6.3   Coaching and mentorship for activists' growth

Coaching and mentorship have traditionally been associated with management sciences and human resource management. It has recently been used to remedy the

excesses of corporate behaviour, tackling social inequalities, and addressing climate change (Gannon, 2019). As such, coaching and mentorship are no longer solely described and understood as developmental and learning relationships at a personal level or learning and development intervention at an organisational level, but also as a social process (Shoukry and Cox, 2018). This may 'actively contribute to broad social concerns' (Bachkirova, Spence and Drake, 2017 p. 7). Taking this further, Weston (2012) argues that coaching needed to be theorised by 'reviewing its wider social impact outside the formal organisations and institutional bodies'. Even mentoring has seen a shift in focus from supporting the socialisation of individuals in key life stages, occupations, and organisations, to broader evidence of how mentoring addresses social inequalities and disadvantages (Gannon and Washington, 2019).

Besides learning from reading material and social action, activists also learned by participating in learning groups and drawing on the experience of seasoned activists. A key part of knowledge-sharing is pairing up experienced organisers with less experienced ones, what Ziedah and Hanieh (2010) call 'movement buddies'. These seasoned activists, or what Ollis (2012) refers to as 'lifelong activists', helped newcomers to understand what they were reading and how to apply it in the struggle. Brockbank and McGill (2006, pp. 12–14) identify four approaches to coaching: functionalist, engagement, evolutionary and revolutionary coaching. Functionalist coaching assumes an objective world and focusses on efficiency, aiming to improve performance. This approach does not challenge the status quo – it works within existing values and norms and recycles power relations. Engagement coaching recognises the subjective world of the learner and use a non-directive approach to respond to dissatisfaction and social exclusion. Evolutionary coaching acknowledges the subjective experience of the learner and invites the learner to examine the embedded power structures that may inhibit learning. The emphasis is on the individual evolving over time by taking responsibility for their own learning. Revolutionary coaching promotes the transformation of the structure of society and challenges the grand narrative. The learner is challenged, and the coaching process seeks disturbance and liberation from 'false consciousness.' Ebrahim and Desmond shared the different experiences they had.

> So it wasn't that he sat down to teach me politically, it was his example
> of resisting the system. Mr Suleiman (anonymised) came back to

South Africa from Pakistan, and he came to one of these camps and when he spoke, I made a mental note to myself, I said to myself, wherever this man is going, I'm going there, because what he knows, I want to know. I want to pick this man's brain and I want; I want to be taught by him, but not in this loose arrangement once-off over a weekend (Ebrahim).

Peter spends hours with me, where he came to my house, and we sat on the street and when he came to my school, and we sit at school and read. He would read passages out of Engels, Marx and Lenin and explain these things to me and draw things in the ground. He was teaching me the way he was taught on Robben Island (Desmond).

Such revolutionary coaching is consistent with Freire's approach to conscientisation, where an individual is not a mere receptacle of reality but who as 'knowing subjects achieve[s] a deepening awareness' and develops the 'capacity to transform reality' (Freire 1972, p. 51).

6.4   Knowledge resources

During the 1980s books and literature resources critical of the nationalist government or perceived to be communist-oriented were banned and activists faced prison sentences for being in possession of or circulating banned literature. The liberation movements, both in exile and internal, had their own journals and magazines that were distributed and used as part of the political education training. In addition to this, activists also accessed books:

to learn about other countries' struggle, because that was a big part of the political education, so including struggles in Nicaragua, the Cuban revolutions, the struggles in Algeria and in other parts of Africa. That was also an important part of our political education' (Nobom).

Another valuable resource was the community- and university-based resource centres. Desmond, an officer at the University of Western Cape SRC Resource Centre had this this to say:

They were invaluable institutions on which we could draw and get this radical literature, and just read and engross yourself. I valued it tremendously. In hindsight, maybe I didn't have the words to describe it then, but it was to formalise leftists learning and research.

Activists drew on books and journals to broaden their understanding of the national, African, and international struggles. Shahida explained that, in addition to books and journal articles, activists also produced their own material.

> Learning materials for learning circles and for mass education through pamphlets and booklets were not always readily available. To deal with this challenge, media committees were formed, and we had to learn how to write and produce material.

One of the key local journals was the South African Labour Bulletin established in 1974; the bulletin was started by white progressive academics after the 1973 labour strikes in Durban. According to Buhlungu (2009) the bulletin played a key role in bridging the 'academic-activist divide' and was a platform for the development of public sociology in South Africa. A key criticism of the bulletin in its early days was that there was little engagement with black workers and activists.

South Africa has a rich history of 'scholar-activism' (Routledge and Derickson, 2015), where solidarities have been forged between university-based scholars, communities, and labour struggles. The development of labour studies in South Africa is a particular example of this. Sakhela Buhlungu (2009) explored the ways in which activist-scholars advanced 'public sociology' by engaging with actors outside of their disciplinary scholarship. Public sociology, as defined by Buraway (2004), operated at the intersection between intellectual engagement on the one hand, and political commitment and activism on the other. Buhlungu (2004) traces the centrality of labour studies to the development of public sociology in a racially charged South Africa in the 1970s when he wrote 'Africans did not have sufficient resources to represent themselves organisationally and intellectually' (p. 147). Labour studies draws on a variety of academic disciplines, including history and political science, but it is more strongly associated with sociology. As a starting point public sociology in South Africa emerged in 'opposition to the dominant power block and in support of the struggle for social justice' (Buhlungu (2004, p. 146).

Various educational resources were used, including popular culture (film festivals) and discussions on popular culture. At the time a number of these films were banned, such as 'The Battle of Algiers.' Slams, a youth activist, recalls how film content was used for political discussion. Sharing political material was also a risk for activists because of the security situation. According to Nobom:

> You were limited in terms of being able to share documents or books. We had to be very careful about that because by that stage people had been arrested already. We became aware of the fact that certain people had been killed in detention. So, before we had to think about

how to creatively share ideas and raise consciousness, we first had to get to know each other.

A valuable resource for grassroots activism was to learn from the people themselves. Rene and Mrs Mona articulated this dialectical process: 'learning from the people you were working was really the major resource' (Rene). Learning from the people was augmented by learning through the notion of action-reflection, 'reflects on action they were involved with how reflecting upon action especially in cases where activists was defeated in their action' (Rene). A particularly important part of the learning process was also to understand that knowledge generation is a two-way process: 'So our civic people learned about, yes housing, security, and comfort. But on the other hand, the people who joined the civic also brought their knowledge' (Ms Mona).

Another key factor was that the learning spaces varied, unlike formal learning that took place in the classrooms or buildings, not all learning for activists was in buildings. Most of the learning spaces were on a continuum – from street protests, mass rallies and funerals to workshops where organisational policy and strategies were discussed. Mandla, a trade union and civic activist reflected on the learning spaces that he found useful.

…but clearly what stands out for me was some of the funerals of comrades…. the funeral itself was a political experience, the clashes with the police juts made it worse. What was helpful was the mass meetings, you get educated there as well, because those speakers will also convey information at the mass meetings. It will be surprising for some people, but I have learned a lot in the early stages from those mass meeting.

This experience of Mandla and other black activists is contextualised by Shirley Walters (2005) a white South African feminist and adult education activist who argues that social movement learning is partly determined by material conditions of the class structure from where activists emerge. She contrasts the learning experience of white and black activists, white activists, and writes that on the one side white activists produced sophisticated policy briefs and research papers, and learning took the format of workshops, retreats and reading international literature while the main mode of learning for black activists were leaflets, rallies, speeches, and funerals.

In conclusion, this chapter helped to render visible the learning and knowledge production of activists whilst engaged in struggle. In the process they have also

articulated the source of their knowledge and how to use this knowledge in a transformative way. The learning experiences illustrate John Holts' (2002) point that learning is inherent in the building of social movements through what he calls the 'pedagogy of mobilisation'. This chapter responds to Choudry and Kapoor's (2010) call for 'movement-embedded research', where the analysis of learning comes from the activists themselves. It illustrated that learning in the anti-apartheid movement was not restricted to formal institutions, but was primarily informal, taking place on the margins: street demonstrations, prisons, and the military underground, posing threats to the ruling elite. Political education was also an important weapon to counter the propaganda of the security police and to sustain activists to withstand interrogation in prison. This is illustrated by Stephen, a rural activist, recalling how he developed the political education curriculum whilst in detention.

> I remember when I was in prison, I basically wrote a whole sort of curriculum of political education articles for the whole prison…and we basically set up almost something similar to what was on Robben Island, because of what we heard and read over the years.

Stephen's experience of writing a political education curriculum in prison is consistent with Henry Giroux's (2011) writing on critical pedagogy in which he allows for a broad variety of pedagogical sites that extend beyond formal education. Giroux argues that educational activity is not only the domain of professional teachers and academics, but includes community activists, journalist, and cultural workers.

In Chapter 7, the conclusion of this research, I will briefly explain how I dealt with my three research questions and propose areas for further research.

