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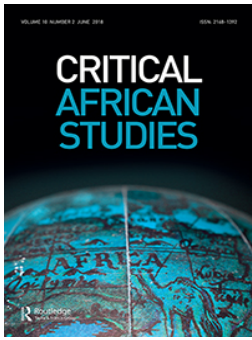
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The uneasy boundary work of ‘coconuts’ and ‘black diamonds’: middle-class labelling in post-apartheid South Africa

Le travail sur les frontières inconfortable sur les ‘Coconuts’ et les ‘Black Diamonds’: Appellation de classe moyenne dans l’Afrique du Sud de l’après- apartheid

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Managing middle-class status involves a great amount of ‘boundary work’, part of which takes place in discussions and narratives over labels. In this paper, I show how an analysis of the narratives around labels such as ‘coconut’ and ‘black diamond’ are vital to understanding the complexities of middle-class boundary work in post-apartheid South Africa. I juxtapose fragments from a public discussion on the term ‘coconut’ in 2015 with young, urban professionals’ reactions to the concept of ‘black diamonds’ in the first decade of the 21st century. This reveals a shift is taking place that is making intra-group differences more visible, while calling into question the racial loyalties of those apparently upwardly mobile. In all, analysing labelling politics helps understand the historical and geographical situatedness of middle-class boundary work.

Keywords: middle class; boundary work; labelling; upward mobility; post-apartheid; South Africa

La gestion du statut de classe moyenne implique une grande quantité de «travail sur les frontières», dont une partie se déroule lors des discussions et des récits relatifs à des étiquettes. Dans cet article, je montre comment une analyse des récits autour d’étiquettes telles que la «noix de coco» et le «diamant noir» est essentielle pour comprendre les complexités du travail sur les frontières de la classe moyenne de l’Afrique du Sud de l’après-apartheid. Je juxtapose des fragments d’une discussion publique sur le terme «noix de coco» en 2015 avec les réactions des jeunes professionnels urbains à le concept de «diamants noirs» au cours de la première décennie du 21ème siècle. Cela révèle un changement qui rend plus visibles les différences entre les groupes, tout en remettant en cause les loyautés raciales de ceux dont la mobilité semble évoluer vers le haut. Au total, l’analyse de la politique d’étiquetage aide à comprendre la situation historique et géographique du travail sur les frontières de la classe moyenne.

Mots-clefs: classe moyenne; travail sur les frontières; étiquetage; mobilité vers le haut; après-apartheid; Afrique du Sud

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Introduction

In 2015, during fieldwork in Johannesburg, a friend told me of a recent public lecture at the University of the Witwatersrand about so-called ‘coconuts’ that ‘had gotten out of control’. Two young, black researchers had presented their work on the failure and complications of non-racism in current South Africa, and one of them had centralized the notion of the ‘coconut’ (a person who is perceived to be black on the outside but white on the inside¹). Apparently, ensuing discussions with the audience had gotten heated to the point that someone had yelled ‘Fuck off white people!’ into the microphone, upon which the event’s facilitator had the person removed from the hall by security. My friend suggested I check out the audio recordings of the evening², and the aftermath on social media, if I wanted to understand black middle class dynamics these days – which indeed was my aim.

Listening to these recordings, I was reminded of the black middle class discussions and narratives I had recorded in 2008, when I had set out to study the role of consumer goods in the lives of the ‘new’ black middle class in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Then, the marketing concept of ‘black diamonds’ had stirred some public controversy for its supposed objectification and connotations of consumerism. The students and young professionals I interacted with at the time were reluctant to identify as ‘black middle class’ and showed ambivalence about their own upward mobility. Raul, then a young civil servant, had said: ‘I probably fit in that category of “black diamonds” in terms of the amount of money that I earn, but in terms of the other stuff, I’m really not’. And Melissa, one of my flat mates, repeatedly told me: ‘But you know I’m not one of them, right?’, even as she agreed to participate in my research that I had explained regarded black middle class identities. The need to distance oneself from certain implications of being black and moneyed or highly educated had struck me.

This time around, however, I was struck by the more explicit racial frame and the emotional intensity of the ‘coconut’ debate. How to understand this episode? Was this an eruption of the same tensions I had noted years before, or had something changed? Part of the then ‘emerging’ black middle class was now supposed to be ‘established’ (Burger et al. 2015), but this did not seem to mean their presence in society had become a matter of fact. On the contrary, it appeared social tension around being black and educated, or black and moneyed had increased (see also Khunou and Krige 2013; Khunou 2015; Canham and Williams 2016).

This paper argues for the need to analyse labelling discussions and narratives as part of middle-class boundary work, in order to better understand the historical and geographical situatedness of middle classes and the practices that constitute them. In other words, research into middle classes needs to ask: When, where and how does ‘middle class’ become a significant category to define others or oneself? Who calls whom middle class, in what ways, using which labels, and to what effect? This is not a matter of determining the parameters of ‘the middle class’ as a solid category, nor of inferring whether etic or emic understandings of middle class are more valid. Rather, this line of questions helps see the ways in which *middleclassness* becomes meaningful, and how this is a dynamic, active and highly contextual process. In this paper I ask what an analysis of discussions around labels such as ‘black diamond’ and ‘coconut’ may reveal about black middle class developments in post-apartheid South Africa.

To this end I will juxtapose reactions to the concept of ‘black diamonds’ in the first decade of the 21st century that I recorded in a five-month fieldwork period in Cape Town and Johannesburg with parts of the ‘coconut’ episode in 2015. The ‘black diamonds’ data was gathered during a study in 2008 on the role of consumer objects in the construction of black middle-class identity in post-apartheid South Africa, with special attention given to media discourse on the relation between middle classes and consumerism, and the inherent moral ambiguities. It consisted of four and a half months of participant observations in students’- and young professionals’ social

life in Cape Town and Johannesburg, as well as formal and informal interviews. Interlocutors were selected through snowballing, starting from a previously established network of students of the University of Cape Town, and of newly found room mates (one post-graduate student and two young professionals). In total, 17 individuals functioned as key informants, and many were interviewed multiple times. Additionally, analyses of daily national newspapers and television reports, as well as lifestyle magazines, were an important part of the study. The 2008 data in this article consists of interview excerpts that show young, urban professionals' reluctance to self-identify as black middle class, as a consequence of its conflation with the notion of consumerist 'black diamonds'.

