MK AS CULTURAL PHENOMENON: A CASE STUDY DOCUMENTING THE DISPERSION OF AFRIKAANS ALTERNATIVE MUSIC DURING THE PERIOD 2005–2013

by

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DECLARATION

I, Magdalize Carstens, declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the module MUST8900, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for the purposes of other coursework.

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Date

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ABSTRACT

MK was a channel on the premium package of the paid Digital Satellite Television Service (DSTV) of Multichoice and kykNET in South Africa during the period 2005 to 2013. The channel broadcast music 24/7, using mostly Afrikaans as medium. Through its content and programming, the channel helped to support and build a new identity for the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth aged 13 to 25 years.

While highlighting issues central to the life world of the Afrikaans youth at the time, simultaneously, MK culture set the scene for unique, dissident forms of expression in Afrikaans. A large following was amassed within its first two years of existence, which turned the channel into a cultural phenomenon. As a 'social influencer', MK stimulated the formation of new sub-genres in the field of Afrikaans rock and alternative music, subcultures representative of the language use and cultural or countercultural practices of the Afrikaans-speaking youth, and a new-found freedom of self by means of alternative or dissident forms of music.

Despite the channel's widespread influence on various musical, technical, and social platforms, culminating in a lifestyle channel with music videos at its core, no in-depth research on MK exists. To address this hiatus, my study's objective was to research MK's philosophy and its legacy regarding the expansion of marginal Afrikaans identities as constructed in alternative Afrikaans music and its subgenres, including hip-hop and rap. Based on this contextual framing, the research question underpinning the study was as follows:

How was the dispersion of Afrikaans alternative music related to MK as a cultural phenomenon, and how were social themes such as identity and branding influenced by its specific mode of address, as well as its meta-textual production of discourse?

The qualitative methodology of ethnographic case study was found to be a productive approach for my research, documenting MK as a distinctive, single-case cultural phenomenon. As most of the channel's social media and internet traces have been removed indefinitely, semi-structured interviews with MK stakeholders served as the primary source for my data collection, supplemented by a study of MK archival material. Interviewees were chosen based on their involvement and field of expertise that constituted and helped shape the media image of the channel. These included

production managers, critics, journalists, band members, and managers actively involved with MK during its existence. Archival materials included all MK Awards nominees' music videos (2007–2013) and the channel's broadcast programmes.

As my study involved a relatively wide range of data sources, thematic analysis has proven to be relevant to my work. While traditionally, researchers have applied the method mainly to textual data, more recently, interview transcripts, field notes, historical or site documents, digital audio files and video files are included among other viable sources of information. Concerning the study of MK as a cultural phenomenon, the method offered a systematic approach to the analysis of my data, which involved the identification of themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding relevant data according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking out overarching patterns as structured by a conceptual framework based on recent scholarship on Afrikaans identity.

My research bought to the fore that the channel had been started for a specific target market, for which branding – on TV and at live events – was a major attraction. Visual marketing (on different levels and dimensions) established MK as a brand and helped to create newly established platforms for young musicians, artists, and technicians (such as audio and visual), while simultaneously extending the brand to lifestyle choices and social causes, some of which are still operative today. The variety of programmes, aided by young and 'funky' presenters, mediated the many facets of being a post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth, providing a cultural safe space within which to rebel and process their troubled history. It also helped them to find a way forward.

On a pragmatic level, MK impacted all Afrikaans rock or alternative bands during its time of existence, leaving a legacy and platform for bands to aspire to international standards for producing music or music videos. Yet, while the success and financial viability of MK were underlined by most of my respondents, one participant intimated that the decision to establish the channel had never been inspired ideologically, but (pragmatically) amounted to a business decision. In this sense, MK's focus on an alternative Afrikaans niche market seemed to have failed as an economic strategy and eventually led to the channel's demise.

Within the ideological realm, contradictions were evident as the channel was found to have brought to the fore multifarious senses of self, most strongly expressed in the opposing identity formations of nostalgia and cynicism, represented in the 'De la Rey' phenomenon and Zef culture, respectively. While the Afrikaans nostalgia brand foregrounded exclusivist ethnocentric tendencies associated with the De la Rey subculture, Zef culture was seen as being supportive of a subversive, heterodox Afrikaner counterculture.

In propagating both nostalgia and cynicism, the former glorifying the Afrikaner past, and the latter perverting exactly those notions of race and language upheld by the apartheid regime, MK was found to have contributed to new South African discourses grappling with the formation of new identities, and a definition and redefinition of terms such as 'other', 'us', 'self' and 'them', deserving of study and analysis.

Key words: MK music channel; cultural phenomenon; post-apartheid youth; Afrikaans music; branding; identity formation; Afrikaans alternative music; Afrikaans-speaking youth.

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Music, like identity, is both performance and story, describes the social in the individual and the individual in the social, the mind in the body and the body in the mind; identity, like music, is a matter of both ethics and aesthetics.

Frith (1996:109).

Figure 1: Fokofpolisiekar[1]

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Rationale for the study

MK, formerly known as MK89 or Channel 89, was a music channel on MultiChoice's paid digital satellite television service DSTV, which became a cultural phenomenon during 2005–2013. The channel tapped into the youth, aged 13–25, of a post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking generation, and provided a mouthpiece for voicing the identity crisis they experienced in the new South-African socio-political context. MK was not simply a forum for rebelling against entrenched societal norms, but also explored the need for a new separate (Afrikaans) culture, language, and identity, related to themes the youth experienced in their daily lives (Marx & Milton 2011:734). Senekal and Van den Berg (2010:110) identify these topics as crime, religion, being young and in love, and being politically oppressed. Prevalent in song lyrics, these themes were also the underlying subjects of in-depth interviews or backstage footage of bands and MK content that were aired or were discussed in printed media.

While highlighting issues central to the life world of the Afrikaans youth at the time, simultaneously, as noted already, MK-related discourse set the scene for unique, dissident forms of expression in Afrikaans. Song lyrics would often denote rebellion against apartheid's political inheritance and those generations by which it was sustained. For example, defiance transpires from melodic rock band aKing's (2008) song 'Lonely Hands': "I'll wear my shame on my sleeve / I'm shaking in resistance / Trying not to make a scene / Only lonely hearts know where lonely hands go".[2] On the other hand, lyrics could demonstrate resistance against the new socio-political context in which the Afrikaans youth felt displaced, threatened, and betrayed. In their controversial song 'Blaas hom', Battery 9, an industrial dance band, portray a well-known post-apartheid dilemma as experienced by a white Afrikaans individual: "Ek was gou weg om 'n bier te gaan haal / toe steel die bliksems my rot en kaal / dit was

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[2] From the album *Dutch Courage*, Rhythm Records RR087, 2008.

die derde keer dat hulle my besteel / alles wat ek het word herverdeel / net daar en dan toe strip ek my moer / wil alles breek / 'n bebliksemde boer".[3]

MK's subversive nature undoubtedly added to its popularity. The channel deliberately promoted new bands of an insubordinate nature,[4] notably Fokofpolisiekar, its name blatantly featuring an Afrikaans swearword, with the band also flaunting the occasional explicit lyrics. Several bands embraced similar themes, often featured as part of their band names, such as Taxi Violence (following a newspaper headline on taxi violence in the Cape in 2004), and Brixton Moord en Roof (Brixton Murder and Plunder, named after the Brixton SAPS office, with band members called Brixton Barnard, Moord Greeff and Roof Bezuidenhout).[5] MK's impact was so significant that it continued via an online platform after the channel had closed in 2013. The channel's influence extended to linguistic expressions,[6] music genres, printed and visual media, and the formation of both sub-cultures and counter cultures, many of which are still flourishing today.[7]

Post-apartheid Afrikaans sub-cultures also had an impact on scholarship, as highlighted amongst others by Annie Klopper (2017; 2009) in her studies on identity formation in Afrikaans alternative music. Arguing from the perspective that "popular music provides a space wherein South African youth actively and continuously reconfigure identity and interrogate associated issues surrounding it", Klopper (2017:i), in her examination of white Afrikaans rap specifically, observes how alternative Afrikaans music may challenge essentialised identities. As Oppenheim

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[3] 'I went out to get a beer / when the bastards robbed me of everything / It was the third time they broke in / Everything I have is redistributed and shared / Just then I got furious / Want to break everything / An angry boer' (own translation). From the album *Wrok*, One F Music/Tic Tic Bang BANGCD 038, 1998.

[4] During 2001–2010, various bands associated themselves with the Afrikaans language, which was no longer seen as the oppressor's language, but within the context of Afrikaans alternative music as a language of rebellion (cf. Nel 2010:116).

[5] Other Afrikaans bands featured more whimsical names, such as Moses Metroman (Moses the Metro Man), Die Tuindwergies (The Garden Gnomes), Spoegwolf (Spitting Wolf), and Die Heuwels Fantasties (The Fantastic Hills).

[6] These include Afrikaans slang words that acknowledged South Africa's multicultural configuration, and were used extensively in the MK context, such as *Aweh* (a greeting mainly used in the coloured community), *my bra* (derived from brother), *kief* (cool), *eish* (a colloquial expression derived from Xhosa as an exclamation of disbelief, disapproval, or regret), *pozzy* (house) and *lekker* (nice) (web-lingo 2012).

[7] As per Nel (2010:37), the thought of living a life as 'the other', using recreational drugs and alcohol, as an 'artistic expression' was seen amongst some sectors of the Afrikaans youth as a form of counterculture that gained momentum at the turn of the century.

(2015:1) finds, in the post-apartheid context "young citizens strive for an alternative path within South African society where they can be proud of their heritage as adaptive, attentive members of this exceptionally diverse country". Nel (2010:126) contends that, one way of achieving this objective was through insubordinate discourse confronting dominant Afrikaner values and norms. Examples of MK-related bands that protested the status quo are Fokofpolisiekar and Van Coke Cartel (VCK), both led by Francois van Coke. As featured extensively on MK, these bands represented Afrikaans counterculture through their fashion and lyrics (Erasmus 2017:183). Examples of previously lesser-known genres that, through the mediation of MK, came to the fore as subversive expression were rap and hip-hop, promoted by bands such as the controversial Afrikaans hip hop group, Die Antwoord, Jack Parow and Bittereinder.

Die Antwoord is a particular case in point. Known for its crude language, cultural appropriation, sexual representation, and explicit visual portrayal both onstage and in music videos, one of the identities challenged by the band is mainstream masculinity – a cornerstone of patriarchal Afrikanerdom. While this type of dissent came to form part of MK's nonconformist mindset, other stereotyped representations of maleness or manliness also surfaced in aired content. Pretorius (2013:214) identifies seven forms of stylised masculinity as featured on MK: the boer (representing the nostalgia theme prevalent in music videos of the time, see my later discussion); the metro man (featured in lifestyle programmes such as JIP); the sportsman (highlighted in interview programmes such as JIP, Gons and Stook); the retro man (introduced in features such as Af, Hoenner and Mullets); the student (JIP, Gons and Jol24); the worker (JIP and ID); and the rebel (Af, Hoenner, Mullets, JIP and Jol24).

Rossouw (2015:87) interprets Die Antwoord's critical response to conventional conceptions of masculinity by applying it to the band's provocative dance and bodywork. She argues that the use of disturbing visuals adds a deeper layer to identity formation and its associative processes as purported by the rappers (2015:87). Du Preez (2011:111) and Scott (2012:758) argue that identity construction as based on Die Antwoord's visual materials is not constrained to the social stereotypes found in hip hop and R&B. Lead singer Yo-Landi, for instance, deviates from the female norm of playing "either the virgin" or "the whore" (Du Preez 2011:105). Similarly, racial

typecasts are destabilized (Van der Watt 2012:411) and linguistic stereotypes are subverted by mixing several languages through which the group undermines notions of an inclusive cultural experience (Mechanic 2010; Scott 2012:751). Van der Watt (2012:411) contends that "Rather than asking what or who is repressed by Yo-Landi and Ninja, we are invited to believe what we see, and so to accept the incommensurability of what we might know and what we see". She questions an uncovering of more profound meaning in Die Antwoord's seditious portrayal of subversive culture, claiming that their superficial performances should be taken at face value, and not be over-analysed (Van der Watt 2012:415). However, the influence of this subversive group on a certain sector of Afrikaans listeners can hardly be overstated. As one Naggy du Toit asserts on Die Antwoord's website (dieantwoord.com), the rappers "have shown people, especially young people, that there is a gate out of this crazy system we were all born into".

As a unique, alternative music platform for exploring the way forward for a minority ethnic group's culture and language during its period of existence, through thus representing and affirming different interpretations of alternative identity, MK amassed an extensive fan base. The channel also promoted more independent thinking concerning the creation of Afrikaans rock and alternative music. By identifying with its target market through the various media as mentioned earlier, it created a more extensive and more widespread fan base and, as stated, became a cultural phenomenon within its first four years of existence (2005–2009).[8] In later years, MK was turned into a lifestyle channel. On a commercial level, the channel's lifestyle choices (or, put differently, the group collective of any bands' fanbase) consequently extended to fashion (for instance, inspired by Die Antwoord and Jack Parow's Zef Culture), and alcoholic beverages (such as Fokof Lager endorsed by Fokofpolisiekar, Jack Parow's Parow Brandy, and Valiant Swart's Mystic Boer Brandy).

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines a fan as "an enthusiastic devotee (as of a sport or a performing art) usually as a spectator" (Merriam-Webster.com). Alternatively, the term is explained as "an ardent admirer or enthusiast (as of a celebrity or a pursuit)". Drawing on the thought of Moser (2007:278ff), Annie Klopper

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[8] This can be seen in the number of votes for various MK award shows. In 2009, 320 000 votes were counted for the third MK Award ceremony, compared to 12 000 votes in 2007 (Thormählen 2009:33).

(2009:32) underlines the multi-sensorial and multi-media impact of popular music, whereby an "interplay and integration of oral, literate, and audio-visual modes of linguistic communication" come into play (Moser 2007:283). Klopper (2009:33) also highlights the impact of music's sensory power when she suggests that, through verbal, non-verbal, sonic, and visual coding, fan identity is established individually and collectively. In the context of MK's mediation, fans would follow their favourite bands by attending live shows, listening to interviews, buying recorded work and branded merchandise. In all cases the youth was able to identity with these products on an personal, experiential level. A prime example is the band, Foto na Dans (Photo after Dance), which explained their name as a sensory connection in terms of a visual experience (Photo) and a physical reaction to the music (Dance) (Van Zyl 2009:58).

The ensuing culture of attending live festivals and shows[9] fostered newfound confidence in the Afrikaans language through more accessible modes of expression and the cultural representation of divergent, emerging sub-cultures. Two prominent sub-cultures that came into being within the MK context, and which will be discussed more fully later in this thesis are those related to nostalgia (a longing for the past, such as the De la Rey phenomenon) and cynicism (critique on the past, with no plan for the future, as portrayed by Die Antwoord). These identity representations have split audiences and critics to either repudiate a particular band or follow them as die-hard supporters. As such, the cultural impact of these groupings exerted considerable influence. Die Antwoord's international exposure of the Kaaprikaans dialect,[10] for instance, had important consequences for local alternative identity construction. The group's assertive use of this minority dialect brought along a sense of worth for brown rap and hip-hop artists, whose work within the democratic era was no longer suppressed (Klopper 2017:57). Neate (2004:124) reasons that these artists now had a chance of identifying as (South) Africans within a public social context, even though they were still marginalised on the grounds of demography and race.

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[9] Examples of festivals are Oppikoppi, KKNK (Klein Karoo National Arts Festival), and Aardklop, while the programme Studio 1 and the MK Award ceremonies were presented in Afrikaans.
[10] The word is derived from a mixture of Afrikaans and the Cape region dialect, originally coined by Brasse van die Kaap to aid in bridging the gap between the dominant white Afrikaans music industry, and the hip-hop form the Cape region (van der Merwe 2017:142). The term Kaaprikaans is consistently used in Warrick Moses' doctoral thesis 'In the Mix: Expressions of Coloured Identity in Cape Town-Based Hiphop (2019) and should not be confused with the documentary Afrikaaps.

As will be argued in this thesis, MK's phenomenon may thus be understood by examining the identities it projected through alternative expressions of the Afrikaans language and Afrikaner culture and through representing various geographical locations influenced by Afrikaans as 'dialect'. Van Heerden (2016:62) notes that the debate around the Afrikaans-related identity question of 'Who am I?' should be relayed to the question 'To whom does Afrikaans belong?'. Focusing on the Afrikaaps documentary,[11] Van Heerden (2016:62ff) reasons that, through its influence previously restrictive beliefs associated with Afrikaans and its political history were undone.[12] Within such an interpretive context, distinct meanings are blurred, and the cultural signification of a previously race-related language altered. Furthermore, the emergence of various Afrikaans 'dialects',[13] formed through contributions from different geographical locations, introduced the argument whether the Afrikaans language could still be seen as 'pure' (a '*volkstaal*') or whether it should rather be seen as a 'street language' (its colloquial form) (Van Heerden (2016:22). This question was broached at the first Sol Plaatje Diskoers Reeks (Sol Plaatje Discourse Series) at the Aardklop Festival in 2007, where guest speakers were asked to debate the way forward for Afrikaans (Du Toit 2007). On this occasion, it was unanimously decided that the lines between formal, grammatically correct Afrikaans and its spoken derivatives should be blurred to allow more freedom and inclusivity of use. By then, such a more democratically-conceived appropriation of the Afrikaans language had already manifested within MK-related productions and products that reclaimed Afrikaans as a language of emancipation.

Charles Leonard (2013), a reviewer for *Mail and Guardian*, ascertains three criteria that, from his perspective, signify a 'socially validated South African', with the

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[11] *Afrikaaps* (2011) is an award-winning documentary about the uniqueness of the Afrikaans culture and language, incorporating its different dialects, focusing primarily on the Cape Malay population. Rap and hip-hop originated in the Cape coloured community, and, as such, was the chosen music genre of people of colour from the Cape Provinces (representative of contemporary Afrikaaps culture). Culture and language tie in with the music genres currently commercially more accessible nationwide to the youth, such as rap, hip-hop and rock (Van der Merwe 2017:135).

[12] This was evident at the KKNK Festival 2010, where the *Afrikaaps* documentary highlighted a history of Afrikaans that revealed its racialised hegemony (Van Heerden 2016:72).

[13] The documentary *Afrikaaps* highlights the Cape Afrikaans dialect, also called 'Alternatiewe Afrikaans' by Van den Heever (cf. Van Heerden 2016:57), that illustrates opposing poles of the language. It unleashed internal questioning in the coloured community, forcing them to choose between speaking 'the oppressor's language' and thus invoke feelings of victimisation and guilt, or to speak the language as a native mother tongue, asserting Afrikaans as a reformed and inclusive language (Van Heerden 2016:57).

emphasis on Afrikaners. These involve forming part of an *ubuntu* identity, adopting a progressive politics, and using English as chosen language medium. Leonard maintains that, by not fulfilling these criteria, one would not be a 'valid' South African, thus becoming 'the other'. However, for Vanderhaeghen (2014), ironically the construct of 'the other' may be connected to white Afrikaans senses of self. His concept of 'self-othering' either points to the marginalisation of Afrikaner identity, or its re-articulation as 'innocent'. Thus, in his argument, "self-othering takes place within discourses of guilt, loss, fear, belonging, transformation, and reconciliation" (Vanderhaegen 2014:1; 30-32). As will be evident later in this thesis, such discourses and related identity debates were mediated by MK not only through the alternative music featured on, and promoted by the channel, but also by a classless foregrounding of Afrikaans culture in lifestyle programmes such as JIP, Ondergrond, Kraakvars and Wys my jou Huis.

In her study of how post-apartheid media aided in forming new conceptions of Afrikaner identity, Fourie (2008:260) focuses on two significant periods in the history of the Afrikaner as represented in polemics published in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*. The first is 1990–1992 (when Mandela was released from a 27-year prison sentence for trying to overthrow the ruling party) and the second is 2004 (when the National Party [NP] disbanded). Fourie offers insightful documentation on typifications of the self (Afrikaner identity) and 'the other' (black South Africans) as observed in *Beeld* before, and ten years after Democracy. While significant adjustment of the typecasting of the self could be observed, no fundamental review of the stereotyping of the other could be perceived. Afrikaners of 2004 seemed to be a white minority, proud of their language and culture, and fighting for their right to hear and speak Afrikaans (Fourie 2008:239). Still, typifications regarding the other showed a deep distrust, the fear of white victimisation, and feelings of loss (of political power), as is evident, for instance, in the following remarks, "Black government does not care for white people: will destroy everything that is Afrikaans or white"; "is encouraging racial hatred" (Fourie 2008:239).

Within the politically unsettling context of the new dispensation, the youth that associated and followed MK struggled to renegotiate their identity. While they wanted to be proud of being Afrikaners, without the guilt of previous generations' upholding of

apartheid, still they could not escape the implications of their cultural and political heritage, or the challenges of coping within an uprooted socio-political reality. Importantly, MK offered a cultural haven where, on the one hand, dissenting thought was expressed in alternative forms of music and lifestyle, while simultaneously being embedded within the crucial fundamental rootedness of the Afrikaans language (cf. Taylor 2004 in Sutherland 2013:17ff).

Music videos provided a particularly productive medium for the promulgation of MK's nonconformist worldviews and perspectives. Vestergaard (2000:116) explains freedom as "the freedom from something, and the freedom to do something". Notably, within the context of MK, notions of freedom of expression extended to the visual element of music video. Hereby the channel followed the influential international trend initiated by the cable television network MTV (Music Television), the leading youth entertainment brand globally at the time. Focusing on the visual dimension of music video, MK created an image culture,[14] soon followed by fashion trends that denoted rebellion and within the Afrikaans social context represented the beginnings of a counterculture. As observed in the entertainment industry through films, music, and poetry, Nel (2010:135) finds that such instances of cultural rebellion should be viewed as fluid social constructs allowing for the formation of alternative identity. Within the context of MK, as argued up to this point, white Afrikaans defiance was thus seen in lyrics, musical styles, and fashion represented specifically in the already-mentioned genres of hip hop and rap. Indeed, global influences impacted these developments. The coloured youth in the Cape, for instance, were able to associate with black Americans' social and political marginalisation through newly created and (culturally) appropriated Afrikaans permutations of hip hop and rap (Klopper 2017:52; Kim 2013:28). Such processes of globalisation underlined a new sense of cultural hybridization and the fluidity of identity formation (Klopper 2017:83ff).

In my argument thus far, the importance of language on cultural and identity building, either individually or communally, has been stressed. As Van der Waal (2008:57) states, "Culture refers to the richness of shared ideas, of which language is perhaps the most important aspect." Similarly, Taylor (2004:65) and Sutherland (2013:18) emphasise the role of language regarding the dominant imaginary of identification and

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[14] As seen in the documentary *Johnnie en die Maaiers* (Beukes 2014).

"how we stand to each other, how we got to where we are, [and] how we relate to other groups" (Taylor 2004:25). Language is, therefore, closely linked with ideology as a tool for conceptualising social and identity boundaries. Van der Waal (2008:52) agrees to the prominence of language and culture as used for political goals and the construction of identities within a specific social context (2008:55).

In the context of MK such identity building is exemplified by the song 'De la Rey', which garnered a huge following after its debut on the channel. Generally, the video projects a sense of Afrikaner nostalgia, visually portraying the pride of fighting for one's culture and language through evocative images of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902). Through the airtime it received on MK, some sectors of the Afrikaans youth strongly identified with the yearnful veneration of Afrikaans culture that could, on several levels be symbolically projected onto their plight within the new Democracy. While the song did not incite Afrikaners to take up action against the ruling party, for some Afrikaans-speaking youth it became representative of a "rudderless volk looking for a leader", or young Afrikaners "rebelling against affirmative action" (Du Plessis 2007:64). As such, it provided a context within which those sectors of the younger Afrikaans-speaking generation to which the song so strongly spoke, could acknowledge the history from which they came and build their identities through a projection of images and symbols which helped frame their new, unsettled reality.

It is thus clear that MK aided the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth in forming a new identity through music, harnessing a new awareness for inclusivity of all dialects and geographical locations, as seen by the example of its 'mother' station, KykNet. In some cases, as applicable to 'De la Rey' subculture as described above, exclusivity also seemed to be at stake. This is an aspect of MK that will be revisited later in this thesis.

However, as a tangible outcome of catering for a more diverse audience, KykNet, focusing specifically on Afrikaans-speaking viewers, capitalised on the developments described thus far with a broader range of sub-channels to suit any age, dialect and cultural differences as represented within the Afrikaans language.[15] MK's inclusivity vision had, at this stage, already showed that the Afrikaans language, in itself, had

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[15] Examples are KykNet and Kie for coloured viewers, mainly forming part of the Western Cape demographic, FliekNet for films in Afrikaans, and KykNet Nou broadcasting music.

become a tool for communicating different musical genres through programmes and festivals, not limited to mainstream rock and pop, but also heavy metal (as seen in the programme Ondergrond) and hip-hop (through the programme Hip-Hop). The branded MK stages became the main attraction at various festivals.[16]

Attending festivals was indeed part of identity formation within the social context that became MK's well-oiled machine. Many bands developed in symbiosis with MK as the channel sponsored stages for bands, provided airplay on TV and live events, and promoted branding for both band and channel. For instance, the lead singer of Fokofpolisiekar, Francois van Coke, ascertained his 'surname's' value, being linked to two bands that were the top bands associated with MK at the time, namely Fokofpolisiekar and Van Coke Cartel. The singer soon realised the monetary value of playing in both bands (with some original members from Fokofpolisiekar playing in up to three bands) that headlined festivals and concerts. The fee for each band was split between the members, of which the income was doubled or tripled, depending on in how many bands a member played. The members of Fokofpolisiekar even performed in up to four side projects, which included aKING, Van Coke Cartel and Die Heuwels Fantasties (Nel 2010:128). In later years, Fokofpolisiekar fronted their beer brand, Fokoflager, with Van Coke again relying on his pseudonym surname to sell merchandise and lifestyle items such as t-shirts, sunglasses, and watches.[17]

While the MK brand started as a music channel, turning it into a lifestyle channel further helped to stimulate an alternate minority ethnic group identity in reaction to the previous political regime's restrictive conceptions of culture and language. The dissident nature of this identity gave supporters of the channel a voice and assisted them in becoming 'proudly Afrikaans' – albeit in an 'alternative' sense. Also, it aided them in dealing with the turmoil of political and social transformation, impacting a generation that, through no action of their own, bore the mark of apartheid's legacy.

1.2   Research objectives and research problem

Against the background set out in the previous section, my proposed research examines the ambiguous manifestations of Afrikaans identities produced by MK as

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[16] These were KKNK, Aardklop, and Oppikoppi.
[17] Available from https://www.vancokes.co.za.

multifarious expressions of the self. I studied these identifications by exploring existing literature on Afrikaans sub-cultures that arose during the post-apartheid period, identifying within these publications key concepts that will structure my 'story' of MK. Through intensive data collection involving MK shareholders and a study of archival materials, I contextualise the said identities in terms of the channel's influence and mediation. In terms of the perspectives offered up to this point, the study's objective is, therefore, to research MK's philosophy and its legacy regarding the expansion of marginal Afrikaans identities as constructed in alternative Afrikaans music and its sub-genres, including hip-hop and rap.

To achieve this, strategic thinking behind the channel is explored and, through interviews with important stakeholders and a study of archival materials, the social themes structured by the channel are documented. I focus on those topics shaping identity and the concept of branding, which strongly influenced the aesthetic positioning and commercial trajectory of Afrikaans rock and alternative bands featured on MK. As indicated in the rationale for my study, I consider related areas of investigation, including the various media that were influenced by MK, such as printed text (JIP, a youth extension in *Beeld*), visual media (music videos), and, in terms of commercialised production, the diverse platforms related to Afrikaans alternative music post-2010, including fashion and alcoholic beverages. Of importance is a focus on the terms 'Afrikaans' and 'Afrikaner', which, within the context of my research, is not limited to any dominant ethnic identities or geographical locations. Instead, it is investigated as a the more 'indistinct' construct MK advanced.

Based on this contextual framing, the research question underpinning the proposed study is as follows:

How was the dispersion of Afrikaans alternative music related to MK as a cultural phenomenon, and how were social themes such as identity and branding influenced by its specific mode of address, as well as its meta-textual production of discourse?

No in-depth research on MK and its widespread influence on various musical, technical, and social platforms, culminating in a lifestyle channel with music videos at its core, could be found within the existing literature on scholarship concerning Afrikaans alternative music. My study will address this hiatus.

1.3 Research methodology and design

To achieve the objectives stated above, I use the qualitative methodology of ethnographic case study, documenting MK as a distinctive, single-case cultural phenomenon. As a study design, "case study is defined by an interest in individual cases rather than the methods of inquiry used" (Stake, in Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift 2014). Thus, within a research approach marked by eclecticism, my selection of data collection methods would be informed, as Stake (1995:xi) puts it, "by researcher and case intuition". Sources of knowledge, such as people or observations of interactions that occur within social contexts relevant to the case, inform the analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of study (Stake 1995:xiff). This would also be true of the present study.

Furthermore, in its objectives of focusing on "building arguments about cultural, group, or community formation or examining other socio-cultural phenomena" (Schwandt & Gates 2018:344), an ethnographic case study is also applicable to my research. Typically, an ethnographic case study involves the examination of cases with a longer duration. In its socio-cultural situatedness, ethnography has a "case study character" and is "intimately related" to case studies; as Ó Rian (2009:291) observes,"'[e]thnographic research has long been synonymous with case studies, typically conceived of as grounded in the local and situated in specific, well-defined and self-contained social contexts". Again, these criteria pertain to my investigation.

Due to the limited number of publicly available sources on MK, and in line with the objectives of ethnographic case study, my main data collection method is semi-structured interviews. Most of the channel's social media and internet traces have been indefinitely removed, thus pointing to the need to collect primary data in this study. The interviews allow me to document the extent of the channel's influence based on its unconventional marketing philosophy in detail. All interviewees were chosen on the grounds of their involvement with MK and field of expertise that constituted and helped shape the media image of the channel. These include production managers, critics, journalists, band members, and managers actively involved with MK during its existence.

As DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019:1) note, semi-structured interviewing "typically consists of a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments". The open-ended nature of this method allows the researcher "to explore participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic [and] delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues" (DeJonckheere & Vaughn 2019:1). As such, the method would be highly applicable to a research context where information is gathered from key informants who bring to the table "personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs related to the topic of interest" (DeJonckheere & Vaughn 2019:1). However, as Ryan, Coughlin and Cronin (2009:309) argue, the one-on-one interview is more than a conversational interaction within a scholarly milieu. Usually conducted on a face-to-face basis – as is also the case in the present study – this type of method implies that trust is established between the interviewer and interviewee and that active listening on the part of the interviewer forms the basis of the interaction (Ryan et al. 2009:311). In this regard, open-ended questions establish trust and allow respondents greater freedom to explore subjects or themes they feel can add value to the research or even suggest additional interviewees. Rigour is enhanced by a clear and accurate interview schedule and documentation, and the use of a reflective diary of the interviewer's experiences and observations during the interview (cf. Ryan et al. 2009:312). Moreover, all respondents would be given the opportunity to verify their statements before these are documented in this thesis.

In addition to the interviews, my documenting of MK is also based on a study of MK archival materials.[18] The latter include all the MK Awards nominees' music videos (2007–2013) and the channel's broadcast programmes. While the interviews helped me gain insight into the channel's philosophy and its structure in an alternate social context, the music videos and recordings of award ceremonies contribute to an understanding of the growth of industry quality standards associated with MK and social and media trends constructed by the channel. The footage of music videos, programmes, and award shows provide insight into the quality of audio and visuals in music videos and live entertainment and shows (at festivals). Examples are animation, and special effects (SFX) awarded their own category at the MK music awards each

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[18] As noted elsewhere in this thesis, problems encountered at the DSTV archives included incorrect archiving and incorrect or incomplete information.

year.[19] Ultimately, apart from determining their role regarding local media innovation, archived MK videos are important to my study in that they meaningfully project representations of the multifarious Afrikaans identities traced in this thesis, and in that sense corroborated other data documented.

As my thesis involves a relatively wide range of data sources, thematic analysis has proved to be a method of analysis relevant to the planned work. While historically, researchers have applied thematic analysis mainly to textual data, more recently, interview transcripts, field notes, historical or site documents, digital audio files and video files are also included among other viable sources of information (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe 2010:926). Furthermore, the method is a systematic approach to the analysis of qualitative data that involves

> identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and clarifying data …
> according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking
> commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or
> explanatory principles (Mills et al. 2010:926).

This means that the method is highly applicable to a context in which the history of MK is recorded, while simultaneously its sociocultural impact be interpreted by way of studying a relatively wide range of cultural artifacts.

Considering the types of data involved in my study, the identification of themes was done deductively; that is, derived from theoretical constructs underpinning my research as well as inductively, with themes emerging from my data (cf. Mills et al. 2010:926) (see my discussion in the next section where these themes are introduced).

As was explained at various points in my argument thus far, to document MK's influence on emerging identities of a post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking generation through lifestyle-based programmes and branding, the channel's underlying cultural agenda and marketing philosophy need to be studied on a micro-level of interaction. My objective to follow cultural trends fashioned by MK and the detailing of Afrikaans identities that came into being through the channel's mediation therefore refers to

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[19] MK materials' novelties included special effects created with a computer or phantom camera that could shoot more frames per second than the average camera. The channel had a 24-hour window with free access to a phantom camera in 2010.

Stake's (2000:437) interpretation of case study methodology that "facilitates our understanding of something else", which he calls "instrumental case study". Hereby, Stake (2000:437) denotes a case that is "studied in-depth, its contexts scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, but all of this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest" (Stake 2000:437). In the context of my research, this implies that MK is documented as a 'case within a case', as it were, while recorded as a post-apartheid cultural 'influencer'. Simultaneously, its broader consequences for post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth identity are detailed and examined.

1.4 Conceptual framework

Concerning a theoretical/philosophical framing for questioning manifestations of Afrikaans identity as mediated by MK, various constructs are introduced in my thesis, including the idea of multifarious senses of self; an Afrikaner diaspora, and the construct of a hardening of Afrikaner dispositions (countering former utopian notions of the so-called 'rainbow'). Visser (2009:338) identifies two historical periods of diaspora, namely the Anglo-Boer War and the change of political regime from apartheid to Democracy with the modern-day diaspora known as emigration, or the 'brain drain' (Visser 2007:9). Dubbed in the media as the 'white flight', the brain drain represents the loss of skilled workers like medical doctors, IT technicians, and artists, to name a few. In a pragmatic sense, by establishing a skilled work force through training beginners in the fields of audio, visual, and set designers, and presenters, MK counteracted this trend.[20] This in turn provided skilled professionals on various platforms which could be used under the umbrella of DSTV.

However, apart from the well-known 'brain drain' phenomenon Visser (2009:335ff) identifies a new Afrikaner diaspora that he links with post-apartheid efforts at redefining Afrikaner identity. First, on a more pragmatic level, he notes that right-wing Afrikaners resorted to 'internal migration' by 'migrating' to the "all-white enclave of Orania – an envisaged *volkstaat* (homeland) for Afrikaners" (Visser 2009:338). Secondly, on a more metaphysical level, Visser (2009:339) observes a trend among

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[20] In this regard, MK's influence will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

conservatively-minded Afrikaners not only to move to enclosed neighbourhoods (the so-called gated communities) but, more radically, to resort 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.

In later chapters, it will be shown how MK catered to this kind of disembodied 'diaspora' through focused programmatic content, including the channel's extensive promotion of 'De la Rey'.

Within the context of my inquiry, the role of Afrikaans – the main MK medium of communication – is also considered. The socio-political history of Afrikaans is steeped in controversy, not just regarding its origins (predating its inception as an official language) but also it is ideological positioning through becoming the chosen language medium during apartheid. As a post-apartheid language, Afrikaans became the target of protests[21] that either opposed its evolution as a heterogeneous construct, or its marginalisation as victimised 'purist' medium of expression (Visser 2021:335).

As was earlier reasoned, language, together with culture, is seen as a building block towards social identity formation (Van der Waal 2008:52). In the case of the post-apartheid Afrikaans youth, Klopper (2009:115) identifies three factors that problematise identity work. The first two of these can be identified as universal by nature, namely youth's natural association with sub-culture, as this helps them to identify with a group and single collective to deal with issues about their future, and the fragmentation of identity as related to a new, unstable social context. Klopper's third consideration pertains specifically to the post-apartheid context. It concerns the loss of power with the dawn of Democracy, which unearthed feelings of guilt, loss, and angst (cf. Van der Merwe 1998:230, in Klopper 2009:115). This meant that some Afrikaans youth felt victimised by the ruling party (Visser 2009:354). Victimisation or "assertion of rights as a minority" (Nel 2010:31) consequently became a legitimate way for these factions to assert their identity – in Afrikaans – through the theme of

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[21] Protests included the Kaapse Beweging (a movement inspired by black ideology, to liberate the oppressed, and the language becoming the signifier for liberation) (Van Heerden 2016:58) and #Afrikaansmustfall during 2015 and 2016 (Afrikaans as instruction medium should be abolished at tertiary level) (Van Heerden 2016:65).

nostalgia. As pointed out already, a prime example was Bok van Blerk's 'De la Rey' (cf. Van der Merwe 2015:249).[22]

However, the broader theme of nostalgia, fueled by notions of victimisation, lends itself to the nurturing of Afrikaner pride and a concept that Steyn (2021:21) terms the 'ignorance contract'. This is a bond that is cemented within the context of social interaction, such as a 'braai' or a music concert, which erases memories of the unpleasant past, replacing these with a belief in a future that purges itself of apartheid's injustices (Steyn 2012:21).

Vestergaard's (2000:123) interpretation of what could be termed an ignorance contract includes more heterogeneous perspectives on post-apartheid Afrikaner identity as representing an alliance with Afrikaans-speaking people of colour (cf. also Nel 2010:29);[23] the state of Orania, which holds on to outdated notions of Afrikaner identity; and an oppositional deconstruction of past Afrikaans societal norms as illustrated in the comic *Bitterkomix*.[24]

The idea of an 'ignorance contract' is also suggested by Sutherland's in-depth research on post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth aged 16–35 (Sutherland 2013:125). Her study brings to the fore that this sector of the Afrikaans-speaking youth is developing, or re-imagining their identities, through two strategies, namely the dealing with the history of their parents that has been passed onto them, by negating new identities out of choice, or holding on to the vital role that the church/religion still holds as part of Afrikaner pride and the sense of belonging to an exclusive cultural group. Non-churchgoers, Sutherland (2013:209) observes, would be more tolerant of and inclusive to a new identity and culture. She describes several negotiating strategies (cf. Leibowitz et al. 2007) that confirm the youth's journey to find a new, all-inclusive identity. These comprise both denying and acknowledging the past,

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[22] The (ideologically loaded) song is about the leadership of a revered general in the Boer army, General Koos de la Rey, who stood up for his people during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902).

[23] Examples are Radio Sonder Grense (RSG), the magazine *Sarie* and the 'soapie' *7de Laan* (Nel 2010:29).

[24] The comic strip became a flagship for 'alternative Afrikaners' as the main character is a long-haired rocker who is imprisoned in a mental ward for five years after police has arrested him. He says, "I was a terrorist, but now I am cured" and joins the army. The character's statement and portrayal allude to the social dress style and compulsory military service, amongst others (Vestergaard 2000:123). The strip's creator, Conrad Botes' main goal was to undermine and critique authority, especially the patriarchal authority of "the father, the priest and the principal" (Vestergaard 2000:124).

responding with emotions like guilt, and taking responsibility for the future (Sutherland 2013:122).

Vanderhaegen's (2014:242) study of polemics in the newspaper *Beeld* brought to the fore specific topics and ideologies that highlight concepts of 'self-othering' and victimisation. Again, these include feelings of angst, hate, guilt, and shame (Vanderhaeghen 2014:242). Importantly, these sentiments point to a hardening of (a victimised) Calvinistic and Nationalist ideology, which flourished during apartheid, as opposed to the shared essential human values of *ubuntu* emphasised post-apartheid.

Finally, since in this thesis MK is studied as a post-apartheid cultural phenomenon, while simultaneously, its broader consequences for post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth identity are detailed. While my data analysis is presented by way of a separate chapter, my research will be reported as an unfolding 'story' over the course of the chapters to follow (cf. Holliday 2007:122). The theoretical/philosophical constructs introduced in earlier this section serve to structure this 'narrative', while, as mentioned, thematic analysis aids a systematic exploration of my data.

1.5 Limitations of the study

As already stated, most of MK's social media and internet traces have been indefinitely removed from web-based platforms, which is a complicating factor in my study. It was explained above that the issue of data collection was mitigated by incorporating the method of semi-structured interviewing, involving a broader base of MK stakeholders.

A further complicating factor is that archived MK materials could only be accessed at the archives of DSTV in Johannesburg. Permission was granted to access the media formats in digital and analogue format on special equipment. While this allowed for invaluable insight in materials relevant to my research, it meant that archival data collection was laborious and time-consuming. Moreover, I found that materials were incorrectly or incompletely archived. As a result, in some cases, concerning my Videography in particular, it was impossible to provide complete information as needed for citation and for my reference list. I have attempted to compensate for this shortcoming by including as much information as was possible.

1.6   Ethical considerations

As explained in my Methods section, due to the limitation of sources on MK, my primary data collection method concerns interviews with main MK stakeholders. As human subjects were thus involved, ethical clearance, granted by the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, UFS, was obtained.[25]

Interviewees were chosen for their varied roles and functionalities during MK's existence. Their participation was voluntary, and each participant has signed a consent form. The privacy and identity of participants is protected as pseudonyms are consistently used throughout my thesis (cf. Kaiser 2009:1632). As the research topic has emotionally laden connotations to the constructs 'Afrikaans' and 'Afrikaner', questions dealing with these topics were formulated discreetly.[26]

Once interviews had been transcribed, participants were allowed to reflect on whether my interpretations accurately replicated what was said during the interview. Participants retained the right to withdraw from the research at any time. They will not benefit directly from participating in the research and were informed as such. All data concerning my research were stored on a password-protected computer.

1.7   Value of the study

A thorough literature search brought to light that a significant number of dissertations are available on the topic of post-apartheid Afrikaner identity. However, as a related topic, no scholarly research has focused on documenting the DSTV music channel MK's history and its demise, or its influence as a cultural phenomenon. Yet, as is argued in this thesis, MK impacted all Afrikaans rock or alternative bands during its time of existence and left a legacy and platform for bands to aspire to compared to international standards for producing music or music videos. Furthermore, it meaningfully contributed to the construction of alternative identities for the post-apartheid, 'born-free' Afrikaans-speaking youth. My thesis aims to address the hiatus concerning research on MK, and thereby document, in a way that acknowledges the

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[25] Ethical clearance was obtained 1 May 2018 with clearance number UFS-HSD2018/0501.
[26] The interview schedule is attached as Addendum 1.

richness and nuance of the topic, its complexity as discursive negotiation of post-apartheid identities and ideologies.

CHAPTER 2: THE (A)SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP OF MK AND POST-APARTHEID AFRIKAANS YOUTH IDENTITY

Figure 2: Oppikoppi Festival 2018 (Nomakanjani)[27]

2.1 The socio-political context pre-MK

As was claimed in the introduction to this thesis, during the channel's existence from 2005–2013, MK was a cultural phenomenon that influenced not only identity formation among certain sectors of the Afrikaans-speaking youth, but also the filmography in local music video and linguistic use of Afrikaans in alternative Afrikaans music. Accordingly, it provided a platform for developing future Afrikaans music (Nel 2010:124). It was also pointed out that ideologically laden words such as 'Afrikaans' and 'Afrikaner' hold burdensome emotional baggage due to the political regime within which the Afrikaans-speaking youth grew up during apartheid (cf. Hoad 2014:191). In addition to these terms, those of 'identity' and 'culture' need to be defined within the context of this chapter to (eventually) answer the research question by which the thesis is underpinned. This concerns the degree to which the dispersion of Afrikaans alternative music was related to MK as a cultural phenomenon and how social themes such as identity and branding influenced its specific mode of address and its meta-textual production of (mediated) discourse.

An influential social and cultural phenomenon such as MK calls for research concerning its relation to identity formation among its young, Afrikaans-speaking fan base. As will be reiterated in this chapter, during its years of existence, the channel formed part of local consumerist culture, as it was meticulously planned according to a commercialised approach with a view to financial independence. Introduced in Chapter 4, my data will confirm how MK was based on a carefully marketed strategy, which, though, ostensibly inclusive, focused on a particular race and age group in the new, democratic South Africa.

After the inception of MK in 2005, many Afrikaans youths identified with aesthetic and cultural values shaped through the channel's programme broadcasts and newspaper coverage. The widespread following amassed by MK was nothing short of a rage amongst the Afrikaans youth. In the sense of a cultural phenomenon, this could be understood as "all-encompassing mass support through the unification of individuals with others of the same conviction, whether such beliefs concerned life goals, musical taste, fashion or the following of a famous personality" (cf. Bakhtiari 2021).[28] It is

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[28] Examples of well-known international cultural phenomena are 'Gangnam style', Taylor Swift, Pokémon Go!, Minecraft and Ice Bucket Challenge (Columbus State Library 2021).

important to note that the term 'cultural phenomenon' is symbiotically related to other terms, notably the terms 'social' and 'culture', which, in turn, relate to the concept of identity. Within the context of a literature review, the bandwagon effect of MK, which influenced the construction of alternative post-apartheid Afrikaans identity, will therefore be considered in this chapter, originating from a particular set of socio-cultural and socio-political circumstances.

- Cultural restrictions and censorship

South Africa is a relatively young democracy with a well-documented political past. After 1948, the pro-Afrikaner National Party (NP) came to power with the ideology of apartheid; Afrikaner Nationalists instilled a respect for 'God, volk en kultuur' (God, nation-state, and culture). This three-stranded rope actively enforced, through Afrikaans as a medium, a foundation in religion, pride for the homeland, and cultural pride of promoting the Afrikaans language.[29] After winning a whites-only referendum in 1961, the NP Government under HF Verwoerd declared South Africa a republic (South African Government 2018). Vanderhaegen (2014:33) describes this process as follows:

> The state of non-being in relation to the British Empire informed the struggles of Afrikaners to acquire first their own language, then their independence, then their own state and finally their own nation, which became coterminous with their own country.

Afrikaners were now faced with forming their own identity, which constituted a(n own) language (Giliomee 2003:365) and, consequently, cultural activities and festivals to celebrate the nation's independence (Giliomee 2003:492). Van der Merwe (2017:63) observes that these developments formed part of a broader strategy to establish Afrikaner cultural self-sufficiency (also in Giliomee 2003:402). This construct was cultivated under the newly established Afrikaner Broederbond (1918), an exclusive organisation "restricting membership to Afrikaans-speaking Protestant white males who were financially independent" (Giliomee 2003:400), initially aimed at keeping up Afrikaner resistance to British rule, and later the political protection of white Afrikaner

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[29] Within the context of Afrikaans popular music, an example of the foundations mentioned above is exhibited in Broodryk's study of identity as represented by the Afrikaans singer Steve Hofmeyr in music, film, and political activism (2015:59).

dominance.[30] Under the leadership of HF Verwoerd, apartheid was more brutally enforced through the concepts of '*kragdadigheid en konsekwentheid*' (forcefulness and consistency) (Giliomee 2003:519). This meant the institutionalisation of racism as legislation enforcing the separation of races. As part of a well-developed state apparatus, censoring was applied to all forms of media and music to help form the ruling race and party's ideological identity. For instance, Van der Merwe (2017:62ff) notes that the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) political take-over in 1959 ushered in an era of conformity with state ideology. Together with the Dutch Reformed Church and the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK; the Federation of Afrikaan Cultural Societies) they established and enforced a "culture of censorship" (Van der Merwe 2017:84). The SABC based the censorship of songs on an evaluation of "13 reasons of censorship", including lyrics of songs that might "inflame public opinion", contain swearwords, sexual references, or were blasphemous (Oosthuizen 2005:15).[31]

The new white, Afrikaans middle-class youth culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s was influenced by the international rock music scene, which manifested primarily in local urban contexts. However, the FAK was opposed to external influences on Afrikaans elitist culture. Consequently, the federation issued a paper in 1974 condemning the influence of overseas popular music forms, which were feared to displace Afrikaans culture.[32] An example of the ensuing censorship was seen in the banning of the Beatles between 1966 and 1971 by the SABC.[33] Simultaneously, Afrikaans popular music records were released celebrating milestones and a sense of

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[30] The name was changed to The Afrikanerbond in 1994 when the organisation became more inclusive and people of colour, as well as women, could be part of it (Van der Merwe 2009:221, Footnote 26).

[31] Examples of censorship include album titles that were changed (*Kwela with Duffy* was changed to *Party with Duffy*) and mixed-language titles that were not allowed, like *Ghitaar boogie* or *Vyfhoek blues* (Van der Merwe 2017:85).

[32] Contrary to the strict control of the SABC and recording companies, ironically the South African Defence Force (SANDF) promoted music by the American singer-songwriter Sixto Rodriquez during this period. While this was done with a view to building the morale of the troops, it meant that young Afrikaans men, who were forced to sign up for national service, were exposed to a world of subcultures, including folk-rock, psychedelic folk and psychedelic rock that would otherwise have been censored (Van der Merwe 2017:94).

[33] Available from: https://www.beatlesbible.com/1966/08/08/south-african-broadcasting-corporation-bans-beatles-music/

pride for Afrikaans culture to combat the following of international superstars like Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones.[34]

- Early manifestations of protest

The introduction of television broadcasts in 1976 allowed lesser-known Afrikaans artists to reach a new audience. These included Koos du Plessis, Jannie Hofmeyr, and Anton Goosen. Additionally, the Musiek-en-Liriek movement was started and organised by the Afrikaans poet Rosa Keet (Van der Merwe 2017:99). Keet was optimistic about bringing Afrikaans music to different parts of the country through tours to cities and rural areas, and through TV competitions featuring new compositions. These efforts allowed Afrikaans artists to voice their opinions more freely within a developing sphere of intellectualism, countercultures, and subversive politics (Bezuidenhout 2009). Klopper (2008:210) notes that the 'luisterliedjies' were replaced by songs with lyrics of a more provocative nature.

In the 1980s, the youth started protesting compulsory military service as part of the so-called border war.[35] The first song opposing apartheid ideology in this context was released by the English musician James Phillips, better known under his alias Bernoldus Niemand, whose hit song 'Hou my vas korporaal' (1985; 'Hold me close, corporal') was a satire on the conscripted 'whites only' military service. The recording was immediately banned by the SABC as it was perceived as anti-apartheid commentary on the apartheid-era military service and its hierarchy.[36] Perhaps, at the time, implied homosexual meaning and its dangers for the Afrikaans 'seuns' (young men) was overlooked.

The Voëlvry movement, an influential movement of Afrikaans alternative music, started out with a nationwide tour in 1986, of which Niemand formed part. The tour featured artists conjoining on every cultural front. This included actors, writers, poets, musicians, and visual artists. All of them aspired to express through music and poetry,

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[34] Examples are *Gé Korsten sing Erika* and the Springbok Hit Parade albums (Van der Merwe 2017:90).
[35] Deon Opperman's musical Tree aan! depicts newly recruited army cadets, doing forced military service at the Angola Border War. More information available from:
https://www.artlink.co.za/news_article.htm?contentID=27408 (Tree aan!) and the Defence Amendment Bill (1967) https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/military-service-becomes-compulsory-white-south-african-men
[36] https://samilhistory.com/2017/06/30/hou-my-vas-korporaal/

opposition against the ruling party, compulsory military service, and the oppressive state-controlled world (through policies of apartheid) in which they lived (Voëlvry the movie 2006; Oosthuizen 2005:8). From a musical perspective, the movement represented an alternative voice of dissent to mainstream Afrikaans popular music at the time, such as the well-known sugar-coated hits of Gé Korsten, Carike Keuzenkamp and Sonja Herholdt (Pienaar 2012:6).[37]

After the first Democratic election (1994), the transition time and the aftermath of apartheid, a door was opened for Afrikaans singers to voice their views more freely, as was the case, particularly with new indie bands that became popular at the time (Klopper 2009:106). The period (the early 90s) was marked by an explosion of Afrikaans rock music and bands. As Schutte and Viljoen (2021:87) observe, Karen Zoid became famous for forcefully posing the question of 'What does it mean to be an Afrikaner?'. Notable is her reinterpretation of iconic Afrikaans folk songs to portray antagonistic commentary on the post-apartheid Afrikaner society (Bosman 2004:45). Her rock version of the FAK song 'Afrikaners is plesierig', an erstwhile gem of Afrikanerdom, for instance, impacted her followers to such a degree that they were dubbed the 'Zoid generation' (Nel 2014:41).

Steyn (2003:iii) describes the discursive strategies applied by post-apartheid Afrikaners with the term white talk, which she designates "a resistant and flexible set of ideologically-charged discursive strategies attempt[ing] to perpetuate privilege into the new dispensation while paying careful attention to self-presentation". This context also pertained to the post-apartheid Afrikaans youth and was advantageously navigated by MK through carefully planned marketing strategies. As recent research shows, branding and advertising are two of the most influential factors when inventing and installing a new brand. This can influence the consumer in such a way that a) the product becomes a lifestyle choice, b) it is financially rewarding for the developer, and c) makes for greater brand loyalty (Müller 2017:579).[38] However, as Van der Westhuizen (2018:4) observes, MK's marketing strategies may have caused white Afrikaans-speakers to "remain trapped in the form of whiteness that competes with

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[37] The lyrics of most popular Afrikaans music at the time expressed sentimental romantic themes: national sentiment, flora, fauna and rugby, but also religious themes and gender stereotypes that conformed to Afrikaner patriarchal culture (Van der Waal & Robins 2011:764).
[38] Well-known global examples are Apple products (iPhone, iPad, iMac), Absolut Vodka and Chanel Perfume.

norm-setting white English-speaking whiteness of seeking to transcend whiteness, and therefore race and racism, altogether".

Before addressing the following aspects, such as the financial, philosophical, psychological, and social reasons for launching MK, first, the concept of post-apartheid white Afrikaans youth identity will be addressed in more detail. In this regard, it is essential to ascertain whether the channel was primarily an initiative of the producers to accumulate financial revenue, whether it served the ideological objectives of so-called white talk as a form of cultural self-preservation – or whether both issues formed part of MK's philosophy.[39]

2.2   Post-apartheid Afrikaans identity

It was argued up to this point that in post-apartheid South Africa, the white Afrikaans-speaking youth were confronted on the most basic level with questions of identity. Seen as part of an inclusive minority ethnic group and culture, as Mmusi Maimane (2015) more recently observed, they no longer formed part of the dominant, supreme, or ruling race. For instance, social rules and restrictions formerly applied, such as racial segregation, compulsory schooling in Afrikaans as medium of instruction, and the censorship exerted by both the National Ruling Party and the SABC were now inoperative (Oosthuizen 2005:7).

The burden of understanding the past, admitting to 'faults of the fathers' without personally being to blame, and finding a new identity proved to be an enormous challenge. Thus, the Afrikaner youth had to discover a new voice through which a newly constructed sense of self-expression could serve as the foundation for a rethought (Afrikaner) culture and language.

Within the broader new South African Society, at this time, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by the Government of National Unity in 1996 through the mediation of the first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela, to help South Africans come to terms with the violence and human rights abuses perpetrated during the apartheid regime to aid the process of reconciliation

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[39] This aspect will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

(Alexander 2002:62ff). Individuals were asked to step forward and tell their stories, all formally documented, after which conciliation took place to amend the injustices.

This process established two main camps for the Afrikaner youth – those that felt they forcibly had to atone for the sins of their fathers, as put in the words of Desmond Tutu "there can be no healing without truth" (cf. Jefferey 1999:20), and those who wanted to move on and start a new culture and identity, free from the burdens that were handed down through Apartheid's generations (Sutherland 2013:120). However, as Sutherland (2013) finds in her study on a post-apartheid white Afrikaans youth sector, they tended to internalise their parents' struggles, both past and present, and would therefore be more inclined to support former ethnic/political convictions than building a new identity. Overall, the Afrikaner youth faced deep-seated ambiguity in constructing a new sense of self while accepting the injustices that occurred in their parents and grandparents' lifetime under the apartheid dispensation. They also had to give new meaning to the word 'other', which during the apartheid era pertained to all races and cultures outside the white Afrikaans enclave (Fourie 2008:244).

Nel (2010:29) identifies three strategies of how Afrikaners tried to reinvent themselves in opposition to those factions who held true to their Nationalist identity. Two of these approaches place the Afrikaner in a negative light as either forming part of an elitist culture and language or as a victimised *volk* (as is applicable to the inhabitants of the white Afrikaans state Orania, established in 1963 to uphold 'the Afrikaner way of life'). Visser (2007:6) expands on the idea of the victimised volk by introducing the term 'inward migration', "identifying Orania as a *volkstaat* to which Afrikaners could internally, through a secluded, own State (and currency), cope with the problems outside of their control, understanding, and livelihood". Nel's (2010:29) third strategy calls for a more inclusive 'umbrella' type of culture, examples of which, in the field of popular Afrikaans culture, would involve the rebranding of various television programmes (KykNet, MNet, SABC), radio stations (Radio Sonder Grense [RSG], 5FM, 94.7)[40] and magazines (*Sarie*, *VISI*) after 1994. The philosophy behind the rebranding of RSG in 1996, for instance, concerned a new name, branding, and overall

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[40] Other examples are regional stations sold to BBE, black-owned private companies for financial gain, of which the bilingual character of the channels fell away, namely, Radio Port Natal, Radio Algoa and Highveld Stereo. The English radio service was changed to South Africa FM (SAFM) (Froneman 2008:153).

atmosphere of the radio station (previously known as Radio Suid-Afrika). Accordingly, programme names were changed to accommodate a broader, non-racial Afrikaans community, and more journalists of colour were hired. The changes proved beneficial, and the listeners grew from 500 000 to 1,9 million in seven years (Froneman 2008:158). Furthermore, the new broadcasting law required more local content to be aired by radio and television stations.[41]

In the case of RSG, this prerequisite turned out to be a double-edged sword, since being the prevailing Afrikaans radio station, filling the legal requirement of 60% local language and content served the purposes of retaining the station's Afrikaans identity, though in a newly formed guise. In contrast, a small, community-based Afrikaans radio station, Radio Pretoria, has openly served the interests of the conservative Afrikaner community since its inception in 1993(Froneman 2008:155). However, in 2015, the civil rights group AfriForum gained control of the station and renamed it PretoriaFM. Since then, it has embraced a more moderate political tone and started attracting a broader Afrikaans-speaking audience.[42]

Broadly spoken, and despite efforts to counter these developments, the revision of cultural identity during the early post-apartheid stages concerned a rebranding of various cultural landmarks and identifiers and a reinterpretation of well-known symbols and their association with an outdated identity forcibly removed. Notorious examples include the national flag, national emblem, public holidays, place names and street names (Vestergaard 2001).[43]

As was noted earlier, recently, much scholarly thought has proliferated regarding the question of post-apartheid Afrikaner identity. Contributions particularly relevant to the

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[41] For a copy of the Broadcasting act 4 of 1999, see https://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/a4-99.pdf.

[42] For more information: https://www.pretoriafm.co.za/.

[43] The national flag was changed from the infamously named 'four colours' to a new logo with six colours. New public holidays included Freedom Day and Women's Day (with Ascension Day removed). Various towns and cities were given new names. For instance, Pretoria changed to Tshwane, although the central business district would still be called Pretoria. Street names in various towns and cities, especially Pretoria that houses the Union Buildings (Administrative seat of the Government), were changed to remove associations with Afrikaner heroes; for instance, DF Malan Drive was renamed Es'kia Mphahlele Drive, and General Louis Botha Drive became January Masilele Drive, thus honouring struggle activists.

present study are those of Steyn (2003) and Vanderhaegen (2014). As noted earlier in this chapter, Steyn used the term 'white talk' for documenting feelings of displacement among white South Africans post-apartheid. The term defines Afrikaners' 'diasporic' nature post-apartheid by defining new identity formations' strengths and weaknesses. It is worth noting that Afrikaner identity's discourses and debates came into being within a larger conceptual framework, filtering through to a national level of race, language, and culture. As Steyn puts it, this process would inevitably involve "a substantial reframing of the social identities forged within the apartheid certainties" and would therefore require "complex individual and collective psychological adjustments as the population moves into an indeterminate future" (Steyn 2003:2).