Chapter 7

Reflections and Conclusion

7.1   Purpose and aims of research

This research investigates the learning and knowledge-generating capacities of social movements in Cape Town during the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s. The context of this study is the metropolitan area of Cape Town, South Africa, where activists have been engaged in collective action against the Apartheid state. Social movements as sites of learning in the anti-apartheid struggle have received little attention, and there is a scarcity of literature on activists' learning as a dimension of the political action in South Africa.

A great deal of learning in the anti-apartheid movement was informal and unconsciously acquired. This unconscious learning only came to the fore upon reflection. Using semi-structured interviews, this study allowed activists to reflect on their personal experience and uncover the learnings. The distinction between formality or informality of learning has traditionally been based on where the learning takes place. The experiences of South African activists provide insights into alternative learning spaces from structured education and training in organisations, political campaigns, social protest on the streets, and political education in prison and the military underground. This inclusion of non-formal learning spaces expands our understanding of social movement learning.

This study concludes that learning in the anti-apartheid struggle was primarily informal, drawing on critical pedagogy, and took place in non-formal spaces

7.2   Research Questions

7.2.1   Question1: What were the driving forces behind activists' engagement in the struggle?

This question starts from the premise that it is important to understand the motivation and persistence of activists – why did they got involved in the struggle against apartheid? Their motivation provides insight into the longevity of their activism and the risks they were prepared to take. Struggles in communities, factories and schools contributed to 'moments of rupture' or crises that opened the opportunity for activists

to engage with the system directly. Local grievances like rent increases and demands for equality in education were the key predictors for participation. I acknowledge the limitations of researching the motives for activists' participation because of the difficulty of capturing participants' motivation before they joined the anti-apartheid movements. This recollection dependent on memory, bring the past to the present. Given that the study is retrospective in nature, I drew on archival resources to validate the events that triggered participation, such as student boycotts, labour strikes and community struggles. A further motivation for participation was the political awakening in the households of many activists. The experiences of their parents and older generations working in the factories, as well as the history of forced removals, provided impetus for early political awakening. Using semi-structured interviews allowed activists to share and reflect on this early conscientisation. The experiences of activists, captured in Table 2, shows activists' conscientisation levels over time according to awareness-raising, social action praxis and the preparedness to engage in high risks activities. So, as activists transform through the conscientisation process, they move from novices, chanting 'liberation now, education tomorrow' to becoming mature activists. This further provides evidence for Freire's (1974) hierarchy of conscientisation, from naive to critical consciousness, and supports Armitage's (2013) proposition that the value of conscientisation is about empowering individuals to critically engage with and transform the world. The awareness-raising level exposed the individual activists to what was going on around them, the social action praxis level transformed individual consciousness to collective action by engaging in various sectoral struggles like the labour movement and education, transforming individual conscious to collective consciousness. At the critical-engagement level activists responded to the brutality of the apartheid system by engaging in political violence in the form of street level protest or military underground activity and accepting the associated risks.

Table 2. Consciousness levels

Awareness	Social action praxis	Critical engagement
• Adults talking (family) • Radicalisation in church (liberation theology) • Apartheid reform (reflection) • Solidarity (Sense of justice, pain & suffering)) • Consumer boycotts (economy) • Poverty	• Rent boycotts (community struggles)) • Labour struggles (economy & personal sacrifice) • Education struggles (boycotts, expulsion) • Protest against apartheid system (non-violence) • Forced removals (home ownership) • Land expropriation (alienation)	• Police brutality (security) • Detention & Imprisonment (security) • Guerrilla warfare (direct action) • Political work (underground) • Death (in detention, military action, capital punishment)

Source: compiled by author from interview data

We can therefore conclude that participation in the struggle is learning in and of itself, and that this participation negotiated and transformed the autonomous individual identity to collective identity whilst engaging in collective social action.

In accepting that learning to become an activist is as important as learning in activism, this research question traced the primary drivers for their early activism. These included their micro-level experiences of the brutality and injustice of apartheid and the resultant poverty derived from apartheid capitalism, which created an impulsive urge to do something. It is out of this experience that a common purpose and solidarity evolved. Macro-level struggles in communities, factories and schools contributed to the 'moments of rupture' that became important networks to strengthen mobilisation and link them to different organisations. Exposure to political education prepared the early activists to engage in social protests and develop thoughts on what

a democratic South Africa could look like. Political education was therefore an important vehicle in the fight for ideological dominance.

7.2.2   Question 2: What did activists learn from social movement participation?

Previous studies on social movement learning focussed on the role of learning in social movements whereas this study was interested in understanding the content. This approach is informed by the perspective that it is important to record previously unrecognised learning experiences, especially those of socially marginalised communities during the apartheid era.

Learning through and in activism unpacks the learning that took place in organisations that developed frames to translate local and single issues into a more comprehensive critique of apartheid power. The learning included beliefs and values that guided action and offered an alternative view of society that was grounded in the experience of struggle. This allowed activists to have a collective interpretation of demands, protest, and legitimating claims. Learning also included how to recruit and build political organisations where activists could expand their capacity and fuse solidarity and movement identity. The development of media and communication skills played an important part in the production and distribution of anti-apartheid movement knowledge amongst the broader community. Activists were taught how to write and edit stories for community newspapers. These newspapers were critical in circulating knowledge amongst community networks and shared goals and collective. The struggle for women's rights was secondary to the national struggle against apartheid. It is only in the mid-1980s that the concept of patriarchy was introduced by the student and youth movement and white feminists. Workshops amongst student and youth activists provided platforms to develop a consciousness about gender emancipation. Lastly, although the struggle against apartheid was primarily non-violent there was an interplay between the learning experiences of the broad, non-violent anti-apartheid movement and the clandestine movement, whether that interplay occurred in prison or in the context of the underground military organisation.

7.2.3   Question 3: How do activists learn in social movements?

The study concludes that activism is the nucleus for theorising regarding social movement learning, it transformed the consciousness of participants and informed their praxis. Learning was also influenced by the physical characteristics of the

learning places, whether it was street protests, non-formal education and training programmes in organisations or informal spaces like prison. All these spaces provided a resource rich environment in which different forms of learning were undertaken. Based on activists' reflections it is evident that informal learning methodologies were critical in raising consciousness. Learning drew on various modes and amongst these were workshops that encouraged democratic participation in the learning process, experienced activists coaching younger activists in the history of movement and traditions, and non-formal education and training programmes on organisation development and recruitment. These learning methodologies allowed for participation by activists from different literacy levels. The learning included functional skills (writing and editing pamphlets) and higher order cognitive skills (strategy and tactics).

7.3   Discussion

From the interview data we can conclude that activist learning and knowledge production started at a micro level (community issues) and progressed to a macro level (political events). The experience of anti-apartheid activists illustrate that their formative years was jumped started by a 'moment of rupture' whether it be in the classroom or on the factory floor, these events happened through personal experience. From a constructionist perspective, activists are recognised not only as bearers of meanings and ideas but as 'signifying agents' (Hosseine, 2010), engaged in the production of knowledge. This signifying work, called framing is a cognitive process through which collective actions are constructed in the context of social movements. So, as activists transform through the conscientisation process, they move from being novices or circumstantial activists, chanting 'liberation now, education tomorrow' to becoming lifelong activists.

Anti-apartheid activists developed a collective identity that was linked to their participation in particular social movements or common struggles, The South African experience also foregrounded the divisive role that ideological difference played in the national movement, this was especially visible in Cape Town with its history of leftists thought. The political education and training were dictated by differing ideological orientations and this not only sharpened the difference between various tendencies but also affected strategy and tactics in fighting apartheid, weaking the opposition movement. For example, the United Democratic Front was a national mass movement with political education more geared towards mass mobilisation and campaigning,

whereas organisations like the Non-European Unity Movement and Cape Action League, primarily Cape Town based had a narrower public appeal with a greater emphasis on ideological training of their members.

This study has unlocked the learning and knowledge that was generated by activists in the anti-apartheid movement and contributes to the body of knowledge on the learning contained in these movements. Gramsci's concept of counter hegemony and Freire's 'conscientisation' is evident in the learning experience of South African activists. Learning about Marxist theory, gender equality, non-racialism, communication and media skills, organisational requirement and mobilisation was done through dialogue to conscientize and build a counter narrative to apartheid. This experience is further aligned to Foleys (1999) work on how social movement learning deconstruct oppressive practices and construct alternative visions of society. Anti-apartheid activists drew on various modes of learning: formal learning (educational institutions), incidental learning (learning in social action), informal education (each one teaches one), and non-formal education (learning settings). These modes of learning are best understood as 'spaces of social movement learning' to understand the relational and situated nature of these diverse spaces (Novelli et al 2021, p.47).

