

# POST-HEGEMONIC AFRIKANERDOM AND DIASPORA. REDEFINING AFRIKANER IDENTITY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA\*

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## 1. Introduction

FW de Klerk, the last Afrikaner president of South Africa, said during a speech he made in London in 1997 on the process of the transition from white to black rule:

*“The decision to surrender the right to national sovereignty is certainly one of the most painful any leader can be asked to take. Most nations are prepared to risk war and catastrophe rather than to surrender this right. Yet this was the decision we had to take. We had to accept the necessity of giving up on the ideal on which we had been nurtured and the dream for which so many generations had struggled for and for which so many of our people had died”.*<sup>1</sup>

This statement indeed reflect a very frank view by a prominent Afrikaner of his people’s experience of the transition of power in contemporary South Africa. Although it should be stated in all fairness that Afrikaners had time to grow into the new political dispensation since 1994, it would also be no understatement to say that many of them experienced the transition as nothing less than traumatic. Based on an analysis of the discourse and debates as reflected especially in the Afrikaans media and Internet discussion forums, two broad notions in which Afrikaner reaction to these dramatic and profound changes is manifested are investigated: a disposition towards diaspora and efforts at redefining Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa. For reasons of space the author does not purport to cover all aspects defining Afrikaner identity within the scope of an article.

The following questions could be posed: What is happening to Afrikaner identity, which was constructed and monopolised in a peculiar way under apartheid, in a post-apartheid South African society? How do Afrikaners negotiate the new space opened up by the advent of the new political order and how do they create a position for themselves in post-apartheid South Africa?

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People* (Cape Town, 2003), p.656.

## 2. Afrikaner diaspora in present terms

The present-day Afrikaner diaspora had its origin in South Africa's period of transition from apartheid to a democratic, non-racial society during the late 1980s and 1990s. After the negotiation process for a new South Africa between the white National Party government and the unbanned black liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) commenced, newspapers began to report on growing numbers of white emigrants who were uneasy about the process of political transition.<sup>2</sup> The new diaspora manifested itself basically in three dimensions of migration.

Firstly, some right-wing Afrikaners resorted to internal migration, which meant "migrating" to the all-white enclave of Orania, the nucleus of an envisaged ethnic *volkstaat* (homeland) for Afrikaners in the interior of South Africa as the solution to escape from the country's problems. According to Van Rooyen, the *volkstaat* option is particularly attractive to those Afrikaners who cannot or do not wish to emigrate to a foreign land but, sensing their impotence to effectively challenge the current government, want to isolate themselves from the black majority to the greatest extent possible and under the constraints of the South African constitution, with their primary goal being to secede and form an Afrikaner state.<sup>3</sup>

A second dimension of migration which some Afrikaners opted for was some form of inward, metaphysical migration - what Van Rooyen refers to as localised "pseudo emigration" and what Richard Ballard calls "semigration". Apart from the trend of moving to safer, enclosed neighbourhoods with high walls and 24-hour armed patrols, or so-called "gated communities", certain Afrikaners have resorted to a physical and psychological withdrawal from everyday life and a kind of self-induced emotional detachment from the realities of South Africa, where the outside world is simply shut-out.<sup>4</sup>

In essence, the reasons for the domestic dimensions of the contemporary Afrikaner diaspora reverberate as a vote of no confidence in a South Africa under black majority rule. According to Vestergaard, for the Afrikaners of

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<sup>2</sup> BM du Toit, "Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas", Paper presented at the seminar of the History Commission of the South African Academy for Science and Arts, Pretoria, 30 January 2003, p.19; J van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek. The Story of South Africa's White Exodus* (Pretoria 2000), pp.vii,5.

<sup>3</sup> Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.x,16, Du Toit, "Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas", p.20. For reference to Orania see also T Pienaar, "Die aanloop tot en stigting van Orania as groeipunt vir 'n Afrikaner-volkstaat" (MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2007) and M Vestergaard, "Afrikanerdom? Negotiating Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa" (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 2000), pp.78-121.

<sup>4</sup> Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.11,18-19; Borman, "Emigrasie onder Afrikaners vandag", pp.389-390; ZB du Toit, *Die Nuwe Toekoms. 'n Perspektief op die Afrikaner by die Eeuwisseling* (Pretoria, 1999), pp.327,342; R Ballard, "Assimilation, emigration, semigration, and integration: 'white' peoples' strategies for finding a comfort zone in post-apartheid South Africa", pp.3,12-13, accessed at <http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/ballard.asp> on 24.3.2005.

Orania the new South Africa is characterised by disorder, crime, violence, farm murders, a general decline of standards and moral values, affirmative action, declining educational standards, and government incompetence, corruption and racism towards whites. Their discourse constructed South Africa as a society on the path to chaos. They experienced a sense of alienation and a feeling of political marginalisation and exclusion, because majority democracy had undermined Afrikaner ethnic political power. It was as if “foreigners” had stolen their country and were now “mismanaging” it.<sup>5</sup>

The most prominent dimension of the present-day diaspora, however, is emigration. Apart from discussing the core causes of this diaspora, it should also be mentioned that as a result of globalisation most ethnic groups, including Afrikaners, are no longer restricted to specific geographical spaces. Since the demise of apartheid and the end of the country’s isolation and of travel restrictions, many South Africans migrated either temporarily or permanently to all corners of the earth in search of better material conditions such as lucrative job opportunities, transferable skills and career improvement possibilities.<sup>6</sup> These are regarded as so-called “pull factors” of emigration.<sup>7</sup>

“Push factors” in the decision to emigrate are often triggered by a critical negative experience – a so-called “last straw” event - affecting the person, a spouse or children, a relative, or a close friend.<sup>8</sup> These negative experiences correlate to a great extent with the reasons for the domestic diaspora and include perceptions of falling standards of education and health care, the Aids pandemic, endemic corruption and mismanagement in the public service, incompetence and the deterioration of government structures, affirmative action, unemployment or bleak job prospects, restrictive labour laws, loss of

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<sup>5</sup> Vestergaard, “Afrikanerdoom?”, pp.102-106,121. Although Vestergaard’s research appears to be a sincere attempt to analyse “different aspects of ‘negotiations’ of Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa”, his methodological points of departure are not scientifically sound in all respects. Fieldwork interviews and questionnaires with Afrikaners were restricted to a sprinkling of Afrikaner spokespersons, two Cape Town suburbs and the right-wing Afrikaner enclave of Orania, while the only Afrikaans literature that was consulted seems to be the peripheral alternative cartoon magazine *Bitterkomix*. (see pp.15-25). Vestergaard apparently made no effort to peruse the often intense discourse and discursive debates on contemporary Afrikaner identity that is being carried on in the mainstream Afrikaans media and literature and other Internet discussion forums. Although Vestergaard’s research also identifies a declining economy and currency as a reason for emigration, it must be stated that in general Afrikaners have benefited materially from the ANC government’s successful economic policies. In this regard see Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp.662,666.