Steyn's (2003:iii) examination of resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa brings to the fore that, since democracy, white South Africans, having lost centres of state power, "are constructing typically diasporic dimensions to how they operate". Analysing the work of three *Sunday Times*' columnists, Steyn (2003:158) traces how white talk is used as a smokescreen to preserve white dominance and power both among white and black elitists and amongst Afrikaans- and English-speaking white South Africans. In this regard, she finds that the power struggle for dominance manifests in concepts of 'us', 'them, 'other' and 'self' (Steyn 2003:158).

These concepts may be used to define Afrikaners as belonging to both the categories of 'other' and 'self'. 'Other' can be seen as a reflection of 'self' by signifying 'self' as that which is known, instead of that which is unfamiliar and uncertain (cf. Klopper 2017:292). Consequently, Afrikaners had to reposition themselves as either part of the new political regime or, instead, by embracing newly formed identities built on notions of 'the other' and contemplations on 'a new self' (Steyn 2003; Gilliomee 2003; Davies 2009; Bosch 2014; Vanderhaeghen 2014).

Reflecting on inherent ambivalences in post-apartheid Afrikanerhood, Vanderhaeghen (2014:1) proposes the concept of 'self-othering', which firstly points to the representation of the group as 'othered' or 'marginalised' and secondly to the re-articulation of Afrikaners as 'innocent'. As was observed in my introduction to this thesis, Vanderhaegen (2014:1) maintains that 'self-othering' takes place within discourses of guilt, loss, fear, belonging, transformation, and reconciliation, at a time

when a national identity imagined as a 'Rainbow Nation' was, and is still "contested by discourses of Africanism, nativism and minority rights".

Accordingly, Vanderhaegen's study on identity construction as observed in polemics published in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld,* finds that, despite prevailing discourses of reconciliation, in the post-apartheid setting of his research, the sense of an Afrikaans ethnic identity is reinforced. Within the resulting 'protected' sense of self, the subject is "(self)absolved of guilt, leaving the historical (racial) victim 'ungrieved' as the boundary of difference hardens into a frontier of antagonism".[44]

The ensuing problem in constructing a new identity amid the contending demands of a society in transformation while negotiating the past's emotional and moral debris is relevant for the current research. Vanderhaegen (2014:10) notes the prevalence of the phrase '*Ons is nie so nie*' (We are not like that/We are other than that), a refrain that reverberates through discourses of what used to be Afrikanerdom.[45] As he finds, "It represents an ambiguous assertion of identity through denial and differentiation. It simultaneously disowns an ascribes negative identity and implicitly defends one that is held to be blameless, and is, if no longer noble, then at least deserving of acceptance" (Vanderhaegen 2014:10-11).

Within the context of popular music forms, Annie Klopper (2017:292) advocates a considerably less 'hardened' concept of 'the other', based on her reflection on how Afrikaners view and measure themselves against that which is unfamiliar and uncertain. In this regard, she recognises the socio-historical positioning of post-apartheid identity formation in viewing it as a social construct(ion) rather than reflecting any specific version of 'truth'. This, for her, points to a process that takes place through the self-realisation of 'otherness', which has to do with how the subject becomes personally and socially responsible for accepting their own identity and that of the other. Only through understanding the culture of the other and the choices made from

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[44] Orizio (2000:202) tells of an Afrikaner community in Rehoboth, Namibia, that had to come to terms with the notions and understanding of 'self' and 'other' whilst they position themselves in the new millennium under government rule, as part of an independent Namibia, or keep fighting (as antagonists) to stay an independent state with an own parliament, almost becoming part of the 'lost white tribes' he refers to.

[45] As Vanderhaegen notes, this expression derives from the title of Jeanne Goosen's 1990 (pre-democracy) novel *Ons is nie almal so nie* and also Herman Wasserman's analysis of racism denialism in the Afrikaans press, "Ons is nie so nie" (Wasserman, 2010 in Vanderhaeghan 2014:68).

an inherently encultured social background, Klopper (2017:287ff) contends, one is enabled to understand the culture of the other more fully, as well as one's own. While Klopper's study essentially focuses on how South African white rappers negotiate identity by reinterpreting hip hop as an originally black cultural form, her findings show how a commercialised musical genre is deployed in ongoing local processes of the creolization, drawing on the means of language and music (Klopper 2017:ii).

- Considerations of production/consumption

Returning to the concept of branding, within the context of popular music, it should be noted that principles of production always come into play. Thus, trends within the sector are not only based on prevalent social, cultural, or political sentiments, but also principles of (more or less) aggressive marketing. Indeed, Roy Shuker (2005:xii) describes the consumerist culture of popular music production as a mixture between entertainment, art, and commerce:

> In cultural terms, popular music is clearly of enormous importance in people's daily lives, and for some, it is central to their social identities. In economic terms, the products of the music industry outweigh those of any other cultural industry, with income including not just the sales of recorded music but also copyright revenue, tour profits, sales of the music press, musical instruments and sound systems.

Klopper fully acknowledges this dual nature of popular music production – and how it may influence identity formation (2009:25). She proposes that, within the local context, identities are constructed through a type of social awareness that also concerns the idea of the fan base and thus involves concepts of branding and collective following (cf. also Van der Waal 2008:55). For Klopper (2017:i), popular music thus provides "a space wherein South African youth actively and continuously reconfigure the notion of social identity and interrogate associated issues surrounding it", all of which takes place within the terrain of thoroughly mediated mass-culture.

On the other hand, the idea of cultural identity for Kim (2013:45) can be found in the connections of an ethnic group with its roots closely tied to a past, present, or projected future. Van der Merwe (2009:75) describes such interrelation between culture and identity as follows, "At the heart of the matter is the fact that identity is embedded in a

unique culture and that culture is essential for the reproduction of identity." However, as noted already, Klopper (2017:i) investigates occurrences of cultural identity formation where the Afrikaner youth, rather than identifying with instances of popular music associated with their historical origins, instead choose to associate with forms of music based on cultural roots other than their own, like hip hop and rap. Such explorations of historically black cultural forms by white Afrikaans-speaking artists and audiences, Klopper (2017:i) contends, contest the notion of essential or fixed identities, and therefore she concludes that the universal, perhaps timeless, theme of telling stories through music is not dependent on race, culture, or geographical location alone. Despite its focus on Afrikaans and 'Afrikaansness', such a broadening of ethnic identity was evident in MK, as the channel catered for a wider target market within Afrikaans communities. This could be seen in their programmes Ondergrond, Hoordosis, Hip-Hop and at country-wide festivals with MK-branded stages (KKNK, Aardklop, Innibos).

- Themes of identity

As Klopper (2011) demonstrates in her study on Fokofpolisiekar, storytelling or, within the postmodernist ethos, writing a biography, can serve towards an intensive study of identity themes. The theme of identity also underlies her most recent research (2017) on the Afrikaans youth's identity crisis as represented in white Afrikaans rap. Focusing on the role that lyrics play in forming identity, Klopper (2017:292) concludes that rap lyrics within the said context function as a materialisation of youth discourse. In this respect, bands become personalised objects for their fan base, voicing the Afrikaans-speaking youth's daily struggles through their lyrics.

In the context of MK, a prime example is Fokofpolisiekar. The band has been studied by various scholars for its influence on Afrikaans-speaking teenagers, university students, the post-apartheid generation of Afrikaans-speaking teenagers, and the young working class. Such work has focused on how the band has mediated identity construction for young Afrikaners amidst the political and existential post-apartheid crisis (cf. Loubser 2014; Klopper 2009; Grundlingh 2008; Davies 2009). As Muller (2017a) perceives, Fokofpolisiekar had amassed nothing short of a cult following and is still seen as one of the most important role models that set a trend that few local bands can equal. As feature on MK, their lyrics opposed the ruling party, reminisced

on historical events, proliferated nostalgia, and spoke to the Afrikaans youth's daily struggles in building new relationships and identities amidst social and political pressure. At times, they have intimated a utopian reality, imagined as a release from a social and political rule less accommodating towards a previously advantaged and ruling ethnic group (Davis 2004; Sutherland 2013:144; Loubser 2014:25; Truscott 2011:94; Klopper 2009:129).

However, Jaco van der Merwe, better known as the musician Bittereinder, reserves a more negative view of Fokofpolisiekar as cited in Holtzhausen (2017:45). From his perspective, the band contributed nothing new in terms of music, lyrics, or image but, like most other local up-and-coming bands, "simply copied overseas trends". This, he ascribed to the fact that performance styles and trends from the competitive overseas market already are dated when reaching South Africa yet hailed locally as 'new'. Contrastingly, Holtzhausen (2017:45) notes that the work of musician Pieter Smith created a more diverse Afrikaans sound that was exported to the Netherlands and other parts of the world. Overall, however, these efforts had contributed to the formation and dissemination of a distinct, novel 'Afrikaans' identity. Albert du Plessis, the owner of Rhythm Records, explains why Afrikaans music's sudden boom was so prominent after Fokofpolisiekar (in *Gedye* 2007). From his perspective, it is easier to invent a new sound in Afrikaans rather than in (South African) English, which must compete with American and British peer production.

Discourses surrounding the propagation of an 'own', 'Afrikaans' alternative music medium are of relevance for the present study – albeit not only on the level of production, but also from a conceptual point of view. Both Vanderhaeghen (2014:240) and Sutherland (2013:198) observe, within the dislocation of post-apartheid identifications, a form of twenty-first-century cultural nationalism enforced by feelings of victimisation, racism, guilt, and self-othering. Bezuidenhout's (2007) study similarly affirms the Afrikaner youth's feelings of guilt, both as 'the other' and as 'bearers of the sins of the forefathers'. Such sentiments are explicitly demonstrated in Fokofpolisiekar's 'Brand Suid-Afrika' (Burn South Africa)[46] and 'Oop vir misinterpretasie' (Open for misunderstanding).[47] In 'Brand Suid-Afrika, the lyrics speak

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[46] From the album *Swanesang*, Rhythm Records, 2006.
[47] From the album *Monoloog in Stereo*, Rhythm Records, 2005.

of a lost innocence and the weight of historical wrongdoing: Vir jou is daar nog messe wat wag/In die bosse buite jou huis in die nag/Ons sal mos veilig wees/Ons sal mos veilig wees/Ons hou ons gewetens skoon/Ons sluit toe die deur/Ons het petrol gevat/En ons het al ons brûe afgebrand/Voordat ons aan die anderkant was.[48]

2.3 Language and Culture

As Willemse (2016:10) aptly states, in the post-apartheid era, Afrikaans as language became the core identity marker of many South Africans, numerous of whom were non-white.[49] Similar to the word 'culture' and 'identity', both markers also of ethnicity, language is indeed one of the primordial pillars on which societal norms are founded (cf. Delport & Olivier 2003, in Sutherland 2013:121). Van der Waal (2008:57) identifies language as an essential aspect of culture, as it cements social engagement both physically and intellectually. Language also connotes non-verbal expressions of self, such as dress or fashion, religion, and even culturally celebrated heritage days. In terms of the present study's focus, the Afrikaans language is thus laden with as much emotional and political baggage as the term 'Afrikaner'. I shall explore this aspect in more detail at a later point in this chapter.

Afrikaans is one of the youngest languages globally, a little over 100 years old, making it more malleable to adjust to newer-spoken trends (Kwaa Prah 2018). As a politically burdened construct, the Afrikaans language, like the terms 'Afrikaner' and 'Boer', is caught in a paradoxical situation driven by a political agenda that influences social and cultural contexts of identity. Contentiously, Giliomee (2003:211) and Willemse (2016:7) argue that the ruling political party, the African National Congress (ANC), through numerous strategies, post-apartheid attempted to disperse the Afrikaner and force this group to accept an ethnic majority's rule, enforcing a new minority ethnicity

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[48] 'For you, knives are still waiting/in the shrubs outside your home at night/We shall be safe/We shall be safe/Our consciences are clean/We lock the door/We took petrol/And burned all our bridges/Before we were on the other side'. Afrikaans lyrics derived from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQlmmU5rcLE

[49] According to the census undertaken by Stats South Africa (2016), the most significant percentage of the Afrikaans-speaking population is based in the following top three provinces, namely the Western Cape (46,6%), followed by the Eastern Cape (10,3%) and Gauteng (10,1%). Available from: http://cs2016.statssa.gov.za

on the Afrikaans community. Afrikaner resistance resulted in protests, some of which were about language, both as a medium of instruction and an official language.

Examples of unrest concerning language are rife throughout South African history, one of the most politically prominent being the Soweto protest in 1976, against Afrikaans as medium of instruction for all South Africans, filtering through to the current situation where protests for and against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at both secondary[50] and tertiary[51] level has, again, been at the forefront in recent years (Steyn 2016:483; Visser 2007:19). This is confirmed by recent polemics concerning language policy at Stellenbosch University (Head 2021), where students allegedly protested the prohibition of Afrikaans for private communication (Vuso 2021).

- Language and (political) power

Melissa Steyn (2010:72) maintains that the symbolic clash of power affected by recent language policy reforms in South Africa, in particular concerning the language of instruction and the renaming of symbolic cultural sites, must be regarded, not simply as newly enforced boundaries, but indeed as "boundaries to justify race". Kriel (2010:280) notes that, according to the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), the highest number of language rights violations reported are against Afrikaans speakers. Seen from the Afrikaner perspective, these types of cultural 'violations' and 'forced oppression' form the social milieu in which the MK generation grew up (instead of the white minority rule of their parents) (cf. Louw 2017:93).

Still, despite purist forms of teaching in a language that, post-1994, attempted to preserve its historical origins within the 'new' South Africa, Afrikaans, in all its newly explored guises, exhibited a sudden spurt of growth, especially in the Afrikaans media. In the introduction to my thesis, it was explained that, following the dawn of democracy,

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[50] Six Afrikaans State schools identified as having a Christian and Afrikaans language ethos, enforced on their learners morning prayers and Afrikaans hymns, despite the influx of various other cultures; cf. https://maroelamedia.co.za/nuus/sa-nuus/godsdiens-in-skole-csv-opening-met-gebed-sal-iets-van-die-verlede-wees/ and
https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/constitution-says-religion-can-be-practiced-at-not-by-schools-court-hears-20170517.
[51] The language policies of traditionally Afrikaans universities, the University of Pretoria (UP), Stellenbosch University (US), and the University of the Free State were changed to phase out Afrikaans as an instruction medium to be replaced with English; cf.
https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/ZP_Files/r31_16-language-policy.zp138060.pdf and
https://www.sun.ac.za/afrikaans/meer-oor/language.

various new programmes were aired on television in Afrikaans, both locally and in Namibia, as part of a newly established freedom of speech and cultural expression. Simultaneously, more significant numbers of Afrikaans novels were sold. Furthermore, art and music festivals started incorporating Afrikaans' different dialects and sub-cultures, challenging the former 'purist' Afrikaans community while consequently gaining thousands of new festivalgoers (Botha 2009; Vestergaard 2001:27).

Within this context, MK exploited an untapped niche market – that of the young, white Afrikaans-speaking youth – by airing a diverse selection of programmes and featuring MK dedicated stages at festivals. Suddenly Afrikaans was no longer perceived as the white oppressive and dominant language (Giliomee 2003:579), as affirmed in various newspaper headings and newly invented band names instituted from 2004 onwards (Fortein 2004). As noted in my introduction initially, these names displayed explicit language, which publicly confirmed the band members' freedom to use their native language, Afrikaans, uncensored and unregulated. This stood in stark contrast to the apartheid years, during which Afrikaans popular songs were mainly translated from European ballads, and mainly comprised sentimental topics and lyrics. As noted earlier, at the time (the 1980s), alternative albums were censored as the ruling party regulated and maintained the dominant culture and language, despite being representative of a minority ethnic group.[52] Censored artists included David Kramer, Anton Goosen and Koos Kombuis.

Fast-tracking to 2005, it was not only the band names, like Bloedskande (Incest), that were disturbing, but also the song lyrics and their subliminal meanings. Not all of these were politically inspired – though dissent against traditionalist Afrikaner culture surfaced in various guises. 'Duskant onbliksem', a song by Bloedskande, for instance, had its video banned due to the nature of the song's narrative – a boyfriend who fights with his girlfriend, kills her, and uses her meat to make an award-winning *boerewors* that he sells to the public.

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[52] Koos Kombuis (*Voëlvry* documentary 2006) questioned the definition of alternative Afrikaners: "… daardie tyd is van 'alternatiewe Afrikaners' gepraat. Ek het altyd gewonder: alternatief tot wat? Wat vir my toe opvallend was (en nou nog is), is die voorskriftelike aard van Afrikanerskap, wat per definisie uitgesluit het dat jy krities denkend teenoor Afrikanerskap kon staan en verhoed het dat jy liberaal mog wees. Dit is as heiligskennis beskou – 'n verloopte Afrikaner."

Focusing on band names post-2004, Klopper (2011:87,141), Bezuidenhout (2007:9) and Erasmus (2017:172) document the following tendencies: a) protest against the conforms of a previously defined cultural identity and its appropriateness, b) verbalising the daily struggles of defining and building a new identity, c) representing instances of nostalgia and/or Utopia, and d) introducing freedom of language and dress. These inclinations directly correlate with trends set by MK. Thus, the channel actively promoted a freer association with the Afrikaans language, focusing specifically on new identities built on the premise of permissive lyrics and band/brand recognition. Thereby, the channel monopolised a particular ethnic and age group (Du Plessis 2012) whilst simultaneously promoting opposing views of nostalgia.

Observing the influence of various dialects of a language reveals essential aspects of a culture's innermost workings and the delicate threads that hold it together. Alant (2013), in his research on translation, focuses on dialect as related to the 'nostalgic music genre'. Concerning the Afri-Frans project,[53] a more superior example of nostalgia in Afrikaans, Alant notes that, in this undertaking, translation connotes to making the other more familiar with the self through the songs' lyrics and involves a focus on specific aspects of culture, notably identity.[54]

MK contributed to the identity project in comparable ways as it provided the platform for producing different genres in Afrikaans music, though focusing more on alternative and Afrikaans rock music. It also offered a melting pot for the different Afrikaans dialects featured on television and live shows. Arthur Dennis, one of the band members of Akkedis, the oldest Afrikaans rock band, commented that Cape dialect changed drastically after MK's launch, as "many Capetonian fans started speaking in a more rounded pronunciation, typically experienced in Pretoria, Gauteng".[55]

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[53] Afri-Frans is a project headed by Matthys Maree to translate familiar Afrikaans songs into European languages to make them more accessible internationally. The first translations in French were done by Prof Naomi Morgan in 2010. The project extended to songs sung in French (Afri-Frans), Spanish (Afri-Spaans) and Italian (Afri-Italiaans). Cf. https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider20/afrikaans-and-dutch-german-and-french-documents/all-documents/afri-project-oortref-stoutste-verwagting.pdf?sfvrsn=fc13fa21_2

[54] The original Afrikaans reads: 'Dit is inderdaad waar, … dat die begrip vertaling vertaalteoreties gesproke rééds meer behels as die vertaling – in die sin van vertroud maak met dit wat vreemd is – van suiwer taalkundige elemente; ingesluit daarby is die kulturele en dus ook, alreeds, aspekte van identiteit.'

[55] Informal conversation 1 July 2018.

- A broadening of Afrikaner identity

However, the infamous quote 'money makes the world go round' was prevalent in MK's demographic and language choices. Politicians understand the worth of lobbying for the right voters, especially for financial gain (Pyne 2005:551ff.). Similarly, MK positioned its programming in such a way as to cater for as broad an Afrikaans-speaking viewership as possible, including black South Africans. However, Vestergaard's (2001:31) critical observation, as cited below, reveals that seemingly straightforward linguistic categorisation within the post-apartheid context may have obscured racial subtleties:

> The persistence of racial reasoning (thinking in terms of racial categories) also redefines Afrikaner identity along linguistic lines. Every time I heard a white Afrikaans speaker insist that an Afrikaner is solely defined as "someone who speaks Afrikaans" (thereby including non-whites), their statement indicated … that the Afrikaner they talked about was without any doubt a white Afrikaans speaker. There was, in short, a discrepancy between the explicit and implicit meaning of their words.

Though the Afrikaans language was thus used to reach out to a broader target audience, it still acted as a cultural marker regarding the granting of recording contracts in a more regulative sense. Indeed, Van der Merwe (2015:14) points out that non-white Afrikaans bands were still affected by racial discrimination, which influenced the recording contracts granted to them and impaired their commercial success.

Nevertheless, Afrikaans was now more freely used by other ethnic groups, who, as Van Zyl (2008:138) contends, now also began to lay rightful claims to the language (though it should be noted that citizens of colour had long been the majority users of Afrikaans). However, this did not prevent Afrikaans from still being seen as an elitist language and, as Klopper (2017:i) notes, one that was not "owned" by "all same language users". Consequently, pre-conceived ideas of who has the right to lay claim to the Afrikaans language and culture, or even 'Afrikaans' genres of music, prevailed. Klopper (2009:16) also notes that Afrikaans music, particularly Afrikaans rock music, was mainly seen as "a white phenomenon".

When Afrikaans-speaking individuals from different geographical locations meet, Afrikaans dialects are prevalent within specific regions and among specific ethnic groups. More recently, acknowledgement of the use of Afrikaans by ethnic groups other than white Afrikaans-speakers became prevalent. During 2019, various social media posts garnered outspoken support and opposition for the brown Afrikaans community regarding their lawful right to use the language and their cultural association with Afrikaans. A prime example is the Ghoema Music Awards that are awarded for exceptional work done in Afrikaans. The instrument referred to, a *goema/ghoema*, is a hand drum played by the Cape Minstrel musicians, which forms an integral part of the slave heritage of the brown people in the Cape. Loit Sols and Les Javan, currently prominent coloured musicians whose music is regularly played on RSG, question why most of the Ghoema votes are awarded to white musicians if the award's name derives from a coloured heritage. Similarly, Van der Merwe (2017:144) queries whether the name, if spelt with an 'h', indicates language politics in that it invokes "memories of cultural appropriation and exclusion".

The radio host and prominent political analyst Eisebius McKaiser (2016) voiced similar reserve in his statement that

> My reluctance to speak Afrikaans on radio and television is simply because we always, as coloured people, assumed that the Afrikaans spoken by white Afrikaans people is the gold standard of Afrikaans. But that is political rubbish.

He notes that the odd programme broadcast on RSG and KykNET, where Afrikaans features as spoken 'dialect', can be considered the exception. While these represent truthful realities, as far as Afrikaans communities are concerned, they simultaneously confirm that the canon to which any 'other' (less pure) forms of Afrikaans is measured against, is the Afrikaans spoken by white Afrikaans people. Van der Westhuizen (2018:4) supports McKaizer's viewpoint and explains on a psychological level how Afrikaners need to alter the reality of their future through experiences from their past for Afrikaans to become an all-inclusive language and culture.

> White Afrikaans-speakers remain trapped in the form of whiteness that competes with norm-setting white English-speaking whiteness, instead of seeking to transcend whiteness, and therefore race and racism, altogether (Van der Westhuizen 2018:4).

In terms of post-apartheid publications that catered to an exclusively Afrikaans readership, Amanda Gouws (2007), a political science professor at the University of Stellenbosch, argues that language is but a "sub-heading when defining culture and identity". Her study reveals that several Afrikaans publications that were launched post-apartheid, for example, *Insig* magazine, collapsed a mere thirteen years after they had been introduced. Consequently, she questions whether Afrikaners want to be intellectually stimulated, be aware of problems of a broader international nature, or understand that their sense of victimisation and having been relegated to a minority ethnic group is a universal problem felt by many cultures and languages around the world. Her study suggests that local newspaper agencies are partly to blame for keeping intellectual stimulation low among an Afrikaans readership since less challenging media content translates to better sales and profit margins (Gouws 2007).

2.4   Exclusive claims to cultural identity

Regarding the construction of post-apartheid identities, Giliomee (1992:339) has noted even before the dawn of democracy that a negotiated settlement in South Africa would, to a significant extent, depend on the ability of Afrikaners to adapt to a curtailment of their cultural and political overreach through redefining their ethnic identity and privilege.

Defining identity raises ambiguous questions that are difficult to answer regarding the definition itself and the influences that contribute towards an individual, group, or cultural identity. However, as argued thus far, MK, on a pragmatic level, tapped into the various influences that helped construct a new, post-democratic Afrikaner identity. As stressed throughout my argumentation, the channel was instrumental in providing a medium where young Afrikaans-speaking youth could raise their voices in unity and feel a (cultural) bond that connected them through music. Thus, the channel gave rise to unique forms of cultural expression such as interviews with bands backstage (Amp and Studio1), printing public reactions to shows and bands, featuring the latest trends, and addressing current issues and problems in the youth extension *Beeld*, called JIP.

Giliomee (2003:504) notes that as the term 'Afrikaner' is closely intertwined with the Afrikaans language, it is loaded with emotional and socio-political connotations related to the previous political regime, especially the way people were regulated in terms of

religion, gender, and race. However, through an undoing of such hard-liner political subtexts, MK enabled the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth to conceive new identities and help build new senses of self (concerning what constitutes their culture and or race and/or language). Using the communal social factor of the Afrikaans language, they could also perceive a new 'other' through experiencing and accepting different cultures or races. Examples of programmes with the before mentioned content are MK Skole (a 30-minute episode with learners from various schools presenting their school's top ten songs), Draadloos (an acoustic/unplugged session by a known and new up-and-coming artist), Hip-Hop (showcasing the latest in the genre, from which prominent musicians of colour were popularising it on the Cape Flats, like Brasse van die Kaap) and Wys my jou huis (video footage of a musicians' house).

Within the current age of technology, MK's marketing strategy among the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth thus focused on their preferences or lifestyle choices with a view to effective branding. In this regard, the argument seems to have been that the better the target market responds to advertisements or branding, the bigger the monetary revenue would become (cf. Shuker 2005:256). A good example is the song 'De la Rey'. Van der Waal and Robins (2011:766) contend that the airplay it received on MK resulted in the song becoming the first Afrikaans 'hit' to sell 180 000 CDs in less than six months and winning an MK Award for the best music video in 2007. Indeed, Van der Merwe (2017:137) identifies the driving force behind the financial profitability of Afrikaans popular music as the marketing of Afrikaans, in Afrikaans, and on Afrikaans platforms, like online profiles, public endorsements, and Afrikaans television channels. Within the broader context, Steyn (2016:487) confirms how, in the post-apartheid era, businesses capitalised on the monetary value of Afrikaans, as KykNET and Afrikaans newspapers were part of a higher income niche market.

- Economic considerations

Literature on the topic of music marketing is rife with studies on the marketing and branding of products, specifically in the case of targeting teenagers (Kalyoncu 2011; Muller 2017b; Hattingh 2010; Klopper 2017). In the case of MK, the channel's vision comprised an entrepreneurial opportunity for a perceived oppressed language and

culture to be explicitly marketed to a young, white Afrikaans generation. As will later be confirmed in my data discussion (Chapter 4), the channel's concentration on this niche market, at least initially, had adequate financial backing (Van der Merwe 2015:242).

Blaser and Van der Westhuizen (2012:384) substantiate that coalitions between business and "other Afrikaner capital" helped build a new financially more assertive and independent middle class during the post-apartheid period. Afrikaners who owned much of the capital from the previous dispensation, as Davies (2009:10) remarks, tried

> in measures to protect their material position and manufacture a new cultural commentary. For it is this transformation that provides the backdrop to the structural shifts in South Africa that have impacted upon the process of identity adjustment and the reconfiguration of Afrikaner identifications.

Alsheh (2015) confirms that an essential coalition of influence was that of class (white middle class), gender and, ultimately, ethnicity (Afrikaner ethnicity).

In terms of my focus on MK, it is essential at this point to explore the philosophy behind the channel regarding its policy on generating financial revenues – which seemed to have been based on decisions regarding the application of what Steyn (2003) terms 'white talk'. As has been argued thus far, MK was a flagship for constructing a new cultural identity, which may also be defined in terms of its potential to confirm a mutual sense of being. Frith (1996:125) maintains that, within the context of popular music production, an identity cannot be formed by an individual only, but rather by communal rituals practised within a group context. These rituals, viewed within a social context, Frith (1996:125) describes as "the forming pillar of a cultural identity". MK's mutual feelings of belonging shared by audience members who attended MK shows and/or watched the channel explicitly related to the daily turmoil of emotions experienced by the then young Afrikaner generation. Bands backed by the channel communicated such emotional responses through their lyrics – a prime example already mentioned is Fokofpolisiekar.

In this regard, Klopper (2009:47), drawing on the thought of Frith (1987:139) in Klopper 2009:82) and Sardiello (1998:122) in Klopper (2009:115), remarks that emotion, or the experience of emotion, is a socially constructed, interactive process. In the context of

popular music reception, this shared process is based on the subconscious associations of listeners with a particular band. Such connotations may be affected by song lyrics, social interaction based on certain rituals forming part of a performance, and the association with a specific image portrayed via dress or stage personality codes. As Klopper (2009:81) perceives, 'die-hard fans' often experience more of an emotional connection with an artist or band due to the strategic establishment of more profound levels of association. Referencing Norman Denzin's work (1984:3, in Klopper 2009:82), she maintains that emotions are thus closely connected with constructing an (emotionally based) social identity. Since such identity is grounded in listener's or fans' shared emotional experiences, it takes on the form of a uniformly encountered experience that binds them socially. Klopper (2009:81) further maintains that song lyrics can transport listeners towards a close association with the performer, with feelings of emotion and connectedness being established on more profound levels of experience than is the case with other art forms, even poetry. Similarly, Frith (1996:109) believes that emotions experienced during a music performance represent a connection on a primal level, which adds to the impact of the aesthetic experience while simultaneously constructing social contexts with which the listener associates.