A second stint of fieldwork in 2015 was performed by way of a pilot study for a current project on the (entrepreneurial) aspirations of young, urban professionals in South Africa. It involved one month of participant observations, following up with former interlocutors as well as expanding the sample through their networks. Again, a series of formal and informal interviews was carried out, this time with 12 young professionals (some entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs) and 10 enterprise development professionals. The 2015 data in this article, however, consists of selected quotes from a public lecture at 'Wits' University and from its online aftermath that one of the young professionals alerted me to. These quotes demonstrate the contestation of middle-class loyalties especially as they relate to race³.

Data from both periods shows discursive boundary work as performed by young, urban professionals and varsity students based in Cape Town and Johannesburg. While the 2008 interview data comprises statements probed by, and addressed to, me, an outsider to South African society, in the context of fieldwork, the 2015 quotes are drawn from public expressions directed towards a specific, local audience. As such, these data sets seem unrelated. Nevertheless, I argue that a juxtaposition, such as this paper presents, is helpful in bringing to light some of the continuities and changes in social tensions over privilege and social mobility in post-apartheid South Africa.

I will first outline the relevance of labelling discussions (as a form of boundary work) for our understanding of middle classes, and then briefly sketch the historical moment of the South African middle-class discussions at hand. Then, I will provide an analysis of both the 'black diamond' and 'coconut' data, and lastly conclude with a reflection on what these episodes reveal about post-apartheid South Africa and the situatedness of middle classes.

Studying middle class through boundary work

Class has been extensively theorized in social sciences as a central axis of social differentiation and inequality. Classically, class analysis has focused on western societies and their historical trajectories, but recently, the 'new' middle classes in the Global South are receiving attention. The variation in historical trajectories, the vast heterogeneity within these newly acknowledged middle classes, and the increasing social presence of the notion 'middle class' in policy and public discourse, have increased the challenges to social scientists' understanding of what middle class is (Heiman, Freeman, and Liechty 2012; Melber 2013; Spronk 2014). Weberian approaches distinguishing between economic and social classes without assuming their overlap have the benefit of allowing for more gradation than Marxian frameworks, and as such have become popular in the study of new global middle classes (cf. Southall 2004a; Lentz 2015, 18). Still, even gradational approaches to class (or status groups) tend to fail to consider 'actors' self-positioning' and 'the active politics of difference' that, since Bourdieu, are widely considered part of the production of class distinctions (Lentz 2015, 19).

Most historians and anthropologists of the 'new' middle classes have departed from economic definitions, so as to be able to acknowledge the heterogeneity of middle strata as well as the agency and praxis that constitutes them. Instead, they focus on the lived experience of

(middle) class and emphasize the need to ‘explore the material and symbolic struggles over class boundaries, and to analyse the middle classes’ dynamic, shifting and contested relational self-categorisations as different from ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ classes’ (Lentz 2015, 25) – in other words, boundary work. When and how this work occurs, in other words, when middle class becomes a socially relevant category, is evidently an empirical question (Spronk 2018).

Rather than taking middle class as an objectified category, then, I follow this lead to study middle class through looking at boundary work in discursive practice. Discursive negotiations of middle-class status are part and parcel of this boundary work (see Liechty 2003). Middle-class status is in part expressed – and contested – through the labels people assign themselves and others, and it is important to note that the terminology of middle class is gaining ground in African policies, public media narratives, and in terms of self-categorisation (Phadi & Manda 2010; Melber 2013; Spronk 2014; Lentz 2015, 24–25). In other words, ‘middle class’ as a term has increasing social presence and significance on the African continent, and its occurrence and social consequences need to be traced. This, for the moment, side-lines the question of whether the academic concept of class applies to the study of African societies at all, or whether it is a Eurocentric concept that fails to capture the complexity of (African) social structures, a point of contention in debates on African middle classes (Lentz 2015, 24–25). In fact, I am here less concerned with pinning down what middle class *is* than with pointing out where it is referenced socially and unpacking what it does. To this end, I follow Iqani’s (2015) socio-constructivist approach to class, placing ‘emphasis (...) on the discursive aspects of social categories rather than on “evidence” about their presumed characteristics’ (4).

By analysing public and private narratives on the category of middle class and associated labels – in other words, discursive middle-class boundary work – the geographical and historical situatedness of middle strata, as well as the practice that goes into class distinction, come to the fore. Below I will discuss a number of earlier studies of South African middle-class narratives that clearly show how they are historically contingent and, continuously contested. This paves the way for a contextually sensitive analysis of the ‘coconut’ and ‘black diamond’ narratives as relevant examples of middle-class boundary work in the post-apartheid era.

Discursive constructions of middle class in South Africa

The existence of ‘a’ South African black middle class well before the end of apartheid is widely recognized (e.g. Nzimande 1991; Southall 2004a, 2016; Seekings and Natrass 2005; Seekings 2009; Krige 2011), although different authors refer to different groups of people depending on their preferred social indicators of middleclassness (education, occupation, income, ownership/entrepreneurship etc.). Studies of social stratification in South Africa throughout the 20th century have described all kinds of middle groups in the race-class nexus⁴. And the relevance of labelling practices has long been noted, too: Mafeje and Wilson, in their 1963 study, describe ‘a group of mostly educated people who considered themselves “decent”, and who were referred to by others, somewhat derogatorily, as “ooscuse-me”’ (Seekings 2009, 871; see also Southall 2016, 34). Bickford-Smith relates the term ‘ooscuse-me’ to a popular song about types of townspeople and the way some of them spoke (2016, 247–248).

But between a short-lived Weberist moment and the ensuing predominance of Marxist analyses among South African scholars since the 1970s, upward mobility based on anything other than control over means of production (which was strictly limited for black South Africans throughout apartheid, cf. Mabandla 2013) has received little consideration (Seekings 2009). Thus, Seekings calls for contemporary research on class and status in post-apartheid South Africa to ‘identify clearly whose delineation of status matters, and for whom?’ as a way to productively build on earlier Weberian contributions (2009, 881).

Still, intra-racial stratification in the post-apartheid era, and especially the apparent growth of a ‘new’ black middle class, *is* receiving attention (Southall 2004a, 2016; Schlemmer 2005; Modisha 2008; Krige 2011, 2015; James 2014; Ndletyana 2014; Burger et al. 2015; Iqani 2015; Khunou 2015). As far as these studies address the public and private narratives on middle class and middleclassness, they reveal the ambivalent and contested character of middle-class status in its relation to the historical moment and wider social processes and how questions of racial loyalty are intimately tied up with upward mobility.

