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Culture and Social Movements in the Post-Apartheid South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the intricate relationship between culture and social movements in post-apartheid South Africa through a critical phenomenological approach. This method focuses on the lived experiences and societal impacts of these movements, revealing how cultural symbols, narratives, religious frameworks, sports, media, and identity have shaped and sustained the struggles for justice and equality. The analysis begins by defining social movements and culture, emphasizing their interplay within the South African context. Using a phenomenological approach developed by Husserl and expanded by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre, this study undertakes steps such as phenomenological reduction, description, essence identification, and structural analysis. These steps are further enriched by combining critical theory with phenomenology, highlighting social, historical, and political dimensions. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of how culture, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and moral components, influences the formation, strategies, and sustainability of social movements. Key findings argue that cultural elements have served as sources of resistance, empowerment, and solidarity, playing an essential role in shaping collective identities and actions. This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the dynamic interplay between culture and social movements in South Africa, underscoring the importance of cultural resources in driving social change.

Keywords: Culture, Social Movements, South Africa, Post-Apartheid.

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Apartheid Sonrası Güney Afrika'da Kültür ve Toplumsal Hareketler

ÖZ

Bu makale, apartheid sonrası Güney Afrika'da kültür ve toplumsal hareketler arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi eleştirel fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Bu yöntem, toplumsal hareketlerin yaşanmış deneyimlerine ve toplumsal etkilerine odaklanarak, kültürel semboller, anlatılar, dini çerçeveler, spor, medya ve kimliğin adalet ve eşitlik mücadelelerini nasıl şekillendirdiğini ve sürdürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Analiz, toplumsal hareketler ve kültürün tanımlarıyla başlayarak, bu kavramların Güney Afrika bağlamındaki etkileşimine vurgu yapmaktadır. Husserl tarafından geliştirilen ve Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty ve Sartre tarafından genişletilen fenomenolojik yaklaşımı kullanan bu çalışma, fenomenolojik indirgeme, betimleme, öz tanımlaması ve yapısal analiz gibi adımları takip etmektedir. Bu adımlar, eleştirel teori ile fenomenolojinin birleştirilmesiyle zenginleştirilerek, toplumsal hareketlerin sosyal, tarihsel ve politik boyutlarına ışık tutmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, kültürün bilişsel, duygusal ve ahlaki bileşenleriyle toplumsal hareketlerin oluşumunu, stratejilerini ve sürdürülebilirliğini nasıl etkilediğine dair derinlemesine bir anlayış sunmaktadır. Temel bulgular, kültürel unsurların direniş, güçlendirme ve dayanışma kaynakları olarak hizmet ettiğini ve kolektif kimliklerin ve eylemlerin şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma, Güney Afrika'da kültür ve toplumsal hareketler arasındaki dinamik etkileşimin kapsamlı bir analizini sunarak, kültürel kaynakların toplumsal değişimi yönlendirmedeki önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültür, Toplumsal Hareketler, Güney Afrika, Apartheid-Sonrası.

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INTRODUCTION

This study delves into the intricate relationship between culture and social movements in post-apartheid South Africa, examining how cultural elements have shaped and sustained these movements over time. The central thesis suggests that while the social movements of the apartheid era were highly centralized and organized, focusing primarily on anti-racism and equality, post-apartheid movements have shifted towards a more fragmented, identity-based structure. These new forms of social movements engage deeply with cultural practices, symbols, and narratives, reflecting the broader struggles for justice, recognition, and equality within a socio-political landscape that remains heavily influenced by the lingering legacies of apartheid.

In post-apartheid South Africa, social movements have evolved in response to the changing political, social, and economic conditions of the country. The formal abolition of apartheid did not immediately resolve the underlying issues of inequality, exclusion, and marginalization that characterized the regime. Instead, these issues have persisted, manifesting in new forms that continue to challenge the democratic state. Cultural elements such as media, music, religion, and sports have become key platforms for these movements, offering spaces for identity formation, resistance, and the redefinition of what it means to belong in a post-apartheid society. These platforms provide marginalized groups with the means to express their grievances and assert their identities in ways that go beyond traditional political activism, fostering a more nuanced and dynamic form of social resistance.