However, Frith (1996) questions the more traditional view that communal identity is construed by feelings of 'oneness' or 'sameness'. Instead, in his view, identities are formed by acknowledging 'otherness'. Hall (2006:280) similarly maintains that identity is created not through any "naturally-constituted unity", but rather through acknowledging the otherness or uniqueness of a person or group, thereby understanding the 'self' as it pertains to the 'other'.

Thus, identity is not a fixed social concept to which an inflexible definition can be assigned. Instead, as Frith (1996:109) maintains, identity construction is a fluid process. In this regard, personal associations may aid the formation of socially or culturally appropriated or socially accepted forms of expression, whereby a certain social 'reality' is construed (Van der Merwe 2009:150; Alsheh 2015:434). However, within the context of MK, in actively sharing activities such as fans coming together to watch a particular show, the identity of the group is established, not through various individuals expressing individually the same characteristics or interests, but through social interaction and association, which, in this case, is to be a fan of the band (Alsheh

2015:434; Klopper 2009:193). In MK's case, it could be argued that white Afrikaans identity was thus consolidated by being fans of the channel or the bands it featured. Through the explicit use of the Afrikaans language – whether in dissident or nostalgic settings – ethnic and cultural ties were cemented.

2.5 MK and the branding of emotions

One of the aspects I shall explore in the chapters to follow is the sustainability of consumer needs, which in the context of MK has proven to extend the brand life of bands and added to market-oriented cultural identities formed through commercial products such as beer and whiskey. Examples are Fokof Lager (Fokofpolisiekar), Mystic Boer Brandy (Valiant Swart) and Parow Brandy (Jack Parow), all of which were strongly associated with MK. Such products were, of course, actively marketed by the artists themselves as well. The opening scene from the documentary *Parowdise* (2015), for instance, shows Jack Parow enjoying his signature drink of a double brandy and coke backstage before he goes on stage to perform – a small ritual which the artist regards as a necessity "to calm his nerves before every show" (Parowdise 2015). Such footage of artists' 'before and after' rituals and visual shots of audiences consuming the same drink could be seen as a powerful MK marketing strategy, on the one hand, and on the other, an influential tool towards identification.[56]

As suggested in the paragraphs above, in this regard, a productive point of departure in my thesis is the awareness that popular music and its surrounding contexts powerfully construct social and cultural identity. In the words of Frith (1996:121),

> … the question we should be asking is not what does popular music reveal about
> the people who play and use it but how does it create them as a people, as a web
> of identities?

From Klopper's perspective (2017:ii), in MK's context, the question would need to focus on how this phenomenon, during its years of existence and afterwards, stimulated the negotiation of an alternative Afrikaans identity. As has been pointed

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[56] Further studies would prove valuable in asserting whether fans are naturally inclined towards buying a particular beverage or whether the artist's commercial marketing of their chosen drink influenced their choices to consume it privately or at a concert (*Oppikoppie 21* documentary 2016, Beukes 2014).

out, identity construction within the popular music environment would always relate to the complex link between artistic and commercial interests (cf. Shuker 2005:xii).

Many bands, realising the monetary value of their shows, gigs, and merchandise, entered into a symbiotic relationship with record labels and MK. Van der Merwe (2015:12) argues that the record companies, together with the bands, purposefully formed and maintained new 'Afrikaans-related' identities, creating a need to be filled by the market. However, Van der Merwe (2017:144) also finds that, post-apartheid and even post-MK, mainstream Afrikaans music and artists "are still white" and are marketed and 'sold' as such. It is notable that the singer-songwriter, producer, and writer Riku Lätti (Die Wasgoedlyn), ascribes this tendency to the fact that mainstream Afrikaans music is a by-product of decades of political meddling (Van der Merwe 2017:144).

Van der Merwe's (2015:4) understanding of cultural identity thus connotes commercialised contexts such as those involving the 'buying' of culture or cultural branding within a context shaped by political ideology. As noted, within MK's mediated milieu, the branding of certain bands, music, or other products created a need to which the intended target group responded. This, in turn, broadened the market, generating more financial revenue through merchandise sales and simultaneously boosted musicians' individual images and status. In turn, identities were formed that were again dependent on the need created by MK. In my data analysis (Chapter 4) the question of whether these strategies were based on ideology or commercial concerns will be investigated in more depth.

For now, it suffices to conclude that MK was a well-oiled promotion and branding machine. Afrikaans-oriented festivals' big attraction was the dedicated MK stage with the same bands performing that broadcasted on the channel. This was the youth's opportunity to be close to, almost touching their idols, standing in the mosh pit and singing the songs of which the lyrics resonated with experiences they could identify with. It was, however, not only the singing along with the songs that made MK so influential.[57] The channel launched various competitions and special merchandise sold at festivals, branded with MK and the bands' logos, making it an exclusive collectable.

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[57] Various MK Videos 2006–2009.

Normally, only a few hundred such memorabilia would be made available compared to the thousands of young festivalgoers. This was also the case with the entrance wristbands issued at various national and international festivals such as Coachella, Glastonbury, Oppikoppi and Rage, which the youth would wear as collectables.

It was seen as a godly status if the festivalgoer or fan managed to get a collectable, from hundreds, sometimes thousands attending the festival, which offered 'bragging rights' to the owner. It not only showed perseverance, to join queues both physically and online, to be one of the few with a sought-after collectable, but also dedication as an 'absolute fan'. Examples of such merchandise were seen at the Oppikoppi festivals during 2015 and 2017, where Heineken and Windhoek Beer sponsored a free Windhoek OppiKoppi hoodie for each case of Windhoek beer purchased before the festival. For a festivalgoer to collect a hoodie, they had to present a slip showing two cases of the specific beer brand (48 beers) bought in the week leading to the Oppikoppi festival. Only 2 000 garments were printed, while 15 000 festivalgoers were expected to attend. Cues were formed six to eight hours before these exclusive giveaways merchandise tents opened; even at that stage, queues were over two hours long.[58]

Gaining tangible 'trophies' in the form of signed CDs, limited merchandise and winning a competition to converse with your idol musician/band personally thus helped the youth establish new identities or senses of self. True to the MK philosophy, self-expression and self-determination were marked by a newly established freedom of song, lyrics, dress, and language use. The band members of Fokofpolisiekar confirmed in an interview published on the Afrikaans blog '*watkykjy*' in 2013 that the youth associated with their brand as established through dress, music, and image, and thus became followers of Van Coke Cartel and Heuwels Fantasties.[59] Figure 3 below shows the band eF-eL wearing jackets, skinny jeans, t-shirts, and trainers in imitation of Fokofpolisiekar.[60]

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[58] Personal experience of attending Oppikoppi 2016 and 2017. Cf. also
https://www.facebook.com/oppikoppifestival/photos/a.200204693348354/884594388242711/?type=3
[59] Cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxAA9_zzkPw
[60] It is interesting to note that Fokofpolisikar has teamed up with Converse to produce a limited edition Converse trainer. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/Fokofpolisiekarband/photos/wie-soek-n-paar-windgat-fokof-lager-kicks-all-you-have-to-is-drink-our-beer-take/10154182252298855/

Figure 3: eF-eL at Papa's restaurant in Hatfield[61]

MK capitalised on the appeal of such fan narratives and strategically used various commercialised stimuli for creating consumer needs and brand recognition, which the Afrikaans-speaking youth associated with. Yet simultaneously, seemingly, they seemed to support the youth in their quest to find answers for questions like, 'What does it mean to be a white, post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth'? Holtzhausen (2017:43), dabbling with the same question, interviewed the musician Pieter Smith and asked if the record labels, with specific reference to EMI, had any control over the production of artists' music. Smith's surprising answer was that "… there is no pressure from the industry […] the pressure is from the crowd". Again, this points to a consumer need that was created and then assumed a life of its own, as it were, so that, arguably, the same might be true regarding MK. Once more, consumer need is closely tied to questions of identification. As Stuart Hall (1992:14) discloses,

> But what cultural studies have helped me to understand is that the media play a
> part in the formation, in the constitution, of the things that they reflect. It is not that

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[61] Photo taken by Brenda Biddulph. No date. Available from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHn9i2_a43M

there is a world outside, "out there", which exists free of the discourses of representation. What is "out there" is, in part, constituted by how it is represented.

Chris Chameleon (in Beukes 2014) revealed that a scientific formula was used for an artist's branding, referring to the visual representation of the artist which denotes the type of music that is sold. Kalyoncu (2011:109) emphasises the importance of visuals for the adolescent consumer and adds that music critics, through their repeated commentary on visuals, enable the artist to be awarded contracts through their visual representation, over and above the quality of their music contribution. Various artists were interviewed and asked whether their music's visual representation influenced their sales; many confirmed it did. MK was the leader in connecting and presenting Afrikaners' visual image as the 'cool' music to buy (Van Vuuren 2008). Battery9 even speaks of "a visual sub-culture" (Beukes 2014).

It may thus be concluded that, in MK's carefully constructed marketing milieu, the visual representation of artists tied in closely with the branding of music videos, especially when done in collaboration with famous producers or photographers, such as Sean Mettelerkamp or Roger Ballen, the latter being closely associated with Die Antwoord. This strategy, together with others described above, resulted in a carefully planned 'etching' of MK within the collective social and cultural consciousness of a young, Afrikaans speaking fan base.

CHAPTER 3: THE 'WORLD' OF MK: THE IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES AND CODES

3.1 Setting up a context for analysis

In the introduction to this thesis, I have stated that my study aims to document MK as a distinctive, single-case phenomenon. Citing the thought of Stake (1995:xiff), I indicated that, true to the principles of ethnographic case study, people or observations of social interactions that occur within contexts relevant to the case would inform my data analysis. Due to the limited materials available on MK, and in line with the objectives of ethnographic case study, my main data collection method was indicated to be semi-structured interviews and a study of archival materials. The latter includes MK Awards nominees' music videos (2007–2013), and a study of the channel's broadcast programmes.

Despite limitations regarding publicly available materials on MK, my research brought to the fore a relatively wide range of data sources to be explored. Consequently, thematic analysis was chosen as a method of analysis since, in recent approaches, apart from conventional text study, interview transcripts, field notes, historical or site documents, digital audio files and video files are included as viable sources of information (cf. Mills et al. 2010:926). Furthermore, thematic analysis would allow me to identify themes or patterns of cultural meaning related to my topic, encode data according to such themes, and interpret these in terms of "commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles" (Mills et al. 2010:926). Considering the types of data involved in my study, it was indicated that the identification of themes would be made deductively; that is, derived from theoretical constructs underpinning my research, which, in turn, originated from my literature study. Themes would, however, also emerge from my data and, as such, be identified inductively (cf. Mills et al. 2010:926). In the current chapter, themes introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 are therefore revisited to establish "a framework of thematic ideas" (cf. Gibbs 2007:38) that will structure the current exposition, my data analysis in Chapter 4, and the conclusions offered in my final chapter.

The precursor to this 'framework of ideas' was the setting up of a list of codes for my analysis which, in Chapter 4, will form the basis of my data interpretation (cf. Gibbs 2007:40). In turn, these codes were related to the themes that will structure my analysis, all of which are closely linked to the encompassing theme of identity formation. Therefore – as will be evident in the discussion to follow – they are also strongly interlinked and, in some cases, overlap to some, or even a significant extent. In the case of both the themes and codes, they are not merely descriptive, but, in terms of my analysis, lend themselves to theoretical contextualization (cf. Gibbs 2007:41).

It was mentioned before that, considering the types of data involved in my study, the identification of themes was done deductively; that is, derived from theoretical constructs underpinning my research as well as inductively, with themes emerging from my data (cf. Mills et al. 2010:926). As was explained in my introductory chapter, the basic analytic strategy used in thematic analysis is coding. As Mills et al. (2010:926ff.) explain, this involves "a process of closely inspecting text to look for recurrent themes, topics, or relationships, and marking similar passages with a code or label to categorize them for later retrieval and theory-building". If done inductively, this process relies primarily on concepts that were identified as part of the theoretical/philosophical framing of a study. Mills et al. (2010:926ff.) indicate that, in this regard, researchers may use "research questions, interview questions, or theory-derived categories as a start list of a priori themes for coding data documents".

However, as these authors show, an inductive approach to coding "is more typical of thematic analysis" (Mills et al. 2010:926ff.). This means that themes emerge from the data – and are thus grounded in the data. Through a process of "noticing patterns, attending to how participants label events, defining emergent themes, constantly comparing data against codes and categories [...] the researcher builds a complex of exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory case analysis grounded in the particulars of the case or multiple cases" (Mills et al. 2010:926ff.). It is of import to note that the inductive process has an enriching function, as is also the case concerning the present study. Mills et al. (2010:926ff.) stress that "Inductive thematic analysis avoids the rigidity and premature closure that are risks of a deductive approach".

The following theme and code categories related to MK serve as the basis for identifying my list of codes, of which examples are given here:

Table 1: Themes, code categories, and code examples

Theme	Category	Code examples
DISSENT	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols	*Rebellion* against Afrikaner Nationalist upbringing and culture, compulsory military service, culturally entrenched social codes concerning language, dress and social behaviour
MK AS SYMBOLIC 'IDEAL'	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols	MK as *symbolic 'hero';* cultural '*safe haven';* representative of *new, more democratically conceived conceptions of language and culture, not defined by race or class;* newly found social and cultural freedom
ALTERNATIVE AFRIKAANS IDENTITY	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols	*Coolness factor; intellectualism; countercultures; self-othering; use of new Afrikaans slang words; bandwagon effect; negotiation of identity; Zef culture;*
LIFESTYLE CHOICES	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols Events Activities	*Non-conformist codes of language, dress, and social behaviour; provocative visual sub-culture and linguistic expressions*
BRAND ASSOCIATION	Strategies/practices/tactics Events Activities	*Interviews; Festivals* (Aardklop, KKNK, Oppikoppi); *competitions* (Rockspaaider, MVP, Avontoer); *merchandise; collectables;* 'bragging rights'; 'brandology'; *visual representation; media visibility; Socially aware brand extension,* (charities including Vrede foundation, Blood Brothers, Bucks for Brixton and Relate bracelets); *career opportunities* for recording companies and young professionals (technicians, set designers, fashion designers, presenters, and musicians)

MK AS CULTURAL PHENOMENON	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols Strategies/practices/tactics Events Activities	Marketing techniques Targeting specific age and ethnic group Brand assertion of rebellious lifestyle
NOSTALGIA	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols	*Branding strategies; longing for the past; De la Rey phenomenon, pride in Afrikaner heritage; identity and cultural loss; victimisation; exclusivity; self-othering*
VISUAL REPRESENTATION	Acts/behaviours States of being Meanings/concepts/symbols Strategies/practices/tactics Events Activities	*Branding strategies; publicity; promoting songs and bands; establishment of visual 'philosophy'*

As was indicated in Chapter 1, according to the sampling strategy in my study, key informants on MK were interviewed, as their input was deemed critical to the documentation of the channel's rise and demise. As Yin (1994:90) notes, "such persons not only provide insights into a matter but also can suggest sources of corroboratory or contrary evidence". As was also stated in my methodological explication, all input from interviews included in this chapter, and those following, are offered as anonymous content. In this regard, only the professional roles of individual respondents regarding their involvement with MK is given in the layout below, as the anonymity of respondents is protected by assigning numbers to them (cf. Creswell 2013:174).

Table 2: Respondent layout

Respondents	**Professional role in the music industry**
Respondent 1	Singer and Songwriter 1
Respondent 2	Singer and Songwriter 2
Respondent 3	Music and Film Producer
Respondent 4	Music and Content Producer
Respondent 5	Channel Director
Respondent 6	Content Producer

Respondent 7	Executive Music and Programme Producer
Respondent 8	Lyricist
Respondent 9	Actor
Respondent 10	Musician and Film Producer
Respondent 11	Managing Channel Director
Respondent 12	Music Journalist

3.2 Dissent

In setting up the context within which MK came into being, one of the first themes that emerged was dissent. Within Afrikaans popular music, as was noted the best-known example of dissent pre-MK was the alternative Afrikaans movement that arose during the 1980s. The objective of this movement was to protest against the ideological and sociological confinements of the apartheid state and its authoritarian, patriarchal approaches to the Afrikaner youth's upbringing, which involved fostering Afrikaner nationalist culture and the anxious upholding of 'an illusion of wellbeing'.[62] As was set out in Chapter 2, measures of state control included compulsory military service for all young men of school-leaving age (Baines 2008:1), the censure of music being broadcast on local radio stations upholding Afrikaner culture as mediated by Afrikaans Reformed churches (Van der Merwe 2017:14), and confining social interaction on racial grounds.

The Voëlvry tour of 1989[63] was the first countrywide music tour that gave Afrikaans-speaking white youths a platform to express themselves freely, specifically to question the oppressive, state-ruled apartheid regime (Oosthuizen 2005:8; Voëlvry documentary 2006). This created a subversive context for the youth to break away

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[62] Such an illusionary sense of wellbeing is unmasked in Johannes Kerkorrel's song *Donkerland* (Dark, dark country), from the album *Eet Kreef*! (The small white republic / In our houses on the hills / Behind bars we hide from all evils / From far away, we see the smoke rise / The locations are on fire / And the soldiers are marching on / Each carrying a loaded gun / There's a bomb in every supermarket / And the sound of glass breaking / Something's got to break!) (Own translation).
[63] The height of the Voëlvry movement happened when the followers of MK were born, during the 80's, barely 30 years before the channel's inception. As such, very little documentation, if any, verifies that it was an important influence on the bands that played on MK.

from a strictly controlled milieu in which they were told how to dress, how to behave socially, what language to use in various social contexts, as well as what the imposed culture as reflected in music and dance should be (a utopian view closely guarded by the government). While being more privileged than other racial groups, through advantages such as easy access to public transport, without documentation like a pass, and being educated in their native tongue, Afrikaans, the youth were strategically controlled to uphold white Afrikaner rule (Voëlvry documentary 2006).

As was stated in Chapter 2, themes related to the idea of dissent as operative in the MK context include the construction of alternative Afrikaans identities, a topic to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The Voëlvry movement's role, and those of later nonconformist bands concerned the promotion of Afrikaans rock music as a direct onslaught on the Afrikaner's hegemonic position. As was noted in the previous chapter, numerous scholars have focused on the sociological impact and influence of alternative Afrikaans music on post-apartheid Afrikaner identity to which MK contributed substantially, observing the influence of bands such as Fokofpolisiekar and, even more controversially, Die Antwoord. Various parallels can be drawn between both the aforementioned two bands and the Voëlvry movement. These are a) protest music (against the ruling political party and an awareness of the social context of the time),[64] b) dress style added to the subversive nature of the bands and music, of which their followers would wear the same dress style,[65] c) provide a platform for Afrikaans speaking youth build a new identity,[66] and d) exemplified the 'coolness' factor (the language Afrikaans became synonymous with cool).[67]

However, simultaneously MK created an awareness of a more democratic view of the Afrikaans language, helping to build an alternative Afrikaans identity through the means of music.[68] To cater for a broader target market among the Afrikaans-speaking

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[64] Timms 2017:43.

[65] The dress style of most Voëlvry movement bands and Fokofpolisiekar was influenced by a punk dress style which included leather jackets, and sunglasses (Lucking 2015:24). Opposed to this Die Antwoord dresses in a *zef* style with oversized clothing, lots of bling (gold chains and chunky jewellery) (Lucking 2015:93).

[66] Marx and Milton 2011:731.

[67] Klopper 2009:104

[68] Certain bands and musicians were already familiar to the public, such as VOD, Fokofpolisiekar, Karen Zoid and Gian Groen, as their fame had been established pre-MK. However, MK substantively contributed to the dissemination of their music, which, in turn, changed perceptions of the Afrikaans language among the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth.

youth, the channel introduced programmes such as Ondergrond, Hoordosis and Hip-Hop, as well as extended the channel's influence through MK-branded stages at country-wide festivals, including KKNK, Aardklop, and Innibos.

The band Fokofpolisiekar's notoriety increased when their first music video, *Hemel op die Platteland,* was broadcast on MK.[69] Their lyrics questioned the formal, apartheid upbringing while, as Erasmus (2017:173) and Davies (2009:120) ague, simultaneously the social pressures of being Afrikaans in a new democratic dispensation, foregrounding the injustices experienced by a minority language group, were foregrounded. Concurrent with MK's philosophy and cultural aesthetic, this social commentary was rendered in an idiom that made its association with Afrikaans popular and 'cool' (Respondent 8). Yet the band shocked audiences with lyrics implying a non-religious, non-conformist questioning of God, and a questioning of conformity as enforced under the previous regime, or as a necessity in the 'new' South Africa. Steyn and Foster (2007:44) underline the theme of white, "ideologically-charged discursive strategies" that amount to politically resistant self-representation. In the earlier-mentioned terms of Vanderhaegen (2014:30-32), these may be seen as instances of 'self-othering', applicable to the lyrics of 'Hemel op die Platteland' and other songs by Fokofpolisiekar. Indeed, Lolkema finds that the refusal of the band to adhere to a 'boxed' and 'accepted' notion of a traditionally conceived Afrikaner identity emphasizes their complicated relation to Afrikaner culture and the Afrikaans language (Lolkema 2014:94; Klopper 2009:144). This was made clear in the lyrics of 'Hemel op die platteland': "Kan jy jou idee van normaal in jou gat opdruk, kan jy?"[70]

Die Antwoord and Fokofpolisiekar, however, represent different manifestations of their complex association with Afrikaans as language and traditional Afrikaner culture, as featured on MK. Fokofpolisiekar's songs promoted a freer sense of self and a pride in defiant culture as a newly found social collective. In contrast, Die Antwoord's response is more than brash and unapologetic: it borders on nihilism. Lewis (2016:179) describes it as an "indigestible whiteness" – a label justified by the group's lead singer Waddy Jones' (stage name Ninja) self-identification as a 'white kaffir' and 'kaffir of the culture', symbolising the ultimate resistance to parent Afrikaner culture and norms.

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[69] From the album *As jy met vuur speel, sal jy brand* (If you play with fire, you will burn) 2003.
[70] Can you shove your idea of normal up your ass, can you?

Again, drawing on Vanderhaeghen's (2014:30) notion of othering, Die Antwoord have thus positioned themselves as 'the destructive other and self-other'.

However, dissent as featured on MK did not, in all instances, symbolize loud-voiced or abusive critique. An interview presented on the MK programme JIP by the Afrikaans journalist and rock writer Angola Badprop with Andries Bezuidenhout, a former member of the Brixton Moord en Rooforkes (Brixton Murder and Robbery Band) also known as Roof (Plunder),[71] brought to the fore that dissent in the context of the channel could also involve alternative Afrikaans music that was less openly politicised, and more 'intellectualised' and 'searching'. Bezuidenhout's debut solo album *Insomniak se droomalmanak* (Insomniac's Dream Calender), released by Rhythm Records in 2003, did not comprise, as Badprop (2003) put it, "happy clappy tunes". Rather, as he explained in Afrikaans, "hierdie album is moerse morbied en depressief".[72] Indicating that Bezuidenhout focuses on 'heavy realities', realised by way of a dark and gloomy style of singing with simple acoustic guitar accompaniment, he continued to state that "Die stuff waaroor hierdie man sing, is die grou werklikheid …" (Badprop 2003).[73] Thus, in this context, anti-authoritarian critique in Afrikaans took on a musically and linguistically more palatable, yet philosophically more taxing form.

3.3 MK as symbolic 'ideal '(2005–2013)

From the above perspectives, MK came into being during a time when the Afrikaans-speaking white youth needed to look up to a symbolic 'hero'. Klopper and Maas (in Thormählen 2009:18) note that the post-apartheid white youth found it easier to associate with musicians than with politicians – a situation on which MK capitalized. As part of their marketing strategy, the channel focused its product on the Afrikaans

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[71] JIP, 27 October 2003.

[72] There is no known equivalent for the Afrikaans swear word '*moerse*'; however, Badprop's Afrikaans slang meaning is that the album is extremely morbid and depressive.

[73] "The stuff of which this man sings, is the grim reality …" Bezuidenhout's web page gives the following information: 'As Afrikaans speaking poet and musician Andries explores matters of identity and belonging against the backdrop of changing South African landscapes. His work, as Lloyd Gedye writes, is "fascinated with the idea of white people finding peace in the new South Africa, reconciling their troubled history and positioning themselves within the social fabric of South Africa"' (cf. https://andriesbezuidenhout.co.za/).

youth by employing an age-specific music video review panel, sourcing material,[74] and broadcasting lifestyle-based content.

The market that MK targeted could be categorized as a middle to upper-class Afrikaans-speaking youth born during the period 1980–1994, most of whom had access to Digital Satellite Television (DSTV). Furthermore, most of these individuals would proceed to tertiary study, and many of them would become future kykNET subscribers.[75] While during the early years of TV MK already became an influential force among the school-going generation, in later years, it became a soundtrack for braais[76] or social gatherings over weekends, either at school or university. Kalyoncu's study on the impact of music programmes on adolescents (2011:112) confirms that music programmes for this age group were linked with every-day social activities such as studying, eating, reading, and chatting.[77]

In terms of MK's role as symbolic ideal, the various programmes featured on the channel represented a different facet of its offerings, each of which signified an aspect of identity construction. The philosophy underlying the choice of programmes was critical in fashioning senses of self that, despite an obvious 'Afrikaansness' were not restricted or confined to class or race but instead catered to viewers' distinctive age-specific and socio-cultural contexts.[78] Examples of programmes featured were Studio 1 (Live music performance by a band, also airing top charts, both nationally and internationally); AMP (24-hour following and live coverage and interview with a band/musician); JIP (a live version of the lifestyle weekly extra insert in printed media, *Beeld*, showcasing current and upcoming gigs), Kraakvars (ongoing showcasing of music videos contributed by viewers), Af (a show where the presenters engage in senseless stunts, in many cases life-threatening); Rockspaaider competition (this

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[74] Presenters like Herman Pretorius sourced over 1000 music videos when MK started, which became the broadcasting content for the channel in later years. Cf. http://www.vredefoundation.co.za/?page_id=29

[75] The channel Koowee was one of the first three channels kykNET produced, airing simultaneously with MK; however, it was aimed not only at the pre-schoolers that watched the channel but also parents of the pre-schoolers.

[76] Sutherland's research on the centrality of *braaivleis* (barbecued meat) to Afrikaans culture found that 'respondents agree on the centrality of *braaivleis* to Afrikaner culture regardless of where they were born, their gender or their church membership' (2013:171).

[77] This could also be attributed to the considerable following for the show MK Live broadcast on Friday evenings between 20h00–21h00 (Thormälen 2009:31).

[78] MK was produced as a separate entity to kykNET, focusing on the youth and their needs.

programme featured music videos submitted by emerging bands, which, if chosen throughout the various rounds, would earn a live performance on the channel as well as a music video contract); Music Video Project, better known as MVP (featuring the ten best video's from the Rockspaaider competition and awarding each of these a cash prize, as well as the production of a music video recording that is on par with international standards and expertise), and Stook (reviewing the latest in gaming, music and movies). A few of these programmes were also strategically designed to represent a South African version of hit shows forming part of the international music channel MTV, which was available on the DSTV package (Thormählen 2009:5).[79]

A highly influential and ground-breaking show was MK Live. The show was broadcast live every Friday night from 20h00–21h00 and featured simultaneously on all local university radio stations.[80] Its content included music, local subject matter such as the latest films on the circuit, latest CD releases, performances and venues for live shows, and live interviews with bands or musicians.

Daily, 20 programmes and 400 music videos were aired on MK, thus solidifying its philosophy and identity as a music channel (Thormählen 2009:4). A panel of roughly seven people assembled to decide on the quality and the 'coolness factor' of the music videos submitted to be aired consisted of individuals forming part of the channel's targeted age range, thus giving age-specific input. These included individuals of secondary school-going age, including learners from Standards 6–7 (Grades 8–9), matric (Grade 12, final year of school education), first- to third-year university students, and students who had just finished their degree and started in their first jobs. Despite the vast numbers of videos viewed each week and the channel's size, the panel remained small.

The amount of airtime given to music videos on MK facilitated viewer connection and identification with the musicians and bands featured. Furthermore, the impact of visual content stimulated another theme of identification, namely the portrayal of a 'cool factor' (everyone wanted to play in a band to be on stage and TV) (Beukes 2014).

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[79] MK shows that were modelled on popular MTV content were Hiekie (Dismissed), Af (Jackass) and Studio 1 (Total Request Live – TRL).
[80] The University radio stations included but were not limited to Kovsie FM/UFS FM (University of the Free State), TUKS FM (University of Pretoria), PUK FM (North-West University), MFM (University of Stellenbosch) and UJ FM (University of Johannesburg).

Represented visually, viewers felt more inclined to attend shows and see their favourite outfits perform live.[81] This was true especially for the Afrikaans-speaking youth who lived in rural areas and had little access to live shows.

The channel facilitated the growing need for being 'cool and on-stage' through the already-mentioned rock music competition Rockspaaider, previously known as JIP Band kompetisie (JIP band competition). The concept of bands playing competitively was, however, nothing new. The aim behind the competition was to find new hidden talent, as many youths, at the time, spent their free time playing in a band that practised in a friend's garage. The criterion for the first official Rockspaaider competition was to enter three songs. Two of these had to be original compositions in Afrikaans[82] and one a cover song, not limited to any genre of music, apart from the requirement for Afrikaans lyrics and targeting the age group of 13–21. The prize money consisted of a first prize of R30 000 (which meant that financing would be available to record and produce a complete CD with the top engineers and producers in the country), a R1 000 prize for regional winners[83] and a R5 000 award for the most original song. In addition, the top bands reaching the final would be offered a show at the Aardklop Arts Festival, which for most would be the first opportunity to perform in public in front of a big crowd. These events were covered by JIP for broadcasting on MK.[84] In the words of presenter Henré Pretorius, apart from an opportunity to showcase their talent, bands would be given a first chance to experience audience feedback.[85] In later years, entry criteria changed to submitting four original Afrikaans songs, a R20 000 prize for the winning bands' school was added, and a CD recording contract for the band. These bands were allowed to grow and learn the ropes of recording, details of technical and 'behind the scenes needs', and how to become public figures.[86]

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[81] Further exploration of this topic is included later in the chapter.