After the end of apartheid rule the possibilities for upward mobility for black South Africans have been amplified. The government started ‘an elaborate process of deconstructing past inequalities and the rules and laws upholding them’ (Schutte 2000, 215). A policy of affirmative action, called Black Economic Empowerment, was to speed up the process of equalizing economic assets and opportunities for black South Africans (Iheduru 2004; Tangri and Southall 2008)⁵. From the late 1990s, an ‘emerging black middle class’ that was ‘rising rapidly to a position of considerable wealth and power in a short time’ (Schutte 2000, 216) was at the centre of public attention in South Africa, in both celebratory and very critical tones. As Iqani (2015) has aptly demonstrated, ambivalent media discourse about the supposedly ‘new’ black middle class in the late 1990s was heavily reflective of this historical moment:

The accession of Black South Africans to th[e South African middle-class] dream was at once celebrated and contested. These two attitudes are different aspects of the same discursive move, which named the Black middle class ‘new’ and thus pinned on it both excessive, hopeful responsibility for a ‘new South Africa’ and a bitter lack of faith in its ability to pull it off (8).

She shows how other strands in this early post-apartheid discourse on the black middle class – contradictorily – questioned its ability to act in the interest of all black people and doubted its loyalty to the liberation struggle. A ‘western’ lifestyle in tandem with a perceived consumerism was publicly critiqued, suggesting black middle class people were selfishly imitating white privilege, or were being disloyal: ‘Some extremely vicious attacks on the “new values” of the Black middle class came from Black commentators, who rooted their critiques in a charge of having “sold out” on the liberation struggle’ (ibid., 10–13).

From the mid-2000s an increasing sense of disappointment with the government led to an array of protests across the nation against rising food and fuel prices, corruption, and persistent inequalities (e.g. Alexander 2010)⁶. In addition, South African economic growth halted and unemployment rose rapidly when in 2007/2008 the global financial crisis got under way (Altman 2009). The economic downturn since the global financial crisis combined with instability in government functioning in more recent years – as envisaged, for example, by the repeated replacement of the minister of finance – have worsened South Africa’s economic prospects (South Africa’s economy ‘in crisis’, 2016), although the recent election of former union boss and business tycoon Cyril Ramaphosa as president of the ANC, and consequently the state, has alleviated this somewhat.

Throughout these volatilities, dissatisfaction over the continuance of high income inequality, lack of service delivery, corruption and debt have been core issues in South African media discourse (see James 2014). The role of the middle class and their socio-economic responsibilities have been recurring themes in public debates on the state and fate of the nation. Labels like ‘tenderpreneurs’⁷, ‘buppies’⁸ and ‘black diamonds’ – all more or less derogatory terms referring to black nouveaux riches – have found expression in these discussions. When South African marketing analysts coined the term ‘black diamonds’ in 2005 to refer to a growing demographic of black middle class consumers⁹, it was soon conflated with the black middle class (see Posel 2010; James 2014; Chevalier 2015), continuing some of the earlier trends in the public debate. ‘Black

diamonds’/the black middle class became associated with overspending and immoral financial behaviour, as media reports linked this label to concerns over the foundation of the recent economic growth and problematic debts (de Coninck 2009).

With regard to ‘changing class configurations and wealth distributions’, Krige (2015) has recognized that ‘new ways of legitimising class differentiation and new wealth are likely to emerge’ (105). Analysing the ways one Sowetan man narrates his own social mobility in life, Krige points out how his interlocutor deploys spatial metaphors as a discursive strategy to naturalize and legitimise the social ups and downs in his life – now underplaying and then emphasizing his own agency. In addition, Krige notes, he ‘made an effort to turn every event that marked upward social mobility into an opportunity to connect with the social space of his kin group and the obligations he feels he had towards them’ (114). In so doing, he responds to ‘growing criticisms of anti-social behaviour among the urban middle classes’, and he ‘reconcile[s] the tensions that arise from short-term, individual material acquisition and its resultant social mobility, with longer term processes of social and societal reproduction, including obligations to kin’ (105). This study then shows the uneasiness of upward social mobility, and the discursive efforts that go into middle-class boundary work in relation to the wider discourses.

Aside from questions of the pro- or anti-sociality of the black middle class, upwardly mobile blacks have a long history of being criticized as fake, ‘sell-outs’, or not black or African enough (e.g. famously in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952)). Canham and Williams’ (2016) analysis of how post-apartheid black middle class are prone to critique from two angles – as they compromise notions of blackness from both a ‘white –’ and a ‘black gaze’ – helps make sense of this in the South African context. They describe how the black gaze – simply put the normative way black South Africans look at other black South Africans – ‘monitors the transgression of class boundaries and established and accepted norms of black behaviour. It seeks black uniformity and loyalty to black disadvantage or a black working-class identity’ (29).

This resonates with the centrality of questions of racial belonging and loyalty for middle-class boundary work that Khunou (2015) notes in the life histories of two black South African women, ‘who reluctantly self-identify as middle class’ (91). Khunou’s informants’ narratives show how growing up arguably middle-class in a non-middle-class environment involved a constant struggle with racial loyalties:

Being black in apartheid SA meant their being middle class came with constant complex negotiations of boundaries with community members that were not middle class and spaces that were middle class but white, thus raising racial dynamics not experienced at home (91).

Khunou notes the way her informants underplayed class (and gender) differences vis-à-vis community others while growing up. She reads these ‘more integrationist negotiations of their class position’ as a function of the racialization of social differences under apartheid, which, among other things, forced blacks to live in the same locations regardless of their class position (2015, 98–99). As such, the narrative of racial oppression and the struggle against it dominated the experience of classed stratification and informed the types of boundary work performed – a pattern still visible in public middle-class discussions in post-apartheid.

From these studies on middle-class boundary work in South Africa it becomes clear that intra-racial stratification has been a contested issue throughout the 20th century and into the new era, and that clearly plays out on a discursive level. Middle-class status is negotiated in relation to the historical moment and the dominant discourses of the moment. Especially in the South African context, it is always more or less racialized. Those perceived to be upwardly mobile are faced with questions of racial loyalty in the shifting race-class nexus of the post-apartheid era and find themselves continuously renegotiating and reworking their status vis-à-vis others. In the

following two paragraphs, I will add to these analyses by providing two separate ethnographic examples of the discursive negotiations of middle-class status in the last decade – individuals’ reactions to the notion of ‘black diamonds’ and a public discussion around the notion of ‘coconuts’. Comparing them will help identify some of the continuities and changes in post-apartheid middle-class boundary work.