This study employs a critical phenomenological approach to explore these dynamics, focusing on the lived experiences of individuals involved in these movements. Critical phenomenology allows for an examination of not only the individual and collective experiences of those participating in social movements but also how these experiences are shaped by broader social, historical, and political contexts. By utilizing this approach, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how cultural practices intersect with social movements, how they contribute to the formation of collective identities, and how they serve as a means of contesting and reshaping the existing social order.

The analysis begins by defining key concepts such as social movements and culture, emphasizing their interplay within the South African context. Social movements are understood

not merely as political entities but as cultural phenomena, deeply embedded in the symbolic and material practices of everyday life. Culture, in this sense, encompasses not only artistic and intellectual works but also the values, traditions, beliefs, and symbolic practices that guide people's lives. In the South African context, culture has been a powerful force in shaping both the resistance to apartheid and the ongoing struggles for social justice in the post-apartheid period.

Using the phenomenological method developed by Edmund Husserl and expanded by thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre, the study applies a series of steps—phenomenological reduction, description, essence identification, and structural analysis—to explore the relationship between culture and social movements. These steps are enriched by combining critical theory with phenomenology, allowing for a nuanced analysis of the social, historical, and political dimensions of cultural practices and their role in shaping social movements. This approach reveals how cultural elements, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and moral components, influence the formation, strategies, and sustainability of social movements, particularly in a society still grappling with the legacies of its past.

A key focus of the study is on how cultural practices—such as the media's portrayal of social movements, the role of music in fostering collective identity, the influence of religion in providing a moral framework for resistance, and the significance of sports as a site of both inclusion and exclusion—have shaped the trajectory of social movements in South Africa. By examining these cultural elements, the study uncovers the ways in which they have served as sources of resistance, empowerment, and solidarity, playing an essential role in shaping collective identities and actions.

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the dynamic interplay between culture and social movements in post-apartheid South Africa. It underscores the importance of cultural resources in driving social change, demonstrating that social movements are not only political but also deeply cultural phenomena that reflect and shape the values, identities, and aspirations of society. Through the lens of critical phenomenology, this study offers new insights into how culture continues to serve as a powerful force in the ongoing struggle for justice, equality, and recognition in South Africa.

Methodology

Phenomenology, as introduced by Edmund Husserl in 1900–1901, marked a revolutionary shift in philosophical inquiry. Moving away from abstract metaphysical concerns, Husserl sought to bring philosophy back to the immediacy of lived experience, aiming to address real, concrete phenomena. Initially, his vision shared similarities with William James' radical empiricism, but it was primarily influenced by Franz Brentano's descriptive psychology, which explored the nature of consciousness. Over time, Husserl recognized parallels between his phenomenological project and Descartes' quest for foundational knowledge, which led him to frame phenomenology as a form of transcendental idealism. This framework gradually incorporated deeper investigations into consciousness, including our perception of time and history. Husserl's concept of the lifeworld, coupled with inquiries into cultural evolution, echoed Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Husserl's relentless exploration of new philosophical directions inspired his students to expand phenomenology into a wide range of inquiries, making it a discipline without limits. The phenomenological commitment to describing things as they appear, focusing on the essence of experience, allowed for engagement with any subject matter, as long as it remained faithful to the phenomena themselves. Consequently, phenomenology became a diverse and expansive field of study, fulfilling Husserl's vision of philosophy as an "infinite task"—a continuous effort to explore the full breadth of human experience (Moran 2002: xiii).

