

*development
dialogues*



* monograph 12



isandla
institute



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

BEING SOUTH AFRICAN: WHAT IS A SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITY?

*monograph 12

ISANDLA INSTITUTE / OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION

About Development Dialogues

Development Dialogues is a joint initiative of Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. The aim of the public dialogue series is to create a space for critical reflection and dialogue among key development stakeholders in South Africa. In doing so, the organisers seek to make a (rather modest) contribution to enhancing the quality of debate in the development sector. Through *Development Dialogues*, Isandla Institute and the Open Society Foundation intend to bring about creative and constructive multi-stakeholder meeting opportunities that push stakeholders to think beyond the confines of their immediate interests and theoretical paradigms.

This monograph captures the speakers' inputs and discussions at the Development Dialogue on 'Being South African: What is a South African identity?', which took place on 13 September 2007 at the Centre for the Book in Cape Town.

Published in 2007



Isandla Institute
PO Box 12263
Mill Street, Gardens 8010
South Africa
Email: admin@isandla.org.za
Website: www.isandla.org.za



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Open Society Foundation for South Africa
PO Box 23161
Claremont 7735
South Africa
Email: admin@ct.osf.org.za
Website: www.osf.org.za



I want to approach this question of the nature of being South African by way of a discussion of a term that has surfaced recently. It is definitely there on the radio and when you listen to commentators. It is the idea of a black republic. I want to explore what this means in the South African context.

I want to suggest that there has been a drift away from some of the values expressed in Thabo Mbeki's 'I am an African speech' – the sometimes ambiguous, ambivalent non-racialism of that speech – towards a definition of a black republic, which I think represents the values of an African National Congress pre-1955, perhaps even pre-1942.

This notion of a black republic is articulated quite vociferously in the current situation. I suspect we will hear it more often as the current presidency heads further towards crisis. It is associated with the following argument: that criticism of the South African government represents, ultimately, a white view. When the person in question is not white, the argument goes, he or she nonetheless gives voice to white values. In this way, he or she is unwittingly complicit in the broadcast of a racist view of the current government. When this sort of criticism is articulated, especially in what is called the commercial press, there is a sense that they are stooges in a game aimed at undermining what is effectively a black republic.

According to the logic of this argument, criticism, in effect, serves not to animate or elevate criticism or discussion in the public domain, but ultimately to criticise a black government, and black people in general. By implication, it serves to cast

doubt on the intelligence and ultimately the sovereignty of a black government. Criticism therefore serves not to enhance the democratic space but ultimately to undermine it. This argument has been made very forcefully by Dali Mpofu, but we hear it all over the place. Christine Qunta has made this argument as has Ronald Suresh Roberts.

What I want to suggest very briefly is that what we are dealing with here is a fundamental shift in the notion of a 'black republic', or rather, that the term 'black' has been invested here with a new meaning.

'Black republic' is a new term in the current situation. But it harps back to a much older era, to 1928 when the idea of a native republic was first introduced at the sixth congress of the communist international. In the beginning it found its most forceful articulation in the position of the communist party. A version of this idea was finally accepted as policy by the ANC in 1969 at the Morogoro Conference – in the form of support for a National Democratic Revolution.

Criticism is seen not to animate or elevate discussion in the public domain, but ultimately to cast doubt on the intelligence and sovereignty of a black government.

Here a 'black' republic (or native republic) meant a national democracy. In other words, what was accepted in Tanzania was the idea that the South African revolution was a national democratic



The measure of blackness in these two notions of 'black republic' is fundamentally different.

revolution in pursuit of a national democracy. I think a version of that idea was recently articulated very elegantly – and I was very relieved to read it – by Joel Netshitenze in the Mail and Guardian. It was a defence of the idea of a national democracy.

So what is the relationship between a national democracy and what we hear in the public domain around a black republic, and what does it mean for our notion of being South African? Let me begin by saying this: I think the measure of blackness in these two notions is fundamentally different. I think it is very important for the future of South Africa's democracy to distinguish between them. The stakes are very high. If the one form of politics wins through, I think our democracy is in great danger. But if the other politics wins through then I think South Africa has the potential to realise the great dreams that our revolution was about.

What are these two different measures of blackness? The measure of blackness in terms of the national democratic revolution, and the politics which I think overwhelmingly animated the Congress tradition especially after 1955, is a measure of blackness that is not simply an issue of race or culture. Fundamentally, blackness is measured by a commitment to certain kinds of values, and, in particular, to democratic values. This led to those

peculiar conversations in the 1980s about whether a white person could be black.