Social movements are significant knowledge producers, or 'incubators of new knowledge' (Graeber & Shukaitis, 2007, p.11) bringing to the fore knowledge from the margins by drawing on people's daily experiences and practice. South Africa identify as part what has become known as the Global South in the literature on decoloniality. The global south according to Mignolo & Walsh (2018) emerged out of the conditions of poverty, inequalities, colonialism, and the current neoliberal globalisation. One of the key concepts underlying the global south paradigm is 'decoloniality,' which transcends political independence and should be seen as a 'broad historical process of transition and translation between experiences and struggles' (Santos,2020, p.XXII). The epistemic south is diverse, reflecting a diversity of the worlds experience therefore Santos is encouraging dialogue between different forms of 'knowledges.' The North-South relationship was initially theorised by Willy Brandt (1980, cited in Santos 2020), he characterised the relationship as a 'global hierarchy' between the wealthy North and the impoverished, peripheral South. This hierarchy relegates southern knowledges 'to non-existence or invisibility' (Barreto, 2014). Using the global South as locus allows for a vision of the world that is different from the world

constructed by the global North, these varied perspectives are embodied in the World Social Forum and the Davos World Economic Forum.

The new wave of movements since the 1990s have been driven by a claim for social justice, making the struggle for epistemic justice part of the battlegrounds of the emancipation project. As synthesised by Santos (2014, 2020) 'there is no social justice without epistemological justice'. Social movements are significant knowledge producers, bringing to the fore knowledge from the margins by drawing on people's daily experiences and practice. Northern-centric social science and the hierarchy in the global division of knowledge production is also evident in the social movement scholarship. Sheoin (2016) mapped the contribution of social movement scholarship by geographical location.

Figure 3 - Location of movements studied in articles published by journal
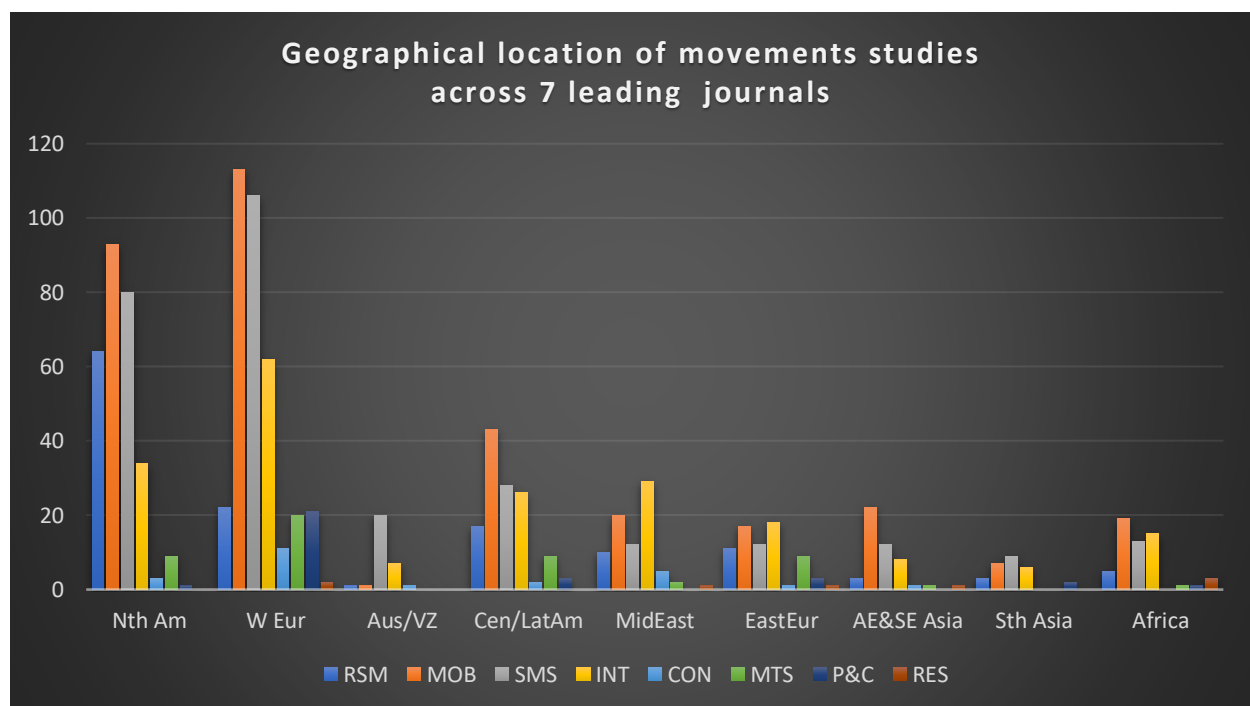
RSM=Research in Social Movements; MOB=Mobilisation; SMS=Social Movement Studies; INT=Interface; CON=Contention; MTS=Moving the Social; P&C=P&C[50]; RES= Resistance Studies Magazine

Source: compiled by the author from Sheoin (2016)

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[50] Italian journal specialises in social and political studies

The above confirms Oriola (2013, cited in Sheoin, 2016) view that liberal democratic states constitute the epicentre of social movement scholarship even though 'most episodic or systemic evidencing of contentious repertoires of protest takes place authoritarian regimes, especially in developing countries'. As illustrated in above, North America, Western Europe and Australia/New Zealand published 671 articles and countries from the South 411 articles. One of the reasons for this 'parochialism' is the fact that leading journals are dominated by Anglo-American scholarship, and this replicate the 'unequal distribution of power' between North-South. The result of this is that the social movements in the South are under theorised.

South African and African case studies[51] of social movements have challenged the assumption of homogeneity underlying the dominant social movement literature. Social movement mobilisation in South Africa and the African continent is a product of, and responds to, a 'concrete context of deprivation, rights denial and injustice' (Habib & Opuku-Mensah, 2009, p.55). The continent's social movement landscape is incredibly heterogenous' but for analytical purposes it is possible to categorise African movements as follows; anti-corporate Globalization/Economic Justice, Democracy and Transparency; Environmental; HIV/AIDS; and Women and Youth. The typology of social movements and the thematic concerns they are mobilising around suggest that 'distributional issues are still central in Africa' (ibid, p.55). The case studies supplemented by a 'ever-growing body of empirical analyses of contemporary social movement across Africa constitutes a 'unique conceptual lens' through which the assumption of and the 'debates of global academy can be tested' (ibid, p.46). Paulin J Hountondji (1997 cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) argues that the repositioning of Africa's epistemic legitimacy is a central part on the repositioning of the African people in the modern works. Mamdani (2018, p.9) explained that there was an urgent need to advance 'the historical legitimacy of Africa as a unit of analysis' if African scholars and Africanist were to transcend Euro-North American- centric and colonial historiographical practices of writing African history 'by analogy'. The African struggles for epistemic freedom seek to 'restore historical and epistemic legitimacy of Africa as a site of knowledge' (ibid, p.138). This study makes a small contribution to providing a

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[51] Mamdani & Wamba-dia Wamba 1995, McKingsley 2004, Bond 2005, Ballard, Habib & Velodia 2006, Robins 2008, Beinart & Dawson 2010, Dwyer & Zeilig 2012, Beinin & Vairel 2013, Sylla 2014, Branch & Mampily 2015, Ismael 2015, Bayat 2017, Ngwane, Sinwell & Ness, 2017

case study on the knowledge contribution of the anti-apartheid movement, extending the knowledge generating capacity if Africa.

7.3   Originality and contribution to knowledge

This qualitative study identified the characteristics of social movement learning in South Africa in terms of motivation, learning content and methodologies. The experiences of South African activists provide insight into alternative learning spaces from non-formal education and training in organisations, political campaigns, social protest on the streets, and political education in prison and the military underground. The inclusion of non-formal learning spaces expands our understanding of social movement learning. The study contributes to the body of knowledge in three areas:

Firstly, drawing on the activists' own lived experiences it sheds light on the motive for engaging in the anti-apartheid struggle. Olli's (2012) 'pedagogy of activisms', outlining the rich learning of activists, is helpful here to explore the process of becoming an activist. It is important to understand why activists join social movements and engage in the anti-apartheid struggle. Drawing on the voice of activists themselves the 'moments of rupture' (Wright, 2000) are documented, allowing researchers to study activists motives and persistence for involvement. Understanding the key predictors for participation provide an important counterweight and challenge rational choice theory.

Secondly, through a process of reflection, activists brought to light the skills and knowledge that they acquired whilst engaging in the struggle. Drawing on Foley's (1999) analytical framework 'learning in social action' this study evidenced the relationship between struggle and learning based on activist's own experience. The learning methodology followed by activists further explains the relationship between 'knowledge and material existence' (Freire, 2000),

Thirdly, the study accepts that, given the context of apartheid brutality, political violence was considered to be part of the 'repertoire of action and strategies' of the anti-apartheid struggle, and therefore extends learning in the anti-apartheid movement to include prisons and the military underground as spaces for learning, extending Choudry's (2019) notion of 'learning from repression' This study concludes that learning in the anti-apartheid struggle was primarily informal, drawing on critical pedagogy, and that it took place in non-formal education spaces. Traditional avenues

of struggle, like factories, schools and street protest have been supplemented by new spaces in which power is contested and in which new strategies and modes of struggle manifested. This approach builds on Bekerman, et al (2007), seeking to 'free up' the study of learning from 'constraining assumptions about traditional institutional arrangements and hegemonic definitions of what counts as learning'.