Husserl was the founder of phenomenology, but other influential proponents included Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Emmanuel Levinas. The influence of phenomenology stems from the fact that all subsequent theoretical developments in German and French philosophy can be seen either as extensions of or reactions to it. Understanding phenomenology is therefore essential not only for its own sake but also as a prerequisite for comprehending 20th-century philosophical thought. Phenomenology has made significant contributions to numerous areas of philosophy, offering groundbreaking analyses on subjects such as intentionality, perception, embodiment, emotions, self-consciousness, intersubjectivity, temporality, historicity, and truth. It has also provided a detailed critique of reductionism, objectivism, and scientism, advocating for a rehabilitation of the lifeworld. By presenting an in-depth account of human existence—where the subject is understood as an embodied, socially, and culturally embedded being-in-the-world—phenomenology has had a profound impact on a wide range of empirical disciplines, including psychiatry, sociology, psychology, literary studies, anthropology, and architecture (Zahavi 2018: 1).

Phenomenology is both a philosophical framework and a research methodology rooted in the study of human experience. It emphasizes a phenomenological concept of experience, which is grounded in the philosophical principles of the approach. As such, phenomenology is not just an alternative method for research, but also a way of conceptualizing and examining experience with a consistent theoretical foundation. What distinguishes a qualitative scientific investigation as phenomenological is the use of three key features: (1) description, (2) a focus on the phenomenological reduction, and (3) a search for the most invariant meanings within a given context. A unique requirement of phenomenological research is that the researcher must remain neutral, avoiding any judgments on the truth or falsity of the participant's claims or perceptions within their lifeworld (Cilesiz 2011: 493).

Classical phenomenology remains insufficiently critical in providing a rigorous account of how contingent historical and social structures shape our experience, not merely in an empirical or piecemeal fashion, but in what might be termed a quasi-transcendental way. These structures are not a priori in the sense of being absolutely prior to experience and functioning uniformly across all contexts; however, they do play a constitutive role in shaping the meaning and manner of experience. Structures such as patriarchy, white supremacy, and heteronormativity permeate, organize, and reproduce the natural attitude in ways that transcend any particular object of thought. They are not objects to be seen but rather ways of seeing, and even ways of constructing the world that often go unnoticed without sustained critical reflection. These structures are neither necessary nor permanent, and they do not operate in stable or consistent ways across all contexts; even within a given historical context, subjects differently positioned in relation to these overlapping structures are likely to experience them divergently. Nonetheless, these structures generate the norms of the lifeworld and the natural attitude of those inhabiting it. Ignoring them is perilous, even if the goal is transcendental, because they are part of what must be bracketed to adopt the phenomenological attitude (Guenther 2020: 12).

Most critical phenomenologists argue that critical phenomenology cannot be defined solely by the topics it addresses; in other words, the question of what constitutes critical phenomenology cannot be answered by simply listing themes such as gender, race, disability, and sexuality. This perspective emphasizes that critical phenomenology should not be equated with applied phenomenology, where the phenomenological method is considered complete and merely applied to new subjects or objects. Rather, as a form of phenomenology, critical phenomenology must be defined in terms of its distinct method, although this method must

differ in some way from the "classical phenomenology" established by Husserl. Since Husserl did not conceive phenomenology as a form of social critique but rather as a method for philosophical clarification, the challenge arises in determining how this method can be adapted for contemporary social critique (Oksala 2023: 138).

A key distinction between classical and critical phenomenology lies in how intentionality is perceived—whether as the orientation of an intentional act (noesis) toward an intentional object (noema), with noesis shaping noema without mutual influence, or as a relational dynamic where feedback loops intertwine noetic processes with a noematic field and vice versa (Guenther 2020: 13). Critical phenomenology does more than just provide detailed analyses of concepts like intentionality, lifeworld, empathy, and intersubjectivity; it also delves deeply into collective intentionality, shared emotions, social involvement, and diverse social experiences. Consequently, it departs from approaches that confine experience to a binary of what is and what should be, or those that reduce it to a mere discursive product. Specifically, framing public experience in positivist socio-psychological terms diminishes the public realm to social groups alone. Yet, collective public experience extends beyond the experience of a singular group, and the ideas emerging within the public space are not just attitudes, opinions, or perceptions of public opinion, whether positive or negative. Phenomenology is concerned with the distinctiveness, singularity, and non-reducibility of experience to pre-existing frameworks and structures. Thus, critical phenomenology engages with questions that stem from specific, concrete issues, situations, and crises. It then investigates ways of addressing these questions, along with creative actions that seek out new possibilities. In this way, it considers not only the significance of experience but also the relationship between practices of freedom and the conditions that allow meaning, action, and intersubjective relationships to flourish. In this context, critical goes a step beyond a mere analytical method that identifies what is wrong or problematic. It is through this approach that alternatives to mechanisms of power and oppression can be cultivated (Şan 2024).