<sup>6</sup> Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, p.34; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.vii,6,101,114,135; Borman, “Emigrasie onder Afrikaners vandag”, pp.388,393,397; T Botha & J Baxter, *The Expat Confessions. South Africans Abroad Speak Out!* (New York, 2005), p.12; G Brand, “Die Afrikaner op soek na diaspora”, Paper presented at the seminar of the History Commission of the South African Academy of Science and Arts, Pretoria, 30 January 2003, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> A Pretorius, “’n Afrikaner-diaspora? Indrukke uit Londen”, Paper presented at the seminar of the History Commission of the South African Academy of Science and Arts, Pretoria,30 January 2003, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.10,12; Du Toit, *The Boers in East Africa*, p.3.

faith in the ANC-led government, high personal income tax, savings being eroded by inflation and an unstable currency, as perceived mainly by whites. However, by far the most outstanding push factor and principal reason given by emigrants for leaving South Africa is rampant crime and violence, lawlessness, the lack of physical safety and the stressful perpetual fear of crime. Most of the emigrants have been touched by crime, whether through theft, car hijackings or family or friends killed in violent criminal acts.<sup>9</sup>

Data analysed by various scholars point to two important implications regarding emigration. Firstly, the predominantly white emigration has resulted in a massive exodus of many professional and highly qualified persons, or “brain drain”, from South Africa in what is sometimes called in newspaper reports a “white flight”. These emigrants include doctors, veterinarians, engineers, accountants, business managers, teachers, scientists, nurses, farmers, clerical workers, IT specialists and artisans. According to De Lange, 841 000 whites emigrated between 1995 and 2005 alone. The white exodus, once a trickle, has turned into a steady stream and has the potential to become a flood which may hold far-reaching consequences for the South African economy. Secondly, the present white exodus is predominantly an Afrikaner emigration. Du Toit quoted news reports referring to an “Afrikaner diaspora”, stating that “Afrikaners [are] now at the front of the queue for tickets out of South Africa”. And according to Statistics South Africa, the emigration figures of Afrikaners have actually surpassed those of English-speaking whites.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of Afrikaner emigrants seem to opt for English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Afrikaners constitute almost half of the total number of South African emigrants to countries such as New Zealand (with Auckland having become a hub of ex-South Africans by the mid-1990s), while 51% of South African doctors who emigrated to the Canadian province of Saskatchewan were Afrikaans speaking. Language adaptability and cultural similarities, living standards, family ties, climate and the demand for skills were decisive in determining these emigrant destinations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.vii-ix,xi,2,35-36,55,71-89,93-107,115,132-133,167; Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.19-20,29-34; Bornman, “Emigrasie onder Afrikaners vandag”, pp.393-397; Botha & Baxter, *The Expat Confessions*, pp.11,13-14,73,81,102; W Brümmer, “Swaels van die Suide”, in *Insig*, 222 (Desember 2006), pp.25-26. See also e.g. “Afrikaan in Duitsland”, “Die reënboognasie is weg”, in *Beeld*, 28 July 2006, posted by [akripolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akripolis@yahoo.com) on 14.8.2006 (Digest Number 108).

<sup>10</sup> See Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.20-22,26,28; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.11,26,36-37,50-51,139,169; Bornman, “Emigrasie onder Afrikaners vandag”, pp.387,393; Brümmer, “Swaels van die Suide”, p.25; J de Lange, “Immigrasie moet regkom om SA ekonomie te red – Beeld”, p.1, accessed at <http://www.solidaritysa.co.za/Tuis/wmprint.php?ArtID=884> on 19.3.2007.

<sup>11</sup> Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.12,19-22,27-28; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.xii,27,38,50-51,139-162; Botha & Baxter, *The Expat Confessions*, pp.6,18.

The international Afrikaner diaspora and the traumatic impact it has had on family structures has stirred a lively response – the so-called *bly of gly-debat* (stay or go debate) - in Afrikaner circles at home. There are probably very few contemporary Afrikaner families who do not have some or other émigré relatives abroad. Especially since the 1990s, disparaging references to the “chicken run” and accusations of emigrants being “disloyal”, “unpatriotic”, “cowardly” and “racist” resonated in the South African press. Arguments for or against emigration became politicised and personal. While one side questioned the loyalty and patriotism of those who were leaving, the other side pointed to the socio-political conditions that caused people to leave the country. The leftist political view is that emigrants are racists who are leaving simply because they cannot tolerate living under a black government. From an Afrikaner nationalist perspective, emigrants were regarded as traitors as they were committing “treason” against the Afrikaner people in South Africa by weakening the strength of the white population group as a whole. Consequently, so the argument goes, the reduction of Afrikaner numbers as a result of emigration will adversely affect the survival of the Afrikaans language and culture.

Others held the view that Afrikaners relinquished their right to be called Afrikaners once they live overseas and that the Afrikaans language cannot survive outside South Africa. But for many emigrants a profound sense of loss – the loss of a unique sense of “South Africanness” and, in some cases, an Afrikaner culture, hence a loss of identity - is a recurrent motif. Some experience feelings of guilt “for leaving their countrymen in the lurch”. A large portion of emigrants continually express their desire to return to South Africa and to make a contribution to its prosperity, but insist that life-threatening crime prevents them from doing so.<sup>12</sup> According to Du Toit, therefore, one finds that the Afrikaner diaspora was driven by a considerable sense of coercion. Many current Afrikaner émigrés give as the reason for their emigration the coercion deriving from fears about their personal safety and the future of their children.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, those who emigrate successfully tend to recreate some sense of order, possibly by having fellow émigrés in their neighbourhood and a circle of friends visiting and socializing together, speaking the native language, joining religious and cultural groups, or, more recently, using the Internet to remain in touch. For example, Afrikaners who emigrated to New Zealand and the United Kingdom were able to re-create a sub-culture of ex-South Africans, and more importantly, a community of Afrikaners in cultural-linguistic enclaves or in certain suburbs, expatriate Afrikaans clubs, publications, Internet

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<sup>12</sup> See Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.ix,xii,115-116,124-130,136,138; Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.19-20,39; Botha & Baxter, *The Expat Confessions*, pp.13,51,55; Brümmer, “Swaels van die Suide”, pp.26-27. See also H Wasserman, “Om hergeboorte te verbeeld – ’n Postkoloniale beskouing van migrasie, kultuur en identiteit”, in E van Heerden (ed.), *Briewe deur die lug – LitNet/Taalsekretariaat-skrywersberaad 2000* (Kaapstad, 2001), pp.298,301 and T du Plessis, “Begrip ‘Afrikaner’ in die smeltkroes”, in *Rapport*, 11 August 2002, p.16.