[82] The so-called 'Battle of the Bands' shows (http://www.emergingsounds.com) was considered too 'English', which instigated the idea of an Afrikaans rock band competition.

[83] It was not specified on MK footage what the regions were.

[84] The interview was aired on the launch of JIP on TV, 4 April 2001 on MK89.

[85] Original Afrikaans: "Die kompetisie is nie net 'n groot geleentheid vir die band wat dit gaan wen nie, maar elke band wat deelneem kry ook 'n kans om hulle musiek voor 'n gehoor te gaan toets".

[86] Melktertkommissie was the first band that won Rockspaaider. The lead singer was 16 years old at the time.

What made Rockspaaider so attractive for the viewers was that it allowed the bands to record their own CDs and obtain possible shows at festivals on the MK stage. Various bands have described their financial inability to produce music videos in their acceptance speeches at the MK awards throughout the years. However, this brought to the fore the resourceful ways of how they overcame this challenge. Examples of using a minimalistic decor and stage setup, due to lack of finances, could be seen in "Beste Hardste Video" 2008 (Best Loudest Video 2008; André van der Walt used three garden sprinklers and two spray lights to get the desired 'rain' effect), 'Beste Road Trip 2008' (Lukraaketaar invited one of the bands' friends with a good camera to accompany them on tour and shoot the footage), Fokofpolisiekar, nominated for Best Video Award 2008 (they used their childhood photographs to create a nostalgic feel for the video), Zebra and Giraffe, nominated for best video and newcomer 2009 (filmed the video on a roundabout swing in a park), and Best Group 2009 (Straatligkinders filmed their video through an X-Ray machine).[87]

Live shows and stages presented at festivals were among the key strategies deployed by MK to connect with the youth. Botha's study (2009:v) on market segmentation of the Aardklop National Arts Festival showed that the age group MK catered for (18-25-year-olds) was considered as a lower spending group that preferred rock shows/concerts and would attend the festival for a more extended period than the age group 46 and older.[88] At least 40 festivals per year featured an MK stage, thus securing the brand name, including the quality and content the channel stood for, both in terms of merchandise and music.

Barely one year after the channel had started, in 2006, MK decided to take the top ten bands of the year on tour alongside the South African coastline, where matric leavers traditionally partied between Christmas and New Year. The bands would perform at a

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[87] Die Antwoord's video 'Wat pomp' was made with a friend's small digital camera. (https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/10/die-antwoord-ninja-evil-boy-interview/).
[88] My observation in attending the 2019 festival was that there were none, if very few, attendees in the age group 30-40 years (the MK original target market age group). A possible reason could be the lack of rock shows.

few of the most popular venues, and a few fortunate matric leavers could afterwards get on the bus to tour along with the bands,[89] thus meeting their heroes in person.

For many fans and viewers, the personal attention facilitated by MK (for example, on the show Amp, where musicians were interviewed on an informal basis) gave them a memorable experience and a 'cool factor'. MK made it trendy to be a post-apartheid Afrikaner, proud of the language and a newly envisioned Afrikaans culture. This marketable factor was prevalent in their branding, music videos, and live band performances featured on the channel. The coolness factor was also facilitated by Fokofpolisiekar and Die Antwoord's dress style, legitimizing the right for the Afrikaner youth to be 'with-it' and 'alternative'. This was expressed, in particular, through a dress style that represented a "rock-'n-roll dress style [which] both defies and challenges the parent culture"(Lucking 2015).

The importance of dress style and the involvement of well-known local fashion designers (garnering more prominence from 2010-2013) was further promoted by MK through the extension of an hour-long build-up to the MK Awards 2012, 2013 show. Various musicians, artists, and public members (as the Awards ceremony was open to the public through purchasing a ticket) were interviewed either at the cocktail bar at the event or on the 'black carpet',[90] pertinently asked questions about the designer who created their outfits. Attention was focused on the labels featured by the presenters, guests, or in behind-the-scenes interviews, involving live on-stage mentions or as a credit at the end of the show. In addition, attention was given to upmarket labels such as Diesel and Religion available for purchase at designer shops such as Young Designers Emporium (YDE).

During one episode of JIP, the presenters Elana Afrika and Henré Pretorius visited a Diesel outlet to try on Diesel's latest denim fashion, interviewing the manager and discussing the different clothing ranges, as well as their prices. The informal feel of the show and the presenters' knowledge of the topic (spending capacity for high school learners and university students) made the interaction with their fanbase more tangible

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[89] The tour took place for six years (2006-2011) but was cancelled from 2012 due to a lack of finances. Cf. https://www.facebook.com/avontoer/photos/rpp.147250024636/ 10151164068749637/?type=3&theater

[90] 'Black carpet' was used by the Studio 1 presenters as a unique take on the build-up to the awards ceremony as modelled on the famous Hollywood Red Carpet events.

and 'real', and thus spoke constructively to the cultural and identity turning point experienced by the youth.

3.4   Alternative Afrikaans identity: Language and culture

As argued in Chapter 2, language forms one of the primordial pillars of identity formation. During the apartheid era, as was argued, the Afrikaans language was used as the medium of instruction and facilitator for the apartheid government's enforcement of Nationalist ideas. After the fall of apartheid, it was incorporated as one of eleven official languages in South Africa (Van der Merwe 2017:136). Within this new constitutional context, Afrikaans was placed on an equal footing with the other indigenous languages. This was a far-reaching change in terms of Afrikaans' role and place during apartheid, when it was the official language, with little to no acknowledgement given to other indigenous languages, formerly known as 'Bantu' languages (Giliomee 2003:276, 389).

Education, language, culture, and identity form part of a symbiotic relationship, as none of its components can stand as individual constituents (Davies 2009:2). Instead, as part of the configuration of a well-rounded citizen, these are interdependent. Globally, festivals held annually to celebrate the uniqueness of a particular language and culture are essential manifestations of cultural pride. Well-known examples include the Festival of Lights (Hindu), Ramadaan (Muslim), Burns Night (Scottish) and Remembrance Day (Commonwealth of Nations). In this regard, the celebration of Afrikaner culture is no different. Perhaps the post-apartheid growth spurt of festivals for and in Afrikaans may be understood from the perspective that suddenly, the language had to 'compete' with other official languages in the country, while simultaneously, it could be 'celebrated'.

Davies (2003:120) notes that the number of Afrikaans festivals, most of which were initiated to mark some or other aspect of Afrikaans or Afrikaner culture, whether it be the arts, generally, or the local culture of the specific community within which the festival is held, have expanded exponentially post-apartheid to incorporate a new wave of festivals. These appeal to a larger audience, including both Afrikaans and English-speaking individuals. However, Haupt (2012:114) attributes the growth of attendance at festivals such as Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), Aardklop,

and Oppikoppi,[91] to the considerable following garnered by Afrikaans TV soapies such as *Sewende Laan, Binnelanders* and *Villa Rosa*.

Yet, as is evident from the statement reproduced below, and intimated in Chapter 2, in the new South Africa, Afrikaans was perceived to play a unique role, belonging to a more democratically conceived group of language users, and thus had to be re-interpreted within its re-contextualized socio-cultural milieu:

> Afrikaans literature, music and theatre are among the most vibrant on the continent. The language and its users have been enriched by their liberation from the shackles of apartheid and previous attempts at standardization and entrenchment. The more Afrikaans celebrates its Africanness; it seems, the more it flourishes. And the more the language is re-appropriated by groups marginalized in the past, the more exciting it becomes (Nel 1999).

In the context of MK this is evident as the channel's programming changed over the years to support a more inclusive conception of Afrikaans language and culture. Apart from offerings featuring a rock/alternative viewpoint, this could also be perceived in the show Hip-hop. Not only did this show pave the way for a different kind of music genre in a different geographical location to be presented in Afrikaans; it could be viewed by viewers all over the country, showcasing a novel use of the language, and breaking down previous barriers associated with geographical locations or ethnic identity. Another example is the programme Kraakvars, that introduced new music videos featuring a variety of music genres in Afrikaans. MK thus set the standard for inclusivity through the production of music videos targeting a more comprehensive body of Afrikaans-speaking viewers, a trend soon followed by other local channels. Examples are the new kykNET channels that were started to cater specifically to the Afrikaans community in the Western Cape, like kykNET en Kie, the inclusion of programming on RSG Radio station, and the Ghoema Awards (started at the height of MK in 2012, "where artists, bands, musicians and songwriters of the Afrikaans music industry are honored [sic] for certain achievements over a specific period".[92] Similarly,

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[91] Oppikoppi was named as the fourth of ten best festivals in the world in 2008. Cf. https://theculturetrip.com/africa/south-africa/articles/oppikoppi-music-festival-the-sound-of-free-south-africa/

[92] Available from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghoema_Music_Awards#Background_of_the_Ghoema_Music_Awards

the Ghoema Music Trust was made up of trustees from a more inclusive demographic, including geographical location, race and age.

3.5 Lifestyle choices with a view to identity formation

According to *Brands and Branding of South Africa 2015*, a well-established annual publication featuring top brands' methodologies both nationally and internationally, the DSTV corporation owned by Multichoice described itself as 'a lifestyle choice channel'. Accessible on the kykNET bouquet, and marketed under the DSTV, at the time (2005 and onwards), MK, given its unforeseen growth during its first three years of existence, indeed started positioning itself as a lifestyle orientated channel, with music as its core offering. This strategy ensured that the channel could exert considerable influence over the Afrikaans youth market, which it targeted, stimulating new post-apartheid identities.

The global music industry context and its technological environment, which also influenced the local music landscape within which MK flourished, needs to be considered at this point as it involved an immense shift from an impersonal to a highly personal culture of electronic music sharing. The ability to download personalised playlists strongly contributed to the sense of an individualized music identity, while, simultaneously, new ways of sharing music aided in forming collective social identities, meanings, and experiences.

Within the popular music industry, the new millennium's first decade brought considerable advances in technology, which influenced CD sales, strategies for marketing, and relationships between artists and record label companies. One consequence was that there was no longer the need to purchase a complete CD, as the 'single-song download' became the preferred mode of music acquisition, according to which listeners could compile their playlists in a far more personalized way. These became easy to assemble through iTunes on either an iPod or MP3 player, while tracks could be carried around and shared through a device small enough to fit into the pocket of a jean.

Compiling personal playlists on portable devices meant that listeners (primarily high school and university students in MK's case) could exchange music freely through

newly formed Peer 2 Peer (P2P) platforms such as Napster. However, the utilization of this type of technology brought about the large-scale piracy of songs and albums, resulting in a decline in CD sales internationally. In South Africa, however, the opposite seems to have happened. As Sherman (2008:97) observes, "Whereas CD writers and MP3 players possibly increase the value of downloaded files, it is access to the internet that makes the actual downloading possible in the first place." For this reason, piracy in South Africa, at the time, needs to be seen from a different view than what might apply to the international market. Locally, the piracy or downloading of songs did not have a notable effect on CD sales, as the only way for most songs to be shared on a P2P network such as Napster was through a good internet connection (Sherman 2008:97). Furthermore, at the time (2007), downloads could only be done through a fast internet connection, either through fast broadband connections capped at least 3GB per month or via internet connections on phones, which were both costly and only available to a privileged few (Sherman 2008:97). This was also why iTunes did not invest in South Africa, as only 14% of all households had access to a computer and the internet (Mokgata 2011:38). In this regard, Sherman found that pirates in our country would instead steal from big corporations than from the smaller artists who, at any rate, lost most of their income to recording companies.

Contrary to this view, Matwetwe Ntombini, at the time artist and repertoire executive of the Gallo Music Group, believed that people who pirated music did not intend to discriminate against artists but rather reproduced recordings for personal financial gain. An example is the monetary value for a street vendor selling illegal CDs (which would retail for as little as R10 for a well-known artist), who could make up to R40 000 per day. Such illegal transactions were estimated in 2011 to constitute 40% of all CD sales (in Mokgata 2011:34).

Mokgata (2011) thus concludes that, during 2009, musicians, record companies and music distributors suffered losses through piracy and the global economic market fall, that culminated in liquidations (for instance, that of Music for Pleasure that distributed CDs to leading retail stores such as Checkers and Pick n Pay) and unfavourable CD sales (Musica showed a 13% decrease from 2006-2011, eventually being forced to close down in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic). Moreover, artists suffered significant losses, such as Thandiswa Mazai, who experienced a 73% drop in the sales of her

CDs during the same years (Mokgata 2011:34). Ralph Lorenz, the owner of Musica (2011), confirmed that music piracy directly caused the decline in CD sales and attributed this development to the changing preferences of consumerists.

With the advent of iTunes music and iPads or tablets, both legal and illegal ways of consuming music became easier. Therefore, there was less necessity to buy CDs and a greater demand for digital downloads (which accounted for 29% of music sales internationally and only 5–6% in South Africa during 2010) than for attending live concerts. This also caused artists to change their marketing strategies. The local artist Lira, for instance, viewed her CD sales merely as an 'invitation' for the audience to attend her live shows, as, according to her, most people were 'live orientated' and preferred to support a brand name by attending a live performance (Mokgata 2011:39). Another interesting local example is the Afrikaans rock group Straatligkinders, who gave away their first CD for free, as they knew it would be pirated as soon as it was released and thus were more concerned with making their music available to the masses for free than charging their audience a high price tag for them to earn a living (Bosch 2019).

Free music, in that sense, means free marketing and distribution for the artist. In MK's case, as stated before, the targeted marketing segments were those of high school and university students. This meant that a music video would get considerable airplay when a whole dorm of students would be listening to the music channel, instead of private home listening where only members of a family or a close-knit group of friends would be exposed. Within broader contexts of reception, a fanbase would exponentially grow far more quickly. Furthermore, according to Bosch (2019), free music distribution could potentially cancel out piracy.

As a result, artists opted not to record and sell CDs. However, to commercially sustain themselves, they entered a '360-deal', also called a 'multi-rights deal' with recording studios (Marshall 2012:78) – a type of agreement first made famous by the British singer Robbie Williams in the early 2000s. However, the decline in CD sales meant less revenue for record companies and, in turn, for artists. In both cases, the future seemed to rest with live shows and a 360-deal.

The 360-deal meant that artists could maintain control over artistic aspects of production, such as CD booklets and poster design. Unfortunately, this has led to them losing valuable time doing their own marketing, which resulted in artists starting to use technology to ease their workload and make the production process more efficient and cost-effective. One such example is using social media and the internet as marketing tools. In this regard, Adam Haupt (2012:13) identifies four types of media used by musicians for distributing their music and brand; conventional mass-media, new media, mobile media and social media'. The social media platforms MK used in the early 2000s, were Youtube (to an extent), MySpace, Twitter, and MXit. Regarding competitions, MK also operated through their Mobi and dedicated internet sites as the central platform used regarding competitions.

The various competitions that MK ran, some related to lifestyle choices, such as Rockspaaider, which included the distribution of tickets for live shows, or behind-the-scenes artist access, voting, and requests for music videos, all aided in marketing the channel as personal and informal – a strategy which productively aided the widely-practised sharing of music, whether pirated or copied.

3.6   Branding

As Müller (2017:579) remarks,

> Creating a particular personality for a brand is well recognized as a marketing strategy to affect such a differentiation and create a strong brand image and, ultimately, higher brand preference and greater brand loyalty.

Consequently, he examines four steps that form part of brand design. These are a) identifying product traits, b) reducing the list of traits, c) analysing the dimensions and d) determining the reliability and validity of the scale. Corporations can realize these steps on various platforms, including visual, electronic, printed, and live media. In addition, the customer (in the case of MK, the target market of the channel) may establish an association with the brand applicable to their specific context. As proof of the strength of their brand, MK won the prestigious Promax award in 2009, barely four years after the inception of the channel, thereby defeating well-known international brands such as Warner Bros, 20th Century Fox and Disney Studios (Thormählen 2009). In the channel's context, nowhere was branding more prevalent than in music

videos and documentaries – an already-mentioned example is the documentary *Welcome to Parowdise* (2015), featuring Jack Parow displaying his signature drink as he goes backstage and then enters on stage – a brand launched commercially and marketed as an affordable, 'real brandy for real people'. Again, the concept of identification is strongly foregrounded.

Fokofpolisiekar is another example. Through airtime on MK, the group was established as one of Afrikaans rock music's most influential bands. Most fans started to associate the lead singer, Francois van Coke, with the band, the music, and the fan base with Fokofpolisiekar that he effortlessly garnered fans for his other two bands, which he started a few years later called AKing and Van Coke Cartel. Subsequently, the name Francois van Coke/Van Coke became synonymous with a specific genre of Afrikaans rock music and an associated dress style derived from their punk, grunge, and metal background. Nel (2010:59) observes that post-apartheid cultural rebels, as is the case with Fokofpolisiekar, became trendsetters for fashion image, which resulted in the group attaining almost cult status. When Snake, the band's drummer, had his first solo photo exhibition tour (Johannesburg July 2017), the Fokof Lager brand was used to attract the public. Through the concept of brandology, the public would associate positive experiences encountered when attending a show of the band with the brand name.

Brandology can also be traced to other examples of successful, MK-related brand extension, for instance, the fashion label Die Antwoord and Valiant Swart's Mystic Boer Brandy. Such products may be seen as 'lifestyle choices', and, in the context of MK's culture of promotion, 'identification'. Lucking (2012:29) remarks that Fokofpolisiekar, in its early years, featured a dress code that was dubbed 'bergie chic' (playing on the term bergie, which denotes a homeless person in Cape Afrikaans dialect), contributing to a newly transformed image of young Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa, taken on by many of the band's supporters. In this regard, it may be observed that the personal life choices of young individuals predisposed them towards the following of a certain band. The supporters of Valiant Swart, for instance are, by nature, brandy drinkers. The same applies to Fokof Lager, of whom the fan base drink mainly beer (own opinion). Therefore, many fans will argue that being a faithful supporter of a band amounts to making conscious lifestyle decisions.

Grundling's (2008:182) research, for instance, sketched the social influence of alcohol at the various concerts of Bok van Blerk which he attended; he found that people would drink till they were "incapacitated".

Beer constitutes 36,5% of the preferred choice of alcoholic beverages for South Africans.[93] This is the category within which Fokof Lager is marketed. However, backed by Sir Thomas Brewing Company, the Fokof brand, already a well-known brand name, was extended to Fokof Lager in 2015. Its production has since been taken over by Devil's Peak Breweries, currently responsible for promoting and stocking Fokof Lager throughout South Africa. Through its association with the band, the marketing of the beer resulted in huge interest and sales profits, which culminated in a bar being opened in Pretoria in 2019 called Fokof bar. The venue's main objective is to lure a beer-consuming market to enjoy a drink while their favourite Fokofpolisiekar tunes play in the background; again, strong lifestyle elements and identification are at stake (Erasmus 2019).

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[93] Available from: http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12169

The marketing of lifestyle choices of preferred alcoholic beverages pre-, during, and after shows was usually done through printed media or word of mouth. In the context
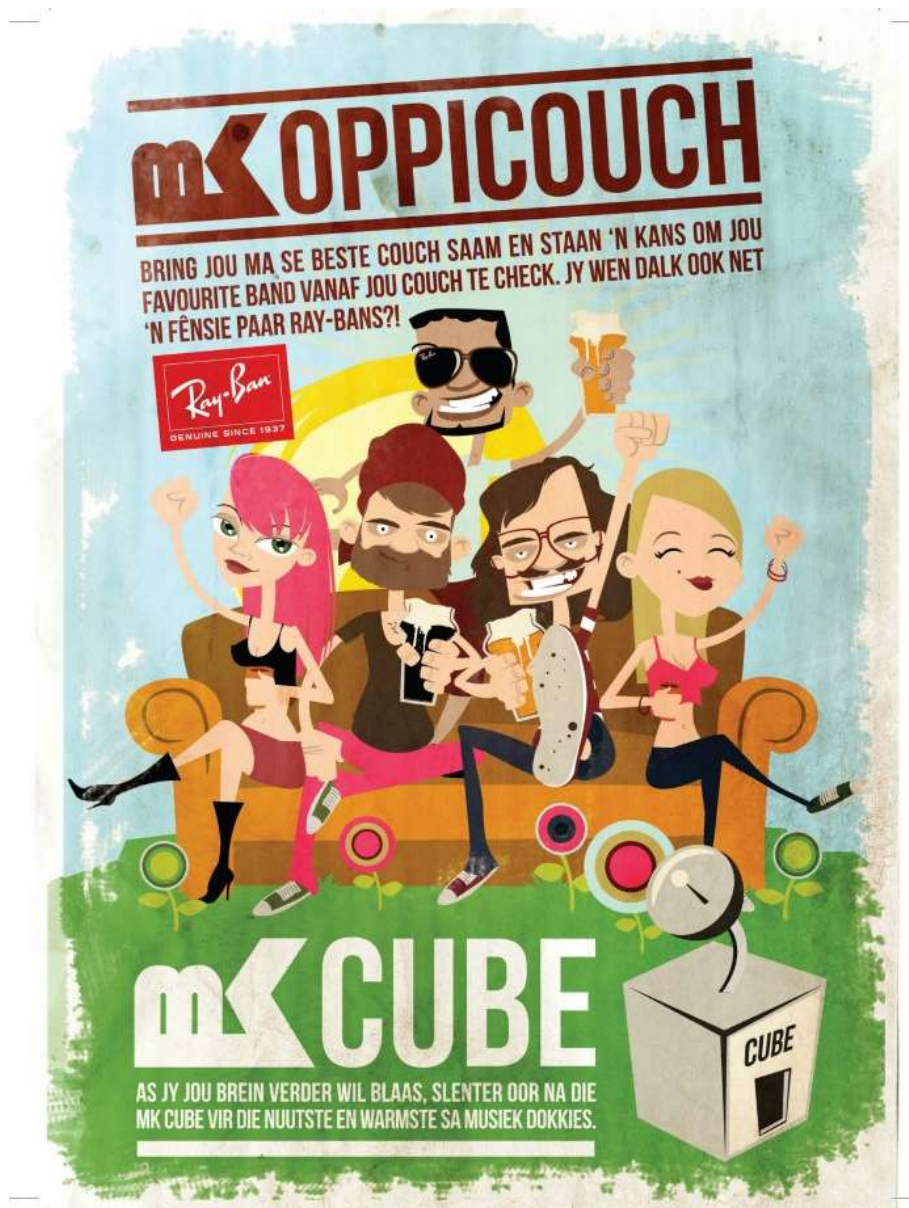
Figure 4: Oppicouch advertisement for Oppikoppi 2012

of MK, however, a specific lifestyle influencer was the programme JIP. While initially disseminated in printed form, it subsequently expanded to a national, multi-media platform, of which MK was the flagship channel. The printed format started one year before the programme's inception on MK, by that time an interactive programme in Afrikaans, combining *JIP* (*Beeld* Newspaper in Gauteng) and *Jonge Burger* (The *Burger* newspaper in the Cape) as well as a new Free State section, based in

Bloemfontein. Interviews were done on the nationwide rebranding and launch night with Peet Kruger (then editor of *Beeld*), Hanlie Gouws (then New Media publishing editor for MultiChoice's eight magazines), and Lindsay King. These confirmed the need for a national lifestyle choice programme that could bring the youth (aged 18–25) from different provinces together by introducing the latest gadgets, music shows, and cultural events such as music festivals and art shows. Associations binding these youngsters together through the notion of a new identity, were thus strongly mediated by MK through branding. The example below, which displays a strong brand image, was disseminated through visual branding at festivals. The 'Oppicouch' advertisement was aimed at Oppikoppi 2012. The couch, in later years, became synonymous with Oppikoppi, and with the 2017 festival MK had a few couches put over the grounds for fans to watch their favourite band.

As Trendafilov (2004) observes, the convincing power of a social product "lies partly within its branding". The consumer is visually stimulated by the logo and/or brand, and because of a positive association, will continue to support the brand. One can extend the concept of branding to the general influence exercised by MK, either on its own or in collaboration with another brand. Indeed, MK successfully collaborated with music festivals such as Aardklop and KKNK. At such events, the channel would sponsor a stage dedicated to the artists presented on MK and extend it to 'behind-the-scenes' programming, featuring bands before they go on stage, or personal interviews before the show. Such strategies, together with those discussed earlier in this section, would amount to MK having become a well-oiled promotion machine promoting strong elements of communal identification.

3.7 MK as cultural phenomenon

Müller's (2017:579) exposition on the establishment of a brand image, cited under the previous section, may aid an understanding of the philosophy behind MK and how it became a cultural sensation, influencing musicians and bands to apply the same marketing techniques to their respective brands post MK. All these strategies applied to MK, as the brand focused on Afrikaans-speaking youth responding to a rebellious lifestyle and representing a low to medium income spending group (cf. Botha 2008:26). The success of the producers' strategic choice of marketing tactics was confirmed by

the fourfold expansion of the channel after its first few years of inception. As already noted, various bands, including Parlotones, Fokofpolisiekar, Die Antwoord, Jack Parow, and Francois van Coke for the Van Coke brand, profitably adopted similar approaches to promoting their own brands, notably regarding lifestyle choices.

It was underlined throughout the preceding chapters that MK was primarily a music channel that chose Afrikaans as its language medium. When it was launched in 2005, few restrictions were placed on content selection and the brand's target marketing. Thus, MK invested in all aspects that constitute essential elements of a music channel and of music video to evolve and become 'more than just a music channel'. Ultimately, it became a lifestyle channel. This effort was driven by actors, presenters, fashion stylists, make-up artists, musicians, and technicians, presenting a platform for a newly qualified working force within the context of a music channel. However, as will be confirmed in chapter 4, they also provided a creative environment where musicians could perform live and record their music videos, with the channel either funding or providing technical support. Apart from having a specific target audience and market, the reasoning was, as mentioned earlier, to mentor a new generation of young, white, privileged working-class viewers to become the next generation of kykNET viewers, presenters, actors, and TV crews – or, as will be corroborated in the following chapter, to create an MK 'ecosystem'.

This environment, established together with the channel's growth, came into being by way of specific themes featured on the various channels, of which most culminated in MK Award categories. Examples are Avontoer (started in 2006, featured on Studio 1 in 2007, and an award category for Best Road Trip Award 2008); supporting the University audience (University top 5 tunes on Studio 1 in 2007, becoming a category for Best Kampus Hit in 2009); acknowledging international hits (both top 5 tunes of UK and USA charts in 2008 on Studio 1, becoming a category for Best International Hit at MK Awards 2010), and supporting local festivals (behind the scenes interviews and footage of festivals on Studio 1 in 2012, becoming a new category for Best Festival in 2012). The programmes and the growth of the above-mentioned themes were given a 'coolness' and 'bigger than life' factor by the presenters of the various programmes, like Herman Pretorius (AMP), Henré Pretorius (JIP), Elma Botha (Jip and Studio 1) and Elana Afrika (JIP).

These highly marketable programmes aided in lifestyle choices and identity formation for the Afrikaans-speaking youth and even extended to the terrain of social support, as was seen in the case of Herman Pretorius, music librarian for MK, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2008. Moved by the cost and the lack of medical insurance, his brother, Henré Pretorius, initiated rock concerts to raise funds for Herman's treatment. This enterprise began as the Vrede Fest, in later years becoming the Vrede Foundation. The social impact of founding this organization that assists young people (aged 15-29) without medical aid in cancer treatment has subsequently branched out to other social awareness campaigns and festivals. These include 'Relate' bracelets by Relate, a Non-Profit Organization with the bracelet being made by elderly people in townships (spear-headed by Francois van Coke);[94] Blood Brothers (A rock show featuring the top rock artists in South Africa, raising funds for the Vrede Foundation) and; Bands for Bricks (started as a financial fundraising Rock show called Bucks for Brixton, For Brixton Barnard, member of Brixton Moord en Roof band, diagnosed with cancer, spear-headed by Johrné van Huyssteen, lead singer of Ddisselblom.[95] These initiatives, initially linked with MK, have become influential annual fundraising and awareness events in South Africa.

3.8 Nostalgia

Nostalgia – another theme linked with alternative identity in the context of MK, as already explained – is a branding strategy exercising considerable impact in post-apartheid Afrikaans music and film media.[96] Nostalgia is prevalent, in particular, in some post-apartheid hit songs, which, once more, beckons whether such songs form part of an objective to navigate the Afrikaner towards new identities or whether it is produced simply with a view to financial gain by stimulating the need for a sought-after genre within a certain sector of post-apartheid Afrikaans music.

Alant explains that post-apartheid nostalgic Afrikaans genres evoke emotions associated with identity and cultural loss. In Chapter 2, examples of nostalgia that

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[94] Available from: https://www.relate.org.za/media/news_new/20160128_northern_news.pdf
[95] More information available from: https://m.facebook.com/events/820471018045286
[96] Examples include singles a range of songs, for instance 'De la Rey', 'Die Gelofte', or the re-recording and issuing of older Afrikaans hits like 'Ballade vir 'n Enkeling', and 'Lisa se Klavier'. Films include *Fiela se Kind* and *Ballade vir 'n Enkeling*. Cf. https://thefilmfactory.co.za/movies/

gained brand recognition were discussed, namely the franchise of *Afri-Frans, Afri-Spaans* and *Afri-Italiaans.* These projects include iconic songs that, at the time, were as popular as on their initial release. Despite not being sung in their original language, the songs, all of which have stood the test of time through their musical integrity, embody, as Britz (2010) puts it, "a wistful longing for the past". Some of the best-known examples are 'Sonvanger' (Valiant Swart), 'Halala Afrika' (Johannes Kerkorrel), and 'Victoriabaai' (Lucas Maree). While arrangements of these songs invoke nostalgia through strong associations with the original versions, simultaneously they seem to summon 'new', 'imagined' identities (Alant 2013:xx).[97]

Moser (2007:292) examines poetic language's reception as realized in printed form versus song. He determines a 'non-verbal reception' associated with a song's aesthetics, or musical expression that evokes emotions referring to shared social and cultural frames of reference. In this regard a powerful category is that of folk or protest songs, which often draw on a nostalgic connection (Moser 2007:292). Focusing on the post-apartheid commercialisation of Afrikaner history and memories, Sonnekus (2016:463) views cultural products forming part of the Afrikaans 'nostalgia industry' as "vehicles for the dissemination of discourses that possibly become internalized by Afrikaners who attempt to reconcile their self-representations with the post-apartheid landscape" (2016:463). An obvious example is the already mentioned 'De la Rey'. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, one of the producers of the song's video explained his reasoning for staging Afrikaner cultural heritage, such as images related to the Anglo-Boer War, as a backdrop to the music video. It was namely argued that such historical connections aid the 'searching, new Afrikaner generation' to remember former heroes and take pride in their Afrikaner ancestry.[98] As was noted in Chapter 2, in the case of 'De la Rey', this strategy, given extensive airtime on MK, has literally paid off in terms of financial success.