Critical phenomenology influences critical discourse analysis (CDA) by providing a deeper philosophical framework for understanding how language and power structures shape social practices and lived experiences. CDA originates from applied linguistics and social theory. It examines the relationship between language, and social structures and practices. CDA aims to critique the ideologies and power dynamics embedded in institutional, conventional, or "common-sense" language use. Language, in this perspective, is not just a tool for representation (of objects or thoughts) but a constitutive social practice that helps shape social

realities. As a research method, CDA focuses on analysing texts—written or oral, and sometimes visual or observational data—to deconstruct the connections between discursive and social practices. In the context of professional discourse, for instance, CDA can be applied to analyse how complex social realities, such as working on intricate cases, are constructed through language. By integrating critical phenomenology, CDA can further emphasize how power relations are experienced and constituted within discourse. This approach helps illuminate the lived realities of individuals and communities shaped by broader ideological structures, thereby enriching both the critique of language and the understanding of social dynamics (Hood 2016: 11-12).

However, this study employs a more primitive approach focused on the examination of texts, rather than the traditional stages of discourse analysis applied to media texts. In other words, the study aims to analyse the relationship between culture and social movements through textual readings. This is made possible through a critical approach that diverges from mainstream discourse. If phenomenology is understood as critical reflection, as clarified above, it becomes possible to explore the potential motivations for critique within phenomenology, particularly within a Husserlian framework. The key question is what could prompt a radical shift in perspective that allows us to see our involvement in the world as a whole. Husserl suggests at least three possibilities: wonder, alienness, and free thinking in a specific, qualified sense. These elements represent diverse ways in which individuals might become critically aware of their own participation in the structures of experience and reality, encouraging a deeper examination of the world and our place within it. Wonder initiates this by prompting reflection on the everyday, alienness by disrupting familiar experiences, and free thinking by enabling a release from preconceptions, all of which contribute to phenomenology's critical potential (Steinbock 2022: 158). In summary, in this study, the texts are analysed and interpreted in a descriptive and critical manner.

Relations between Social Movements and Culture

Social movements are defined as collective actions directed against elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural norms, undertaken by individuals with shared goals and a sense of solidarity, continuously interacting with elites, other groups, and various elements. Social conflicts and demands that emerged across different regions throughout history began to manifest as social movements, as described above, from the 19th century onward—when nation-states were fully established and had consolidated their power. In this context, the latter half of the 19th century is regarded as the starting point for the development of modern social movements. A significant

shift took place in the 19th century, transitioning from the defensive actions traditionally conducted by community groups to more organized, self-aware, and enduring movements and actions aimed at securing new rights and opportunities (Yılmaz 2023a: 124). Social movements begin when actors within institutions attempt to reach their goals by developing strategies outside the institution, or when marginal actors unexpectedly reach a broader audience, or when both situations occur simultaneously (Meyer 2023: 45). Social movements tend to focus on individuals, organizations, or events, with the best approaches attempting to capture the interconnections among these elements (della Porta & Diani 2006: 2).