<sup>13</sup> Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, p.42.

websites and programmes (which can also be connected to Afrikaans radio stations in South Africa), cultural festivals, barbeque gatherings, and stores that sell South African foods in an attempt to introduce Afrikaans into some schools and by creating a sense of unity and continuity through church groups and congregations.

These are diaspora communities which re-establish and perpetuate valued aspects of their language and culture. An Afrikaner collective memory is thus kept alive informally in social contacts, rituals of interaction such as picnics, dances, gatherings, and religious and linguistic identity, by receiving South African entertainers and sports figures, by still supporting South African sports teams and also by individuals keeping in touch with family and friends, especially through electronic mail. In this way an emotional attachment to a South African identity remains with many emigrants much longer. For a sizeable section of expatriates South Africa remains “home” for a very long time, and a considerable part of their time and energy is spent in trying to recreate a “Little South Africa” for themselves in their new country.<sup>14</sup>

The process of assimilation into their host counties might be slow for some emigrants, but the fact remains that most settlers have indicated that they are happy in their new homelands and have no desire, nor any intention, to return to South Africa, except perhaps for the occasional holiday. Although many first-generation Afrikaner emigrants may tend to cling tenaciously to their culture, traditions and language, for Du Toit and Pretorius the problem lies with the second and third generations. The children of Afrikaner emigrants quickly forget or unlearn how to speak Afrikaans. Therefore the maintenance of an Afrikaner identity abroad, which depends on successive generations of “Afrikaners”, is not sustainable. As the process of being different becomes harder to maintain, and when boundaries become so porous that identity cannot be maintained, then such identity fades.<sup>15</sup>

### **3. Efforts at redefining Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa**

#### **3.1 Perspectives on the position of Afrikaners in a post-1994 South Africa**

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<sup>14</sup> Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.12,38,42; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.131,137-162,166,168; Pretorius, “’n Afrikaner-diaspora?”, p.3; “Evangelie weerklink in Afrikaans op Australiese platteland”, in *Kerkbode*, 9 February 2007, p.4; C van Wyk, “Australiërtjies neem nou Afrikaans”, in *Die Burger*, 14 January 2005, p.6; A Rademeyer, “’Blokes’ en ‘mates’ wil Afrikaans leer praat”, in *Die Burger*, 22 March 2006, p.9.

<sup>15</sup> See Du Toit, “Boers, Afrikaners, and Diasporas”, pp.1,37,40,42-43; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek*, pp.130,137,140,168; Botha & Baxter, *The Expat Confessions*, pp.54-55,79-81; Van Rooyen, *The New Great Trek* p.38; Pretorius, “’n Afrikaner-diaspora?”, pp.4-5; Bornman, “Emigrasie onder Afrikaners vandag”, pp.387-388; H Aucamp, “Hou op ‘Afrikaans!’ skree”, in *Die Burger*, 6 April 2002, p.13; B de Villiers, “Probeer eerder dié wat not nog hier is in SA te hou”, in *Rapport*, 27 November 2005, p.14; B Marais, “Dié studie verskil met Kom Huis Toesyfers” and CF Kotzé, “Emigrante sal gewis nie terugkeer nie”, in *Rapport*, 22 October 2006, p.xi.

Especially since the transformation era of the administration of President Thabo Mbeki, who introduced an accelerated programme of the Africanisation of almost all spheres of public South African life, a huge disillusionment with the new South Africa has permeated the mindset of many Afrikaners. According to a 1999 survey by Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, a respected South African sociological analyst, an alarming degree of alienation has developed between the Afrikaner community and the new political and social order since 1994. According to Schlemmer, many Afrikaners felt “switched off” and marginalised, and did not take much interest in mainstream (i.e. black) South Africa. These feelings thus correlate with the manifestations of the Afrikaner diaspora as discussed above. Schlemmer argues that Afrikaners had believed that, in any negotiated settlement, their representatives would drive a hard bargain and their hubris had convinced them that they alone could rule the country. Instead, they have been proven wrong on both accounts.<sup>16</sup>

This uneasiness with the effects of the transformation from white minority rule to a black-controlled democratic state had a profound influence on the ethnic psyche of Afrikaners and on the discourse about the place of an Afrikaner identity in post-1994 South Africa. Buys argues that, where the importance of Afrikanerhood and identity had been overstated before 1994, it was reviled after that. At the same time, the degradation of Afrikaner identity as an integral part of their group identity undermined their loyalty to their country and the African continent.<sup>17</sup> This view was also echoed by Tim du Plessis, the editor of *Rapport*.<sup>18</sup> In the discourse on Afrikaner identity there was thus a correlation between the emotions of emigrating Afrikaners and those of their kinsfolk who chose to remain South Africans. These emotions include disillusionment, alienation, a sense of marginalisation, detachment, feelings of exclusion, “dejection”, inward migration, a sense of powerlessness, and a loss of status and national identity in the post-1994 dispensation. To this could be added the apparent ideological drive and insensitivity among certain ANC functionaries to change and replace place names of particular significance in the Afrikaner cultural heritage without proper consultation or consensus.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See L Schlemmer, “Factors in the persistence or decline of ethnic group mobilisation: a conceptual review and case study of cultural group responses among Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> F Buys, “Ons mag maar aan ons eie kant wees”, in *Rapport*, 15 July 2007, p.20.

<sup>18</sup> T du Plessis, “Treiter die ANC die Afrikaners?”, in *Rapport*, 13 August 2006, <http://free.financialmail.co.za/07/0209/features/efeat.htm> posted by [akripolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akripolis@yahoo.com) on 14.8.2006 (Digest Number 108).