7.4   Reflections

This study unpacked the learning that took place in the anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s. Having been an active participant in the struggle during this period myself, especially in education and training, it was nostalgic to take a trip down memory lane. It was also interesting to note that a new language and theory have evolved as a sub-discipline in adult education, specifically addressing learning in social movements. What was taken as second nature at the time, developing tactics and strategy, and educating activists, especially student and youth about the injustice of the system and how to overthrow it was developing theory in action.

Engaging with activists after 30 years and being dependent on memory for data collection was challenging, but the use of the interview method augmented with archival material presented a good account of activists' experience. A key observation for me was that activists saw the interviews as a recognition of their participation in the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s. This was important in the context of attempts by the narrow nationalist to act as 'victors' and undermine or ignore the involvement of certain communities in the anti-apartheid struggle. Allowing activists, a 'voice' was a powerful experience and participants appreciated the platform to reflect and place on record their lived experience.

7.5   Possible areas for further investigation

The context of this study was the anti-apartheid movement struggle. Towards the end of 1980s into the early 1990s, the leaders of the liberation movement were freed from prison, organisations were unbanned, exiles returned, and the negotiation processes started between the ANC and the apartheid state. This transitioned the 'the struggle' from a mass movement to what Patrick Bond (2014) a scholar-activist describe as an ELITE TRANSITION. The following further studies are proposed:

- What role if at all, did social movement learning played in preparing activists and the public at large to participate as change agents in the South Africa political negotiations?

- Mapping the scholarship of social movement learning in Africa to make a distinct contribution from an African perspective to advance the decoloniality debate.

- What are the characteristics of post-apartheid social movement learning?

- A longitudinal study on the impact of learning on activism, drawing on participatory action research.

Theme	Political Awakening
Experience	'When I went to prison in 1985'(A10), 'I think within the first three years of the 80s, I think it was a life changing event, it was my personal attempt to join the ANC[52] (in exile) and that changed the course of events permanently. It was a failed attempt. It was failed and successful at the same time. It was failed because we didn't end up in a military camp. It was successful because I learnt how to deal with adversity and how to deal with torturer' (A6) 'I always make the point, apart from my family it was poverty and community experience' (A10)
Injustice & Empathy	'there was a sense of injustice' (A1), 'I think it was 1979/80…the Modderdam Road[53] forced removals …people being told that they don't belong' (A12) 'I had this impulsive urge to do something, to make something happen, to do something …(A15)
Religion	'Even though there were different traditions in the churches, there was a communality in terms of the struggle that has been identified and the overarching desire was to conscientize people around dismantling of the apartheid system' (A14) 'My radicalisation if you want to put it that way, starts in the Church' (A2)
Family	'The impetus for my political awakening, my father was very political …in terms ff his criticism of the system…he had a hate, hatred for the system that we were subjected to' (A15) 'I think it was my whole upbringing, it was part of my family and where we stayed, my parents taught me the whole meaning of caring. Caring was a word that was widely used in our house' (A7) 'There were adults talking about apartheid and die boere (white people) and hoe die boere' and that kind of talk' (A1) 'my late father and family being somewhat linked to the Unity Movement so that impacted on us, the whole culture of reading, acquiring knowledge, understanding what's happening in the world and there was various discussion groups (A16)
Teachers	'…suddenly kids were marching around the school and they not going back to class I couldn't understand this, and my Afrikaans teacher had numerous conversations with me about why these kids

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[52] African National Congress
[53] Near the University of the Western campus

	are marching around the school and why it is important for me to join them' (A6)

'there was a specific incident in the 1980s which raised my awareness to more active participation. About 7 teachers were expelled by the Department[54] because of their political involvement' (A1) |
| Apartheid | 'For me joining of the struggle was at a very young age, I was 13 years old….the school was used as a polling booth for the Coloured Representative Council in 1973. Hewatt Training College[55] was across the road and they obviously played a major role in shaping our movement to action' (|A16)

'They had everything (parents) at home…land and cows to milk …the white people took our land' (A19)

'Then in 1978 was a very important event for me, I was the head boy in Std 5 (Yr 7) and part of the rehearsals to raise the South African flag[56]…with a lot pride I explained to my father what I was going to, I am going to hoist a flag, and my father told me that was not going happen and it actually caused a huge amount of trauma in the house' (A6)

'When my father took me to his work, he was a cleaner, at a white school and his boss was a white man, the caretaker…the man couldn't read and write, but he was my father's boss' (A14) |
| Security | 'Where the consciousness if you like came was when one morning on a Monday the teacher informs us that one of our classmates has passed away and he was hit by a stray bullet….stray bullet from the police or the army' (A17)

'So politically more directly, I would say my first lightbulb moment was in 1969 with the death of Imam Haroon[57] in detention' (A5)

'You know we were in a war situation, people were being killed' (A17)

It was at that point where we were confronted by the police and I remember being caught in that schoolyard… just the sheer brutality that went on when the cops got into the school, basically just ransacked and pulled teachers out of the classrooms and students and the normal kind of chaos that broke out' (A14)

' With the state of emergency lots of people were banned and in detention' (A1),

'that also contributed to my awakening, to my political awareness or development, was the issue of my detention, you know the eighties. So '85 there was a brief detention period and during that time we also of course met the people within prison and we were able to talk |

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[54] Department of Education
[55] Teachers Training Colleges
[56] Considered by the majority as a symbol of Apartheid
[57] A Muslim cleric

	to and learn from. We were able to actually also share our own ideas during detention, but it was also a testing period' (A15)
Tri-cameral Parliament	'The massive opposition of the Tr-cameral parliament and that of course manifested itself at the university. There were many meetings, workshops, rallies, just against this project. So the environment which I entered was very politicised. So going to University[58] in 1984 was an important movement which made me join the broad mass democratic movement' (A9) 'I remember as a Std 9 (Yr 11) learner going to a National Party[59] public meeting addressed by PW Botha[60] in my school uniform,…when it came to question time…I questioned them on the policy of the tricameral parliament' (A18)
Boycotts	'Towards the end of 1985, into 1986 but before that we had the consumer boycotts and the bus boycotts and the rates boycotts. So those campaigns played a major role and it was not just one campaign, there were a number of them' (A13)
1976 Uprising	'I would say what triggered my involvement was the injustice that took place, the unfairness. I remember my anger in 1976. Even though it was not ideologically or politically inspired, it was more anger against the system, the frustration and you can say the hatted towards the white people' (A4)
Solidarity	'I think the other thing was, was this thing called Solidarity. Where you can identify with the pain and suffering of other people that you don't even know' (A10) 'I remember being inside in the house and it must have been July because it was raining really hard. I looked out and saw an old man with a hemp sack on…I looked at him and could see the despair on his face. I felt a deep sense of guilt that I was warm and dry…'(A20)

Theme	Race, Class, Gender & Language
Gender	'I remember that we had an AZASO[61] workshop in August 1985 and for the first time I had a paper on triple oppression…that explains a lot of things to me in terms understanding theoretically gender oppression. But I think it was also the extent of the student movement and influences on the women's movement. On the one hand there was your UWCO[62] and then the influence of the NUSAS[63] feminist (remember femcom). And some of us had to then make sense and sort of like the AZASO women's group found ourselves somewhere in between' (A1), 'I don't think we had initially a gender ideological consciousness. But in this organisation like the youth movement they exposed us to that. …when sexual harassment and gender policy and self-defence classes; when those things came, we were exposed to gender issues in a real conscious way. We were actually trying to lead it;

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[58] University of the Western Cape
[59] The Party that introduced Apartheid officially in 1948
[60] The Prime Minister of South Africa
[61] Azanian Students Organisation
[62] United Women's Congress
[63] National Union of South African Students

	women were leading it and they were pushing us as fellow leaders, but we agreed to it and it became the workshops, the awareness, there was a Sexual Harassment Charter ' (A10) 'with gender relationship, the way we were learning in the 80s was very constrained, within a very small theoretical framework; the triple oppression of women, that's what we learnt. And from a patriarchal and that we must respect women and give them rights. But my learning then about gender relations was purely about triple oppression of women Black feminist leaders like XX started… Even when they were still student leaders started introducing more complex conversations and very quickly XX was pushed to the margins. The moment she introduced in SANSCO[64] a workshop on patriarchy, that was the beginning of the end' (A6)
Class	'But the bigger class thing, capitalism, the ruling class, those things really played itself out at the higher end of consciousness, and in our leadership positions …when we started travelling to national and international meetings we started getting into contact with socialism, communism, capitalism and then other publications of racial capitalism, colonialism of a special type . We started thinking ideological. But I think it came later down our activism and consciousness. We weren't really fighting a class struggle. I am sure the ANC, the Congress alliance[65], the party had that as part of their thing; so when we got in touch with that and when we got schooled in that, we started seeing what we are doing in Belhar seeing in terms of class struggle and where it fits in'(A10) 'We would then start getting introduced to Marxism, dialectics and historical materialism and so on. So that was the context that the class contradiction was the overriding framework in which our political education took shape and hence the preference towards Marxism-Leninism' (A17)
Race	'Look the race issue was the obvious one. When you move out of Belhar[66], you just made the point, its Langa or Gugulethu[67]. That's white comrades from Mowbray, it happened. So the race thing happened the moment you leave Belhar to another structure, to another meeting. I remember this interschool meetings between Harold Cressy[68] and all the other schools, and then the township schools. So the race one was a national space that happened because there was suffering and activism coming from different places and converged in either interschool meetings or in the UDF[69]' (A10) 'Because of the national struggle… we were no longer just a Cape Town one. We were no longer a lot of coloureds, we were part of the new South Africa and a South Africa which built a new identity, and that is what the foundation laid for us' (A11)