On this notion of blackness, one is black not simply because of the colour of one's skin. One is black when one acts on the basis of democratic values. These include a commitment to equality – which we so easily forsake in the current situation when we talk about poverty. Poverty relief is not the same as struggling for an egalitarian society. It also includes a politics of tolerance; a politics where one invests real power in democratic institutions, in particular Parliament, and not in the party or in the executive.

This measure of blackness, which is a very important element of the Congress tradition, has been dominant until recently. I think it is now being challenged by another measure of blackness. It is associated with a politics that privileges blackness as race and blackness as a culture and blackness as *native* values. Remember that there was a native congress conference or workshop in Pretoria about a year ago. There was a sense of being black, and of having a particular culture, over and above universal values of democratic values.

The national democratic revolution measures blackness not simply in terms of race or culture, but of a commitment to democratic values.



I am very concerned about the dominance of this last one. Because – and let me end on this remark which Xolela has made in the past – this notion of blackness, measured by race and culture, demands of South Africans that one is authentic in a very particular and rather unpleasant way. ■

The other measure of blackness is associated with a politics that privileges blackness as race and blackness as a culture and blackness as native values.





The reason we are here to talk about this issue speaks in many ways to a certain ambiguity that we will always have about identity. I have come to a point where I think that the desire to solve that ambiguity is fruitless, a dead end and ultimately dangerous. So instead of talking about identity, I want to talk about a sense of identity. You may think that is a cop out or that I have not finally resolved the big question of identity and what it actually means. But I have come to a point where I think that it is sufficient that one has a sense, not a definitive approach or conclusion about identity, but just a mere sense.

In political theory, in democratic theory, this is a topic that people have grappled with for ages: the tension between a strong substantive identity that people claim, and a sense of individualist libertarianism, or a notion of 'leave me alone'. There is a wonderful book by Kwame Anthony Appiah called 'The Ethics of Identity'. One of the points he makes is that any attempt to deny identity – the concept of identity as people experience it – is in many ways a form of tyranny. You say to people that they have false consciousness, that they are not what they think they are, and therefore are suitable for the guillotine or the gas chambers. But on the other extreme, a total reliance on the concept of identity itself leads to defeatism and the idea that 'this is who I am and all that there ever was is contained in this body in this moment in time'.

Any attempt to deny identity is in many ways a form of tyranny.

I would like to suggest scepticism to both the denial of identity and the reliance on identity. I say this because there is an autobiographical element to it. I hail from the black consciousness movement and I am an activist for the black consciousness movement. Identity was very crucial to that movement. Up to a certain point I would have relied a great deal on the need to construct a South African identity substantively. In other words, to specify what it might actually entail.

The idea of a black republic is no longer representative of how black people have thought about identity.

When Thabo Mbeki became the head of South Africa I remember writing a long piece in the Mail and Guardian celebrating his arrival and how important that was for the construction of a South African identity consistent with what we had been yearning for. I was welcoming the fact that the ANC was ultimately seeing the light of day, because for a long time the ANC had denied these discussions of identity.

However, over the years, and the past five years particularly, I became sceptical of this very notion, this reliance on identity. I became sceptical for reasons that I will outline. The first time it struck me was when the whole controversy surrounding HIV/AIDS came up under Thabo Mbeki. Then there were other policy controversies, like the arms deal or corruption or crime. I began to sense a cynical use of the language of identity to defend things that were really and truly horrible.



I would listen to the president giving a talk at Fort Hare saying HIV/AIDS is a racist construction by white people who are trying to form stereotypes about black people. And I would listen to the president saying corruption is not a problem, it is a matter of white people trying to construct stereotypes about black people as thieves. I would hear the president talking on television about why crime is a figment of white imagination. I am not making these things up. These are things that happened. I saw them on television. I listened to them with my own ears. So I then had to confront this in a very real sense, in a very personal way.

Over time there has always been a grappling with identity and there has never been a definite notion of what it actually means.

Of course, in all of this there was an appeal to black consciousness. There was this appropriation of Steve Biko to mount a defence of the government. I found it unacceptable.

Over a period of time I had to go back and examine black history itself and look at how black people have thought about issues of identity. I think the idea of a black republic is no longer representative of how black people have thought about identity. I am writing a book looking at how notions of identity were created in the black community over time, going back to the mid 19th century, and particularly the intellectuals of the Eastern Cape, who were very crucial in the forma-

tion of the ANC. And the line for the most part was really a continuum. Before 1910, for example, before the formation of the ANC, what you had for the most part were regional identities, and with the formation of the ANC came the formation of a national consciousness and a national identity.