Nostalgia can be portrayed visually on various platforms, including films,[99] music videos, musicals[100] or photographs, such as in the work 'Platteland' (1994) by the

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[97] Cf. https://www.litnet.co.za/afrikaners-is-nostalgierig-afri-frans-as-vertaling-van-identiteit/#Artikel
[98] With a view to branding, nostalgia is as actively produced by consumers buying into the product, as it is by the commodified product (Hutcheon in Sonnekus 2016:468).
[99] Examples are *Pretville* (2012) and *Treurgrond* (2015).
[100] Examples are Deon Opperman's musicals *Tree aan!* (2011) and *Ons vir jou* (2013).

award-winning photographer Roger Ballen. In this project, Ballen photographed a group of white Afrikaners seen as outcasts ('white trash') during apartheid, living in destitute poverty despite belonging to the same ethnic group as the ruling political party over a period of almost 20 years.[101] Ballen's photographs portray this group in rural settings, dressed in khaki clothes, showing signs of abject poverty and mental and or physical disability or illness. This controversial portrayal of Afrikaners caused polemic amongst art experts.[102] It is significant that Die Antwoord corroborated with Ballen to produce the music video *I fink you freaky*, which won a coveted international award.[103]

Again, such prestigious association underlines the theme of branding, as the association of a music video with an award-winning photographer or filmmaker added a high-status 'signature' to the product. This strategy is evident in the category Best Video at the MK Awards 2012 and 2013, as observed in MK archival materials, where the contributions of filmmakers, directors, and video producers were duly acknowledged.[104] The last Award show in 2013 saw the category Best Video being awarded to both the artist and the producer. It is significant that Fokofpolisiekar as well as Die Antwoord corroborated with the celebrated photographer and filmmaker Sean Metelerkamp, who, together with Ballen, rose to international fame post MK.[105] These outcomes of the influential reach of the channel again underline its impact as a cultural phenomenon within the South African post-apartheid context.

3.9 Visual representation

Visual representation is another important theme concerning the success of MK – exercising influence not only on an ideological level, but also a pragmatic one. The carefully constructed environment described thus far discussed worked in favour of DSTV's philosophy to provide a platform for a newly qualified, inexperienced workforce that would be trained and utilized as the next generation of viewers, TV

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[101] *Platteland*, released in 1994. Cf. https://www.rogerballen.com/platteland/

[102] Cf. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/apr/05/roger-ballen-outland-interview.

[103] The award for the best music video at the 20th Short Vila da Conde International Film Festival, Portugal, 2012. Cf. https://www.rogerballen.com/about/awards/.

[104] Examples are Louis Minnaar, Thomas Ferreira, and Tristan Holmes.

[105] Metelerkamp was one of the cameramen who grew with MK and the platform it provided, eventually becoming one of the most prominent South African photographers/filmmakers.

personalities (musicians, actors, and presenters) and support personnel involved in the technical aspects of camera, sound, and lighting. Most of the technicians (video and audio) were trained at local film schools, such as African Film Drama Art (AFDA), and needed experience in media production. They were, indeed, young, newly qualified, and eager to work.[106] As will also be evident in my data discussion, offered in the next chapter, much of MK's visibility and sudden growth within the first two years of its existence was due to the youngsters learning to hone their skills at a below-standard pay rate. They saw their work as a passion project and did not require as much remuneration as an experienced technician would and would eagerly work longer hours for free. This input of a youthful sector influenced the target market to be more open to music videos and other presentations featured as part of MK programmes – again, suggesting a strong case of identification.

Music videos afforded opportunities for better and financially more budget-oriented publicity by frequently playing on MK, sometimes up to 8 times per hour, which aided in promoting songs. Hunter Kennedy (Fokofpolisiekar) admitted that music videos are nothing more than a "glorified flyer" that serves the purpose "to get people to your show". In this regard, he identified two functions for music videos, namely, a narrative one, which will help fans interpret the music, and a kinetic one, of which the energy would give viewers "a glimpse of what the band will perform like live on stage".[107] Music videos were also formatted as 'short films' to attract the attention of the listener and the viewer. The audience would be more inclined to watch till the end of such productions and rewatch them, to follow the lyrics, but, simultaneously, would be hooked on the music and the narrative.[108]

In the same way that music video draws on technology such as computer-generated effects or animation, so did the advertisements that were featured on MK. While these only involved promotion of MK content, they set new standards for local commercial filming. An example is the introduction of the phantom camera, known merely as 'phantom', a high-speed camera that could shoot 100 times more frames per second

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[106] They were all under the age of 25, which fitted the intended viewer's age.

[107] From an interview with Fokofpolisiekar by Griffin from Watkykjy in 2013. Cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxAA9_zzkPw&t=4s [Note that this was not an interview conducted as part of my research, but one available within the public domain]

[108] Examples are 'De la Rey' (Bok van Blerk), 'Jy soen my nie meer nie' (Lianie May) en 'Tyd om te trek' (Bok van Blerk).

(250 compared to 25 000), making it possible to slow down the imagery and produce it slow-motion videography.[109] Respondent 6 mentioned that the channel had the opportunity to use this camera for 24 hours for filming their advertisements at no cost (which was unheard of in the industry at the time, as the equipment was costly and difficult to get hold of in South Africa at the time).

Following the example MK set by using the phantom camera for their advertisements, including the MK Award Promo's for 2011,[110] special effects associated with the equipment started to feature in various music videos produced at the time. Stop-motion, a special effect made easier with a phantom camera (choosing individual frames and combining them to form a video), could be seen in videos nominated in the category Best SFX/Animation 2011.[111] This was underlined in the presenter's words, Elma Smit:

> Special effects, visual enhancement and stop-motion animation is not a visual style anymore, but an integral part of any top-quality video-making process. More time, more money, and more focus are being placed on post-production. And with technology becoming more affordable for your average filmmaker, visual effects are no longer alone feature on a Hollywood blockbuster but a reality for nearly every video making process.[112]

The technology used behind the scenes for producing a music video and for presenting a channel requires unique expertise on many levels. This includes camera knowledge for live transmission (music show/video, interviews, behind the scenes as the performance is happening), camera for pre-recorded programmes (music set, interview set), editing (final editing, computer graphics), lighting (both live and on set)

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[109] It is worth mentioning that special effects and animation were quite costly in 2008. Production teams had to shoot 25 frames per second, which turns into 4320 frames for a three-minute video. In 2011, the video that won 3 awards (Mr X feat Die Heuwels Fantasties) took one day to film and seven months in post-editing to improve the animation and special effects (Archival footage of MK Awards, 2011). More specifications on the camera can be found at:
https://www.phantomhighspeed.com/industries/sector/scienceresearch
[110] An example is the 'slow turning' of the model in the following promo. Available from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAap8QGq9XE
[111] Hikatori ('Johnson Hates Me'), Hog Hoggidy Hog ('Sherry Anne'), Die Heuwels Fantasties ('Hyg Duiwel'), The Parlotones ('Stars Fall Down') and Zebra & Giraffe ('The Inside').
[112] Archival footage of MK Awards, 2011.

and sound (both live in-house shows, live performance at a venue, live and pre-recorded interviews and shows).

In the context of MK, Elma Smith, presenting The MK Best Video Award 2011, indeed emphasised that a music video is not just reliant on the songs and the musicians, but extends to filmmakers, graphic and digital designers (as could be seen with the MK Animation/Special Effects award each year), choreography, make-up, stylists, and set designer (MK Awards Live 2012). Again, due to MK's influence, improvements within the broader field of local commercial music and film production followed because of the channel's impact.

CHAPTER 4: A DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEW DATA DERIVED FROM MK STAKEHOLDERS

Thematic analysis is among the most widely used forms of qualitative analysis in the social sciences, applied across a range of disciplines (Swain 2018). As indicated in Chapters 1 and 3, it is a flexible method of analysis that provides a set of core techniques and procedures through which patterns of meaning may be identified and analysed (cf. Braun & Clarke 2006:77ff). As was noted, due to the limited materials available on MK, my data collection method consisted of semi-structured interviews and a study of MK archival materials.[113] It was explained that thematic analysis would allow me to identify themes or patterns of cultural meaning related to my topic, encode data according to such themes, and interpret these in terms of "commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles" (Mills et al. 2010:926). In the light of the types of data involved in my study, the identification of themes was made both deductively and inductively; that is, derived from theoretical constructs introduced as part of my literature review, and emerging from my data as confirmed in the present chapter. While Chapter 3 served to establish a framework of thematic ideas relevant to my topic (cf. Gibbs 2007:38), in this chapter, the said framework structures my discussion of the interview data and archival materials, the first theme introduced being that of dissent.

4.1 Dissent

Dissent played a crucial role in the trajectory of the youth that religiously followed MK, especially concerning the perception that they were "atoning for [the] sins of their fathers" (Respondents 4, 7, 10). Similarly, Respondent 3 noted that

> The parents [of the MK generation] were singled out as the bad people [and] these stigmas will never be left behind as they will always infer the sins of the fathers.

In this regard, the anti-establishment function of rock bands featured on MK were underlined as they highlighted

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[113] As respondents preferred to conducted their interviews in Afrikaans, I freely translated these into English with a view to my data analysis, offered in this chapter.

the stigma associated with [Afrikaner] culture and kicked against the system for things their parents did which they were being held accountable for. [It is exactly within the realm of Afrikaner guilt that MK created room for the youth to rebel against preconceived assumptions of their culture] (Respondent 3).

As Respondent 4 noted,

MK was the crowning glory of the post-apartheid generation [and most forms of popular music before 1984] was regulated by the SABC, ATKV and the FAK; everything Broederbond. If you were creative in any sense of the word […] you were ignored.

Respondent 7 attributed dissent in the context of MK to the fact that the channel also "had the opportunity to make various programmes without censorship and get away with what it wanted to". An example is the airplay of controversial music video's by Die Antwoord, "played after 22h00 at night" (Respondent 7).

As already suggested, the theme of dissent seems also to correlate with Afrikaner guilt. Concerning the broader socio-cultural milieu within which MK flourished, Respondent 10 observed that "there was a type of angst filtering through" and that "the [then] current generation was an angry generation". This partly motivated him to support Afrikaans ventures "through guilt". Yet it was noted by Respondents 6 and 7 that the MK generation was "the first generation allowed to depart from the restrictive social norms entrenched during apartheid". Dissent in this sense was expressed through dress style and language as inspired by MK as symbolic ideal (Respondents 6, 7). Indeed, objection to traditionalist [Afrikaner] culture and apartheid era conceptions concerning the Afrikaans language were crucial instigators of insubordination associated with MK.

Respondent 8, for instance, said that

I do not want to associate with Afrikaans, [as it is] not my choice to speak it as native language. [He had been exposed to an Afrikaner nationalist ethos which brought him to believe that Afrikaans was not cool.] I struggle to feel proud [of my heritage]. I do not necessarily see myself as an Afrikaner.

As was argued in earlier chapters, MK capitalised on this kind of sentiment, shared by many Afrikaans-speaking post-apartheid youths, in constructing a new image for Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture. Indeed, as Respondent 8 put it,

> What was cool of MK was that, at least, they made clear that there is a faction of Afrikaners who are not traditionalist, racist beings.

Respondent 10 noted that dissent in the MK context was

> super loud; loud music was extremely popular at the time and all bands [featured on MK] shared something of the fuck the system sentiment.

4.2 MK as symbolic 'ideal'

MK achieved a huge following within its first three years of existence, both through the airing of music videos and live events, featured via in-studio broadcasts and festival coverage (Respondents 1, 6). Through the content created, it became a "melting pot of creativity within the music industry" (Respondent 4). Despite many people (still today) being under the impression that it was "a predominantly white Afrikaans channel" (Respondent 6) or "very white" (Respondent 8), Respondent 7 pointed out that "The MK brand was inclusive of everyone", and thus incorporated unique, dissident forms of expression such as alternative rock and Afrikaans hip-hop as part of its offerings. Furthermore, the channel was "an elaborate mentorship" (Respondent 6), and it was "local" (Respondent 7). Respondent 2 confirmed that the channel supported the music industry, as could be seen in the programme Geraas, while Respondent 9 found that

> the groundwork or platforms created helped a lot of the bands, not just at the beginning, but throughout the channel's whole existence, both alternative and pop artists.

Respondent 8 indicated that

> bands benefited more than the channel from the symbiotic relationship that helped to cement the next generation's leadership.

An important factor highlighted by Respondent 6 was that "MK also had open chat platforms and profiles, long before they started on Facebook".

Concerning MK's ideological positioning, several respondents emphasised the sense of liberation projected by the channel. "It allowed young viewers to ask questions", and "rebel though coming from a good home", as could be seen in the show AF, "a platform for students to do extreme things" (Respondent 7). As a result, young Afrikaans-speaking fans suddenly had

> a freer and open environment [in which they were] allowed to be creative with MK playing a big role in the stimulation of these creativities (Respondent 4).

This kind of liberating impulse gave impetus also to the advancement of new music genres in Afrikaans. Respondent 5 noted that

> the channel allowed alter egos and alternative voices to be heard which played a big role to break down the barriers between different [music] genres. [In this sense,] MK was not exclusive but gave a platform to the youth … who had no access to other media forms.

MK also promoted a "freer and open environment" in the sense of its more general liberal worldview. An example is the programme Af, which started as a homemade prank video filmed for fun. When presented to the MK board at the time, one of the board members commented "*dit is af*" (this is off). However, the managing director of the time, Theo Erasmus and the Public Relations specialist, Haddad Viljoen, gave the footage the green light, on the condition that the show be named 'Af' instead of 'Dis af' (Respondent 7). The show was mainly about "dudes that caused shit, fashioned after Jackass"[114] (Respondent 7) and were "uninhibited in their filming and actions" (Respondent 12).

> A spin-off from Af was the show Hoenner, which was started by two presenters who left Af and started Hoenner (Respondent 7).

Respondent 4 remarked that the target group

> who was in Standard 6 in 1994 was not as bogged down by the baggage of emotional trauma as the generation before them.

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[114] An American reality slapstick comedy television series.

It is from this perspective that Respondent 3 argued that the song De la Rey represented "a part of history of which they could be proud". Thus, while MK stimulated dissent against conservative conceptions of Afrikaner culture, simultaneously it provided an environment for post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth to nurture their need for a new, separate Afrikaans culture, language, and identity, constructed within the shelter of MK as symbolic ideal. It was within this context that MK made it possible for songs like 'De la Rey' and, on the other side of the ideological spectrum, bands such as Die Antwoord to develop a huge fanbase, growing exponentially larger during the final two years of the channel's existence. This development Respondent 8 described as "the inception of cult-like followings that turned 'De la Rey' and Die Antwoord into cultural phenomena". As will be argued in my final chapter, from this resulted the establishment of two distinctly opposing alternative Afrikaans identities, namely nostalgia and cynicism. It also led to the formation of bands' "sub-culture status through which counter-culture became pop-culture" (Respondent 8). As respondent 9 noted, a proliferation of sub-cultures resulted as "the country is vast …; there are a great variety of sub-cultures under Afrikaners including metal heads and net-gamers".

In response to the question of how the construct 'Afrikaner' would currently be defined, Respondent 2 reflected on whether the term should imply 'a nation or a language'. For this respondent,

> culture is the binding factor to explain the word, whilst the features of a culture is normally cuisine and dance, or in the case of Afrikaner culture, rugby, and Christianity (this opinion was shared also by Respondents 8 and 10), Christianity still being "the underlying religion" (Respondent 10).

These answers suggest that MK's subversive image, at the time of its inception, served to uproot entrenched ideas concerning Afrikaner culture, some of which endure even today. However, criticism was lodged by Respondent 4 who considered MK's influence to have been "a media hype" more than a true reform of Afrikaner culture, referring to "conservative white people … in the channel's top management". Furthermore, this respondent questioned the ethical and moral standing of the media concerning the eventual demise of the channel, as

no-one had the balls to criticise kykNET and Karen [Meiring] when MK was closed.
If the channel had such a big impact, then there was supposed to be long editorials
(Respondent 4).

4.3 Alternative Afrikaans identity

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the idea of 'coolness' played a significant role in
identity formation as constructed by the channel. Respondent 4 noted that "The
platform that MK created had an immediate and huge cool factor to it". The coolness
factor formed a direct link with between the channel's image and its offerings
(Respondent 8) as "the channel could not be cool if the content is not cool". The
programme Amp was an example of a MK show that garnered huge support through
the charisma of its presenter Herman Pretorius. Pretorius made the show 'cool'
through his interviews "that were more like a couch conversation with good friends,
than a formal interview" (Respondent 7). The presenter would go to famous gig venues
like Back to Basics in Johannesburg and follow the band for the whole evening whilst
they are performing, filming behind-the-scenes footage, and having informal
conversations with the musicians (Respondent 9). Respondent 7 also noted that

the show wasn't artificially put together by a publicist as you could hear something
different in each episode; "It was the flagship show".

As was noted in the preceding chapters MK's coolness factor and the notion of
alternative Afrikaans identity was constructed through music, specifically. In line with
MK's philosophy of inclusivity, the channel stimulated the formation of new genres
embracing various Afrikaans music genres, "to represent more of South Africa"
(Respondent 4). For Respondent 11, a crucial aspect of alternative Afrikaans identity
as mediated by MK was

the wide variety of music videos featured on the channel which stimulated
heterogeneity; everyone should feel MK is the channel for them.

As an example, this respondent mentioned MK's promotion of music from the Cape
Flats "such as hip-hop videos by Brasse Vannie Kaap"; were incorporated as part of
the channel's offering, "because MK saw and had the scope to expand to other
markets". Indeed, the channel expanded the idea of Afrikaans music with hip-hop

shows like "Hiphopkop", mentioned by Respondent 6, thereby incorporating music from a wider selection of ethnic groups as part of "a South African culture" (Respondent 11). Such stimulation of

> an overlap of musical tastes led to the effectiveness of Oppikoppi, that attracted people to the festival where they went to listen to that music (Respondent 6).

Again, this kind of expansion of previous notions of 'Afrikaansness' was "portrayed [by the channel] as cool" (Respondent 7). Thus, MK helped to educate Afrikaans audiences to new genres of music "which they didn't know existed" (Respondent 6).

Alternative Afrikaans identities as constructed by MK relied on the channel's visual image to a significant extent. Association with MK's brand was defined, in particular, by the visuals seen on the channel. As Respondent 1 noted, young people watching the shows followed the fashion trends they promoted; if a presenter was wearing a Fokofpolisiekar T-shirt, for instance, it was assumed to be cool, and thus "fans would also want one". In the early years of the channel's existence, the cool factor was extended to the MK magazine. Respondent 8 recalled that one of the magazine's issues was "a cereal box that contained games and posters", alluding to exclusivity of MK membership. The channel was also known to sponsor tours and award special sponsorships for music videos, on the premise that these would be used exclusively for their archive.

It was the visuals with their realistic and unparalleled portrayal of bands, including behind-the-scenes footage by presenters like Herman Pretorius that gave the fans a strong association with the channel (Respondent 7), and made it popular under the Afrikaans-speaking youth "to be a rocker" (Respondent 9). This factor, accompanied by excessive airplay afforded to charismatic bands like Fokofpolisiekar, unified fans in their experiences of adapting to a new South African society. Respondents 4 and 5 noted that there seemed to be an obvious form of symbiosis between the bands and the channel: The more airplay bands received, the more prosperous they seemed to become – as was the case with Fokofpolisiekar (Respondent 12). Respondent 11 noted that "MK gave a form of legitimacy … to the brand" so that "the brand was bigger than the channel". This could be seen as a particularly influential impetus towards alternative identity formation, as the fame and coolness factor association

worked to such an extent that a fan got to know the band and members through their videos on TV and would subsequently stop a band member in the street to take photos with them (Respondent 10).

Respondent 8 described this phenomenon as "almost Kardashianlike". This kind of fan identification could also be attributed to the increasing influence of the web and social media, as these made it "easier for fans to get hold of the band, though not necessarily connecting with them" (Respondent 8). Respondent 12 reminisced regarding the identification associated with MK merchandise:

A university student will not easily put a Moët sticker on their book bag but would paste an MK sticker. Why? Because of the association with the channel and the bands. Through pasting an MK sticker on your book bag or wearing an MK branded cap, you showed you associated with the channel and its values.

This respondent conjectured that it was "more about the bands than the coolness factor of the channel". Respondent 3 felt that

the cool factor played an important part in terms of association with the bands and the channel that mediated [their music] … fans of Fokofpolisiekar, for instance, were able to associate and connect, not just on a superficial level by rebelling against authority, but by realising there is a deeper meaning [of the songs] that resonates within them.

An important factor brought to the fore concerning the channel's identity is the matter of financial revenue.[115] Respondent 6 reflected on the question whether the channel was seen as a separate entity, or as a kykNet funded channel, because "it made music decisions for both MK and kykNET" (Respondent 11). While financial revenue was also obtained through a monthly subscription, according to Respondent 5

this was not a determining factor, as viewer numbers weren't good, but the association was massive.

However, Respondent 11 pointed out that "the ratings of MK were never a specific measuring tool". What became clear is that the channel "had oppositional sides to it"

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[115] Most financial revenue came from advertisements, comprising mainly in-house advertisements of MK shows. It is worthy to note the one of the main advertisements sponsors was the Northwest University which was "the biggest outside financial sponsor on MK" (Respondent 10).

(Respondent 6). On the one hand it featured content and programming that could not be associated with kykNET. On the other hand, it exploited the trusted kykNET brand "to tell people what is cool and what is new to watch" (Respondent 6).

Concerning the construction of an alternative Afrikaans identity, MK capitalised on the desire of school-going youths to be in a band, as "MK made it look cool to be in a band" (Respondent 2, 4), "to be onstage" (Respondent 1), "to look cool" (Respondent 6), and to get the recording contract to make a music video that would play on MK, essentially making them more famous among their peers and in the country.

'Coolness' was thus a big factor in terms of MK, as the channel made the Afrikaans language and aspects of Afrikaner culture more likeable amongst different cultures. Whereas MK "mostly produced 60% Afrikaans content (Respondent 11), English bands started to see the effectiveness of getting airplay on the channel and started recording in Afrikaans" (Respondent 4).[116]

As already noted, MK was also "influential in giving exposure to new (previously unfamiliar) genres in Afrikaans like hip-hop and rap" (Respondent 4), thereby expanding the notion of 'Afrikaans music'. It was noted by Respondents 3 and 8 that MK had a more "open policy" towards various music genres when they started but eventually focused more on commercial music and alternative music as the channel became better known. This seeming contradiction may perhaps be explained by the fact that "Afrikaans music is a small market" (Respondents 6, 7). This statement was underscored by Respondent 8, who questioned the viability of the typical MK market: "I don't know if you can really make money [in such a small market]". In this regard, Respondent 3 pointed out that MK's potential for commercial profit was restricted by the channel's focus on "an alternative niche market that constituted only 2–3% of the market" (Respondent 3).

4.4 Lifestyle choices

As Respondent 7 noted, "MK was a cultural thing. A lifestyle [with] a greater influence on decision making relating to aspects encompassing daily life". In its heyday, MK was

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[116] An example is a recording by The Parlotones of the Afrikaans hit song by Koos Kombuis, Lisa se klavier.

also pervasive; Respondent 8 pointed out that "it was in every household". An important aspect was fashion that was endorsed by bands like Fokofpolisiekar when accepting their first MK award with

> a well-planned dress style that looked cool and was carefully planned to […] shock and to send a message (Respondent 7). It was a culture thing, a lifestyle. Fokofpolisiekar basically wore old clothes. Yet this look became iconic and the term 'bergie chic' was coined to describe it (Respondent 8).

Furthermore, Respondents confirmed that programmes aired on MK not only reflected identity and social problems the youth experienced post-apartheid; they also served as a powerful means of association with the channel through the underlying philosophy that "MK was for everyone". Thus, they catered for specific lifestyle choices. In this respect, programmes sorted under basic categories like talk shows (Gons, MK 8-5, Geraas); magazine shows (JIP); lifestyle choice programming (JIP); fashion influenced shows (JIP, Studio1); prank shows (Af, Hoenner) and a number of 'firsts', such as the dating show in Afrikaans (Heikie); the live weekly production show ('Studio1') and music request shows (Skole Top 10, MK Live and 'Studio1') (Respondent 7).

The talk show Gons was originally a kykNET production which moved to MK as the opening show for the channel. In the start-up time of the channel, it formed part of the only dedicated Afrikaans channel, kykNET (Respondent 7). The show invited musicians to be interviewed by the presenters Johrné van Huyssteen and Francois Nolte, whilst MK 8-5 was "a talk show about bands" (Respondent 9). The magazine show JIP was the forerunner of MK's later lifestyle approach by chatting about anything from the latest shows, films, and clothes, to gigs and food, thus becoming a visual extension of the printed addition to *Beeld* (Respondent 7).

As was pointed out in earlier chapters, lifestyle choices in the context of MK also involved the brand extension of bands by way of the selling of merchandise – specifically in the case of alcohol (such as Fokof Lager and Parow Brandy). This aspect of MK's extended influence overlaps with the theme of brand association, which is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

4.5   Brand association

Brand association is "a visual representation strategy that MK employed to great success" (Respondent 6). This tactic culminated in the channel's sponsoring of stages during festivals, the visibility of their recording trucks during the early years of KKNK and Aardklop,[117] competitions that were presented in association with shows like the JIP Rockspaaider competition (of which advertisements received ample airplay on MK), and AMP, described by Respondent 7 as the Rock and Roll version of Oprah, the MVP project, which allowed young and talented directors to envision new conceptual ideas (Respondent 5) and enter any type of music like rock and roll, pop, rock alternative (Respondent 11), which, in turn, culminated in the MK Awards where the youth could vote for the funniest, coolest and sexiest songs (Respondent 11).

Furthermore, MK stimulated career opportunities for young professionals in the industry (lighting, sound, camera, presenters, and 'creative professions' like stylists, fashion designers) (Respondent 4), brand extensions (Fokoflager, Parow Brandy, Mystic Boer Brandy, Die Antwoord fashion), and social awareness extensions (Blood Brothers, Bucks for Brixton, Vrede Foundation and the Relate bracelets), all of which contributed to the advancement of the channel's visibility. As Respondents 5 and 7 noted, the young producers [that worked on MK at the time] became the current senior producers [on the channel]. As Respondent 6 contributed, "It became an eco-system. This well-oiled system also helped bands to earn a living, travel and do gigs".

As noted above, a significant part of brand recognition was MK's visual representation and sponsorships at festivals, especially Oppokoppi. Respondent 4, for instance, noted that "The growth … of Oppikoppi … was directly related to MK". Similarly, Respondents 6, 8, and 9 supported the view that Oppikoppi's significant growth during the early 2000s was "due to the MK sponsored stages and acts". The channel did "40 gigs per year where they had a presence with branded stages and filmed studio sessions" (Respondent 6).[118] The MK stage would, in many cases, be one of the two or three main stages during a festival, representing "a stage for the acid heads" (Respondent 2), DJ stage, acoustic stage (Respondent 2) and, in the later years of

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[117] These shows were recorded by MK and marketed as '13 in a row' (Respondent 7).

[118] Respondent 3 noted that MK turned into "a live events organizer".

Oppikoppi, a dance stage (Red Bull stage), or a comedy stage (Respondent 6).[119] While this offered MK huge opportunities for brand visibility, simultaneously it presented young professional cameramen from AFDA with the opportunity to gain experience of filming live events as part of their curriculum for filming live projects (Respondent 4), and gain exposure for their work (Respondent 9). Indeed, Respondent 8 (and 6) noted that most MK technicians and presenters were "within the channel's target group (under 25 years of age)". This, in turn, stimulated healthy competition under AFDA students "to produce the best, or award-winning music video" (Respondents 9, 12). As Respondent 4 argued, this internal form of competition became "big so as to have brag rights on a video where people can say befok" (Respondent 4). The idea of a competitive practice within MK also extended to the aspect of peer reviewed music videos (Respondent 6).

The brand, and the anomaly that was MK, also brought to the fore different facets of local identity politics through their selection of programmes, presented by young, dynamic hosts. Furthermore, fans identified with the channel through their associations with the stages, behind the scenes footage, and merchandise – "at one occasion even causing a fist fight for the popular trucker caps" (Respondent 6). MK created a kind of communal culture where fans would be able to see their idols perform, possibly meet up with them afterwards, and experience their favourite songs 'live' at a show, whilst being exposed to other songs or the rest of the CD (Respondent 10). Through these strategies,

> MK created the platform for certain bands to become commercial commodities Indeed, Polisiekar became a commodity due to the immense fame and association through MK at festivals and stages (Respondent 2).

4.6 MK as a cultural phenomenon

To fully comprehend the influence and impact of MK as a cultural phenomenon, in the preceding chapters, the social milieu within which the channel came into being was sketched. During the interviews conducted with a view to this study, Respondents

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[119] This situation seems to have changed. Respondent 6 pointed out that "These days there are no rock stages at festivals anymore, which cater to the young. As if to say, festivals scaled down on attracting the youth" (Respondent 6).