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. H Giliomee and L Schlemmer, “Kwaad maar kwesbaar, versigtig en vervreem”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 16 September 2005, pp.1,4; A Venter, “Nasionale identiteitsvraagstukke in postapartheid-Suid-Afrika”, in *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, 39,1 (March 1999), p.23; Du Toit, *Die Nuwe Toekoms*, pp.74,127,349; “Rapport editor T du Plessis looks at the emergence of a new Afrikaner, “New Afrikaner unity a call for leadership”, in *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2007, posted by [akripolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akripolis@yahoo.com) on 3.3.2007 (Digest Number 125); “Oubaas”, “Afrikaners lyk gehawend”, in *Die Burger*, 8 May 2007, p.18; M Rossouw, “Afrikaans kry minder steun, sê Giliomee” and “Afrikaners ‘glo hulle word bedreig soos ná Boereoorlog””, in *Die Burger*, 1 June 2005, p.7; F Buys, “Só kan Afrikaner na toekoms reik”, in *Rapport*, 16

In the light of the soul-searching about their cultural and political existence in and relationship to the new South Africa, Amanda Gouws, a professor in political science at the University of Stellenbosch, asks a rather controversial rhetorical question in a newspaper column as to whether there is any other population group in the world that is so “obsessed” with its identity as white Afrikaners.<sup>20</sup> This identity crisis became apparent when, against the background of the negative association of the history of Afrikanerdom with apartheid, some prominent Afrikaner intellectuals, in an act of self-renunciation, publicly distanced and disassociated themselves from their Afrikaner ethnic identity while still maintaining Afrikaans as their language.<sup>21</sup> According to Giliomee and Schlemmer, it was probably in an effort to be politically correct and to limit any damage to their image and academic careers.<sup>22</sup> In a vigorous polemic that was waged in the Afrikaans media, however, such utterances were severely criticised and lambasted by Afrikaners who argued that an Afrikaner identity deserved a space in the new South Africa, albeit non-rationally redefined.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 The Afrikaans language debate

One of the most contentious issues regarding Afrikaner identity is the status and position of the Afrikaans language. In his surveys Schlemmer found that the issue of language rights represented the one area where white Afrikaans speakers felt most threatened and ethnically marginalized, and that a sense of being discriminated against in terms of language and culture is a matter of

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January 2005, p.11; M du Preez, “Changing ideas of Afrikaner/white identity”, pp.1-10, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/max\\_du\\_preez.asp](http://www.litnet.co.za/seminarroom/max_du_preez.asp) on 22.7.2005.

<sup>20</sup> A Gouws, “Ons beheptheid met Afrikanerskap”, in *Die Burger*, 24 May 2007, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. D Hefers, “Afrikaner-debat is uitgeleef, dood”, in *Die Burger*, 23 June 2002, p.16; PF Erasmus, “Begrip ‘Afrikaner’ het nie bestaansreg”, in *Die Burger*, 23 March 2003, p.25; W Esterhuyse, “Rassisme die eintlike gevaar”, in *Die Burger*, 13 April 2005, p.14; A van Niekerk, “Kyk vorentoe, vat hande”, in *Die Burger*, 21 April 2005, p.20; A van Niekerk en W Esterhuyse, “Nuwe nasionale identiteit is nodig”, in *Die Burger*, 16 May 2005, p.8; P de Vos, “Afrikanerskap is nie a-polities nie”, in *Die Burger*, 26 April 2005, p.20; P de Vos, “Nie veel swart Afrikaners”, in *Die Burger*, 17 May 2005, p.13; “Die wysgere stamp koppe”, in *Rapport*, 27 February 2005, p.vi; A de Vries, “Neo-Voortrekervrou”, in *Insig*, May 2007, pp.52-53; Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p.616 and A van Niekerk, “Oor die wegbly van die jollie bobbejaan”, <http://www.litnet.co.za>, 26 January 2005, posted by [akropolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoo.com) on 7.2.2005.

<sup>22</sup> Giliomee and Schlemmer, “Kwaad maar kwesbaar”, p.4.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. H Giliomee, “Voetsoolvlak lewer die ware demokrate”, in *Die Burger*, 19 July 2005, p.8; G Brand, “Wanaangepas, op die verkeerde plek, uit pas”, in *Die Burger*, 4 April 2007, p.19; N Viljoen, “Bly ‘n Afrikaner”, in *Die Burger*, 9 April 2007, p.8; JD Coetzee, “Kan nie stam ontbind”, in *Die Burger*, 16 April 2007, p.12; L Scholtz, “Hoekom ek Afrikaner is...oor ek een is”, in *Die Burger*, 11 May 2007, p.14; D Roodt, “Die Bôggom en Voertsek-debat”, posted by [akropolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoo.com) on 7 February 2007; J Rossouw, “Hoera vir die Jollie Bobbejaan! ‘n Antwoord aan Anton van Niekerk”, pp.1-6, accessed at <http://www.vryeafrikaan.co.za/lees.php?id=108> on 17.2.2005. See also M Kriel, “Fools, Philologists and Philosophers: Afrikaans and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism”, in *Politikon*, 33,1 (April 2006), footnote 8, p.68.



near-consensus among them.<sup>24</sup> Ampie Coetzee, a retired professor of Afrikaans literature at the University of the Western Cape, aptly put these sentiments into words by stating that for Afrikaners Afrikaans is more than a language, it's a "tonguing" of identity. If Afrikaners were to lose their language, they would become nothing.<sup>25</sup> Jaco Alant, a lecturer in languages at the Durban University of Technology, ascribes the strong links to Afrikaner identity underlying the language debate to their experience during the twentieth century of being empowered in their own language. This explains Afrikaners' propensity to make language an issue of identity.<sup>26</sup>

Although the post-apartheid South African constitution provides for eleven official languages, among others also Afrikaans, since 1994 Afrikaans has been dropped as a language of the state's bureaucracy. Central, provincial and local governments have switched to functioning virtually exclusively in English, as have the parastatals and government research institutes. There are pressures to downgrade Afrikaans within the legal system and there has been a dramatic decline in Afrikaans usage on television, while English has become the dominant television language. Afrikaans has effectively been abandoned as a language of signage, product labelling and announcements at airports and railway stations. Companies that previously ran their operations in Afrikaans are also switching to English. As part of their identity crisis and identity "dislocation", Eric Louw argues that Afrikaners not only have to come to terms with a loss of state patronage, but also face a degree of state hostility directed at their language and cultural forms.<sup>27</sup>

But it was state pressure to convert Afrikaans schools and universities into parallel- or dual-medium institutions in order to provide access to non-Afrikaans speakers that has unleashed various forms of mobilisation from the Afrikaner community. Many Afrikaners believe that the survival of their culture and ethnic identity ultimately depends on the survival of their language, and they fear that the predominance of English, when introduced in parallel or dual systems of education, would eventually lead to Afrikaans institutions of learning becoming anglicised.