So the notion of what it actually means to be whatever we are has at various points in time been defined and redefined in black history. Before the 1970s, for example, there was no notion that Coloureds and Indians were black or part of a black movement.

Then Steve Biko came along and said that we are redefining the notion of blackness, and for a decade and more that was the identity we shared. Robert Sobukwe came with his own approach of identity and what it meant to be African. What I am saying is that over time there has always been a grappling with identity and there has never been a definite notion of what it actually means. All of these definitions were for the most part political, and were responses to the problems of the day.

What is happening today is a departure from this tradition of what I call synchronism to something I would call nativism. The explanation for this is power and how people who come to power find ways to sustain themselves. Race has been appropriated, and symbols like Biko have been appropriated, to serve that purpose.

I have become sceptical and I listen twice now whenever anybody tells me they are black or whenever anybody prefaces whatever they are saying with 'my brother'. Then I ask myself why that phrase is being used. The phrase itself is an invitation to solidarity, even before I hear what is being said.



Historically, definitions of identity are for the most part political, and are responses to the problems of the day.

While one can be sceptical of this reliance on identity, one should not deny the reality of this discourse. Not for the people in power this time, but for the people in the black community who are still stuck in the rural Transkei, who can see no change in their lives. You cannot go to those people and tell them they must move on, that they are not really black, and that identity does not matter. We can have a discourse that says identities does not matter, they are always changing and they are multiple, but try presenting that argument to the women stuck in the rural villages of the Transkei. It does not speak to their reality. The question is, how do we speak to those realities outside of the cynicism of power that we are operating in?

One of the ideas it calls for is soul making. It is the idea that you can speak about identity in a way which it is not cynical and which is useful for people as a tribe to solve their problems in their daily lives. It is about recognising that the history of how black people have dealt with this is far more sophisticated than we have made it out to be. For me that is what Steve Biko represented. He engaged in very creative ways with those people who are stuck in a certain place and out of that

created a movement that began to articulate notions of identity in a far more sophisticated way than we see now. And those were political definitions of identity.

So as we speak about what it means to be South African, I think what we need more than anything is not a definite dictionary type definition of what it is that is South African, but what Ivor was talking about, notions of inclusion, of democracy, of having a sense of something. That is the greatest challenge that we have as a society now.

This turnaround – from the Thabo Mbeki who made the ‘I am an African’ speech to the most

The notion that some of us are more authentic South Africans than others is about the most dangerous thing that has come to the fore.

cynical use of race – is unfortunate. We are at a point where how we get out of it and whether we will get out of it is an open question. It will require a re-examination of the way we talk about identity and how we reject notions of authenticity. This whole notion that some of us are more authentic South Africans than others is just about the most dangerous thing that has come to the fore under Mbeki’s rule and it is something society has to find ways to deal with. ■



AFTER THE INPUTS, THE FLOOR WAS OPEN FOR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS. ISSUES THAT WERE RAISED INCLUDED:

- To what extent is it possible to consider a South African identity divorced from the dialogues of politics and the economy?
- Is there something that can potentially unify us? If not, is there anything useful in saying there is a particular South African identity or are we merely bonded together by universal values in an egalitarian society that is democratic? In other words, is there any relevance in asking what is distinctive about South Africans in relation to non South Africans?
- Is it not simple love of the country that identifies one as South African?
- Is being South African purely geographically defined, i.e. being in the same territory?
- How one defines a South African identity determines what one considers as treason.
- What makes a South African identity distinct from an African identity?
- Race and identity are used for political purposes.
- Is there any value in discussing the notion of shared values as defining identity or is identity linked to territory, in which case refugees can also stake a claim that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

IN RESPONSE THE SPEAKERS MADE SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

Ivor Chipkin:

The South African revolution came at a particular moment of what was a particular international worldwide project, and that is what has been referred to as cosmopolitanism. It arose from a critique of nationalism and it was based on a sense that there was a new kind of political community beginning to emerge, especially in Western Europe and perhaps in the United States of America. If you look at Holland, which in some sense is a poster child of cosmopolitanism, there was the sense of a kind of political identity not based on a national identity or on a commonality of race or culture or language or religion or whatever it was. But this project has seen a fundamental crisis, if you look at for example France or the United States.