6, 7, 9 and 11 confirmed that MK's target market consisted of high school learners, university students,[120] and young professionals, thus the age group of 12–25 (Respondent 6), all having access to the DSTV bouquet, with MK only available on the "highest, most expensive model" (Respondent 8), which focused on "the higher income suburban youth" (Respondent 6). This market segment represented what Respondent 12 called

> the open-minded Afrikaans youth; youngsters who had access to DSTV, as opposed to those who grew up in rural parts of South Africa (also Respondent 1).[121]

According to Respondent 6, the MK authorities understood that the access lower income groups had [to satellite services] was very limited. Therefore,

> to target the right market, it was necessary for MK to establish something that wasn't associated with kykNET (Respondent 6). The success of the channel could therefore be ascribed to "not doing anything alone … but always walking with the industry and the people (Respondent 11).

As Respondent 11 stated, initially the channel was established to "give Afrikaans under young people a boost". Respondent 3 observed that most MK supporters were adolescents who started high school just after the dawn of Democracy in 1994, thus being school leavers and therefore first- and second-year university students when MK was first established. These youngsters grew up with radio as pastime entertainment in their teens (Respondent 9). Barely ten years after Democracy, with the advancement of television, most of them "were now watching TV whilst doing homework every afternoon after school" (Respondent 9, 10, 12). In this regard Respondent 1 emphasised that

> one should not underestimate the influence of TV [at the time]. Especially teenagers are very impressionable at that age … what they see on TV and the bands that [they] follow.

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[120] This was a large untapped market as Respondent 8 admitted that the main, traditionally Afrikaans Universities (Stellenbosch, Northwest and Pretoria) were associated with MK 'parties'.

[121] These were also the youth that had the financial backing to study with the view of becoming well-paid professionals. An example is 'R1 000 000 000 crowdfunded in two weeks [for Fokofpolisiekar's new album]' (Respondent 6).

TV's appealing visuals were a persuasive element in building a fan base so that

> MK became a powerful medium for reaching teenagers (Respondent 1). Though presently the medium of television has become old fashioned and even outdated (Respondent 1), at the time of MK's inception it lent the channel enormous influence – almost to the extent of becoming the MTV of South Africa (Respondents 6, 8).

Yet, simultaneously Respondent 1 pointed out that, currently, among the older Afrikaans-speaking generations, Afrikaans TV is still relevant, so that older people, including his mother and grandmother, "might perhaps not like Francois van Coke's music, but they know who he is, because they have seen him on KykNet". In this sense, Afrikaans singers such as Van Coke and Karen Zoid form part of what this respondent termed "*die Afrikaanse tipe gesprekswêreld*" (the Afrikaans kind of conversational world; Respondent 1).

As already noted, a further attribute of MK was that the channel gave young, Afrikaans-speaking individuals, who would previously not have had access to any kind of public platform, the opportunity to appear on TV (Respondent 4). This underlined the importance of quality video images and the portrayal of oneself ("one's image") (Respondent 7). Respondents 1, 9 and 11 shared the interesting view that "TV was now the new babysitter". Ironically, this meant that Afrikaans-speaking parents continually grew more at ease with swear words in band names and lyrics flaunted on MK, because, though conservative, they were supporters of kykNET (the only channel at the time broadcasting music in Afrikaans 24/7). Also, the medium of television directly brought ideas and ideologies advanced by MK into the heart of the previously 'sacred' space of the Afrikaner home. Reflecting on this development, Respondent 1 conjectured that

> anything happening on TV was immediately more acceptable to your parents than something taking place in a dark drinking hole; the medium of [Afrikaans] television legitimised the whole band scene.

However, importantly, this respondent also pointed out that, through MK, the genre of Afrikaans protest music began to reach an Afrikaans-speaking society that was, in his words, "politically unaware" at the time.

Coincidentally with their strategy to reach the Afrikaans-speaking youth, MK's broadcasting approach brought to the fore a new wave of artists, musicians, television producers and journalists. While, initially, many of these individuals formed part of the teenagers that listened to MK every afternoon whilst doing homework, they were also influenced to play in a band to be on TV. As per Respondent 4,

> there would never be such a movement (or phenomenon [Respondent 9]) in the
> South African music industry, that will reflect a generation as MK did [in its day].

Respondent 2 claimed that there was a huge influx of new bands, most consisting of matric leavers who would start a band, practise in their parents' garage, and film music videos, hoping to become famous when their productions were aired on MK. Very few of these bands recorded albums, as it "wasn't a necessity" (Respondent 12). The same respondent noted that it was "as if there were not enough audiences for the number of bands formed". MK suddenly provided a platform for aspiring youngsters to feature or develop artistic, technical, or vocational skills (Respondent 1). Described by Respondent 1 as a "steppingstone" the MK platform also extended to the travel industry, with various bands travelling over the country for concerts and shows (Respondent 9).

The channel furthermore established a 'right to existence' for MK associates and contributors as they were part of the DSTV network that provided public platforms for both artists and technicians alike. As Respondent 4 noted,

> MK was influential in stimulating a creative environment for artists and filmmakers"
> and this could be seen in the sodomic punks who ran around [at festivals and in
> managerial positions] that did total crazy ass things [like the programme 'Af'].

Another influential platform created was that of inclusivity, not just as a channel with its bands and fanbase, but with producers, record labels, and the music industry (Respondents 5, 7, 11).

> We tried from our side to better the music industry from the inside, through helping
> the youth compare different music taste so as to discern what they liked and what
> they didn't like (Respondent 11).

Respondents 8 and 10 confirmed that opportunities created for musicians helped solidify their 'longevity', which would not have been possible via other existing platforms at the time.

Alongside these developments, the market for MK broadcasts on university radio stations proved to be most profitable, as university accommodation consisted of condensed housing ("one decoder with thousands watching it"; Respondent 11) with a "bigger concentration" of people (Respondent 10), thus proving a bigger fanbase within a smaller radius. However, contrasting the positive financial revenue from university students was the piracy of various songs, causing the recording companies significant loss of revenue (Respondent 3). Despite piracy, fans still wanted to see an artist perform live, and in turn, hear other songs from their CD than the one track pirated (Respondent 10). Their response to listening to a CD track was to see their favourite artist(s) live at a show, which ironically became the artist's "livelihood and salary" (Respondent 10) as CD's were now "unused" (Respondent 6). To combat piracy and a loss of interest in music videos, Respondent 3 started specialising in making short films of music videos. Through this, fans would be intrigued by the storyline and give more airplay to the song as they would follow the song's story, especially love stories.

It is of interest to note that, currently, the buying market is progressing "back to singles", which influences the music industry negatively, as "more people now have access to free content on Internet and YouTube" (Respondent 5). This respondent also observed that "if people like music, they'll buy it to listen in their car or at home as they want it on their playlists". This contrasts with the MK context where video broadcasts on TV "allowed people from across the country to see the music videos" (Respondent 6).

4.7 Nostalgia

As perceived romanticised sentimentality, the construct of nostalgia, in recent scholarly thought has met with much hostility and dismissive critique (Tannock 1995:454ff).[122] Such appraisal of the concept mostly involves a view of the past as a

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[122] cf. also Boym 2007; Dames 2010, and Sedikides & Wildschut 2018.

time of "happiness, peacefulness, stability, or freedom" (Tannock 1995:454). However, as Dames (2010:269) contends, nostalgia may also involve "a form of memory that can convert previous suffering into delight" – a style of memory mostly limited "to exiles and refugees". Ironically, as the work of Steyn (2003; 2012), Fourie (2008), Vanderhaegen (2014), Verstergaard (2000), Van der Waal and Robins (2011), and Visser (2009) illustrate, in the context of Afrikaner culture, the concept of "*Afrikanertrots*" (Afrikaner pride) may strongly relate to such a manifestation of nostalgia, described by Dames (2010:269) as "a collective invocation … of a shareable potent mnemonic alchemy". From such a perspective, *Afrikanertrots*, a strand of nostalgia prevalent in music videos aired on MK, is "intimately related to its capacity for offering solace and pleasure" (Dames 2010:269). As Respondent 3 noted, this kind of nostalgic sentiment was to be found "Not only in videos but also in the symbolism of what MK stood for, a channel that could help find a lost identity in a new political regime". Such an observation was voiced also by Respondent 8 who believed that "[MK] viewers needed someone to look up to and who could give leadership in the [then current] political landscape". A similar view was expressed by Respondent 11, who emphasised the post-apartheid need for

> someone to steer the youth in right direction for culture and history … to know this is what I am made up of in South Africa. [Nostalgia in this sense] brought about more patriotism under MK's followers, which was more palpable in the inland Afrikaner than the Afrikaners in the Cape (also Respondent 10).

However, some responses of participants in this study brought to the fore critique on romanticised interpretations of Afrikaner nostalgia. As Respondent 2 put it,

> Now they need to adapt to nothing. Not nothing but very little, much less than before. And a great number of people struggle with that. And they only use blame as excuse, as this is the easiest to come to grips with the situation.

Similarly, Respondent 10 implied that versions of Afrikaner nostalgia aired on MK were suggestive of denial:

> There comes an angst with Afrikaans [and its association] as pain that is not transformed, [it] is transmitted.

As a powerful example of a romanticised Afrikaner past, the song 'De la Rey', which received significant exposure on MK, became an inspiration for a certain segment of younger Afrikaans listeners, ostensibly "to follow the moral example of De la Rey … when he stood on his principles, on his way" (Respondent 3). At the time, the song was also perceived to be "a mouthpiece to support the youth to say things they wanted to say and wanted to hear" (Respondent 3). The impact of De la Rey was such that, apart from the sub-cultures formed during this time, a new phenomenon established itself, namely the so-called 'De la Rey phenomenon'. Despite the song having been written two years prior to its fame in 2009, it only garnered huge public support when broadcast more often on MK. In Dames' (2010:269) terms, indeed the song was an example of a "vexatious political memory" that, by way of a collective nostalgic invocation, could offer "solace". As Respondents 3 and 10 noted,

> De la Rey struck a chord with the youth of the day and affirmed their identity through the theme of nostalgia, harking back to a forgotten time that was strongly founded in tradition, religion, and strong leadership that powerfully delineated the identity of the Afrikaner.

4.8 Visual representation

As was confirmed at other points of this thesis, MK was started at a time when "a need arose for a music channel in Afrikaans" (Respondent 5) that "catered for the youth" (Respondent 6). However, as Respondent 6 intimated, the decision to establish the channel was not solely an ideological one: "It was a business decision" to promote the kykNET 'family' and was never a decision to "save the language" (Respondent 6). Ostenstibly it was a profitable venture as new musicians and talent added a visual element to their music to make it suitable for TV production. In accordance with international trends at the time, music videos became very popular. As Respondent 4 observed,

> During the early 2000s, at the height of MK's fame, these videos supported a visual culture, taken from MTV – a channel which already existed on the DSTV bouquet (Respondent 6).

As Respondent 7 further observed,

> the local mirroring of MTV underlined the necessity for the MK producers to understand the building blocks of [local] culture … to influence the twists for the programmes taken from international hit shows.

Indeed, the channel "did not make use of any international music" (Respondent 5). However, like the MTV model, the MK platform

> helped [local] bands become famous and visually more appealing as the channel was established at a time when there was "a need to be on TV" (Respondent 12).

> There was no room for bands to get more airplay on Radio and it allowed MK the opportunity to feature an abundance of visual material not featured on any other TV channel in South Africa (Respondent 4).

This meant that MK became "bigger than radio" (Respondent 10). Respondent 5 observed that it was through the "conditioning of more airplay" that bands would garner fan support; as Respondent 10 noted, "Straatligkinders played up to ten times a day".

Concerning production techniques, the advances brought about by MK were already outlined in Chapter 3. As such, MK was the first channel to use a phantom camera for slow motion shoots (as is the case with their advertisements for the 2010 MK Awards) when it entered South Africa for the

> first time to be used in a movie set. They were also the first channel to have a live broadcast every week, which meant a live band in studio, with a live chart show (Respondent 6).

Several respondents (1, 3, 4, 6, 12) underlined the role of MK to mediate and influence the visual representation and perception of the 'cool factor', noting that "newspapers had not grown to incorporate a younger reader age"; "no person under 35 read newspapers anymore" (Respondent 4).[123] The articles that were published in the newspapers "were written in-house", and, seemingly, "did not focus on the youth" (Respondent 6). Respondent 1 noted that visual presence or airplay on MK "directly correlated with invitations to perform at festivals", thus helping bands to establish their brand amongst fans. "Many fans knew the brand associated with the channel and the quality of performances of bands" (Respondent 3). This, in turn, motivated fans to start

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[123] There has also been little research done into how people change their music taste after age 35 years of age (Respondent 6).

a band and enter competitions like Rockspaaider, which would afford the top 10 band "an opportunity to play on stage, in front of a live audience, with proper lighting and a PA system" (Respondent 1).

Respondent 2 noted that with more advanced technology, most of the music videos aired on MK were moved to YouTube and Indie channels on the internet. This was confirmed by Respondent 5 who stated that, in turn, this development negatively impacted the revenue generated by CD sales "as people now had a cheaper way to access music through means like the internet". A more extensive use of technology also aided the ease of acquiring equipment. In this regard, Respondent 6 contributed that "the Cape and Johannesburg started shooting more ads [which meant] more equipment was available to use. Simultaneously, more of the technicians worked on film sets, where they could use the equipment for free. As a result of these expansions of technology as mediated by MK, Youtube invited the channel to partner with them when it came to South Africa and DSTV said no. As such, in its innovative use of what is now called social media, MK was the first [local] teacher of Facebook and Youtube".

Respondent 3 noted that "Before MK, artists were measured according to their ability to earn income on performances, which would culminate in their branding/advertisement revenue, in turn allowing producers to spend money on CD production that was directly related to the amount of money spent on branding".

Nowadays, "it is all dependent on live performances and 360 deals" (Respondents 3, 6). Respondent 9, however, did not react favourably to the 360-deal due to its nature; "artists are not responsible for recordings, and the income is divided between the artist and the recording label".[124] Indeed, pervasive visual representation meant that the host mother, DSTV, would be connected to all representations 'belonging' to MK. Respondent 3 felt that this turned "censorship into quality control and a way for DSTV to control the market". Nevertheless, through the impact of visual representation, "MK grew to become a lifestyle channel which became a brand for most viewers" (Respondent 6). An example was the programme Studio 1, which allowed the TV production teams and designers to work together as the channel developed into a small eco-system (Respondent 6). The show featured a live band in

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[124] South African artists who have signed a 360 deal include Refentse, Elandrè and Brendan (Respondent 10).

studio and a live chart show which was "a first" (Respondent 6), given "a funky appeal by its presenters Henre Pretorius and Elma Postma and famed for its production quality" (Respondent 7).

4.9 MK revamped (post 2013)

My data analysis is concluded by briefly considering MK's demise and its legacy, the latter constituted by the platforms it introduced, namely those of marketing, technical, styling, designing (sets/graphics), communication between record labels and artists, and interaction between musicians and their fanbase, as well as the channel and its viewers that left a significant mark in the industry – aspects that bring together several of the themes outlined in this chapter.

Concerning the channel's downfall, Respondent 4 believed that the channel "did not die from natural causes; it was murdered, its throat was cut". Therefore, the respondent argued that "MK's death could not be blamed on the creative people, or the viewers; it could strictly be attributed to the bureaucrats". Furthermore, he thought that "the channel died because of budget cuts".

It has been stressed in Chapter 3 that MK helped launch the careers of local professional musicians and presenters and was at the forefront of the broadcasting of age-specific content and programming in South Africa at the time (MK Live, MVP, and MK Avontoer).

Respondent 6 admitted that

> there was not enough money to put up the capacity to make it work as an online channel even with [the current] technology. The future of the channel is not in a linear TV channel but in an algorithmic, self-curated channel, as most internet traces of MK were indefinitely removed (Respondent 6),

Respondent 7 felt that

> if a strong identity in a brand can't continue forwards, then it should be removed.

My interviews brought to the fore that the future of a transformative channel like MK is, to this day, a debatable subject. Some respondents believed the channel could "still exist on a digital/online platform with the right social media publicity" (Respondents

3, 9). However, questions arose about the future relevance of the platforms created by MK for young professionals in the industry. "There is no platform for music, except the videos that were repeatedly broadcast on kykNET, thus what outlet would there be in the current times?" (Respondent 2). Other factors mentioned were "capital revenue" (Respondents 3, 4, 9, 12) as "received from subscriptions or advertisements" (Respondent 7, 8), the "sustainability of an internet platform with the current network and connectivity issues faced in South Africa" (Respondent 4), as well as the "measurable success of the channel, supported by statistics" (Respondent 7).

> Consumerism and the advance of technology, like the internet[125] should also be taken into consideration, as people consume stuff different as previously on TV (Respondent 10).

Respondent 3 felt that Multi Choice had become "prehistoric", while Respondent 10 pointed out that music consumption is now mainly "device driven through hand-held devices" (Respondent 12).

> It is easier to send a link to a song, instead of having to go home, switching on the TV, waiting for the song to play, and then to share with your friends (Respondent 10).

Concerning the question whether nostalgia could revive MK, Respondent 9 believed that it would be "better represented on radio". Respondent 4 noted that, since MK had ended, "there has been no familiar band that rose to fame compared to the numerous bands that rose to fame during MK's existence". Similarly, Respondent 10 named six commercial bands "that came from MK" [and were still operative] 9 years after the channel was closed, noting that "that's nothing! That time [during MK's existence] there were over 40". Respondents 4 and 10 mentioned Afrikaans' "new future amongst brown people of the Cape Region", a factor also considered by Respondent 3 ("You have to cater for them"). Similarly, Respondent 8 felt that the platform should be "more inclusive to a South African or even African alternative platform".

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[125] People now had easier access to music and could download a whole song or CD than watching a band's live show (Respondent 12).

When the question was raised whether MK would still garner younger and new supporters or mainly have their older, aged fans come back, should the channel be brought back to existence, Respondent 8 commented that

> the only way to ensure a new and young generation is to upend censorship, as is the case on the internet, and to extend an open platform to the LGBTQ community which will open doors that the normal media will try to suppress.

This respondent added that such a strategy "would involve young investors from various cross-platforms (for instance fashion, music and extreme sports)". However, for Respondent 4, the future of kykNET would be vested in "The hip-hop that was broadcast on MK showed kykNET", while Respondent 6 felt that "R&B is the main genre of the moment". Thus, it was clear that, on this question, no consensus could be reached.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The question posed in my introductory chapter concerned the dispersion of Afrikaans alternative music related to MK as a cultural phenomenon, and the degree to which social themes such as identity and branding were influenced by the channel's specific mode of address and its meta-textual production of discourse. In this chapter, the most salient findings of my study, brought to the fore by my literature review and data analysis, are synthesised. In answer to my research question, these findings are then interpreted in terms of the conceptual framework set out in Chapter 1, underlining the notion of alternative Afrikaans identity as constructed by MK. Following some general findings on MK and post-apartheid Afrikaans alternative identity offered in this section, my observations are presented under the thematic headings that structured Chapters 3 and 4.

It was noted in Chapters 1 and 3 that MK presented a cultural haven for its young Afrikaans-speaking followers where, on the one hand, dissenting thought was expressed in alternative forms of music and lifestyle, while simultaneously being embedded within the fundamental rootedness of the Afrikaans language (cf. Taylor 2004:25 in Sutherland 2013:17ff).

From this perspective, a main finding of my study is that MK was not only a platform for rebelling against entrenched societal norms, but also explored (and perhaps exploited) the need for a 'new' Afrikaans culture, language, and identity. This endeavour laid the groundwork for dissident forms of expression in Afrikaans, aided by the eclectic choice of programmes broadcast on the channel. In this regard it was found that MK's popularity turned it into a cultural phenomenon within its first four years of existence (2005–2009), while, ultimately, it became a lifestyle-based channel. Furthermore, the channel's impact was so significant that it continued via an online platform after its closure in 2013. Some of the areas to which its longer-term influence extended include linguistic expressions, music genres, printed and visual media, and the formation of both subcultures and countercultures, many of which are still influential today.

One of the most compelling voices cited in Chapter 2 was that of Melissa Steyn (2003), who invented the term 'white talk' for documenting feelings of white displacement in post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, she describes articulations applied by post-apartheid Afrikaners as idealistic with both a conflicting and adaptable strategy to preserve privilege whilst almost memorializing the Afrikaner (Steyn 2003:iii).

My study of MK archival materials confirmed that such discourses and related identity debates were mediated by MK through carefully chosen content featured in programmes like JIP, Ondergrond, Kraakvars, and Wys my jou Huis. However, while the Afrikaans 'feel' of these programmes conveyed a strong sense of belonging, simultaneously alternative expressions of the Afrikaans language, Afrikaner culture, and a youthful sense of Afrikaans identity were established and mediated by MK.

In my literature review it was noted that language is one of the primordial pillars of culture and identity on which societal norms are founded (Delport & Olivier 2003, in Sutherland 2013:121). Indeed, both archival materials and interview content (Respondents 3, 6, 7) confirmed that MK's strong focus on Afrikaans as broadcast medium helped the youth to find and articulate their newly found identities through modes of communication that extended to fashion, social activities, and lifestyle choices.

However, simultaneously, as also became evident, among the Afrikaans-speaking youth there was resistance against former ideas of Afrikaans culture as embodied by the SABC, ATKV and FAK; in Respondent 4's words, "everything Broederbond". Perhaps for this reason the subversive nature of MK struck a powerful chord with some sectors of the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth. Dissent and insubordination were distinctive traits of MK, which added to its popularity, with bands like Fokofpolisiekar and Van Coke Cartel becoming synonymous with the channel. These bands represented a non-conformist Afrikaans counterculture both through their lyrics and fashion (Erasmus 2017:183) that 'permitted' MK fans to associate with alternative versions of Afrikaans culture. In the literature consulted, and in my interviews, the importance of Fokofpolisiekar was continuously emphasised. Later in MK's chronicle, the culture of attending live festivals, branded by the channel through merchandise and stages at live festivals, brought to the fore two prominent subcultures that formed

within the MK context, namely nostalgia (the 'De la Rey' phenomenon) and Zef culture (Die Antwoord phenomenon) of which both are still flourishing today.

Attending festivals was indeed part of identity formation within the social context constructed by MK's well-oiled marketing machine. In this regard it came to the fore that a symbiotic relationship developed between the bands and MK, which broadened the market, generating additional income through the sales of merchandise, and thus promoted the bands and the channel, mainly through visual association. However, language was also considerable factor concerning MK's branding and marketing strategies. As was noted above, the channel capitalised on a need through which strong association and identification were formed in which the role of language could hardly be overestimated. This formed part of a post-apartheid context where, in Giliomee's (2003:579) words, suddenly Afrikaans was no longer perceived as "the white oppressive and dominant language". Thus, the strategy had economic as well as ideological implications. Increasingly, less pure, vernacular forms of Afrikaans were featured on the channel, thus broadening formerly entrenched ideas of 'Afrikaansness'.

Still, MK and the bands took advantage of the monetary value of their symbiosis. Together with the input of recording labels, the need for 'Afrikaans-related identities' was addressed (Van der Merwe 2015:12). This resulted in a commodification of Afrikaans culture and the creation of an 'image culture' that, at the time, was unprecedented in local television. Visual culture became a MK-related brand synonymous with later famous photographers such as Sean Mettelerkamp and Roger Ballen, both of whom made award-winning music videos for Die Antwoord. MK's visual culture also promoted freer expressions of self among fans and advocated the channel's nonconformist worldviews through the music videos it broadcast, endorsed, and facilitated by competitions such as MVP and Rockspaaider.

Against the perspective of these findings, under the thematic headings brought to the fore inductively and deductively by my literature study and interviews, patterns of cultural meaning related to my topic will subsequently be presented and interpreted in terms of their "commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles" (cf. Mills et al. 2010:926).

5.1 Dissent

As was suggested throughout this thesis, dissent played a significant role among the youth that followed MK, and in the propagation of the channel's influence. Not only did the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth have to adapt to a new and politically unsteady socio-political milieu; they were tired of being held accountable for violations associated with the previous regime. As Respondent 3 noted, the parents of the MK generation were singled out as the bad people. Therefore, the post-Apartheid Afrikaans youth would not be able to shed this stigma as they "would always infer the sins of the fathers". The same respondent underlined that it was within the realm of Afrikaner guilt that MK "created room for the youth to rebel against preconceived assumptions of their culture". However, Respondent 10 'confessed' that he felt motivated to support Afrikaans ventures "because of guilt". This suggests that dissent in the context of MK could also be linked with nostalgia and amplified feelings of white victimisation and culpability. Simultaneously dissent could be connected to the coolness factor of a newly conceived Afrikaans language as introduced on MK. Respondent 8, for instance, admitted that, at the time, he did not want to be associated with Afrikaans, because being connected to the language was not his choice. However, through a subversive use of Afrikaans and a broadening of the conception of 'Afrikaansness' MK helped the language to shed (at least some) negative connotation.

Earlier it was remarked that bands featured on MK were openly insubordinate, and that this was one of the main reasons for the channel's legendary growth in popularity. Die Antwoord is a particular case in point. One of the identities challenged by the band was mainstream masculinity, a cornerstone of patriarchal Afrikanerdom (Pretorius 2013:214). While this type of dissent came to form part of MK's nonconformist mindset, the subversion of other stereotyped representations of maleness or manliness also surfaced in aired content. Generally, the more radical of these portrayals could be attributed to the influence of Zef subculture and its nihilistic dismantling of preconceived ideas concerning fashion, sexuality, and cultural norms (Du Preez 2012:104). Again, Die Antwoord's crude mode of dissent as promoted on MK resonated with many fans. Naggy du Toit's earlier cited statement, posted on Die Antwoord's website (dieantwoord.com), confirmed that the rappers showed young

people a way "out of this crazy system we were all born into". This statement also confirmed sentiments experienced by the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth, and the dilemma of finding new identities, while dealing with their troubled past.

5.2   MK as symbolic 'ideal'(2005–2013)

At several points in my argument, it was emphasised that MK prided itself on providing a platform that covered various facets of identity as can be seen in the diversity of its programmes. These included programme categories like talk shows (Gons, MK 8–5, Geraas); magazine shows (JIP); lifestyle-choice programming (JIP); fashion-influenced shows (JIP, Studio1); prank shows (Af, Hoenner) and a number of local 'firsts', such as the dating show in Afrikaans (Heikie); the live weekly production show ('Studio1') and music request shows (Skole Top 10, MK Live and Studio1) (Respondent 7).

It was noted that the age-specific content aired on MK was curated by a panel that consisted of members of the targeted age group on which the channel focused. A particularly interesting viewpoint brought to the fore in my literature review was that the post-apartheid youth "found it easier to associate with musicians than politicians" (Thormählen 2009:18). Catering for the target market (age 13-25) through tailor-made content helped to add to the coolness factor of MK. In this respect, MK copiously borrowed from approaches made popular by the internationally aired MTV. This was confirmed by Respondent 1, who emphasized the role that MTV played in structuring MK's appeal and initial configuration, construing it as "the MTV of South Africa". However, this respondent's reasoning for the channel's impact also considered the local post-apartheid context in that, from his perspective, MK "foregrounded the newly found freedom of Democracy following the strict censorship maintained during apartheid". Similarly, Respondent 7 confirmed that the platform that MK created "allowed the youth to rebel though coming from a good home". Correspondingly, Respondent 4 felt that the channel provided a "freer environment for the youth to stimulate … creativities". Thus, it could be concluded that, while MK inspired dissent against conservative conceptions of Afrikaner culture, simultaneously it provided an environment for post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth to cultivate their need for a

new, separate Afrikaans culture, language, and identity, constructed within the shelter of MK as symbolic ideal.

5.3 Alternative Afrikaans identity: Language and culture

As mentioned at several earlier points, MK's symbolic impact was significantly influenced by its coolness factor which accounted for "a direct link between the [channel's] image and its offerings" (Respondent 8). Notably, this was emphasised by the competition Rockspaaider, where MK made it look cool to be onstage, and in a band (Respondents 1, 2, 4, 6). The channel's coolness factor was also visually portrayed through lifestyle programmes such as JIP, specifically in terms of dress styles featured by influential bands. It was also enhanced by young presenters who were 'all funky', and with whom the youth strongly associated (Respondent 7). Furthermore, viewers connected with bands through ample airplay on the programme AMP, which made it "popular to be a rocker in Afrikaans" (Respondent 8).

The impact of MK's coolness factor simultaneously influenced the attraction of live performances at festivals, which drew huge numbers of fans. A new wave of post-apartheid festivals was found to appeal to both Afrikaans- and English-speaking individuals, such as KKNK, Oppikoppi and Innibos. This contributed to a form of brand recognition where MK was associated with a certain quality of performance, and, above all, coolness. Respondent 11 noted that "MK gave a form of legitimacy … to the brand so that the brand was bigger than the channel". This could be seen as a particularly influential element regarding the idea of alternative identity formation, as MK's fame and coolness factor association "worked to such an extent that a fan got to know the band and members through their videos on TV" (Respondent 11). From this may be gathered that, indeed, the channel's broadcast and marketing philosophy was extremely well planned and executed.

5.4 Lifestyle choices and identity formation

Input from my respondents made clear that, at the height of its 'career', MK became a household name, familiar to the point where fans were eager to attend live shows and festivals endorsed by MK, or watch lifestyle shows where bands or behind-the-scenes footage would be featured. Lifestyle choices, aided by the various programmes on MK

like AMP and JIP, helped the viewers to identify with newly constructed senses of self in terms of their choice of favourite programmes, festivals, artists, and presenters. Corroborated by archival evidence of the wide reach of the channel's offerings, it could be concluded that MK solidified its philosophy of being "inclusive and for everyone" (Respondent 7).