Social movements are a specific form of collective action. While all social movements depend on collective action, not all instances of collective action qualify as social movements. These movements are coordinated and purposeful, distinctively characterized by political activities that occur outside established institutions (extra-institutional) (Bozonelos, Wendt, Lee, Scarffe, Omae, Franco, Martin & Veldhuis n.d.: 204). The history of social movements presents an intensified version of a characteristic issue often encountered in political analysis (Tilly 2008: 26). Social movements share seven key traits: (1) a fresh perspective that offers an alternative way of seeing things, (2) group loyalty, (3) a commitment to action, (4) decentralized leadership, (5) clear objectives, (6) flexible organizational structures, and (7) a unifying ideology. Within this framework, social movements may range from transformative to reformist to liberationist, each pursuing change to varying extents. An essential aspect of social movements, especially relevant to this study, is their relationship with communication. The emergence of social movements depends on their interaction with both media and the public, while their expansion and societal acceptance are sustained through ongoing communication efforts (Yılmaz 2023b: 166).

To understand the dynamics of social movements, researchers use various methods, including interviews with movement leaders and participants, field observations, surveys, historical archives, and protest event analysis (Almeida 2023: 57-64). These methods provide systematic information about movement dynamics and help reconstruct past movements (Almeida 2023: 63-70). Social movements also target institutions beyond the state, such as corporations, educational systems, religious institutions, health organizations, and international bodies, reflecting the multi-institutional theories that acknowledge power distributed across multiple institutions (Almeida 2023: 96). Participation in social movements can also foster collective identities, transforming individual grievances into collective action through shared interests and experiences (Almeida 2023: 105). Identity claims encompass the belief that "we"

– the holders of these claims – form a unified force that must be acknowledged (Tilly, Castañeda & Wood 2022: 47).

Culture can signify the collection of artistic and intellectual works; the process of spiritual and intellectual development; the values, traditions, beliefs, and symbolic practices that guide people's lives; an entire way of life (Eagleton 2019: 15). Culture is seen as an order corresponding to meaningful action. Conforming to this order is thought to rely on intentional motives rather than on a mechanical or objective necessity (Alexander 2017: 10). Culture has been defined, in brief, as a "specific way of life" shaped by values, traditions, beliefs, material objects, and the surrounding environment. Culture is described as a dynamic and complex environment that includes activities, worldviews, objects, and beliefs, which are stable yet can also change through routine communication and social interaction. In other words, culture is considered an environment. Furthermore, it has been stated that culture encompasses worship, forms of worship, ways of shaping time and space, ways of dancing, the values through which children are socialized, and many other details that make up daily life. From this perspective, it is emphasized that no culture is superior to another. As a concept of daily life, culture is always regarded as a democratic idea (Lull 2001: 95). Culture is maintained and altered through various processes, forces, and factors that can be grouped under cultural transmission and cultural evolution. Societal change involves new behaviours, learning, and decision-making prompted by innovations. The concept of cultural evolution emerged in the 19th century and was often misused to distinguish between "evolved" and "unevolved," or "advanced" and "primitive" humans, leading to severe racism when applied politically. Cultural evolution is determined by the acceptance and selection of innovations by society, resulting in continuous change marked by statistical variability due to diverse choices made by individuals. Thus, the history of culture is the history of innovations—what has been proposed, what has succeeded, and why (Sforza 2021: 22-23).

Culture is grounded in the understanding that culture permeates every aspect of social life and cannot be confined to specific domains such as art and literature. According to İrfan Erdoğan (1999), culture encompasses all areas of human social life, representing how individuals express and produce themselves through their accumulated experiences and creations from the past. Culture is the way humans create and recreate their lives, and this process of creation is what constitutes their culture (Erdoğan 1999: 19). Culture, whether popular, mass, or class culture, involves the production of material and immaterial forms that shape the ideology and consciousness of society. It can be generalized as "the whole way of life

of a people" at a given time and within a particular technological structure (Erdoğan 1999: 20). However, understanding culture also requires examining the relationships and distinctions brought about by the modes of social production, dominance, and struggle within a given context. These dynamics are crucial in understanding how culture functions and evolves (Erdoğan 1999: 20). Media, religion, music, and sports are indeed integral parts of culture. Culture is not limited to refined human activities or high arts but encompasses all aspects of daily life (Turner 2016: 10).