Then the South African revolution comes along and pronounces that a South African people will be without any specific racial mark, cultural mark, ethnic mark or religious mark. We are the rainbow nation. We are the people without any particular marks. But what do we have in common? Now the moment that we arise that project had a crisis in most of Europe. The future of South Africa is not just important for South Africans. How it resolves is obviously huge for us, but I will argue it is of huge historical significance for the progressive project around the world.

What is fundamental in the Freedom Charter is that it says South Africans are those people who live here: South Africa belongs to all who live in it. That is an extraordinary assertion which at the time was given a particular resonance relative to what



apartheid was doing, saying that South Africa belonged to white people. There is something extraordinarily radical about that formulation, because of what it says about who South Africans are. Our commonality is not one of ethnicity or language or race or religion; it is merely a commonality of geography. South Africans are those people that just happen to be here, people who have simply been thrown together through historical accident, terrible, brutal, terrifying, historical accident. And we are those people on the southern tips of Africa in this particular geography. That is who South Africans are.

This is the essence of the non-racial project: a kind of acceptance that we are thrown together. We have to find a way of living together, not on the basis of finding some commonality as Africans or a common religion or a common culture. It is as serious and as simple as that. What is extraordinary about the non-racial project is that the way in which we find our way of living together is by becoming citizens. We find our commonality in and through citizenship. And what does that mean? We find our commonality in and through our common acceptance and sharing of radical democratic values. That is how we find our bonding. You see that tradition, that politics, or that notion of a black republic if you like, is of historical importance. Not just for our country, but for the world. That is why it is a project that is so worth defending. It is that sense of the black republic that we must defend.

The issues of treason and love are interesting terms to explore. The question is, when does one betray and under what conditions does one betray? If you like, it is hate versus love. Is treason

not a kind of antithesis of love, the kind of hate for the people, so you are betraying the people? The question is, what would be the measure of love and what would be the measure of hate in these terms? I think we have different versions of it.

I am an activist in a certain terrain, opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. And in this regard if you google my name it will come up under something called the SHIT list, which stands for Self-Hating Israel-Threatening Jews. It is a fantastic list to belong to, because it is hundreds of pages long. Apparently, there are many of us. In a sense there is the same kind of politics of authenticity, that being Jewish is associated with a particular kind of politics in support for the state of Israel. And if one is critical of the state of Israel and one opposes the state of Israel, one is by definition committing treason to the state of Israel – or being self-hating in this particular case.

I think there are all kinds of similarities in the conversation around South Africa – that there are blacks that are unwittingly part of a white conspiracy. So when is one disloyal? On the basis of that measure, is one being treasonous when one is somehow not repeating a certain kind of discourse, or the discourse of the government of the day? I would suggest that in history, in terms of the history of non-racialism, there is a different measure of treason. Treason is a very useful way of exploring this, because there are acts of disloyalty, there are acts that are repugnant to the non-racial tradition – when one is behaving undemocratically, when one is behaving as a racist, or when one is opposing the democratic project. Within the form of that tradition, those are treasonous acts.





Again, when does one love one's country? And when one loves one's country, what is it that one loves? Is it the buildings, the mountains? In a non-racial tradition I would suggest that one loves citizenship, one loves the democratic values that animated the struggle against apartheid, against a bigoted racist system of colonial violence. That is what one loved, one loved the values that animated that struggle and therefore when one loves South Africa, one loves democratic values, more indeed, than one loves black people or people of the same religion. I do not love Jews; I love democratic values, if I can put it that way. So I think that relation between treason and love is a useful vent to explore some of these issues.

It has been noted that there is evidence of a shift in thinking about blackness and identity. This shift is also tied to a particular macro economic strategy, from the late 1990s to 2001, and in particular the state's social transformation in South Africa. The South African democratic project is about taking in the black middle class, accepting growing levels of inequality and sustaining the project under conditions of growing levels of black inequality by appealing to African identity. Increasingly you need to appeal to a black capitalist class and an increasingly impoverished working class in terms of economic blackness. So I think there is a dimension of a class politics involved as well.

Returning to the notion of citizenship, the issue of local government is important. In the mid-1980s there was a further development of the democratic project in South Africa, in relation to local government and especially what was then the apartheid city. It was a radicalised notion of citizenship, that was not simply someone who had

the vote in the national election, but rather was involved in community development. In terms of the RDP, there was the idea that development would happen through forums and consultation with local residents. In a sense being a South African citizen in this particular politics was not simply someone who has to carry a passport or an identity document, but someone who behaves on the basis of democratic values and makes democratic demands on the state.