A sensational case in point was the legal battle waged over the medium of instruction of the Afrikaans-medium Primary School Mikro, in Kuilsrivier, near Cape Town. In January 2005 the Department of Education of the Western

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<sup>24</sup> Schlemmer, "Factors in the persistence or decline of ethnic group mobilisation", pp.153,241-243,318,342,344,346.

<sup>25</sup> A Coetzee, "Waarheid van taal is Engels", in *Die Burger*, 16 February 2006, p.23.

<sup>26</sup> J Alant, "Oor bemagtiging, taal en die Afrikaans-debat in die Coca-Cola-demokrasie", pp.1-8, accessed at [http://www.linnet.co.za/taaldebat/alant\\_coca\\_cola.asp](http://www.linnet.co.za/taaldebat/alant_coca_cola.asp) on 28.7.2006.

<sup>27</sup> PE Louw, "Political power, national identity, and language: the case of Afrikaans", in *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 170 (October 2004), pp.44,46-47,51,54; P Duvenhage, "Multilingualism, Afrikaans and Normative Political Theory", Paper presented at the International Colloquium on Multilingualism and the Media, University of Antwerpen, 30 November 2004, pp.1,3-5; Du Toit, *Die Nuwe Toekoms*, pp.200-217,225-227,233-240.

Cape Province attempted to compel the school to take in a number of English-speaking learners, arguing that the English schools in the Kuilsrivier area were filled to capacity and that Mikro had spare capacity. The Department's decision would in effect have changed the school's medium of instruction to dual medium. The school's governing board, however, acting on behalf of the Afrikaans parent community, took the Department to court to prevent the change of its language of instruction. The court ruled in favour of the governing body and stipulated that the Department could not force the school to teach learners in English. Even the Department's appeal against this court ruling failed. The Court of Appeal confirmed the ruling of the Cape Town Supreme Court that school governing bodies had a constitutional right to determine the language of instruction in their schools.<sup>28</sup>

The most ferocious contemporary debate on language matters, however, was waged among Afrikaners themselves on the position of Afrikaans as medium of instruction at the University of Stellenbosch – an institution which is often referred to as the (historical) “cradle of nationalistic Afrikanerdom”. This fierce debate initiated the mobilisation and participation of the university's Afrikaans-speaking alumni on an unprecedented scale in the post-1994 era. The debate was characterised by hardened stances, which at times amounted to personal attacks and which were reminiscent of bitter political and cultural feuds that occurred among Afrikaners in the past.

The issue became public soon after the appointment in 2002 of Professor Chris Brink as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch. According to the Higher Education Act of 1997, the Minister of Education determined the language policy of institutions of higher education. In 2002 the then minister, Kader Asmal, declared that exclusive Afrikaans-speaking universities should also make provision for parallel instruction as no student could be obstructed from enrolling at any state-funded university as a result of the language of instruction, especially in strategic subjects such as engineering and medical sciences. In addition, these universities were to provide the Department of Education with time frames for the period 2004 to 2006 in which their adjusted language policies would be implemented.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, under Brink's leadership the University of Stellenbosch began to adjust its language policy to one of dual Afrikaans-English instruction on undergraduate level and declared that the issue of the medium of instruction is a problem which “should not be solved but should be managed”.<sup>30</sup>

This policy soon led to serious criticism by prominent Afrikaner intellectuals and other public figures, who stated that such a language strategy would lead

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<sup>28</sup> M Merton, “Mikro se uitspraak ‘sege vir Afrikaans’”, in *Die Burger*, 19 February 2005, p.8; M Merton en P de Bruin, “Aikona! WKOD kan skole nie dwing om Rooitaal te huisves”, in *Die Burger*, 28 June 2005, p.1; “Mikro”, in *Die Burger*, 18 July 2005, p.10; J Rossouw, “Onderwys: Die staat teen die gemeenskap: Die geval van Laerskool Mikro”, pp.1-6, accessed at <http://www.vryeafrikaan.co.za/lees.php?id=148> on 28.4.2005.

<sup>29</sup> B Louw, “Goeie nuus vir Afrikaans”, in *Die Burger*, 9 November 2002, p.13.

<sup>30</sup> C Brink, “US-rektor stel taalvisie”, in *Die Burger*, 11 June 2002, p.9.

to a “reckless” language displacement of Afrikaans, to the gradual anglicisation of the University and to the “suicide” of Afrikaans. These lobbyists advocated that Afrikaans should remain the University’s “anchor language”.<sup>31</sup> Professor Pieter Kapp, the chairperson of the University’s convocation, representing its alumni, prophetically warned that the university’s language policy “could lead to protracted language tension and turbulence on campus”.<sup>32</sup>

The Stellenbosch language debate flared up again and intensified when the University management approved of the Faculty of Art’s 2005 decision to introduce dual Afrikaans-English medium of instruction in all its undergraduate courses. This would become the fiercest debate in Afrikaner circles on the status and place of their language in post-apartheid South Africa since 1994. The issue threatened to totally alienate the University of Stellenbosch management from the largest section of its alumni and traditional Afrikaans supporters. The debate swiftly divided people into two camps and was characterised by personal accusations, innuendo and opposing positions which became more and more intransigent. Pro-Afrikaans lobbyists, including more than eighty Afrikaans writers, academics and intellectuals, some of international repute, accused Brink, the university management and their supporters of a breach of trust between them and the alumni on the position of Afrikaans at the institution. The Brink camp was also accused of favouring English, the “killer language” and of putting Afrikaans on a “slippery slope to anglicisation and extinction”.<sup>33</sup>

According to *Die Vrye Afrikaan* the Afrikaners in the Brink camp suffered from “pathological guilt” because of the apartheid past. They could only maintain the positions of power or influence they enjoyed under the new dispensation by “relativising, denying or even renouncing their ethno-linguistic identity”.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See e.g. H Giliomee, “Stellenbosch moet besliste reëls instel”, in *Die Burger*, 18 June 2002, p.10; JL Sadie, “Afrikaans by US gerelativeer”, in *Die Burger*, 21 June 2002, p.10; L Scholtz, “Afrikaans: Trek streep nou op Stellenbosch”, in *Die Burger*, 28 June 2002, p.10; T du Plessis, “Baklei gerus, maar maak seker jy wen”, in *Rapport*, 30 June 2002, p.18; J Vosloo, “Taaltnis in die skadu van die eike”, in *Rapport*, 30 June 2002, p.19; A-M Mischke, “Drastiese Taalplan”, in *Rapport*, 1 September 2002, p.1.