The importance of popular culture in understanding societal processes and practices. They argue that culture is composed of these "peripheral" meaning and pleasure networks, which include mass media, sports, and popular dance (Turner 2016: 11). This inclusion highlights that culture is not just about elite forms of expression but also about the everyday practices and meanings that shape our social existence. Terry Eagleton further elaborates that culture signifies a dialectic between what we do to the world and what the world does to us. This means that natural processes and human labour together create culture, and this interaction transforms both nature and culture. He states, "If culture implicitly contains history and politics, then it also contains theology" (Eagleton 2005: 15). This indicates that religion, as a part of human history and societal organization, is also a cultural phenomenon.

In summary, media, religion, music, and sports are all considered culture because they are fundamental components of the social and symbolic systems that shape human experience and identity. They are included in the broad definition of culture as the total way of life of a people, which involves the production and consumption of meanings and practices in everyday life. Social movements have a profound impact on culture, reshaping societal norms, values, and symbols. These movements, driven by collective action and shared goals, often generate new cultural expressions and contribute to the evolution of cultural landscapes. Firstly, social movements can introduce new symbols and values that alter the cultural fabric of society. This process involves creating and disseminating new meanings that challenge existing norms and practices. For example, movements advocating for civil rights, gender equality, and environmental protection have historically introduced symbols and values that redefine cultural identities and societal priorities (Meyer 2023: 22). Art, music, and even culinary traditions often reflect the influences of social movements. These cultural elements serve as mediums through which movements express their ideals and aspirations, making their impact visible and tangible. For instance, the civil rights movement in the United States profoundly influenced music genres

such as soul and jazz, embedding the struggles and hopes of the movement within the cultural mainstream (Meyer 2023: 23).

The influence of social movements on culture is also evident in the way they can challenge and transform institutional norms. When movements target institutions such as media, education, and sports, they can drive significant cultural shifts. For example, during the apartheid era in South Africa, international sports organizations boycotted South Africa's participation in global competitions due to its racial segregation policies. This boycott not only highlighted the political injustices of apartheid but also reinforced the cultural value of equality in the international community (Meyer 2023: 79). In summary, social movements significantly impact culture by introducing new symbols and values, influencing art and everyday practices, fostering collective identities, and challenging institutional norms. These movements are both products and producers of cultural change, illustrating the dynamic interplay between social action and cultural evolution.

The Impact of Culture on Social Movements

Religion is deeply informed by the principles of liberation theology and the understanding of religion as a complex and dual phenomenon. Liberation theology, particularly prominent in Latin America, emphasizes the connection between religious faith and the struggle for social justice, focusing on the experiences of the poor and oppressed (Rowland 2011: 20). This theological approach is rooted in the daily experiences of marginalized communities and seeks to interpret sacred texts in ways that resonate with their struggles and aspirations. Liberation theology is not merely an academic exercise but a praxis-oriented approach that emerges from the lived realities of people engaged in struggles for justice and dignity. It involves a reinterpretation of Christian doctrine to support the fight against social, economic, and political injustices. This theology has found its most authentic expression in places like Brazil, where it has profoundly influenced pastoral practices and community organizing (Rowland 2011: 23). Moreover, liberation theology insists on a practical engagement with issues of health, education, and overall human welfare, arising from group meetings, worship, and joint projects aimed at improving the quality of life for the marginalized (Rowland 2011: 20). It challenges traditional theological frameworks that prioritize intellectual discourse over practical action and reorients the focus towards addressing the immediate needs and rights of the oppressed.

Additionally, religion aligns with the views of thinkers like Michael Löwy, who highlight the dual character of religion. Löwy notes that religion can function both as an instrument of social control and as a source of revolutionary inspiration. Religion, according to

Löwy, expresses both the protest and the acceptance of social conditions. This duality is evident in the way religious movements can simultaneously support the status quo and inspire profound social change (Löwy 1999: 47). Liberation theology represents the critical and transformative potential of religion. It draws on Marxist analysis to understand the structural causes of poverty and inequality, seeing capitalism as a fundamental source of social injustice. This theological perspective advocates for a commitment to the poor and a radical transformation of society, aligning itself with the broader goals of social movements seeking to create a more just and equitable world (Löwy 1999: 67). In summary, religion is that it holds significant potential for social transformation, particularly when aligned with the principles of liberation theology. This approach emphasizes the active engagement of religious faith in the struggle for justice and the reinterpretation of sacred texts to support the rights and dignity of the oppressed. It recognizes the dual nature of religion as both a potential tool for maintaining the status quo and a powerful source of revolutionary change.