Black diamonds: who wants to be compared to some black shiny stone?

Upon arrival in Cape Town in 2008 for fieldwork on the relationship between consumption and class identity among students and young professionals, I soon found out nobody actually used the term black middle class for themselves. For five months, I conducted interviews with students of the University of Cape Town (UCT) in the southern suburbs surrounding the campus, and their siblings and wider network. I also organized group discussions, collected and analyzed magazines, television shows and newspaper reports on ‘the black middle class’, and participated in the social life of my flat mates and neighbours (all students and young professionals themselves).

Everybody I spoke to acknowledged the relevance of the study of ‘black middle class’ and its consumer habits, but nobody felt I was talking about them when I explained my research interest. My flat mate frowned and said: ‘Hmm, well, I never thought of myself as middle class’. But people did see others as such. After we first met, my neighbour Tom, 22 years old and from the Eastern Cape, phoned me and said he knew just the candidate for an interview on my topic: his housemate Siphosiso. ‘He is totally into the whole black diamond thing’, Tom told me. And had I heard about that other kid at UCT who hadn’t been able to afford his rent anymore, but held on to his BMW, and so ended up sleeping in it? The reluctance to be classified as black middle class alongside an acknowledgement of its reality indicated a curious tension surrounding upward mobility for black South Africans.

On the one hand, a hint of the optimism of a new day for South Africa with freedom and equality for all had been translated into liberal economic policies, and many of my interlocutors at the time showed great aspiration for their careers. On the other hand, the threat of an economic crisis, rumble over the ANC leadership, a judiciary crisis as a result of president Zuma’s corruption trial, and outbursts of ‘xenophobic’ violence in several townships contributed to a general sense of insecurity.

Both a need and urge to show success and freedom, and concern over the foundation and sustainability of wealth was ever present in the private and public discussions I recorded in 2008. When I stayed with a friend’s family in Soweto for two weeks, my host ‘mother’, Yvonne, arranged for her sister to come by the house in her new SUV, so they could take me for a ride around the block. Her sister then insisted that I visit her home in one of Johannesburg’s suburbs so I could see their fully furnished, four bedroom house. But Yvonne also made a point of explaining to me how it had taken her and her husband 24 years to be able to afford the new kitchen they had just put in (and which they avoided using so as to keep it new). She could not understand ‘how all those other people can afford all those new things’ at once.

Media discourse was an important factor in this tension between showing success and condemning irresponsible spending (Iqani 2015). Public discourse about the black middle class in South African media around 2008 crudely and simply linked black middle class to material consumption, to the point where the format of the consumerist ‘black diamond’ had become common sense (see Laden 2003; Posel 2010; James 2014¹⁰). Magazines, newspapers and television shows helped construct and maintain links between the black middle class, ‘black diamond’, success and danger, and made them seem natural (see also Chevalier 2015; Pearson 2017). By selecting and presenting successful black people as subjects they legitimized their public presence, whilst constructing a stereotype of black middle-class appearance. On the one hand upwardly mobile,

successful black people were portrayed as having a lavish lifestyle defined by designer clothes and luxury possessions, which in turn was interpreted as a sign of progress in the new South Africa. On the other hand, media discourse was very critical of the black middle class and their assumed conspicuous consumption. In these latter types of narratives and depictions, the fulfilment of material desires was framed as greedy or immature. An episode of national news show *Interface* (SABC3, 18 August 2008) clearly revealed how ‘black diamond’ had become a contested term.

The episode revolved around the question ‘Is the black middle class under threat?’. As part of the introduction, a short video showed malls with black shoppers, black women in suits on escalators moving up (sic), a jeweler, and repeatedly, from different angles, the interior of a Mercedes Benz. An expert provided a definition of ‘black diamonds’ as a middle income group, and then the video showed an auctioneer, in front of a row of large, shiny cars examining a repossessed car. An ominous announcement by the voice-over wrapped it up: ‘No one knows for sure when the economy will recover. In that time, many will have fallen off the middle class radar’ (*Interface* on SABC3, 18 August 2008). The clip thus effectively summed up the parameters of large parts of the public discourse on black middle class at the time: black middle class people are prone to overconsume and are heavily indebted. The question was whether they were the drivers or the victims of a debt crisis.

The ensuing discussion panel in the studio consisted of Jimmy Manyi, president of the Black Management Forum¹¹, Dennis George, secretary-general of the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA), and John Simpson, director of the UCT Unilever Institute for Marketing Research – the same institute that had coined the concept of ‘black diamonds’. In the discussion that followed, Manyi made a point of contesting the label:

It is demeaning, commoditizing our young people. It is used to lure our young people into a conspicuous consumption mode. So we think the term is really bad. And we ask the question: if there are ‘black diamonds’, why don’t we ever hear about ‘white pearls’? So we are very suspicious of the term. (...) Who wants to be compared to some black shiny stone? So I have a problem with this very, very dehumanizing – we’re tired of these labels. That if people have to deal with us they have to keep giving us labels all the time. We’re sick and tired of this.

This quote is revealing for several reasons. Firstly, the way Manyi expressed concern about the exploitative capacities of the term – by noting how the term ‘lures’ and ‘commoditizes’ – points to the social power of the label as a marketing tool. Secondly, according to Manyi, with this label ‘people’ dehumanized ‘our people’, and ‘we’ were tired of this. He was clearly invoking the history of racial categorization in South Africa and criticizing its legacy of white lifestyle as the norm with black lifestyle as the unknown other or deviant. The host’s follow-up question was: ‘So you deny the existence thereof?’, which framed Manyi’s suspicion of the politics of the term as a denial of the societal problem of indebtedness that the label had come to imply. Thus, the host was probing a response about the relationship between the term and ‘reality’, in other words, about whether the group the label referred to existed and *were* what the label implied they were: spenders of wealth they didn’t in actuality represent.

Suspicion of and ambivalence over what ‘black diamonds’/black middle class stood for was palpable in my own conversations and interviews during fieldwork, too. Raul, a Cape Town based participant in my fieldwork, for example, attached another label to the category, namely ‘BEE’ (Black Economic Empowerment):

It’s pure pretence. It’s all façade, it’s all pretence. Those are people who pretend. (...) People pretend they’re BEE, but you can’t be BEE in Cape Town. (...) If you go to Johannesburg, you’ll experience the whole Black diamond thing. (...) Those people are money ... they have real deals, big deals,

[Black Economic] Empowerment deals (...) And for me, it doesn't appeal to me. If I was in Jo'burg I would avoid it when I can. I can spot it from a mile. The cigar smoking, and there's a way you can tell there's a gathering: people will be sitting there with expensive drinks and when the bill comes, watch people shifting, watch people going to the toilet, watch.