<sup>32</sup> T Ferreira, “Nog ‘n fel aanval op US-taalplan”, in *Die Burger*, 1 October 2002, p.1; T Ferreira, “US teen uitgerekte taalonrus gemaak”, in *Die Burger*, 14 October 2002, p.2.

<sup>33</sup> See B Breytenbach, *et al*, “Afrikaans nou op glybaan by US”, in *Die Burger*, 22 September 2005; M O’ Connor, “US se ‘T-beleid plaas Afrikaans op glybaan””, in *Die Burger*, 22 September 2005; “Dié skrywers teken almal US-beswaarskrif”, in *Die Burger*, 13 October 2005, p.2; P Kapp, “US ‘versaak sy eie visie””, in *Die Burger*, 18 October 2005, p.13; M Malan, “‘Taal-tsoenami’ tref beleërde Matieland”, in *Rapport*, 30 October 2005, p.8; E Joubert, *et al*, “Skrywersversoek aan die US”, pp.1-7, accessed at <http://www.litnet.co.za/taaldebat/skrywersversoek.asp> on 13.12.2005. See also H Giliomee and L Schlemmer, (eds.), *Kruispad. Die toekoms van Afrikaans as openbare taal* (Cape Town, 2001) and H Giliomee and L Schlemmer, *‘n Vaste plek vir Afrikaans* Stellenbosch, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> J Rossouw, “Die Afrikaanse universiteit van die toekoms”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 17 February 2006, p.10.

On the other hand, the Brink camp accused the Afrikaans lobbyists of being “neo-Afrikaners”, “neo-conservatives”, “reactionary”, and of “clinging to privileges”, who with their arguments were pursuing an Afrikaner “volkstaat of the mind”, or an “Afrikaner enclave” and were “yearning for a discredited past and a defunct Afrikaner nationalism”.<sup>35</sup>

The mobilisation around the language policy at the University of Stellenbosch became even more intense when about 3000 students signed a petition, and when a circular from the convocation petitioned more than 70 000 alumni to oppose the dual-medium option.<sup>36</sup> Matters came to a head when a meeting of the convocation was called at Stellenbosch in November 2005. About 1200 alumni converged on the University town in what was to become the largest meeting in the convocation’s history. Approximately 2600 Stellenbosch graduates from all over the world participated in the language debate and 2549 endorsed a reconfirmation of the convocation’s 2002 motion that Stellenbosch University should be positioned as an Afrikaans-speaking university which accommodates multilingualism. For some, the Stellenbosch debate represented a “turning point” for Afrikaans either to be maintained as an “academic language” or to be relegated to the status of a “kitchen language”. Never before in its history were the executive of the University of Stellenbosch so severely and sharply criticised in public by its own convocation for its policies.<sup>37</sup>

The position of the Afrikaans lobbyists was strengthened when, in the wake of the 2005 meeting, four pro-Afrikaans members of the convocation were elected to serve on the council of the University of Stellenbosch, its highest governing body. Simultaneously, three “Brink supporters” were defeated in the election. It was clear that the pressure, as a result of the controversial language policy, became untenable for the University’s management. Not only were all decisions regarding language since 2002 referred back to the University’s Senate and Council, but a committee headed by the Afrikaner historian and newly elected pro-Afrikaans member of the Council, Hermann Giliomee, was also requested to table an alternative language plan for the University.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See e.g. C Brink, *No Lesser Place. The taaldebate at Stellenbosch* (Stellenbosch, 2006) and F Cloete, “Neokonserwatiewe aanslag op die psige”, in *Die Burger*, 30 March 2006, p.18.

<sup>36</sup> M O’Connor, “Brief oor Afrikaans aan US na 70 000 oud-Maties op pad”, in *Die Burger*, 28 September 2005, p.2; M Malan, “Maties maak hul stem dik vir Afrikaans”, in *Rapport*, 23 October 2005, p.2; “Petisie aan die Raad van die US”, pp.1-2, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/miniseminare/matie\\_petisie.asp](http://www.litnet.co.za/miniseminare/matie_petisie.asp) on 17.11.2005; “High Noon op Stellenbosch”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 18 November 2005, p.5; “US-studentepeiling: Afrikaans toenemend geveto”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 19 May 2006, p.5.

<sup>37</sup> See Universiteit van Stellenbosch pamphlet, *Vergadering van die Konvokasie*, 9 November 2006, pp.1-9; M O’Connor, “T-opsie vir US afgeskiet”, in *Die Burger*, 11 November 2005, p.1; R van der Horst, “US-krisis is keerpunt vir Afrikaans se status”, in *Die Burger*, 21 May 2006, p.23; “High Noon op Stellenbosch”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 18 November 2005, p.5.

<sup>38</sup> See; C Smith, “US-raad vra senaat om weer na taalbeleid te kyk”, in *Die Burger*, 8 November 2005, p.1; “US-raad”, in *Die Burger*, 8 November 2005, p.12; M Malan, “Verkieping vir Maties se raad word taaloorlog”, in *Rapport*, 19 February 2006, p.1; M Malan, “Ons wil

Eventually, the unpleasantness generated by the language debate, the controversies which surrounded Brink's policies, as well as the almost untenable and massive public pressure the University management had to face on the Afrikaans language issue, were probably all contributing factors to the unexpected resignation of Chris Brink in July 2006 as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Stellenbosch, quite some time before his tenure was over. The Afrikaans press referred to Brink's "faulty vision" and speculated that his intransigent position on the university's language policy had largely estranged him from the Afrikaans-speaking community and claimed that he even began to lose the unconditional support of some of the key role players at the university.<sup>39</sup>

Brink was succeeded at Stellenbosch by Prof. Russel Botman, the University's first Coloured Vice-Chancellor. Not only did the symbolic gesture behind his well-received appointment represent a bolder striving towards greater diversity at the university, but Botman introduced a fresh perspective to the Stellenbosch language debate by stating that "the moral basis of Afrikaans should be restored".<sup>40</sup> An interesting development since the advent of Botman's tenure was the founding of Adam Tas, a non-racial pro-Afrikaans student lobby, on the campus.<sup>41</sup> Although the issue of the University's medium of instruction is not resolved as yet, a changed atmosphere and spirit of co-operation on campus between the pro-Afrikaans lobbyists and the University management, in an effort resolve this sensitive matter, has been noticeable.<sup>42</sup>

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Afrikaans bly!", in *Rapport*, 26 March 2006, p.1; ZB du Toit, "Matie-reaktor reik hand na Giliomee oor taal", in *Rapport*, 2 July 2006, p.1; "US-Afrikaans", in *Die Burger*, 3 July 2006, p.10; "US-reaktor betrek Konvokasie-bestuur by taalproses", in *US Nuus*, 30.6.2006, accessed at [http://www.sun.ac.za/news/NewsItem\\_Afr.asp?ItemID=10491&Zone=E05](http://www.sun.ac.za/news/NewsItem_Afr.asp?ItemID=10491&Zone=E05) on 24.7.2006.