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[64] South Africa National Student Congress
[65] Committed to the Freedom Charter
[66] Coloured township in Cape Town
[67] African township in Cape Town
[68] One of the coloured middle-class schools in Cape Town
[69] United Democratic Front

	'Now what was also important there was that it was also to broaden the base of participation, because SACOS[70] could not penetrate the townships and that was really where the masses were, and untapped talent. You needed to unify the organisation, the sport movement because that is important – we need to bring the different sport bodies together and then we need to develop that talent' (A11) 'So with '76 I started becoming more aware of how coloured identity was very much a tool for dividing people' (A12) '…as a kid as I grew up you know as a normal boy on the Cape Flats[71]. I'm coloured, my first exposure to black Africans is through activism through organizations. And so that's when I begin to interact with race and quite honestly in my case it didn't take me long to realize that I embraced the concept of we are all black' (A17) ' At a social level was interacting with people from across racial boundaries, which is not what apartheid meant to achieve. But being involved organisationally, draw yourselves together within organisations and between organisations. So, as we say, you were able to engage in a non-racial way. (A9) 'for me, is that you see how racism is able to mask class oppression' (A9)
Language	'I went to a unity Movement school we didn't really study Afrikaans. It was seen as the language of the oppressor. So when they are organising there, everything is done in English and I think from high school days when we were organising and the church organisations, it was always multilingualism' (A12) 'Now of course we were Afrikaans speaking and this material as in English, that was the other thing. My ability to speak English drastically improved because my organisational and political involvement. So the first level was the ability to speak English and confidence to be able to speak publicly, and articulate views' (A10), 'Do you know when the class thing really came is actually in English -Afrikaans medium things. I remember when we would have a school boycott or wanting to boycott classes. The most reluctant ones was the English speaking laaities, it's a class thing, it's a middle class thing but it's a class thing. Even in the activist committees, most of the laaities at the action committees and road blocks and tires were Afrikaans speaking, were not English speaking really. From our schools, Belhar, Excelsior, as well as Symphony' (A10) 'my brother arranged for me to go and stay with an English speaking family in Bishop Lavis, I was there just for an hour or two, and then I ran away to …because I was so scared of English' (A13) 'I became more confident to use English, and less conscious of the fact that I couldn't speak in proper English or I would speak in

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[70] South Africa Council of Sport, committed to non-racial sports

[71] Common reference to the resettled townships for people who were forcefully removed from the whites-only declared District Six

Afrikaans and so on, you know, but people were quite comfortable. I think many of the rural activists or the rural students went through kind of similar sort of things I think. So English became less and less of a barrier to me because obviously I had to learn extra hard and read up words. It was a challenge because you couldn't express yourself the way you want to in meetings or in public meetings' (A13)

'I struggled to switch from an Afrikaans to an English setting. But then it forced you to break out of your comfort zone from having to articulate your views and positions which you were adequately able to do when you were speaking Afrikaans, but very difficult to do it and translate it into English and rapidly having to learn how to deal with tha.t Because you are now standing in front of student and you have to argue in front of students in a vernacular that resonates with them. Difficult, but I was thrown in the deep end around those things' (A14)

Whilst you are in a process of activating campaigns, you are also having to learn the theory behind the campaigns. It wasn't always easy, for me, you come from an Afrikaans background and you have a disadvantage of understanding English and having even more so the terminology that is involved in written text in a complete different century and trying to understand all of that (A14)

'And there is now the first time I get exposed to comrades from the township and also the switch. Now the meeting is conducted in English because we don't understand I don't understand Xhosa and how why should I expect him to understand Afrikaans so the compromises we all speak English' (A17)

'They would speak in their language and you would you can't actually stand with them and mingle because you don't understand cause and they don't always want to speak English you know and so on' (A17)

'Even our learning about race relations through the literature of the congress movement didn't help me to understand race relations. It didn't help me, because the teaching in the congress movement was… there is four national groups, and it has a pragmatic relationship towards the ending of apartheid. Coloureds, Indians, Africans and whites, and they pragmatically came together to end apartheid. And then in the 70s came the Black Consciousness Movement that unravelled all of that forever. And in a sense the ANCs theory of four national groups didn't hold anymore. It only held really in theory, but it didn't really hold sustainably' (A6)

'I already made the point about English…the confidence to converse and articulate a position on an issue…but after 1980s developed the confidence…the ability to speak English and confidence to be able to speak publicly and articulate views ' (A10)

Theme	Ideology, Theory and Action
Action & Ideology	' We started thinking ideological, but I think it came later down the our activism and consciousness. Most of us, all of us went through it later down the line, not when you join or when we recruit you' (A10) 'Our exposure to the ANC and the Communist Party meant exposure to things like Marxism, dialectics, development of society…so in that sense class understanding, class analysis became part of us, part pf our dogma, part of education, part of the way we speak' (A10)
Ideological Diversity	'There was a broader struggle, because of the various ideologies which operated in the Western Cape. So there was a lot of tolerance that we should work (as sport bodies) together' (A11) '…but because we were in a sense ideologically tolerant to different streams, we used to allow people to come and talk to us and present their case, and in that sense we were not dogmatic…we started off without ideological grounding. We thought it will be useful to be exposed to different viewpoints, instead of upfront what we gonna follow' (A15) 'but now I am becoming more and more of a problem…Nationalism wasn't good enough. Yes, I have gone through some of the histories on Nationalism, but now I must start reading Marx and Marx is finding its way into XXX. So how do we apply this en hoe interpret ons die goed in die struggle (*how do we apply this and how do we interpret these things in struggle*) ? Paths to revolution… en jong waar kom jy uit?! Jy is a focken intellectual! Ons is besig met ander laaities hier in XXX; keep it simple, en sulke goed, verstaan jy (*where do you come from, we are busy hear with the youth, keep it sinple and this like that*) . That was part of the problem…the rift started…And that was also the level of political discussion. We were discussing pathways to revolution and two stage theory versus permanent revolution. And that is the process of becoming families with a clique and group. But now there was a problem. This was a Trotskyist grouping and this was a nationalist grouping. And then at some stage they expelled me; expelled myself and XX for trying to recruit other ouens (*guys*) in the youth, to the League, and two different philosophies, and it was destructive and breaking down the movements. But I remained a Trotskyist in terms of my outlook. When I analyse things, I analyse… I can't give up what I have learnt from my Marxism, Leninism and my Trotskyism, that is my framework. Even today I will engage sometimes, uncompromisingly in that direction' (A2) 'So, 1976 came and I think what was important about black consciousness was the whole notion about black power and black pride and it was a good counter weight to apartheid education and the whole imposition almost culturally of inferiority. And I think for me a young person it was in a way quite liberating, that I wasn't inferior to them' (A5) 'Now the other part of it, the Marxist teaching, was this whole thing of connecting with the working class but particularly industrial workers as the vanguard of the socialist struggle. So, that grabbed me personally because it made complete sense theoretically. And so

	more and more also based on the Leyland (workers strike) experience I was keen not only for the youth organisation but personally, to get more involved in the real revolutionary struggle, which is workers. That period '84 coincided with the underground group, shifting its position from a sectarian position towards the masses, because we realised that the masses were with the UDF and we were hanging out with sectarians in the Cape Action League. So gradually we withdrew from Cape Action League and joined Cayco and the student formations of the Congress Movement. On a kind of semi-entriest orientation, but not real entriest. But it was more of a broad orientation that we need to be part of this big movement that had already emerged, and we did that full force' (A5)
Sectarianism	' Like I said I got one spank when I was on the (Robben) Island, when I was told to stop that kind of promoting certain positions in conflict with the general policy of the organisation (Congress). Especially the kind of heavy concentration on the workerist line. And I soon realised that the worker group has to succumb to the main, and the ANC was the lead' (A16)
	'The other dimension was that learning about other tendencies, who were seen as rival tendencies. The main one of course was the Congess movement, which in youth terms was Cayco. The mutual opposition was quite intense. I remember this organisation went through a very sectarian phase, which was that early 80s period when I was recruited. So, from I would say 1980 to 85 it was a sectarian, so called ultra-left phase of the organisation. What I am really saying is that in that process this rival tendencies and battles, there was lots of education (A5)
Theory & Action	'So I was attracted to the Unity Movement because of the amount of knowledge that I was gaining. But I was also attracted to the XX Youth movement and COSAS[72] because of its activism. There's action there you know, we planning, we plotting, we staging a march whatever you know. So I'm attracted there but they don't have what the Unity Movement is offering and the Unity Movement gave me a huge amount of reading material' (A6)
	'whilst you are in a process of activating campaigns, you are also having to learn the theory behind the campaigns' (A14) .
	'n the same vein as your Freirean concept of power. So, that is the awareness that we don't create a society to through formal thinking processes, but it is the exercise of personal power through the struggles of society in which you claim back what belongs to you and it is that exercise of power at that level where you can reclaim you know what belongs to the people on the ground, and to be able to work within their interests. So that is a very important political lesson that I was learnt, that I learnt in the eighties' (A15)
	'It was a long period of struggle to get through all those documents and having to read and cement yourself into the theory of the revolution' (A14)