He thus denounced what he perceived to be the imitation of a lifestyle (in Cape Town), that, even where 'real' (in Johannesburg) involved ways of keeping up appearances that he didn't want to be associated with.

A more complex workaroud of the 'black diamond'/black middle class trope was offered by Kgomotso, a thirty-three year old professional who worked for a promotion company that organized a lifestyle festival aimed at a black audience. This festival was launched in 2007 in Cape Town, with a second edition in Johannesburg in May 2008 to celebrate 'the Afropolitan lifestyle'¹². The acquaintance who referred me to Kgomotso had been approached by the festival to be a 'spin doctor' to help develop and promote the concept for the Capetonian edition, implying the public tensions around displays of black consumption were in need of spinning. He had declined because he thought the festival supported the concept of 'black diamonds', 'and I don't believe in that thing'. In the interview, Kgomotso, however, explained how the festival was about something else:

If you have heard about our festival, we're saying that we're celebrating the Afropolitan identity (...) We're giving it a new meaning, a new context in our society. So what we saying is: A-fro-po-li-tan, it means African, in a cosmopolitan context. And that is who we are. You know I'm different to my mother in the sense that I'm Afropolitan. My culture is at the forefront of my identity. I'm a Xhosa woman, I'm proud of that, and first and foremost that is who I am. Our cultural traditions are very, very important to me. But at the same time, I'm living in a westernized ... world. So you know, as I'm saying, we are struggling between the two identities, and you know what there's nothing wrong with that.

In the light of the publicity around 'black diamonds', it was striking that Kgomotso and her organization chose the term 'Afropolitan', which she framed as an innocent attempt to reconcile two 'identities', arguably 'black African' and 'cosmopolitan' or 'westernized'¹³. I interpreted her final remark as apologetic.

Yet the consciously chosen term Afropolitan did not ward off all suspicion over the irresponsible consumerism the black middle class was increasingly associated with at the time:

You got the people that, for them it's all about 'I'm earning the salaries, and I need the status.' They need to show that 'I'm making it and therefore I need to drive that Beemer', 'I need to live in ... Constantia or Parklands [upper class areas in Cape Town - LdC], whether I can afford it or not I just need to be there'. (...) So people need to get educated. (...) Because also our parents never had the access to the information. (...) So at least with us, we are fortunate in that we are living in an age where we are able to access that information, and that's why we're saying, as a people, let's move beyond consumerism. Let's start acquiring information that's gonna help us build sustainable wealth and businesses for our kids, so that my child doesn't have to struggle the way I did. (...) That is why at our festival we are saying that the principles are *inspire*, you know, experiential, informative and of course entertaining.

By framing the phenomenon of overspending by new black rich as a historical problem that should be sorted out and ascribing herself and her company the role of supporting this cause, she averted personal identification as an over-consumer, avoided defending the 'wrong' kind of wealth, yet maintained loyalty to the notion of upward mobility for black South Africans.

What the above narratives show in different ways, is a need and an urge to distance oneself from the negative connotations of 'black diamonds'/black middle class consumerism. Where

Manyi redirected the responsibility for the supposed conspicuous consumption of newly affluent black South Africans to the creators of the term ‘black diamonds’, Raul and Kgomotso respectively addressed the consumptive and financial behaviour of this category of people itself. The former firmly dismissed it as unfounded or pretentious, while the latter framed it as uninformed. The boundary work in these narratives and discussions revolves around the identification of those who know and show proper ways of handling wealth.

So, in the first decade of the 21st century, in South Africa, the notion of ‘black middle class’ and associated labels took on a social significance in relation to ongoing social dynamics of new opportunities for upward mobility for black South Africans and a shaky economic growth. ‘During the 1990s, the media struggled to make sense of, and constructed through speaking of, a new vision of social order in which race was no longer the pre-determining characteristic’ (Iqani 2015, 13), and this struggle continued in the 2000s. In public and private discourse, while a growing/more visible black middle class was still identified as a sign of progress in overcoming the racialized economic inequality of apartheid days, they were increasingly also framed as the ones spoiling the party, as sabotaging the fair redistribution of wealth by their spending patterns. The available cultural space for upwardly mobile black South Africans was thus limited and tense, and predefined in terms of financial responsibilities. In this context, identification as black middle class was avoided by most in a variety of discursive moves.

Is there class in ‘coconuts’?

A short decade later, ambivalence around middle class labels and the social responsibilities of those upwardly mobile had changed shape. During fieldwork in the second half of 2015, in which I focused on avenues for upward mobility among young, urban professionals and students, my interlocutors used words like ‘bourgeois’, and ‘black tax’ to describe the current state of discussion on the black middle class. The latter term refers to social norms to redistribute income to extended family for upwardly mobile black South Africans, a source of great social and personal tension. The prevalence of the term ‘black diamond’ seemed to have withered¹⁴. When I shared this observation of changed terminology with a friend in Johannesburg, he mentioned a recent controversy over the concept of ‘coconuts’ at the University of the Witwatersrand. Apparently, a speech made by a young, black researcher about this label had generated intense emotions and name-calling in the audience, moving the facilitator to remove a member of the audience from the venue. My friend referred me to the elaborate aftermath of this night on social and regular media. The entire story surprised me. Wasn’t ‘coconut’ an old term? How had it come to provoke such controversy this time?

Indeed, the term has a history, globally as well as in post-apartheid South Africa. Rudwick (2010) analyses public instances in which the label ‘coconut’ gained social relevance in South Africa from 2001. She discusses the common perception that ‘coconuts’ do exist’ (ibid., 61) and that it refers to individuals who are lacking in, or confused about, their African heritage, including language (62–68). In other words, a ‘coconut’ is a person who is perceived to be ‘black on the outside, white on the inside (...) by other black people who regard themselves as more authentically black’ (Vincent 2008, 1435). Vincent and Rudwick see in the ‘coconut’ narratives remnants of essentialist apartheid race think, that builds on ideas of racial separateness. Spencer (2009), in addition, points out how the term is loaded with a sense of inappropriate boundary-crossing: “[C]oconuttiness” (...) occurs when one betrays one’s African culture by gravitating towards the social expectations of a hegemonic westernized culture’ (68). McKinney (2007), however, argues that ‘[t]he use of the “coconut” label (...) destabilises traditional apartheid “race” categories, bringing to the fore the complexity of what it means to be or to perform “white” and “black” in South Africa’ (19).