As far as the issue of refugees or foreigners is concerned, things are so ambiguous in South Africa. We do accord foreigners rights by virtue of the fact that they are resident in the city. We do accord them rights to a certain level of health care. So being a South African citizen in this regard is not an ethnic or cultural quality, but potentially anyone in the world is South African.

In thinking about the future of the democratic project in South Africa, the case of India is quite illustrative. It was thought that the Indian Congress Party was destined for eternal rule. This did not happen, yet India is the only post-colonial society where a democratic system has survived. The question is, can we ever imagine a situation in South Africa where the ANC loses power and South Africa still remains a democracy? These are the questions about identity we need to answer.

On the politics of race, the question is whether President Mbeki is driven towards the politics of race by virtue of the fact that he is not just talking about transformation, but he is actually trying to pursue it. The truth is that overwhelmingly people in South Africa want to somehow find a way of reconciling. The Presidency has just issued a review of the state of South African identity.



One interesting issue is that those people who overwhelmingly identify themselves as South Africans are white. Black South Africans are slightly more ambivalent. A lot of black people will identify themselves as Africans and on the basis of linguistic or ethnic criteria, while white South Africans are ready to embrace this notion of South African identity. But the other truth is that black people are overwhelmingly poor, white people are overwhelmingly wealthy in relative terms and they do not want to give up those resources. These are the constraints under which we have to pursue a politics of reconciliation. Fundamentally, any attempt to initiate redistribution in a radical sense comes up against a very powerful white South African lobby who are opposed to it. So are white South Africans ready and willing to embrace this new South Africa and this new South African identity? I remember Tutu's statement at the time of the release of the Truth Commission report and his anger because when there was the most extraordinary opportunity for reconciliation, whites turned their back on the TRC. So the politics of race may well be a way of expressing deep disappointment, although there are other ways of expressing that frustration and, quite frankly, disgust with white South Africans in a way that does not drive one into the kind of cul de sacs the Mbeki presidency has driven us into.

Xolela Mangcu

At one point I really believed that you could actually craft something that says 'this is what it means to be a South African'. Now I think that citizenship is what really makes us who we are.

I do not think the idea of South African identity is possible without tying it to politics. I would love to get to a point where love for country is sufficient. But what happens is that notions of identity and even betrayal are deployed for political reasons, so that if you disagree with somebody, and if you criticise the president, there are certain people who will say that you are betraying the country. So when one talks about citizenship one is not saying that it is not a heavily political issue, because you can never run away from politics.

Also, we need to shift the political discourse from the politics of ethnicity based on skin colour. There are people who will tell you – and some of them never lifted their hands in any struggle, but simply say this because they have the same skin colour as I do – that they have a right over somebody with a different skin colour. If you can shift the discourse from the politics of authenticity or nativism to a politics of citizenship, it does not mean we will agree over what citizenship actually means. Dealing with citizenship may mean dealing with issues of inequality and racism. So it is not an easy a-political way out, but I think it shifts the discussion in a way that enables everybody to participate in the discussion, unlike notions of authenticity.

As far as the notion of betrayal is concerned, white people loved Thabo Mbeki. He was this pipe smoking, very suave and very intelligent black person, who assured white people that black people were actually normal people and could run this country. Then when the ANC was in power and he began to talk about Africans, there was a great deal of resistance. I think he felt in a sense





betrayed. There is also an interesting thing about citizenship, and this is not an original idea, that African Americans in fighting for their struggle in the United States made their claims on the basis that they are Americans. You find in many countries that when people are violated for whatever reason, the claim that they make is a citizenship claim: 'You have to listen to me because I am a South African.'

There are certain things that are repugnant and unacceptable within the context of a democratic society. Racism is one of them. But outside of that, in the normal course of political discourse, I think the importance of citizenship is that it gives people an equal right to make their argument. That is what we need in this country. We need to open up society so that everybody has the right to make their argument and to be challenged – whether you are white, rich or whatever. Then we can have real political contestation about the inequalities in this country. That is one of the things that we really have to confront. If we do not confront racial and increasingly intra-racial inequalities, we are going to get ourselves into this vicious cycle where black people feel that democracy has meant little for them. We need to find a space in which we talk about these difficult issues as citizens of this country.