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[72] Congress of South African Students

	'you had to come and defend your position…but it forces you to sharpen your positions…but also to be influenced by other people…which I think is an important part of organisational leaning (A1)
Ideological Tradition	'Look on campus, I think there was a political tradition which has established itself in the preceding years, one way or the other, which is what we refer to as the Charterist tradition. So when I got to university, it was there, it was quite visible, as opposed to you AZASM[73] (Black Consciousness), your PASO[74] (Pan Africanist), your MSA[75] (Muslim). AZASO (Charterist) had a visible presence, but also in terms of its ideals, what it stood for, it had become hegemonic within the university itself and was linked quite closely to what the UDF sought to achieve. So I naturally gravitated towards it. But also there were conscious recruitment efforts, mobilization and organisation on campus. That is what I identified myself with. There was a hegemonic discourse on campus amongst students' (A9)
Liberation Theology	'taking society into the religion. So then for example said we can study the, the scripture ourselves, we can study the Quran ourselves, we can open up an English version of it, then we can ask ourselves what does this mean for us? What the hell does this mean in this moment, now? What is trying, what, what is God trying to communicate to us now? At that time we were Muslim Youth Movement people, but what we did in our little small circle of four, we decided you can't just look at the theology, you actually need to go and test this bloody theology out there, okay, because one of the other things we had, we had also come into contact with was the bible, the Christians - their document the Kairos document[76]. The Kairos document was fascinating because it talked about practice you see, it talked about encountering God amongst people, the God of the poor. We found similar developments in the Quran. We found similar characters amongst the Prophet's companions, the Prophet's own choices, we then began to see because we began to put on different spectacles you see and suddenly the scriptures that we thought we knew and thought we had a grasp of, it just brought out completely new nuances, completely new colours, that we never imagined before. We were in for a bigger revolution in our thinking and ourselves, because when we decided to go practical, to go to ground, to go and to go and test some of these theories by connecting to people' (A8)

'Now I am busy with this church youth and the church youth is a completely different cattle of fish. Its not that you can just walk into it and you can speak Das Kapital in the church, you have to translate these things and try to understand where people are coming from. There is a shift that needs to happen and its not going to happen overnight.' (A14) |

[73] Azanian Student Movement

[74] Pan African Student Organisation

[75] Muslim Student Association

[76] Condemning apartheid as a heresy

Theme	Activists Learning
Political Education	'our political education had 5 components…tools of analysis… historical component.. organisational issues…basic skill…day to day issues.. it was enabling us to deal with the issues of the day, so the constituent assembly, what are negotiations, what is suspension of armed action, the violence and how to understand the third force (A1) 'I was drawn into a discussion group like a caucus kind of thing we would have sleep overs and that would be our political education and we would give a report of our work for the week' (A13)
Law & Regulations	'remember then it was the state of emergency, all of sudden you had to learn about the emergency and what it means' (A1)
Media & Communication	'they also teach about how you do to layout for a pamphlet or silk-screening a T-shirt…(A1) 'The Grassroots[77] was more of an organising tool than a newspaper, than just writing stories and articles and take photos and so on…we used it as vehicle to basically start organisations (A13) 'Because I remember SASPU[78] national. I remember they sent me up when I was at UWC, to Joburg to learn editing and all that. And then we go back and we can get involved in the editing of Grassroots (12) 'We were very creative. I just think of how we made pamphlets. We were cutting out stuff from newspapers, fitting it and photocopying it' (A4)
Learning Content	'coming into struggle that had a very long history it also forced you to get a good understanding and grasp of history because everything have a historical context' (A1) 'also getting to learn about other countries' struggle' (A1) 'There was lots of reading about the Bolivian struggle, the Nicaragua struggle, obviously Angola, Mozambique, all former Portuguese colonies'(A16)
Leftist learning	'exposure to things like Marxism, dialectics, development of society, class understanding, class analysis became part of us, part of our dogma, part of the way we speak, part of the way we start identifying who is who' (A10) 'in MK[79] part of learning is to read Marx and Lenin, that's the driving force that ultimately moulds you into a guerrilla as a political being rather than as a military being' (A14) 'One morning XX gave me a secret package with some reading and I read it, the whole thing it gripped me…so I was hooked on Marxism' (A5)

[77] Community newspaper
[78] South African Student Press Union
[79] Umkhonto we Sizwe, ANC military wing formed in 1961

Methodology	'And then we were introduced to Paulo Freire and the whole idea of working on community, in community or with community. Whereas we started developing awareness of we are working in community, so we are not coming from outside with all the knowledge' (A12)
	'its about having these workshops and these political education sessions, as a way of trying to impart knowledge and skills in a more controlled environment'(A10)
	'The idea of workshopping or facilitating learning…and facilitation wasn't just about groupwork…it was really understanding your students are not empty vessels, they came with knowledge and they come with experience' (A12)
	'So I think that knowledge about understanding Paulo Freirean methodology, it became very widespread, just because it was the only way we could go on to survive' (A12)
	' We were introduced to the workshop method, I was very interesting in the workshop mode of learning, because we were used to classroom kind of learning for many years, or the lecture style of learning for many years. , it draws upon your own knowledge, your own experiences and then generalising that for the broader community' (A15)
	'there was the first time I learnt about workshops and progressive methods of learning and teaching…the senior people had this whole thing about workshops. This for me was very interesting, and of course that made for great learning because it was experiential stuff based every individual's knowledge and collective learning, instead of the cascading method of the teacher-learner kind of thing' (A5)
	'And the primary way in which expanded this and we shared it with others was the workshop method, you know where people gather in the somewhat of a semi-circle …and it's in the debates where the learning really happens and in the doing' (A8),
Knowledge Resources	'…and of course everything was banned, so we had to have photocopies of everything' (A12)
	'But also some of the content that came out of the movies. We had a lot of movies coming to the fore, banned and unbanned' (A16)
	'Marlo Brando at a similar time accepts his award of the Oscars on behalf of the native American genocide, in memory. So that would also become a point of discussion around why culture is important (A12)
	'I didn't have much politics, I had gut politics, its only when you got into the circle of reading and you make the organic link with the experiences and the learnings that you have gone through' (A14)
	'I was fortunate that my father and them had books on Fanon and Nkrumah etc '(A12)

	' And we'll send whatever we could lay our hands on in terms of papers, articles, books, things that we would photocopy from the library…there was an insatiable thirst to read' (A13) 'But when one was literally learning from the people you were working with and that was really the major resource' (A18) 'We had film week during the holidays and we had discussions around that' (A3) 'Learning materials for learning circles and for mass education through pamphlets and booklets were not always readily available. To deal with this challenge media committees were formed and had to learn how to write and produce material' (A20),
Informal Learning	'A lot of it was learned informally. And it was learned organisationally, because what we learned organisationally what we learned informally in most cases what was not covered in formal curriculum, and yet it is those things which have sustained us over the years in terms of our perceptions of society, our understanding of power relations, race relations, gender relations. We learned about how power operates, the structures and institutions which sustain inequality, our oppression but also made a commitment to fight it' (A9) 'I did not finish my formal studies because of the activism, because of the commitment. But I still learned knowledge, I still acquired skills, I still acquired the ability' (A10) 'So the learning didn't necessarily happen in formal workshops. You are going to learn this and then the lessons we are learning as we are struggling and learning to work together' (A12)
Structured learning	'Structure like the Unity Movement would structure their programmes and you participate in that' (A14) 'NUSAS was quite organised having winter schools and having organisational workshops…there were regular supply of formal reading packs' (A18)
Resource Centres	'ERIP made an indelible imprint on my activism, because what they did was they organised into winter schools…they would encourage young conscientious and activists types from all schools to attend' (A17) 'We used the library as our centre where we could get young people together to teach them and gave them the teachings in a very safe space' (A3) 'The SRC Resource Centre[80] …those were invaluable institutions on which we could draw and get this radical literature, and just read and engross yourself, I valued it tremendously. In hindsight, maybe I didn't have the words to describe it then, but it was to formalise leftists learning and research' (A5)
Reading Circle	(reading) So this is now liberation, nationalist struggles and from there it moved to the more difficult reading Marx, and I struggled