Music is not just an art form but a powerful medium that reflects and influences cultural and social dynamics. Drawing on the insights of Raymond Williams, music is seen as a cultural practice deeply embedded within the social and economic structures of society. Williams (1993) highlights that music, like other forms of art, has undergone significant transformations with the advent of corporate capitalist relations. The production and distribution of music have increasingly become dominated by corporate institutions that control popular music through technologies like records and cassettes. This shift marks a departure from the earlier forms of music creation, where the producer and creator often worked independently (Williams 1993: 52). The rise of corporate control in the music industry has led to the commodification of music, where commercial interests often shape artistic expression. Despite this corporate dominance, music retains its profound impact on social and cultural life. It serves as a means of expression and resistance, particularly for marginalized groups. Music can convey powerful messages, mobilize communities, and foster a sense of identity and solidarity. For instance, the role of music in social movements, such as the civil rights movement or the anti-apartheid struggle, illustrates its capacity to inspire and unite people around common causes.

Furthermore, music intersects with other cultural practices such as dance, poetry, and theatre, contributing to a richer and more complex cultural landscape. It is an integral part of the "whole way of life" that Williams describes, encompassing everyday practices and the broader cultural expressions of society (Williams 1993: 119). This holistic view of culture underscores the interconnectedness of diverse cultural forms and their collective impact on

shaping societal values and norms. Music acknowledges both its role as a product within a capitalist framework and its enduring power as a medium of cultural expression and social change. Music's ability to articulate shared experiences and aspirations makes it a vital component of cultural life, capable of reflecting and shaping the social realities of its time.

Sports is deeply influenced by its socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Sports, particularly in the context of football, reflect broader societal transformations and distortions. Changes in economic conditions and political ideologies significantly impact the organization and perception of sports (Talimciler 2017: 11). Stadiums, much like cities, are vital spaces where collective memories are created. These are not merely venues for matches but are integral parts of our lives where unforgettable moments and personal histories are written (Talimciler 2017: 15). Sports serve as a mirror to society, reflecting both its virtues and flaws. They provide an opportunity to observe and understand societal dynamics, inequalities, and the interplay between power and resistance. In countries with less developed economies, the emphasis on winning often correlates with a desire to align with power and benefit from its rewards, while losing is associated with distance from power and reduced gains (Talimciler 2017: 43). Furthermore, sports contribute to the normalization of societal inequalities. The values practiced and accepted in sports settings often transfer to everyday life, reinforcing notions of power and success. This is evident in the fan culture surrounding major teams, where allegiance to powerful clubs mirrors societal tendencies to align with dominant forces (Talimciler 2017: 43). In conclusion, sports recognize its role as a cultural and social phenomenon that both reflects and shapes societal values. It underscores the importance of viewing sports not just as entertainment but as a significant arena where broader societal issues and dynamics are played out and observed.

The battles waged in the realms of music, religion, and sports are quintessentially struggles within the symbolic domain. These areas serve as critical arenas where cultural meanings, identities, and values are contested and negotiated. In the context of social movements and cultural struggles, the concept of symbolic violence highlighted by Schlesinger (1994), is particularly relevant. Symbolic violence refers to the imposition of meanings and cultural norms that enforce dominance and control within a society. This form of violence operates through symbols and cultural practices rather than physical force, making it a powerful tool for ideological control and hegemony (Schlesinger 1994: 45). In music, for example, the cultural struggle is evident in the way certain genres and artists challenge dominant narratives and offer alternative perspectives. Music becomes a site of resistance where marginalized