I want to add something to this, which goes beyond our conversation and maybe this is a subject for another dialogue. Part of the shift has to do with the long-standing culture of vanguardism in the ANC and the idea that it is the right and the responsibility of the ANC to guide and steer society. Liberation movements operate like this, because they see it as their obligation to guide us

all towards freedom. In a democratic context that mindset does not work, because people are not as glued together as they were when they were oppressed. So when you come with a vanguardist approach, race becomes a very powerful tool to say that this is part of the project. I think that one of the things that we have to think about in the long term is whether we as a society can survive without a dependence on the ANC. Some societies have had to confront this. If you had to go to India in 1947, shortly after independence, and say to people that the Indian Congress Party would not be in power 20 years down the line, they would have laughed in your face. If you went to Mexico and said Perez would not be ruling forever they would think you are mad. That is why you find people like Jacob Zuma saying the ANC will rule until Jesus comes. It is a genuine expression of the idea that the party is eternal. Now we know, or we should know, that the party is not eternal. So what we have to think about is how we move along as a society without the party.

As highlighted by Ivor, white South Africa – not all, but a great deal of white South Africa – has resisted the move towards the democratic project for various reasons, to protect their own interests, wealth or whatever. So is Mbeki reflecting that when he speaks the way he does? And is that why he is having resonance in some quarters? I think he is in many ways. But is the manner in which he has reflected this, the only way he could have gone about this? When he became the head of the ANC in 1997 I celebrated that because I thought that now we are going to deal with the real issues facing South



Africa. But the response to issues like HIV/AIDS and corruption has in my view interfered with the project of dealing with white racism. In my view, the challenge of dealing with white racism took second place to the need to protect himself, and in a sense he lost the plot. It made it even more difficult then for people to raise real issues about racism. The way the discourse has been formulated is that even when you raise a legitimate issue it can be dismissed as playing the race card. That is the way he framed the issue.

Our history says this was not the only way to go. If you look at people like Steve Biko, who was probably the most sophisticated critic of racism in this country, or someone like Robert Sobukwe, they approached the issue with frankness and courage and you never had a sense that these people were hateful or bitter or angry. And they won over a lot white people. The impact that Steve Biko had on white activists is still largely unrecorded. So my answer is that it is not enough for leaders to reflect what is in the society. They need to

reflect it, but not allow themselves to be trapped by it. And I think Thabo Mbeki allowed himself to be trapped in that politics.

I also want to say (and this is quite sobering, perhaps) that people die and society moves on. I am a critic of Mandela, but I have realised the patience that he had. There was something about him that said that ultimately black people are going to run this country. There was a certain patience underpinning his politics, and it was different from our impatience as young radicals. South African whites are not going to be forever the same type of whites that they are today, in the same way that South African blacks also are not going to be the same kind of blacks that they are today.

The real question is, how do we put in place a more inclusive culture for the next generation? For me, the issue is that if you are stuck in the politics of the time as a leader, you make impossible the development of a different kind of imagination that will come 20 years down the line. ■





BEING SOUTH AFRICAN: WHAT IS A SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITY?

13 SEPTEMBER 2007

CENTRE FOR THE BOOK, CAPE TOWN

ABOUT THE PANEL:

Dr Ivor Chipkin is a chief research specialist in the Democracy and Governance research programme at the HSCR. Before joining the HSRC in 2005, he worked at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER). He obtained his doctorate from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in France. He is an Oppenheimer Fellow at Oxford University, and a senior associate member at St. Antony's College at Oxford University. He has published widely on questions of the State, nationalism, development and democracy. Most recently, he published *Do South Africans Exist? Nationalism, Democracy and the Identity of 'the People'* (Wits University Press).

Dr Xolela Mangcu is the convenor of public conversations about the role of archive in public deliberation for The Constitution of Public Intellectual Life Research Project based at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). Prior to this, he was Executive Director of the Social Cohesion and Identity Research Programme at the HSRC and the Executive Director and founder of the Steve Biko Foundation. He is a non-resident WEB Du Bois Fellow at Harvard University, a columnist for Business Day, and non-executive chairperson of New Mvela Trust, a black economic empowerment trust set up by Mvelaphanda Holdings, now New Mvela. He has published several chapters in books, journal articles, and more than 300 newspaper and opinion-editorial articles. He is currently working on a biography of Steve Biko.



BEING SOUTH AFRICAN: WHAT IS A SOUTH AFRICAN IDENTITY?



www.isandla.org.za



OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

www.osf.org.za