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[80] University of the Western Student Representative Council

	with it. It's not easy to read those things…these things are not one day events, these are top processes are simultaneously while the organisation is attending meetings and responding to issues. So, what I'm saying is that the knowledge accumulation process isn't a formal static process' (A2) 'So, part of your training was reading, and I think that is what helped me cope with university, there was a discipline around reading and I could cope' (A2) 'I didn't understand everything, but I understood some of the tenants of Trotskyism and I was reading, even reading then was difficult, but we had a small underground group who would meet regularly' (A2) 'there was more learning in those environments because it was small, and it was intimate, and you could impart more knowledge because there was condition of trust in those clandestine groups. (A6) 'So XX was the convenor of the reading circle and he would prepare the text. The texts were normally be a photocopy of a publication or book, mostly from the classics. One photocopy and we all meet, and the text will go around. So we would all read a page or a big paragraph and discuss' (A6)
Underground Learning	'You were limited in terms of being able to share documents or books. We had to be very careful about that because by that stage people had been arrested already. So before we had to think about how to creatively share ideas and raise consciousness, we first had to get to know each other' (A12), 'The other thing was underground reading through reading groups. This was interesting because it was very intense…there was a whole thing of secrecy. You were in a reading group, often not more than 6 in a group' (A5) '…look most meetings were banned, so in some way political constraints forced us to be creative' (A12)
Prison Learning	'I remember when I was in prison, I basically wrote a whole sort of curriculum of political education articles who the whole prison…and we basically set up almost something similar to what was on Robben Island, because of what we heard and read over the years' (A13)
Recruitment	'it was all about that organisational skill, of how do talk to other people or how do you reach out to other people and organisation (A1) 'I was invited to a number of other churches and asking me to come and speak to the guys because it was the church where we drawn a lot of strength' (A3)
Reflection	'what lessons can we learn from defeats we have' (A12) 'that night after our debrief, we reflected on the violence and brutality of the police, we reflected on our approach, our

	despondency that we did not get to Pollsmoor[81], and we began to shape our immediate action' (A20)
	'Some people experience, and they never learn. Because they are not reflecting on their doing …and in that sense one of the things we learned is that knowledge is embedded. Once you take it out of its reality, social reality, it's just a series of codes' (A12)
Collective Action	'So the awareness is now that this is a collective process, it's about working with people, it's about understanding where they come from, it's about knowing where you are going to, it's about understanding that you have to be patient, it's about understanding that the forging of the new society which we want to create is something that cannot just be the responsibility of a few people that you hand over power to, but it's the day to day struggles, within various spheres of society at every local, every level, where people are involved and where power is at play' (A15)
	' and then also the decision was very much collective…we planned as a group, executed as a group, people were given responsibilities and then of course through that a whole lot learning also happened' (A15)
Organisation skills	'the organisation teaches you social skills but also organising skills and being systematic about things' (A1)
	'In AZASO it was very much around organisational skill that you learn' (A1).
	'HAPCU was very much a conscientizing & organising' (A1)
	'the way of raising people's consciousness was understood as more than just experts sharing knowledge…it was understanding how to organise (A12)
	'In 1985 I was elected into the AZASO NEC, and that opened an entirely different phase of learning, all of a sudden it was not only UWC[i] but the whole country (A1)
	'people divided into teams, and these teams had to go out and research, research the history of the community, where we come from, how it was started, who are the stakeholders, who were the role-players, who are the political influences in the community, who were the collaborators' (A15)
	' so building unity and building string social movements I think in the 80s and 90s was all about building it on a grassroots level' (A12)
	'So I think if you come back morals and values and principles I think we got a lot of those things engrained through that organisational trajectory we were in' (A10)
Literacy	' (literacy) Around the problem of housing, learning information was developed on what to do in a case of fire, how to apply for formal

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[81] Prison based in Cape Town

	housing and to organise to pressure government to provide housing' (A20)
Learning in struggle	'as a high school student I observed workers talking theories…it's not the way you say things…it's your real deep understanding' (A12)

'Even though there were different traditions in the churches, there was a commonality in terms of the struggle that has been identified and overarching desire was to conscientize people around dismantling of the apartheid system …so the learning processes of that was quite significant in that sense, some of the learning you went through are some things you have never been exposed to in a school situation (A14)

'So it wasn't that he sat down to teach me politically, it was his example of resisting the system' (A15)

'I attended meetings and it was during that time now that I started to get a better grasp of the system, how it operates, being exposed to more ideas and then also building up connections' (A15)

'The idea was that we had to go to the people, we have to take up the issues that affects them directly. We start campaigns…than learning to act and perform drama and create awareness in that way' (A15)

'So that kind of learning that we undertook was enormous because for us to be able to put our demands and defend it, it had to be based on fact, not assumptions and that's where the learning came in' (A15)

'So its kind of learning from others experience or people talking to people who knew about that situation from being and being guided how we can approach dealing with the issue in that community' (A18)

' So our civic people also learned about, yes housing, security and comfort. But on the one hand the people who joined the civic also brought their knowledge' (A7)

'..but clearly what stands out for me was some of the funerals of comrades…the funeral itself was a political experience the clashes with the police just made it worse' (A2)

'What was helpful was the mass meetings, you get educated there as well, because those speakers will also convey information at the mass meetings. It will be very surprising for some people, but I have actually learned a lot in the early stages from these mass meetings' (A4)

'The learning was enormous, I felt so empowered during that time that I even left my studies in my final year, partly because that education I'm getting outside is far more valuable than the inside' (A15) |

	'I think that the knowledge that we gained, it deepened our understanding of politics, it enriched us as individuals' (A9) ' the law student society had an advice office in Belhar and that really out me in contact with the youth' (A1) 'In a sense it also opened a different aspect of learning; working with older people and getting to understand the community as different from a student perspective' (A1) 'And so that, that year I can tell you 1981, was a huge learning curve. We organized door to door house meetings, street meetings, we organized zonal meetings, we organized big community meetings, we organized marches, and through all of those dynamics of organizing, a lot of learning was inherent within that because the learning was collective, it wasn't individual learning it was collective learning. People like to research said, people who were divided into teams, and these learning teams had to go out and research, research the history of the community, where we come from, how it was started, the history of the local government involvement in the community, why certain things didn't happened over a long period of time, who are the stakeholders, who were the role-players, who are the political influences in the community, who were the collaborators, who had a vested interest in the community to make things not happen. So, that kind of learning that we undertook was enormous because for us to be able to put up our demands and defend it, it had to be based on a basis of fact, not the basis of assumptions and that's where the learning came in (A15)
Mentorship	'there was a hierarchy in the learning groups , obviously we looked up to people like XX and so because they were our seniors both in age but also in terms understanding' (A13) 'but in the groups themselves, it was fairly democratic, you were encouraged to ask questions, raise issues and they would explain thing' (A13) ' you sit with seasoned activists around you that are impatient, its about having to forge the revolution and there's impatience about bringing this government down' (A14) ' we would learn from other guys and we would go back and we will run similar kind of study groups on the hostels' (A13) 'XX was a stabilising force around the information and about reading books and discussing documents and getting to know the theories' (A3)

	'In that time what was interesting for me was my own development, that I could actually take responsibility for convening groups to set up study circles above ground with banned literature' (A4)

'XX spend hours in XX, where he came to my house and we sat on the street and where he came to my school and we sit at school and read. He would read passages out of Engels, Marx and Lenin and explain these things to me and draw things in the ground, He was teaching me the way he was taught on Robben Island' (A6)

'I made a mental note to myself, I said to myself, wherever this man is going, I'm going there, because what he knows, I want to know, I want to pick this man's brain and I want to be taught by him' (A7) |

Theme	Safety, Security and Prison
Security Legislation	'Part of the other process of learning was in 1988. With the state of emergency lots of people were banned and in detention' (A1)

It was at that point where we were confronted by the police and I remember being caught in that schoolyard… just the sheer brutality that went on when the cops got into the school, basically just ransacked and pulled teachers out of the classrooms and students and the normal kind of chaos that broke out' (A14)

'The same could not be said of our organisations which existed in our former Homelands, Bantustans where conditions were very oppressive and mobilising openly was to basically invite the wrath of the administration and your homeland security apparatus' (A9)

'There was surveillance, counter surveillance, how to make weapons and all kinds of bombs and fire stuff and so on. Also, the whole issue of safety and security. How to conduct yourself during an interrogation, and also the issue of debrief' (A4 |
| Prison | ' In prison there were also political classes, it fast tracked knowledge and learning. So the consciousness, knowledge, through that intervention, because you didn't choose to go into prison, it grabbed you. But by default, I learnt other things there, which I wouldn't have learnt if we were not in prison' (A10)