These studies all show how the ‘coconut’ label is part of discursive post-apartheid identity politics, while assessing its effects differently. But – even though the intersection with class and prestige get mentioned (e.g. McKinney 2007, 19) – the analyses mainly focus on the label’s role in the discursive production of race. Its relation to class, and particularly to middle-classness, is much less explored, while race and class clearly – and increasingly intricately – intersect in the post-apartheid era. Below I will unpack selected parts of the ‘coconut’ episode on and after the evening at Wits University. I build on Canham and William’s analysis of how the ‘black gaze’ (in addition to the ‘white gaze’) impacts the lived experience of black middle class professionals (2016), and Khunou’s (2015) assertion that a struggle with racial loyalties is central to middle-class living in South Africa.

Coconuts: check your privilege

Every year the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg provides research fellowships to journalists, artists and researchers in honour of Ruth First, a white advocate of non-racialism under apartheid, to carry out original, in-depth research with the goal of influencing debate in South Africa¹⁵. In 2015 the theme was ‘Race: Lived Experience and Contemporary Conversations’ and two young, female researchers had been awarded fellowships. On the evening of 17 August 2015, they presented their findings in a lecture, followed by a discussion with the audience. Panashe Chigumadzi spoke about what it means to be a ‘coconut’ in contemporary South Africa, while Sisonke Msimang presented on the (im)possibility of friendship between black and white South Africans. The evening was facilitated by previous fellow and public intellectual Eusebius McKaiser. All three had participated in public debates extensively before this particular evening¹⁶. Chigumadzi’s talk on the meaning of the label ‘coconut’ generated a strong response, both in the audience at the event itself, and among black intellectuals (e.g. Nyamnjoh 2016), students, and activists in the (international) media afterwards¹⁷.

In her speech, titled ‘Of Coconuts, Consciousness and Cecil John Rhodes: Disillusionment and Disavowals of the Rainbow Nation’¹⁸, Panashe Chigumadzi mobilized the label ‘coconut’ to point out the continuation of structural racial inequality:

At best, “coconuts” can be seen as “non-white”. At worst, they’re “Uncle Toms” or “agents of whiteness”. I’ve chosen to appropriate the term and self-identify as a ‘coconut’ because I believe it offers an opportunity for refusal. It’s an act of problematising myself – and others - within the socio-economic landscape of South Africa as part of the black middle class that is supposed to be the buffer against more “radical elements”. (...) The fantasy of a colour-blind, post-racial South Africa has been projected onto us coconuts, but our lived experiences are far from free of racism.

The point of proactively claiming the label ‘coconut’ was that it ‘offers an opportunity for refusal’. The things-to-refuse for Chigumadzi are the notions that, on the one hand, being black middle-class means lacking and/or betraying blackness, and that, on the other, the black middle class are instrumental to those holding onto an illusory non-racial version of social reality. This seems to fit with what Canham and William analyze as the ‘double dimension of expectations’ that discipline the black middle class in South Africa (2016, 25) from both a black gaze and a white gaze. The former demands allegiance to (apartheid-) suffering and working-class identity as emblems of authentic blackness, while the latter often expresses itself as a denial of race-inequality in order to maintain white privilege¹⁹.

On a national TV news show the morning after the lecture, Chigumadzi elaborated on her choice to claim the pejorative title of ‘coconut’ further²⁰:

I think a lot of people who might hear me speak the way that I do, or who know my background as a middle-class, as an upper middle-class black person, will be very surprised to hear the kind of politics that I have, particularly a very black politics, an anti-racist politics. Because the assumption is that by virtue of going to these spaces and being accepted and being able to do well in those spaces, you wouldn't be interested in issues of decolonization, transformation and that kind of thing. (...)

Here she relayed the apparently common notion that enjoying middle-class privileges means lacking 'black politics'. A little bit later, she dealt with the idea that having 'black politics' while enjoying middle-class privileges is in turn problematic:

People think that, you know, it's middle-class kids at UCT who are being spoilt, and what are they really crying about, they should just be happy they're at the university. And we're saying that even in those spaces, that's not, you know, what we should, what we define as the freedom. There's still a long road to go within that. And that's really what I'm speaking to, that even for those of us who have reached the so-called promised land, we're saying that this is not good enough, this is not where we'd like our freedom as a country to sort of stand still at, and we still need to go through the process of decolonization' (MorningLive SABC, 18 August 2015).

Chigumadzi made explicit, and aimed to tackle, perspectives on those who are black and middle-class that problematize them as sell-outs or as ungratefully spoiling the non-racial party. She thus performed active discursive middle-class boundary work, centering around questions of racial loyalty much like Khunou's informants (2015).

But the *ways* in which she did so are different and worth noting: firstly, she claimed instead of disavowed a pejorative title, and secondly, she framed her position as, in fact, in line with 'the struggle':

[T]his is a way for me to locate it within a long history of people who might have been called coconuts. For example, you think about your Tiyo Soga²¹, who you know is the first black graduate of, you know, Lovedale²², Robert Sobukwe²³, you know, a whole lot of people who were part of these mission schools and who could've been considered 'coconuts'. But they still refused, you know, that path of being, you know, so-called native elites and what not (MorningLive SABC, 18 August 2015).

By redefining access to places of privilege, such as universities, not as a terminus, but as a mere stop-over on a 'long road' to freedom, she made a clear effort to re-include the black middle class in the story of ongoing oppression and racial discrimination.

This contrasts both with the integrationist narratives of Khunou's informants who grew up under apartheid, in which class differences were *underplayed*, and with the evasive narrative moves I recorded in 2008, in which efforts revolved around distancing oneself from the black diamonds/black middle class trope. By claiming her position and framing black class privilege as having a long history aligned with 'the struggle', Chigumadzi contested suspicions of 'selling out to the black cause' (Canham and Williams 2016, 39), revealing both continuity and change in the way black middle class status is negotiated in South Africa.

To return to the evening at Wits and the events that followed and that led to further public controversy: after Chigumadzi's talk, co-fellow Sisonke Msimang gave a presentation on the (im)possibility of interracial friendship in current South Africa. Both women were then briefly interviewed by host McKaiser, and finally the floor was opened for discussion with the audience. After a couple of young women said how they identified with Chigumadzi's story, the exchange took a provocative turn with the intervention of a third audience member. He introduced himself

as born in Zambia and a child of French parents who suffered black-on-black racism when he went to primary school in South Africa. He then asked Chigumadzi and Msimang how long they were ‘going to choose to be victims’, which provoked commotion in the rest of the audience. He continued, pointing out that the women ‘sound more white than black’, and wondering why Msimang had chosen a white husband, ‘when we say we are proud of being black’. He thus questioned their integrity and loyalty and critiqued their ‘tad bit one-sided’ assessment of racism in South Africa.