Lifestyle choices endorsed by the channel included MK-branded merchandise that was sold at most live shows and festivals, promoted also by the artists performing. These would include T-shirts, caps, lanyards, CDs and stickers, of which signed CDs were seen as a legitimate cause for 'brag rights' amongst peers. CD sales involved beneficial financial revenue for most artists during the early years of the channel (2003–2005); however, sales started to decline in the early 2000s. As was brought to the fore by Respondent 10, this was due to the rise of "ground-breaking technology that made it easy to either pirate a CD … [or] … selecting and copying single tracks" (also Respondent 3). Respondents 3 and 6 therefore believed that "the money for artists lay in 360 deals or live performances as opposed to CD sales". Because single tracks could be downloaded on a remote music device and easily shared between listeners, it changed the way music was consumed (Respondents 10, 2). Respondent 10 noted that, therefore, bands would give CDs away for free, as "they just wanted the music to be heard". In the case of MK, this gave the channel the opportunity to build a bigger fanbase at an exceptional rate, as their target market was high school learners and university students who did not have much money and would "rather copy and pirate than buy" (Respondent 10). Similarly, MK garnered huge support among university students as in residences there would be one TV but any number of students watching MK (Respondents 6, 10).

Though Respondent 4 believed that "MK was never about the money", financial revenue was generated through positive branding and association of the channel's stages at music festivals (Respondents 6, 7, 10, 11). At festivals, on a commercial level, the MK brand association helped to secure even more trading of lifestyle products, like alcoholic beverages and fashion. However, a perspective from my literature review affirmed that such transacting also had an ideological aspect. According to Trendafilov (2014), buying into MK's lifestyle choices gave its fans a sense of shared identity.

5.5 Brand association

The above-mentioned branding techniques, of which sponsoring stages at live events was a major part, amounted to a visual tactic that MK deployed to great success. Related to this aspect, it was found that, through endorsing brand extensions, young professionals were given more opportunity to cooperate on behind the scenes footage, as was featured in certain programmes. This meant that MK not only generated behind-the-scenes, informal footage that became a trademark of the channel, whereby it attained an almost cult-like following, but also created a newly envisioned platform for young professionals to gain vocational experience by being part of MK's technical teams. Consequently, it was seen that the channel afforded new filmmakers, most of whom had been schooled through reputable institutions like AFDA, as well as presenters, stylists, presenters, designers, and sound technicians the opportunity to work for MK. As Respondent 11 noted, the success of the channel could be ascribed to "not doing anything alone … but always walking with the industry and the people". Most of the aspiring youngsters contributing to technical services at MK were under 25 years of age, which helped the channel to be "fresh and young" (Respondent 6). Several respondents (Respondents 6, 10, 12) confirmed that it became 'a brag right' amongst AFDA film students to be the producer of an MK award-winning music video, which allowed for healthy competition. As archival materials verified, the career-changing opportunities that MK offered and its philosophy of inclusivity were extended to deserving social causes, namely Bands for Bricks, Blood Brothers, Vrede Foundation and Relate bracelets. Most of these are still operative today.

5.6 MK as a cultural phenomenon

The immense growth of MK, supported by the above-mentioned career opportunities and the policy of brand extensions, reached its height during the channel's last three years of existence (2010–2013). This was attributed to MK's targeting of high school students and a young working class aged 13–25; a group which, as was pointed out throughout my thesis, needed a voice and support to build an own identity in the new South Africa. As was confirmed in the previous sections of this chapter, the channel gave young viewers the chance to explore their culture, language, and heritage within an environment that, though culturally supportive of Afrikaans-speaking viewers, gave

its fans the freedom to explore the complex socio-political issues that lay beneath their identity struggles. Thus, ironically, while MK heavily invested in all (commercial) aspects that constitute essential elements of a music channel and of music video, the channel evolved and "became more than just a music channel" (Respondent 7). This could be ascribed to the fact that, at the time, television was an immensely powerful medium for reaching teenagers (Respondent 1) and thus, according to Respondents 1, 9 and 11, became 'the new babysitter'. This statement referred to parents' trust in the Afrikaans-oriented kykNet brand (Respondent 6).

However, it also came to the fore that, through its marketing and operational philosophy, MK seemed to have emancipated itself from kykNET to some degree. The generation of viewers that grew up watching MK whilst doing their homework aspired to be on TV or in a band. Therefore, as was evident from my interviews, it was an easy marketing tool for MK to employ talented young people, without experience, for a variety of jobs on the channel. This helped MK affirm their "right to existence", as Respondent 4 put it, with minimal connection to their mother channel, kykNET, and "provide public platforms for technicians and artists which would grow up to become the new generation of kykNet technicians and performers". Again, this statement confirmed the channel's enormous influence and its apparent independence, which, ironically, may have played a role in the MK's demise later on, as suggested by Respondent 4.

5.7 Nostalgia

My literature review, interviews and study of MK archival materials brought to the fore that nostalgia was prevalent in various media featured on MK like films, music videos, musicals and/or visual representation. What also crystallised was that, as part of building their new identity, two opposing poles were created among the younger Afrikaans-speaking generation, validated firstly by the song 'De la Rey', which took the Afrikaans music scene by storm during 2007 and, subsequently, Die Antwoord.

On the one hand, 'De la Rey', as prime example of nostalgia, was considered an anthem of a previous, bygone era that longed for a simpler lifestyle and the revival of deep-rooted Afrikaner morals and Nationalist symbolism, such as respect for leaders, in this case, the Anglo-Boer General De La Rey, who is bidden in the song to come

back (from the dead) and lead the Boers (Respondent 3). On the other side of the ideological spectrum, cynical of the 'De la Rey' obsession, was a generation of Afrikaans-speaking youth trying to build a new identity relating to the culture of *ubuntu*, rather than that of Afrikaner supremacy (Respondent 8).

Bezuidenhout's (2007:9) notion of three diverging strands in post-apartheid Afrikaans popular music was noted in Chapter 2. These are

> nostalgia (a longing for an innocent past), romanticism (escapism constructed around a denial of the negative aspects of life in South Africa) and cynicism (a critique of the direction of post-apartheid society but without plausible programmes of action).

As was brought to the fore by my investigation of MK archival materials, elements of nostalgia and romanticism were prevalent not only in the obvious example of 'De la Rey', but also in songs such as 'Antibiotika', 'Brand Suid-Afrika' and '(skyn)Heilig' (Fokofpolisiekar). On the grounds of its enormous impact and influence on Afrikaans youth, 'De la Rey', however, could be construed by way of Bezuidenhout's concepts of nostalgia and romanticism (and, to some degree, cynicism). As will be evident later in my discussion, nostalgia and cynicism represent particularly important identity configurations associated with the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking generation as represented on MK.

My study of MK archival materials also brought to the fore that all the above-mentioned strands were present in music videos receiving MK Awards during MK 2007–2014 as set out in the table below.[126] These show portrayals of nostalgia, romanticism, cynicism – or, alternatively, nostalgia and romanticism – masked as fantasy or escapism. A further category, propagating MK's celebrated cool factor, could also be identified.

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[126] My bibliography lists the extensive list of music videos, MK awards ceremonies and shows watched with a view to writing this thesis.

Table 3: Categories of nostalgia, romanticism, cynicism, fantasy/escapism, and 'cool' in MK Awards videos (2007-2014)

	Nostalgia (the longing for an 'innocent' past)	Romanticism (escapism constructed around a denial of the negative aspects of South African life)	Cynicism (a critique of post-apartheid society, without plausible programmes of action)	Fantasy/ Escapism	Cool factor (attractive girls, props, movie-like, 'short story', bands backstage and on stage)
2007	Bok v Blerk – De la Rey	Chris Chameleon – Die onverkrygbaar	Fokof – Brand Suid-Afrika	The Parlotones - Dragonflies and astronauts	Prime Circle - Live this life
	Albert de Wet – Wat het gebeur by Aliwal-Noord			Snotkop – Vrydagaand	
2008	Die Kaalkop Waarheid – Kleur van blomme			Hikatori – Melkman	Lukraaketaar - Taranangi junkie
	Fokofpolisiekar – Ek skyn heilig			Robbie Wessels – Leeuloop	Eden – Vas aan jou
	Lukraaketaar – Taranangi junkie			Straatligkinders – Avontuur van 'n hartbreek	Andre van der Walt – Beeldskoon is nie genoeg nie
					FND – Soldaatvolk
2009	Fflipacoin – Jasmyn	Lianie May – Jy soen my nie meer nie	Max noraml.tv – Total f-up	The Parlotones - beautiful	Winterstasie – Wie is jy
		The Parlotones – I'll be there			Ashtray Electric – The swing
					FND – Hou jou hande bymekaar
2010				The Parlotones – Overexposed	
				Mr X ft Die Heuwels Fantasties – Hyg Duiwel	Kurt Darren: Kaptein
2011	Die Tuindwergies – Kopskudkinders			Dans Dans Lisa – Sing In Skaamte (PUK FM)	Monique & Snotkop – Ek sal vir jou
	Eminem ft Rihanna – Love The Way You Lie				Bobby van Jaarsveld – Spieëltjie

	Bobby van Jaarsveld – Net vir Jou				
	Prime Circle – Breathing				
	Snotkop – Parapapa				
2012			Van Coke Kartel – Vir Almal	Jack Parow – Bellville	
				Jax Panik - Dinosaur (MFM)	
				Jax Panik – Get Up	
				Van Coke Kartel – Ondier Kom	
				Mr Cat & The Jackal – Badman He	
2013	Shortstraw – One Long Day	Gangs of Ballet – Hello Sweet World	Van Coke Kartel – Dis 'n Land	Haezer ft. Lark – Brave	
	Jeremy Loops – mission to the sun Howling			Johnny Neon – Hearts	
	Van Coke Kartel – Tot die son uitkom				
2014	Shortstraw – Waterworks				

5.8 Visual representation

Visual representation came to the fore as another important aspect that drove the success of MK. As observed in earlier chapters, within the context of MK, visuality exercised influence on both the ideological and pragmatic level. My interviews underlined the fact that the channel relied on a carefully constructed marketing environment through which it amassed a huge following. Yet, undoubtedly, MK simultaneously contributed to the development of the (popular) arts in South Africa

through providing a platform for a newly qualified, inexperienced workforce trained and utilized as the next generation of viewers, TV personalities (musicians, actors, and presenters) and support personnel involved in the technical aspects of camera, sound, and lighting. However, as Respondent 3 suggested, perhaps this implied some form of exploitation, as much of MK's visibility and growth within the first two years of its existence depended on "youngsters learning to hone their skills at a below-standard pay rate". Yet technological innovation introduced by MK, including the use of the phantom camera, the special effects associated with it, and camera knowledge concerning the various aspects of live television transmission significantly contributed to new standards of television production in South Africa at the time.

5.9 MK revamped (post 2013)

Related to the previous theme of visual representation is MK's legacy which, as was seen in Chapter 4, constituted the platforms of marketing, technical development, styling, designing (of sets and/or graphics), cooperation between record labels and artists, and interaction between musicians and their fanbase, as well as the channel and its viewers. All of these were found to have left a significant mark in the industry.

Concerning the channel's downfall, the respondents were conspicuously silent. However, Respondent 4 felt strongly that the channel "did not die from natural causes … it was murdered [and] its throat was cut". This respondent strictly attributed the channel's 'death' to decision made by 'the bureaucrats' and the budget cuts which they introduced.

Concerning a possible future for MK, Respondent 6 contested such probability due to a lack of funding "to make it work as an online channel even with [the current] technology". The respondent based this opinion on the fact that MK "is not in a linear TV channel "algorithmic, self-curated channel". As pointed out in my introduction, most internet traces of MK were "indefinitely removed" (also Respondent 6); Respondent 7 attributed this to the fact that MK's strong brand identity could not "move forward", and therefore should not continue. Though some respondents believed the channel could resume "on a digital/online platform with the right social media publicity" (Respondents 3, 9), Respondent 2 questioned the viability of such an undertaking as the videos that were repeatedly broadcast on kykNET would have "no outlet in the current times".

Other problems underlined included those of capital revenue (Respondents 3, 4, 9, 12) which, even if linked with subscriptions or advertisements might not presently be sustainable (Respondents 7, 8). Network and connectivity issues in South Africa were mentioned by Respondent 4, while Respondent 10 felt that modes of consumption had changed too much to still accommodate a channel such as MK. Respondent 3 downright condemned MultiChoice as being 'prehistoric'. For this reason, Respondent 9 believed that even nostalgia as a basic marketing strategy "could not revive MK", and that "it would be better represented on radio".

Inclusivity was another aspect brought to the fore, as Respondents 3, 4 and 10 believed Afrikaans' future to be amongst coloured people of the Cape Region. Similarly, Respondent 8 felt that the platform should embrace a broader South African "or even African alternative platform". Respondent 8 believed that MK could only be revived if the channel were to extend "an open platform to the LGBTQ community which will open doors that the normal media will try to suppress", adding that such a strategy would attract young investors from various cross-platforms, including "fashion, music and extreme sports".

Concerning music genres, inclusivity also seemed to be at the forefront of some respondent's minds. For Respondent 4, the future of kykNET could be vested in the kind of hip-hop music formerly broadcasted on MK, focusing on a coloured market segment; Respondent 6 identified R&B as "the main genre of the moment". Thus, as pointed out in Chapter 4, no consensus could be reached on this matter.

5.10 Conceptual reading of my findings

In the introduction to my thesis and in Chapter 3, among the constructs underpinning this study, I mentioned the idea of multifarious senses of self as applicable to the context of MK; an Afrikaner diaspora, and a hardening of Afrikaner dispositions, contradicting former utopian notions of the so-called 'rainbow nation'. In this final section of my study, I return to these concepts to interpret main findings from my research from the perspective of theorisation on post-apartheid identity questions related to MK, particularly as associated with the dispersion of Afrikaans alternative music.

Throughout this thesis, the impact of deep-rooted socio-political and cultural disputes on the Afrikaans-speaking post-apartheid youth has been stressed. Apart from literature on the topic,[127] respondents taking part in my study, all of whom were stakeholders of MK, confirmed that marginal and liminal experiences of being white and Afrikaans in post-apartheid South Africa brought to the fore self-protective positions of whiteness and, contrastingly, those that opposed and protested regressive ideas of white power (Respondents 3, 4, 6, 7, 10). It was found that, ever since the late apartheid era, Afrikaans alternative music had voiced dissenting positions that confronted questions of race, ethnicity, and power. Within the context of MK, the unsettled Afrikaans-speaking youth and rebellious alternative Afrikaans bands came together in what was elsewhere in this thesis described as a cultural haven. As a well-oiled marketing machine MK answered the need for providing a unique, alternative music platform that represented and affirmed alternative Afrikaans identity, a 'democratic' appropriation of the Afrikaans language that reclaimed Afrikaans as a language of emancipation, and modes of expression that accommodated and endorsed the cultural representation of divergent, emerging sub-cultures.

It was seen that, through all these strategies, MK amassed an extensive fan base. It was also found that the channel promoted more independent thinking concerning the creation of Afrikaans rock and alternative music. By identifying with its target market through various media platforms as described in earlier chapters, MK became a cultural phenomenon within its first four years of existence (2005–2009) while, in later years, it exerted influence as a lifestyle channel. On a commercial level, lifestyle commodities featured as part of MK culture extended to fashion (related, for instance, to Die Antwoord and Jack Parow's Zef culture), and alcoholic beverages (such as Fokof Lager, Parow Brandy, and Mystic Boer Brandy). The channel's contribution to vocational development regarding its technical teams that provided platforms for a talented, yet inexperienced workforce, could hardly be overstated (though in the view of Respondent 3, this strategy suggested some degree of exploitation). Similarly, MK's influence concerning the dispersion of Afrikaans music could not be overestimated as

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[127] cf. amongst others Marx and Milton (2011:734); Senekal and Van den Berg (2010:110); Klopper (2017:iff.); Oppenheim (2015:1ff.); Nel (2010:126) and Erasmus (2017:183).

the post-apartheid youth associated more easily with musicians than with politicians (Thormählen 2009:18).

However, my findings brought to the fore that MK's legacy is not without controversy. In this regard, a main issue concerned the channel's strong association with Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture. As noted earlier, on the one hand, MK affirmed alternative Afrikaans identity via an emancipation of the language that, apart from dissent, acknowledged less pure, vernacular forms of expression, illustrative of a broader geographical and demographic representation. On the other hand, the channel shamelessly promoted the Afrikaans nostalgia brand which, particularly in the case of 'De la Rey', does not necessarily point to the 'softer' side of white, post-apartheid resistance. Venerated among right-wing Afrikaners as a kind of political anthem, as Nell (2014:8) contends, the song's lyrics could be understood as "a war cry against oppression and the loss of power the Afrikaner experiences in the new South African political scene". In terms of Vanderhaegen's (2014:242ff) thought, first introduced in Chapter 1, such responses, enabled and mediated to a significant degree by MK, point to a hardening of Afrikaner dispositions and a perpetuation of "victimised versions of Calvinistic and Nationalist ideology".

Charles Leonard's (2013) criteria for signifying a "socially validated South African", also cited in my introduction, similarly underlined the extremely sensitive position of Afrikaans in post-apartheid South Africa – notably his (radical) view that a true South African should use English as chosen language medium. Indeed, for at least one of my respondents, following Democracy, Afrikaans was strongly associated with feelings of guilt and shame, so that, to speak the language, was "not his choice" (Respondent 8).

Perhaps MK's ambiguity regarding Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture was best illustrated through the promotion of the bands it most ardently supported. It was confirmed in my literature study that language is one of the primordial pillars of culture and identity on which societal norms are founded (Delport & Olivier 2003 in Sutherland 2013:121; Van der Waal 2008:52). This view was underlined by Respondents 3, 6 and 7. As was stated early on in this thesis, many Afrikaans bands developed in symbiosis with MK as the channel sponsored stages for bands, provided airplay on TV and live events, and promoted branding for both band and channel. However, in the literature

consulted (notably Klopper 2009) and in my interviews the enormous influence of Fokofpolisiekar was continuously stressed (Respondents 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12). While the band blatantly flaunted insubordination and the subversion of 'traditionalist' Afrikaner culture, their mode of communication, used loudly and rowdily at times, was Afrikaans. Thus, through the medium of alternative music as promoted by MK, the Afrikaans language was no longer seen as the oppressor's language, but as "a language of rebellion" (cf. Nel 2010:116). However, this also meant that Fokofpolisiekar strongly associated with MK's general advancement of Afrikaner culture.

All these aspects formed part of the brand, and the anomaly that was MK brought to the fore different facets of local identity politics through their choice of programmes. Thus, it was found that MK created a kind of communal culture where fans would share live experiences and meet up with their idols (Respondent 10). Through these strategies, MK "created the platform for certain bands to become commercial commodities" (Respondent 2); however, always with an underlying philosophy of a focus on Afrikaans dissent.

It is therefore an irony that, as part of this objective, MK actively promoted Bok van Blerk's 'De la Rey' – a powerful example of an idealised Afrikaner past which, as was noted, attracted a huge following among right-wing Afrikaners. As Respondents 3 and 10 observed, the song, which received significant exposure on MK, struck a chord with the youth of the day in affirming their identity through the theme of nostalgia, harking back to a forgotten, strongly idealised time. Yet in Dames' (2010:269) more critical interpretation, 'De la Rey' was an example of a "vexatious political memory" that, by way of a collective nostalgic invocation, could offer solace of a kind that did not serve the ideal of a politically unified new South African nation.

While the message of 'De la Rey' proclaimed sentiments opposing those of Fokofpolisiekar's music, and thus would sort under Melissa Steyn's (2003:iiiff) category of "white talk", as argued above, though remonstrating both conservative Afrikaans culture and the new political status quo, still Fokofpolisiekar strongly associated with the Afrikaans language as expressed within MK's emancipated milieu. Thus, though representing an ideologically charged, non-conformist articulation of dissent, their music represented a form of self-preservation while contributing to the

strong sense of 'Afrikaans belonging' constructed by MK. Indeed, as was noted under section 5.7, nostalgia and notions of an idealised reality were prevalent not only in the obvious example of 'De la Rey', but also in Fokofpolisiekar songs such as 'Antibiotika', 'Brand Suid-Afrika' and '(skyn)Heilig'. However, as the lyrics of '(skyn)Heilig' demonstrate, even romanticized depictions of the past were ambiguous in their insinuation of guilt and shame: 'Genade onbeskryflik groot/Ek is die Hel in/Bibber en beef die boere bedriëer/Die wêreld gaan jou haat, my seun/As jy die waarheid praat gaan hulle jou wil doodmaak'.[128]

This brings us to the thought of Vanderhaeghen (2014) for whom the construct of 'the other' may be connected not only to politically opposing ethnic groups, but also to white Afrikaans senses of self. As was stated in Chapters 1 and 3, Vanderhaegen's concept of 'self-othering' either points to the marginalisation of Afrikaner identity, or its re-articulation of the Afrikaner past as 'innocent'. In both cases, "self-othering takes place within discourses of guilt, loss, fear, belonging, transformation, and reconciliation" (Vanderhaegen 2014:1; 30-32). As suggested elsewhere in this thesis, MK's facilitation of such identity debates, mediated through the music promoted by MK, and a foregrounding of Afrikaans culture in lifestyle programmes such as JIP, Ondergrond, Kraakvars and Wys my jou Huis, spoke of an ambiguous stance concerning more 'orthodox' versions of Afrikaner culture. Indeed, as suggested by Respondent 6, MK may even have exploited its association with the 'dependable' kykNet brand to gain the trust of more conservative Afrikaans-speaking viewers, especially during the early years of the channel's existence.

In terms of my conceptual framework, indeed, MK's catering for a sense of Afrikaans belonging may be understood from the perspective of Visser's (2009:335ff) notion of a 'new' Afrikaner diaspora, linked with post-apartheid efforts at redefining Afrikaner identity. On a metaphysical level, Visser (2009:339) observes a tendency among conservatively minded Afrikaners to resort to denial and a withdrawal from the realities of South Africa where the outside world is simply shut out.

By constructing an Afrikaans cultural 'enclave' by way of their choice of programming, MK gratified this kind of disembodied 'diaspora' among its young corpus of viewers. In

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[128] 'Amazing Grace/I am the Hell in/Shudder and tremble the Boer defrauder/The world will hate you, my son/I you speak the truth, they will want to kill you'.

supporting the broader theme of nostalgia, fuelled by notions of victimisation, the channel seemed to have lent itself to the nurturing of Afrikaner pride, a strategy that may be understood in terms of Melissa Steyn's (2012:21) concept the 'ignorance contract'. Respondents 4, 6, 7 and 8 all seemed to suggest that MK provided the perfect milieu for this kind of ethnic bonding.

Yet Vestergaard's (2000:123) interpretation of what Steyn (2012:21) terms the ignorance contract was seen to include more heterogeneous perspectives on post-apartheid Afrikaner identity. Apart from recognising obsolete notions of Afrikaner identity and, on the other side of the critical range, oppositional deconstructions of past Afrikaans societal norms, he also acknowledges newly formed alliances with Afrikaans-speaking people of colour (cf. also Nel 2010:29). Several of my respondents (Respondents 4, 6, 7) stressed MK's expansion of its offerings to be more inclusive of a broader Afrikaans-speaking viewer base, and the fact that the channel made the Afrikaans language and aspects of Afrikaner culture more likeable amongst different local cultures. Again, this commendable strategy seems to have clashed with the channel's foregrounding of more traditionalist versions of Afrikaner culture. Respondent 6 proffered a straight answer in this regard, "MK had oppositional sides to it."

Furthermore, it should also be noted that, while nostalgia often has a negative connotation, in the context of this study it was suggested that nostalgia could imply pride rather than shame (Respondents 4, 6, 7 and 8). In this regard Boym (2007:10) speaks of nostalgia as "an affective yearning for a community within a collective memory, a longing for continuity in a fragmented world". Such a view on nostalgia, described by Boym (2007:13) as 'restorative nostalgia' stresses the concept of home (in the symbolic sense) as it "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home". These viewpoints seem to be applicable to sentiments expressed by respondents involved in my research. Indeed, Legg (2004:100) notes that restorative nostalgia "aims to reconstruct the lost home, often in association with religious or nationalist revivals".

In Chapter 3, the question was posed whether MK was driven strategically by ideological concerns, or those related to the generation of income. In this case, also, in my data chapter contradictions came to the fore. While, throughout this thesis, the

success and financial viability of MK were underlined (also by most of my respondents), Respondent 6 intimated that the decision to establish the channel was never about 'saving' Afrikaans, but rather a business decision to promote the kykNET 'family'. In this sense, MK's focus on an alternative Afrikaans niche market constituting no more than 2–3% of the market (Respondent 3) seemed to have 'backfired' as an economic strategy and, eventually, led to the channel's demise.

Seeming contradictions within MK's broadcast and marketing philosophy could, however, be understood in terms of Kim's (2013:45) statement that the roots of socially constructed identities are "closely tied to the past, present or projected future". Indeed, as was evident from my literature review, interviews, and archival work, two of the strongest identities associated with MK, both in the sense of ideological orientation and marketing potential, were the often-discussed cultural phenomena of 'De la Rey' and Die Antwoord. As was evident from my earlier discussion, both 'movements' had amassed cult-like followings through the channel's mediation. Representing the earlier-mentioned subculture formations of nostalgia and cynicism, respectively, these formations could be understood as deriving from the Afrikaner's troubled past, its complex present, and its questionable future. Haupt (2012:113) interprets the identities projected by these phenomena as follows:

> If Bok van Blerk is the troubadour and selective historian of a glorious Afrikaner past, then Die Antwoord is Van Blerk's poorer, less educated, crass, and decidedly more embarrassing relation who parodically draws attention to the fact that not all white Afrikaners fit squarely into dominant representations of Afrikanerdom.

As my study brought to the fore, nowhere within the ideologized milieu of MK did the idea of multifarious senses of the self, come to the fore more strongly than in the opposing identity formations of nostalgia and cynicism. 'De la Rey', extensively aired on MK, was considered by some respondents (Respondents 3, 7) as an anthem for reviving deep-rooted Afrikaner morals and nationalist symbolism. In this sense, the public impact of the song was such that the government felt threatened by its strong expression of a recovery of 'lost' identity, exhibited in the rise of the De la Rey subculture, where fans would sing the song as an anthem, and subsequently, before a show, sing 'Die Stem', the national anthem of the apartheid era (Coetzee 2007).

Contrasting with the exclusivist ethnocentric tendencies of De la Rey subculture, Du Preez (2012:10ff) believes that Zef culture could be seen as supportive of heterodox Afrikaner culture. Again, its influence as propagated by MK was considerable. Marx and Milton (2011:739) explain Zef culture as a critical commentary on Afrikaner culture that has had noticeable impact on the formation of an alternative, post-apartheid white Afrikaner identity. Similarly, Scott (2012:754) perceives Die Antwoord as "a counter-narrative of the nation". The group amalgamates two smaller Afrikaans-speaking communities, namely "white trash" and "Cape coloured gangsters" (Scott 2012:747), Simultaneously, in limiting the Afrikaans language to pre-conceived ideas and ostensive biases of race and culture, Scott (2012:754) finds that they "focus the audience's gaze on all that is uncomfortable, distasteful, and undesirable about 'white' as a racial category, as opposed to a purely racist category". In closing, MK contributed in a rather perplexing way to new South African discourses grappling with the formation of new identities, and a definition and redefinition of terms such as 'other', 'us', 'self' and 'them' (cf. Steyn 2003:158) It may be conjectured through both the counter-cultures of nostalgia and cynicism, the former glorifying the Afrikaner past, and the latter perverting exactly those notions of race and language upheld by the apartheid regime. However, as could be gleaned from Vanderhaeghan's (2014:30-32) work, critical attention should be given to any notion of protected senses of self, where the subject is "(self)absolved of guilt, leaving the historical (racial) victim 'ungrieved' as the boundary of difference hardens into a frontier of antagonism".

Thus, while in this thesis MK's meaningful contribution to the construction of alternative identities for the post-apartheid, 'born-free' Afrikaans-speaking youth was determined beyond all doubt, simultaneously the channel's complexity and ambiguity as discursive negotiation of post-apartheid identities and ideologies were uncovered. However, it is hoped that, through this work, the hiatus concerning research on MK was addressed as comprehensively as possible, and that by documenting the channel's saga, as based on stakeholder input and a study of archival materials as contextualised within white identity discourse and critical whiteness studies, the richness and complexity of the topic were brought to the fore.

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[129] Problems encountered at the DSTV archives included incorrect archiving and incorrect or incomplete information. As a result, in some cases, concerning my Videography in particular, it was impossible to provide complete information as needed for the reference list.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule (MK Stakeholders)

1. What was the philosophy behind MK?
2. MK was unique because it was a 24/7 music channel, with no advertisements, broadcast in Afrikaans, and provided a platform for the Afrikaans speaking youth to build a new post-apartheid identity. The music and content were age-specific. What would you say were the pros and cons of having such a platform that ultimately became a cultural phenomenon, influencing the writing of lyrics/songs in Afrikaans, the quality of music videos produced for the competitions, and the extension of sub-cultures?
3. Did MK, in your opinion, target a specific age, race, or language group?
4. Would you say that a specific part of the country was targeted more?
5. How was MK's audience targeted with regards to marketing and branding?
6. Would you say that MK's presence at art festivals such as KKNK and Aardklop garnered more support for certain bands?
7. Who, in your opinion, benefitted more from the dedicated MK stages - the bands (for marketing and gathering a more extensive fanbase) or MK (using the bands as promotional material)?
8. Would you describe MK's relationship with the band and the audience as 'symbiotic' or 'parasitic'?
9. Can you name a few bands as an example for your previous answer?
10. What did MK add to the concept of music TV that no other channel did?
11. MK offered unique and audience-specific content. Can you elaborate on the different shows, for example, Rockspaaider, Studio1, and Hoordosis, to name a few, and explain the philosophy behind each?
12. How would you say did MK add to the identity formation of the 'born-free' Afrikaners?
13. How would you describe the identity, cultural likes or dislikes, and social identity of this Afrikaner 'sub-species'?
14. A number of the artists and bands that became famous during MK's existence, such as Fokofpolisiekar, Die Antwoord, and Jack Parow, started their own branded products like clothing and liquor. Would you view such commercialized products as their 'legacy', established as a form of short-term self-preservation after the closing of MK, or instead as an extension of the artist's longer-term financial viability as part of their artistic image?
15. Why was MK closed or moved to an internet platform?
16. Do you think that MK's existence is still palpable?

17. Would there still be a market for a channel like MK that promotes and identifies with the post-apartheid Afrikaans-speaking youth?