<sup>39</sup> See "Maties verloor Rektor aan Britse universiteit", in *US Mediaverklaring*, 4 Julie 2006; M Malan en P Malan, "Hy soek stil-stil werk oorsee", in *Rapport*, 9 July 2006, p.10; "Foutiewe visie", in *Rapport*, 9 July 2006, p.18; "Die geval Chris Brink", accessed at <http://www.vryeafrikaan.co.za/lees.php?id=615> on 24.7.2006. An irony which added weight to the arguments of Brink's opponents was the fact that he left Stellenbosch at the end of 2006 to become the Vice-Chancellor of the English-speaking University of Newcastle in Britain.

<sup>40</sup> G Brand, "US 'wil morele basis van Afrikaans help herstel", in *Die Burger*, 9 February 2007, p.7; R Botman, "Johan Combrink-gedenklesing: 'n Perspektief op Afrikaans", pp.1-3, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print\\_article&news\\_id=10538&cause-i...](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print_article&news_id=10538&cause-i...) on 2.3.2007.

<sup>41</sup> L-B Lamprecht, "Adam Tas in taalstryd", in *Die Burger*, 12 February 2007, p.7; M Malan, "Maties en Tukkies op oorlogspad oor Afrikaans", in *Rapport*, 11 February 2007, p.6; R Nel, *et al*, "Die nuwe Adam Tas: Henry Cloete gesels met Roelof Nel en Jared Abels", pp.1-3, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print\\_article&news\\_id=9989&cause\\_id...](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print_article&news_id=9989&cause_id...) on 2.3.2007.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. *US Memorandum: Taalhersieningsproses*, 19 Julie 2006; M Malan, "Wiele aan't rol vir US se nuwe taalstrategie", in *Rapport*, 16 July 2006, p.8; "Wye konsensus oor vertrekpunte vir hersiening van Taaldebat", in *US Kampusnuus*, 1 March 2007. p.1.

### 3.3 Afrikaans popular culture and the “De la Rey phenomenon”

Whereas it is mostly the middle-aged and older generations of Afrikaners who seem to be suffering a “post-(Afrikaner)-state melancholy” in terms of their cultural identity and the status of their language in the new South Africa, the younger generation of post-apartheid Afrikaners does not necessarily share the same burden as they never enjoyed state power at all.<sup>43</sup>

What took the Afrikaans community by storm and by surprise like no other cultural event since 1994 was undoubtedly the release and unprecedented success of a modern popular Afrikaans song on the Anglo Boer War leader and Afrikaner folk hero, General Koos De la Rey, sung by Bok van Blerk, the stage name of an Afrikaans rock singer, Louis Pepler. In essence, the song is a ballad about the determined and heroic exploits of the Boers against the superior force of the British Army during the war. In the face of the Boers’ hopeless situation, the song calls on De la Rey, for whom they were prepared to die, to come and lead the Boers to resurrection as a nation. Van Blerk drew large crowds of Afrikaners, young and old, from all over South Africa and even abroad to his shows, which always end with a climatic finale with the singing of the De la Rey song in which the crowds join with tremendous emotion, passion and displays of patriotic fervour. Within a very short period 200 000 copies of the album were sold, which is a record for Afrikaans music. Not surprisingly, the press has dubbed the reaction to the song the “De la Rey phenomenon”.<sup>44</sup>

What was also not surprising is that, as in the case of other prominent Afrikaner discourses, the De la Rey phenomenon soon became a contentious issue, with Afrikaner contemporaries hotly debating the merits and demerits of the song. It has been exhaustively analysed in the Afrikaans media and it even caught the attention of respected international newspapers such as the *New York Times* as well as the *Financial Times* and *The Guardian* in Britain.<sup>45</sup> Analysts who were critical of the song characterised it as being “a distracting side show” to the interests of the broader South African society; Afrikaner “nostalgia” and “romanticism” and “a longing for an innocent past”; “a yearning for a more military lifestyle”; the “De la Rey hysteria”; a one-sided perspective

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<sup>43</sup> J Rossouw, “FAK as ideeskepper”, in *Die Burger*, 19 July 2007, p.19; J Rossouw, “Understanding Afrikaner alienation”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan* Intussen 5 Maart 2007 (Jaargang 04 Nommer 02), accessed at <http://www.vryeafrikaan.co.za> on 6.3.2007.

<sup>44</sup> H Retief, “Hy’s ‘n Bok vir die Boere”, in *Rapport*, 28 January 2007, p.15; “Van Blerk se ‘De la Rey’ verkoop soos soetkoek”, in *Die Burger*, 30 January 2007, p.3; H Booyens en S Ahmed, “Hoe Rey die Boere? Jil-Jil, So!, in *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 February 2007, pp.14-15,20; “De la Rey lei die Boere in Londen”, posted by [akropolis@yahoogroups.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoogroups.com) on 18.3.2007 (Digest Number 128).