Throughout this contribution there was a stir in the crowd, and as soon as this speaker finished, another young man in the audience grabbed the microphone and yelled, angrily:

No but this man is disrespecting us in front of white people! [audience roars loudly] No! no! no! I mean this man is inciting us, and there are white people here and obviou-I mean Panashe, Panashe [audience starts applauding] don’t clap, don’t clap - ‘cause I mean what does Ruth First have to do with black people? Why is this thing even called it-it’s named, after Ruth First. (...) And, and white people are here, they are smiling becau-I mean these are the motherfuckers that caused racism, they must go, fuck off! Fuck off white people! Fuck off fuck off! We’re sick and tired of you, man! [McKaiser tries to interfere – unintelligible] It’s for sure this thing ... [cut off midsentence - LdC]

The previous speaker’s critique clearly enticed an emotional outburst in this man, who lashed out against the white people present as representatives of the legacy of oppression of non-whites in South Africa. Facilitator McKaiser asked security to remove this person from the venue and attempted to finish the programme. This sparked a comment from Chigumadzi, about the ‘policing of black voices’, and in the following days McKaiser – who is known and self-identifies as ‘coloured’²⁴ – was heavily disparaged for his decision on social media.

A week later, McKaiser tried to rebuke some of the criticism – ‘I was characterised by one person on Twitter as someone “trained in the management of black slaves”’ – in an extensive online letter²⁵:

I am just as angry about anti-black racism as some who were angry that I stopped the expression of hatred. (...) But, for some coconuts, the anxious desire to be affirmed as fully acquainted with black struggles runs so deep that they think the quickest way to prove cross-class solidarity is to express hatred towards white people. (...) And so we can all, as black middle class kids, show our documents of being subjected to white attempts at assimilation. But I am sorry. Sending home black tax, and letting your hair grow naturally as it wants to now that you’re older, do NOT mean you get black poverty. (...) Some of the coconuts who were angry this week, for example, have cars their parents bought them, live in apartments paid for by mom, and that is fine. Do not bemoan your access to credit or your assets. But check your privilege while you skewer whiteness.

In a kind of discursive acrobatics, McKaiser uncovered his critics’ apparent need to work themselves back into blackness as defined by suffering from racism and material deprivation. He framed them as hypocrites because their class privileges set them apart from those who suffer most (poor black people). This, he iterated, is a function of a transformation of one’s self-understanding and lived experience after upward mobility has taken place:

I grew up poor, and even with that experience in my head, I still do not fully understand poverty because I have been middle class for so long already.

He thus posed the project of aligning oneself with a black working class identity of struggle and suffering as cognitively impossible, and the attempts of ‘coconuts’ to do so as futile. It can be argued that McKaiser, in response to accusations of his own disloyalty to the shared struggle

of black people in South Africa, invoked a version of a black gaze seeking to check black middle-class identity as fundamentally different from working-class suffering.

From this ‘coconut’ debate it is not only obvious that race and class are intimately connected in the post-apartheid era, but also that the position of the black middle class continues to be heavily contested. Where Chigumadzi claimed that racial discrimination transcends class-privilege, McKaiser underlined how the lived reality of the middle classes is different from that of lower classes. But apart from their *content*, their narratives are of interest as discursive *moves* that reveal and deal with the discomfort of transgressing racial boundaries by virtue of being (doing, speaking, looking) middle-class. The conundrum of being black and having privilege is not just an analytical matter but continues to be an uncomfortable lived reality too. Chigumadzi’s reclaiming of the label of ‘coconut’, the critical and emotional outbursts of the audience members, and McKaiser’s *tu quoque* all respond to, and are part of, an array of suspicions with regard to the authenticity and racial loyalty of those who are upwardly mobile.

But different suspicions seem to be informing Chigumadzi’s and McKaiser’s narrative in 2015 than those suffered by the young, urban professionals in 2008. While the latter distanced themselves from immoral economic behaviour, both Chigumadzi and McKaiser were concerned with those who suspect them of being disloyal to the ‘true’ black struggle against racial oppression because of their access to sources of middle-class privileges (education, residential location, access to credit), which are historically dominated by whites. Thus, in 2008 the foundation of wealth and spending habits were the object of public suspicion of ‘new’ black middle class, but in 2015 it is rather their loyalty to black liberation and equality that has become the benchmark.

Conclusion

Looking at the moments and manners in which middle-class labels become matters of public contention is important for understanding the discursive dimension of middle-class construction. To understand social dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa, it is worth zooming in on the public and private narratives that surround terminology such as ‘black diamond’, ‘coconut’ and ‘black tax’, and track the way they change over time. Both the ‘black diamond’ and ‘coconut’ narratives revolved around the relationship between upwardly mobile individuals and ‘the rest’, but in different terms, and with different emphases. While the ‘black diamonds’ raised questions of appropriate public presence and interracial recognition, the ‘coconut’ debate was more clearly dominated by issues of intra-racial loyalty. In the years between these discussions, the black middle class has moved from being perceived as a new phenomenon to a noted part of the social landscape in South Africa. In tandem, a subtle shift seems to have occurred in the boundary work black middleclassness requires. Though the question of whether consumerist upward mobility is serving the true cause was latent under the ‘black diamonds’, in subsequent years it surfaced and intensified. What is this apparent shift indicative of? What does it reveal about South Africa, and about the middle classes?

It can be seen as part of the ‘historical trajectories of middle-class elements’ in South Africa (Southall 2004a, 522–3). Various non-white communities were differentially oppressed under formal apartheid and are again differentially positioned vis-a-vis opportunities for advancement in post-apartheid. Under apartheid, *interracial* separation was the dominant organizing principle (although never simply so) that concealed *intra*-racial socio-economic differences, both in popular and academic accounts. The slow but sure development and assertion of a black middle class remained overshadowed by a dominant narrative of interracial inequality. But social differentiation increased and became more apparent with economic liberalization after 1994 (e.g. Krige 2011; cf. Ferguson 2015). This was accompanied by optimism when the

economy was still growing, but with increasing inequality and economic hardship, the racial loyalties of social climbers have become a more pronounced matter of contention. In the case of post-apartheid South Africa, this is painfully bringing out in-group differences, and reformulating questions of racial loyalty. Further historical analysis may yield insight into the ‘strong and dense historical reasons why the performance of racial identity in the present could be so closely connected to practices of acquisition’ (Posel 2010, 172).