'I can remember when I was detained, at XX Prison, I basically wrote a whole sort of curriculum of political education articles for the whole prison. Remember there was that state of emergency. We were there; almost close to a thousand comrades and activists from all over the XX were there. And we basically set up almost something similar to what was on Robben Island, because of what we heard and read over the years, this committee and that committee, this committee and our own sort of communication network and so on. I was the one who was responsible to write political education material out of my head, on all sorts of subjects' (A13)

'when you are detention and being interrogated, being tortured and so forth, it's your political education by an large is what keeps you going. You know I often think if I did have an understanding of |

	why…I would have been screwed you know, the police were messing with your mind, But the fact that you know you know your foundation is solid that you're not confused this is not just an emotional thing etc.. We all break but it does carry you for some time. You're putting up a fight and telling them to fuck off and so so so it certainly impacted on my political consciousness and my actions' (A17)

'Also, the whole issue of safety and security. How to conduct yourself during an interrogation, and also the issue of debrief – if you were in a cell and one of you were taken out by security police, how do you then interrogate that person to find out exactly what that person said' (A4)

'The biggest significance of that event is ending up in jail and having to deal with that. And having to deal with a very significant fall out as a result of that. Because in our world, you come from prison, so you must have spoken, or released information or whatever. Our thing was always but who could we have betrayed? (A6) |
| Trust | 'You were limited in terms of being able to share documents or books. We had to be very careful about that because by that stage people had been arrested already. We became aware of the fact that certain people had been killed in detention. So before we had to think about how to creatively share ideas and raise consciousness, we first had to get to know each other (A12)

'Die Hen and the Cape Kids and all these code names, like a real underground thing that we were running. And everyday we'd phone like you know those free phone calls to get away from that phone that blue or green phone with the thing that you put in and keep outside and we would give long instructions over the phone and letters and all sorts of things' (A13) |
| Protection | 'You have got the protection of the church. You can do whatever you want to do, even though there was an attack on the churches and there was a consistent harassment that was happening at Western Province Council of Churches' (A14) |
| Safe Spaces | 'Then we established the athletics club and that was the place where we did our political education and the Youth club is still running today but that was also a safe place. We could use XX for political education and recruiting people to come on board. Whenever a meeting was called it had to be, in terms of the communication on where the meeting was going to be held, because you also never knew who to trust and there were always the kind of people who were placed, and you had your agents provocateur all the time' (A3) |

Theme	Research and Documenting
Memory	'Now we rely on memory and memory is imperfect. Memory is also affected by trauma and all these things. And some nostalgia even when it comes to memory. Some things you remember and association you can make. These are the problems of memory and obviously where you can remember, you can also try and find artefacts and other things that will confirm the information' (A2)

Purist	' It is nice that that you are taking the 80-90s because it is devoid of this new phenomenon that came post 1994. With the inxiles[82] and exiles, we were purists. We were really insulated and naive, but we got the good stuff, we actually didn't get the bad stuff' (A10)
Anonymity	'you did indicate that many of the information will be coded and it would be protected and not be easily available. It does you a opportunity to just reflect on your life and your own contributions that you have made' (A14)
Our History	I am just thinking as we are talking…our history is not really recorded. Who is recording all of this? I know you are doing it now, but where are all these stories? Who will know, when we vrek (when we're dead) one day, about the UCT[83] rally in 1984? (A5) 'The second thing that inspired me was writing and documenting what we learnt, documenting our experience. The one thing that I became aware of, pre-90, the pre-1994 period, was our lack of writing our lack of documentation. And our total reliance on outside stakeholders either from overseas or locally, white liberals, who come and interview and write stuff about you, and then sell it back to you in books. So that inspired me and that was also the inspiration behind that book, was to document as much as possible with the aim of sharing that information, those learnings, those experiences with other as well'(A15)
Pride	'I met some of the comrades and they are almost shy away or skirt away to say they were actually involved and they were in detention. I make it known that I was in detention….so I will not deny my involvement in the liberation struggle because I am proud of that and it gives me strength' (A3) 'I am proud of that and I tell you now if I can do it over, I will do more. There is nothing I would change other than increase my efforts' (A4)
Academic Process	'I will bring to you whatever it is that flows out of me so I have deliberately not give too much detailed attention to the question and analyse the question from my perspective because I don't want to insert myself into what I think the academic process ought to be or what theoretical assumptions of the question ought to be' (A6)

Theme	Auxiliary
Mental Wellbeing	'Now we rely on memory and memory is imperfect. Memory is also affected by trauma and all these things. And some nostalgia even when it comes to memory' (A2) 'But what I am saying is that mental wellness is part of the story. It is the stressors and trauma you are exposed to. You don't know how it impacts on you, but it does. All of this has an impact But now life is changing, I have a baby, I split with the mother, I actually couldn't handle emotions. I was known as a fearless firebrand who didn't succumb to emotions. In struggle we are taught to supress our emotions. Now my life is different, and my love is gone and I can't handle it emotionally, and lots of things going on. My

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[82] Denotes those activists we operated inside the country
[83] University of Cape Town

	organisation that was my life, in a sense, that is also gone, and I decide to go back to study and study to get a new job (A2)
Disillusionment	'I became also a bit disillusioned with a few things a few internal things within the organization although in terms of ideological point of view, I had no qualms about the ideology but in terms of practical organizational stuff, I had a bit of a challenge with that '(A15)
Faith and Support System	'I must admit that the one thing I always found solace in was my faith, I could really hang onto the faith and what I believed around the religion itself. Around that time, I was still very strong Christian based in terms of what I was fighting for and why I was fighting for it. That carried me a lot' (A3)

'What also carried me was the fact that I could bring my own family around to support me. My mother was old at the time and she was really the only one there. But my brothers, my sister, all of them started believing in the cause because of the political education that went on in our own house. With the realisation that they believed in me to take this forward, I could draw from them because they were strong enough to survive while I am surviving on this side' (A3) |
Alternative	'if you look at movements such as the National Education Crisis Committee, it forced us to move beyond the slogans and think about what we want to do with our education system. Why we have rejected apartheid education but also what is the alternative and what else do you want' (A1)
Understanding	'we didn't learn by reading about methodology and doing workshops, we learnt because we had an inherent respect for really understanding how action and experience can carry us forward, because we had a real enemy. And in that sense one of the things we learnt is that knowledge, and I think about it now, that knowledge is embedded. Once you take it out of its source or reality, it's just a series of codes' (A12)
Military Underground	I had great opportunities. I left the country during the days of apartheid and went via Africa to Czechoslovakia, where we were trained in political stuff. We came back to Lusaka where we were exposed to ammunition and assault rifles etc. These were part of the exposures that I had. I could do a lot of things. (A4)
Post 1994	'Did our learning experience helped us to understand the challenges? I think the answer is yes. What we must also say that during our struggle years, our objectives were framed in very broad generalised terms. We are fighting for a non-racial democratic South Africa. And that was important in terms of drawing people into the struggle against apartheid. We are guided by the Freedom Charter, that is key in terms of the overall vision. I think the learning experience as activists were useful and still are because of dealing with issues of political power in society. Dealing with state institutions and their role. Dealing with various sectors in society that needed to be transformed;

| | be it education, land ownership, international politics relations. So as activists yes I think that that learning experience has been useful because we have been able to locate those ideals, those concepts, incorporated into our policy documents Which basically establish the framework for what our society should be like. It has enabled us to then understand the road we have travelled' (A9)

'The first thing that it equipped me with was to have a solid enough theoretical base to contribute to some really fundamental democratic building processes, or state building process. One of the things I want to highlight was my involvement in the writing of the defence white paper (post 1994). I was part of the co-authors of the defence white paper and I was on the working group that did the defence review, that lead to the arms deal. But it is that theoretical grounding I had that enabled me to, equipped me to understand some of the strategic challenges facing SA' (A6)

'I think the important thing about critical thinking that we were taught through our political education and exposure to organisations, it's now like part of your world view. And no matter in what setting you are, you use those tools to look at a situation and analyse it' (A1) |

List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Conges
AMR	African Resistance Movement
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
AZASO	Azanian Students Organisation
AZASM	Azanian Student Movement
APDUSA	African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CAHAC	Cape Areas Housing Action Committee
CAL	Cape Action League
CAYCO	Cape Youth Congress
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSDERIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CUSA	Council of Unions of South Africa
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers Union
FCCA	Federation of Cape Civic Associations
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
ICU	Industrial Commercial Union of Africa
NCL	National Committee for Liberation'
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NF	National Front
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NMS	National Security Management System
NUM	New Unity Movement
PAX	Pan Africanist Congress
UDF	United Democratic Front
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAFTU	South African Federation of Trade Unions

SAYCO   South Africa Youth Congress

SOE   State of Emergency

WCCA   Western Cape Civic Association

WCYL   Western Cape Youth League

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