<sup>45</sup> “Song Wakens Injured Pride of Afrikaners”, in *New York Times*, 27 February 2007, posted by [akropolis@yahoogroups.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoogroups.com) on 3.3.2007 (Digest Number 125) and A Russell, “Boer Roar”, in *Financial Times*, 21 July 2007, accessed at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/c6b9deea-371e-11dc-9f6d-0000779fd2ac.html> on 24.7.2007; “De la Rey-debat en ‘ongemaklike Afrikaners’ haal voorblad van bekende Amerikaanse koerant”, in *Die Burger*, 28 February 2007, p.2.

focusing only on the cultural interests of one race and interest group; and also “an expression of frustration, uncertainty and a feeling of being marginalised which could easily develop into a new wave of Afrikaner arrogance and ethnic machismo”.<sup>46</sup> The ANC Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, even went so far as to suggest that the De la Rey song could contain a “coded message for an armed rebellion” and warned that it “could be captured by right-wingers who wanted to incite Afrikaners against the government”. Jordan’s claims were, however, immediately refuted by a number of prominent Afrikaner intellectuals.<sup>47</sup>

For analysts who held a positive point of view on the De la Rey phenomenon, the song provided a stimulus, especially among the Afrikaner youth, for discovering their own identity, as it made them realise that General De la Rey symbolised a heroic past – a past which Afrikaners could be proud of. De la Rey thus became “a mentor on the way to cultural self-discovery”.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

More than a decade into a new democratic South Africa Vestergaard’s observation that Afrikaner identity is to a certain degree in a state of flux<sup>49</sup> still holds true, whether they are in a diaspora or struggling to redefine their position and cultural identity and the status their language in their homeland. The propensity of Afrikaner émigrés to settle in predominantly English-speaking Caucasian and Protestant countries and in communities sharing similar biological, religious and cultural characteristics, as Du Toit has pointed out, has certain implications in terms of the diaspora and redefining Afrikaner cultural identity. Firstly, it has been clearly indicated that for the majority of

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<sup>46</sup> See C Niehaus, “De la Rey’: a distracting side show...”, pp.1-3, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause\\_dir\\_news\\_item&cause\\_id=1270...](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&cause_id=1270...) on 22.3.2007; A Bezuidenhout, “From Voëlvry to De la Rey: Popular music, Afrikaner Nationalism and lost irony”, pp.1-13, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print\\_article&news\\_id=11123&cause\\_i...](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=print_article&news_id=11123&cause_i...) on 2.3.2007; “Kleinboer”, “De la Rey-gewildheid: ‘n versugting na die militêre”, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause\\_dir\\_news\\_item&cause\\_id=1270&news\\_id=9562](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&cause_id=1270&news_id=9562) on 2.3.2007; C Fourie, “Tyd nog nie ryp vir ‘n taalraad”, in *Rapport*, 25 Febuaury 2007, p.2; A Boesak, “Ons en die Generaal”, in *Bylae by Die Burger*, 24 February 2007, p.4 and M du Preez, “De la Rey draai in sy graf om...”, in *Bylae by Die Burger*, 3 February 2007, p.6, respectively.

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. “Bok ‘blêr nie politiek””, in *Die Burger*, 25 January 2007, p.14; A Smith, “Daar’s g’n De la Rey-kode” and E Williamson, “Lied laat niemand laer trek””, in *Die Burger*, 7 February 2007, p.3; A Smith, “Zuma sing sy eie ‘De la Rey’, sê DA”, in *Die Burger*, 8 February 2007, p.3; H Booyens en S Cilliers, “Koos op ‘n Wit Perd”, in *Die Huisgenoot*, 15 February 2007, pp.16-17; S Swart & A Grundlingh, “De la Rey – no cause for alarm”, accessed at [http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause\\_dir\\_news\\_item&cause\\_id=1270...](http://www.litnet.co.za/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&cause_id=1270...) on 22.3.2007.

<sup>48</sup> See e.g. M van Bart, “Die medium is die boodskap!”, in *Die Vrye Afrikaan*, 20 April 2007, p.24; L Scholtz, “‘De la Rey’ is simbool van iets wat groter is”, in *Die Burger*, 1 December 2006, p.12; Booyens en Cilliers, “Koos op ‘n Wit Perd”, pp.16-17; T Eloff, “New Afrikaner unity a call for leadership”, in *Mail and Guardian*, 2 March 2007, posted by [akropolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoo.com) on 3.3.2007 (Digest Number 125).

<sup>49</sup> Vestergaard, “Afrikanerdoom?”, pp.57,138

these persons emigration was an irreversible and permanent act of will. Secondly, the perpetual maintenance of any Afrikaner identity and the Afrikaans language abroad, especially after the first generation, is not sustainable. Therefore those émigrés are lost as far as Afrikaner identity formation is concerned, and this should be accepted as a *fait accompli*. Rather it seems that the future of Afrikaner cultural identity and the Afrikaans language will be determined in South Africa only (and to a lesser extent perhaps also in Namibia).

According to the respected Afrikaner intellectual and former politician, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, in future the term “Afrikaner” will have to be associated with a new set of values which are unknown as yet, because those who wish to be Afrikaners will have to start moulding and refining those values. How this opportunity is used will determine whether there is a future for Afrikaners in the new South Africa. Any group that would undermine the striving towards transcending values of a common South African patriotism by claiming special minority status can expect less sympathy for those minority interests from the black majority. Therefore Afrikaners would have to become a new “imagined community”.<sup>50</sup>

In the sacrifice Afrikaners made in 1994 by giving up their minority domination of South Africa, they had indeed largely lived up to the suggestion by NP van Wyk Louw, one of the greatest Afrikaner poets and essayists, that they had to choose between “mere survival” and “survival in justice”.<sup>51</sup> The emphasis in the intellectual discourse among Afrikaners on their identity has become, although at times still rigorous and heated, at least more nuanced and has shifted from a focus on exclusivity towards being more inclusive.<sup>52</sup> Where Afrikaners are, on the one hand, experiencing a sense of cultural loss, they are, on the other hand, rapidly re-constructing a new cultural frame in the emergence of cultural festivals.<sup>53</sup>

From a perusal of the discourse as reflected in the Afrikaans media, however, it is evident that the debate on the re-negotiation of a cultural identity for Afrikaners is still a very dynamic and on-going process which is bound to continue generating interesting and lively responses from the Afrikaner community as the creation of a post-apartheid heterogeneous and multi-cultural South African society unfolds further.

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<sup>50</sup> F van Zyl Slabbert, *Tough Choices. Reflections of an Afrikaner African*. (Cape Town, 2000), pp.80-82,85. See also Vestergaard, “Afrikanerdoom”, pp.73-74.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p.663.

<sup>52</sup> C Malan, “Denkendes lei nou Afrikaner”, in *Beeld*, 4 April 2007, posted by [akropolis@yahoo.com](mailto:akropolis@yahoo.com) on 7.4 2007.

<sup>53</sup> See Kitshoff, “Die opkoms, dinamika en betekenis van die Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees”, pp.83-89,101,123-126,134-151,153-163.