In other words, the historical and geographical situatedness of the middle classes becomes evident in analyses of public contentions of middle-class labels. Recent public attention for labels like ‘black diamond’ and ‘coconut’, and people’s efforts at reworking them, are symptomatic of social changes in the post-apartheid era. In the early 2000s the emergence of the supposedly ‘new’ black middle class reflected a process of claiming space next to an established white middle class. Towards the 2010s, after an economic downturn, and under continuing political unrest, the competition for opportunities has intensified, bringing out intra-racial inequalities.

By zooming in on the ways young, urban professionals have responded to public discussions of new wealth, and associated labels in the last decade, I hope to have shown how being – or being perceived as – upwardly mobile is profoundly tied up with questions of economic morality and racial loyalty. The ‘black diamond’ and ‘coconut’ discussions in South Africa thus reveal historically specific instances of privilege management, at the core of which are painful, moral questions of loyalty.

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Notes

1. It carries connotations of inauthenticity, of being not ‘black’ enough. See Vincent 2008.
2. Full transcripts are available on <http://www.journalism.co.za/jamlab/ruth-first/#archive> (last visited 5 April 2018).
3. For a more complete description and analysis of the 2008 fieldwork, see de Coninck 2009. The quotes from the ‘coconut’ debate in 2015 consist of my transcriptions from audio recordings of the event as published online at journalism.co.za, as well as quotes from online publications in reaction to the event in that same month (youtube.com; iol.co.za).
4. See Southall (2004a) for a comparison of early Weberian approaches, and ‘revisionist Marxist analyses’ of black middle classes in 20th century South Africa.
5. The impact of BEE policies on the economy, and who benefits from them, is a topic of ongoing discussion (see for example Southall 2004a, 2004b; Patel and Grahams 2012), but beyond the scope of this article.
6. Internationally covered examples include the (ongoing) Nkandla scandal, on president Zuma’s alleged use of public funds for private home renovations, the Marikana tragedy where striking miners were shot by South African police in 2012, and the student protests under the headings of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall against racial-financial exclusion from higher education (see for example <http://mg.co.za/tag/student-protests>).
7. This noun is now internationally recognized as referring to South African 21st century context: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tenderpreneur>. It refers to a form of entrepreneurship that relies on government tenders, which in South Africa have a reputation of being rigged.
8. Black young urban professionals.
9. This was a collaboration between TNS research surveys & UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing.

10. For a discussion of ‘the ideological undercurrents of the labelling of a black middle class as new’ and its relation to consumption, see Iqani 2015.
11. The Black Management Forum (BMF) describes itself as ‘a non-racial, thought leadership organisation founded in 1976, with the main purpose of influencing socio-economic transformation of our country, in pursuit of socio-economic justice, fairness and equity’ (see www.bmfonline.co.za). It provides a network and support structure for black managers and regularly advises government on policies. The BMF is a national organization with student-branches at most universities in South Africa.
12. The official website for the festival no longer exists. This travel- and hospitality blog gives an impression of what the programme in 2007-8 entailed (<http://www.southafrica.com/blog/lifestyle-sa-festival-celebrating-black>, last visited 5 April 2018).
13. For an analysis of the cosmopolitan and moral qualities of the category of ‘Afropolitan’, see Eze 2014.
14. The UCT Unilever Institute for Strategic Marketing has titled subsequent studies of black middle class ‘4 million & rising’, ‘Forerunners’ and of the black consumer market in general ‘The Majority’ see <http://www.uctunileverinstitute.co.za/> (consulted 11 December 2016).
15. See <http://www.journalism.co.za/projects-a-fellowships/ruth-first/#abouttruth> (consulted 4 January 2017).
16. McKaiser is the author of three non-fiction books on race and politics in South Africa and is also known as a public debater and broadcaster (an introduction to his work can be found here: <https://www.ru.ac.za/politicalinternationalstudies/teach-in/teach-in2013/eusebiusmckaiser/>, consulted 4 January 2017). Chigumadzi has worked as a journalist, published a novel, spoke for TEDxJohannesburg and founded Vanguard magazine. Msimang worked in the human rights sector, spoke for TED and published work in several international newspapers, as well as a recent book about her childhood.
17. For example, Dutch newspaper NRC paraphrased large parts of her speech under the heading ‘In South Africa the ‘coconut’ revolts’ [my translation] (<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2015/08/31/in-zuid-afrika-komt-de-kokosnoot-nu-in-opstand-1528134-a1074767>, 31 August 2015) (consulted 12 January 2017)
18. A full transcript of Chigumadzi’s speech is available online via [journalism.co.za](http://www.journalism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ruth-First-FINAL-Draft--Panashe-Chigumadzi.pdf) (<http://www.journalism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ruth-First-FINAL-Draft--Panashe-Chigumadzi.pdf>, consulted 5 January 2017). A version of her text was also published online at The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/24/south-africa-race-panashe-chigumadzi-ruth-first-lecture>, consulted 19 November 2016).
19. The notion that upwardly mobile blacks were created by the apartheid regime as ‘a buffer against more “radical elements”’, as Chigumadzi puts it, is prevalent since late-apartheid. Krige (2011, 80) notes how the ‘concomitant anger expressed by poor Sowetans against the black middle class, had a surprising unintended consequence in that it radicalised some sections of the black middle class’ (2011, 80).
20. Chigumadzi’s appearance on the South African Broadcasting Channel news show can be viewed via [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDRavsbgf7A) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDRavsbgf7A>, consulted 4 January 2017).
21. First black ordained minister, translator of the bible into Xhosa – LdC.
22. Renown missionary school – LdC.
23. Prominent anti-apartheid dissident – LdC.
24. The racial categories of ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ continue to be socially prevalent and relevant in post-apartheid South Africa, both in legislation, public debate and in everyday social interactions. Read some of McKaiser’s contributions to public debate on coloured versus black identity in South Africa before (<https://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/15/in-south-africa-after-apartheid-colored-community-is-the-big-loser/>) and after (<https://mg.co.za/article/2015-12-03-dont-tell-me-who-i-am-black-man>) the evening at Wits.
25. Read the full letter here: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/the-2015-f-whites-olympiad-1.1903876#.Vi5qg5e4KM6> (consulted 27 August 2018).

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