voices can express their experiences and aspirations. The corporate control over popular music, as discussed by Raymond Williams, illustrates how the symbolic domain is a battleground for cultural influence and economic power (Williams 1993: 52). Religion, too, serves as a symbolic domain where struggles for meaning and social justice are waged. Liberation theology exemplifies this by interpreting religious texts in ways that resonate with the experiences of the oppressed, thereby challenging the status quo and advocating for social change (Rowland 2011: 20). This theological approach transforms religious practices into acts of resistance and empowerment, emphasizing the role of faith in the struggle for justice. Sports, particularly football, reflect societal values and conflicts, acting as a microcosm of larger social dynamics. The competitive nature of sports, the glorification of winning, and the stigmatization of losing mirror broader societal attitudes towards success and failure (Talimciler 2017: 19). Sports arenas become spaces where cultural norms are both reinforced and contested, influencing public perceptions and behaviours. The media's portrayal of these symbolic struggles further amplifies their impact. The language and narratives used by the media can shape public understanding and response to social movements, framing them either as legitimate expressions of dissent or as threats to the social order (Schlesinger 1994: 49). The struggle in symbolic domains is about winning hearts and minds. The ideological battles fought in these arenas are crucial for gaining cultural dominance and influencing societal values (Schlesinger 1994: 45). Music, religion, and sports, therefore, are not just cultural practices but critical sites of ideological contestation and social change.

A cultural approach to understanding social movements is essential because culture provides the symbolic resources, narratives, and frameworks that shape and sustain these movements. Social movements are not only political or economic phenomena but are deeply embedded in the cultural contexts in which they arise. According to Jasper (2017), protest is an integral part of human existence and has the potential to create significant changes throughout history. Individuals come together to protest, utilizing all available resources, including money, media, stories, collective identities, jokes, cartoons, and sometimes even weapons (Jasper 2017: 10). The creation and impact of culture are most evident in the realm of protest. To understand protest, it is crucial to acknowledge the value of culture. At the same time, protest helps us understand where culture comes from. Culture is meaning it encompasses how we interpret the world, including our actions and motivations, how we communicate these interpretations to others, and how we understand the actions of others (Jasper 2017: 11). It is both an ongoing

process and the outcome of that process, materializing in various forms such as written words on protest signs.

Strategizing is another cultural dimension of protest, involving decisions about goals and the means to pursue them, forming alliances, identifying opponents, and mobilizing resources. This strategic aspect highlights the interplay between cultural meanings and practical actions (Jasper 2017: 12). A cultural approach is necessary because individuals often have multiple motivations for their actions, and understanding these requires a cultural perspective. Culture consists of shared ideas, feelings, and moral codes, as well as the physical symbols we create to express or shape them. Our understanding of the world and ourselves is facilitated through cultural processes such as singing, reading, or marching together (Jasper 2017: 22). Culture permeates the actions of protesters, as well as those of judges, police, lawmakers, reporters, and other actors involved in social movements. The three main components of culture—cognition, emotions, and morality—interact continuously, shaping political expression and action. Cognition involves the words we use, our beliefs about the world, and the distinctions we make between things. Emotions bring us closer to people's real experiences, as individuals often navigate their paths through the situations they encounter. Morality comprises both explicit principles and intuitive feelings that guide actions (Jasper 2017: 23-24). Rituals, as cultural expressions, reinforce the fundamental beliefs and feelings of a group, reminding members and outsiders alike of their core identities (Jasper 2017: 25).

Culture is integral to social movements because it provides the tools for understanding and engaging with the world, guiding actions, and forming collective identities. It is through the cultural lens that we can fully appreciate the complexities and impacts of social movements. In conclusion, adopting a cultural approach to social movements allows for a richer, more nuanced understanding of their dynamics. It acknowledges the importance of symbolic resources, narratives, and frameworks in shaping and sustaining movements, thereby providing a comprehensive view of how social movements function and achieve their goals.

Social Movements and Cultural Protests in the Context of South Africa

Apartheid was a racially discriminatory system implemented in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. It was enforced by the National Party and systematically restricted the social, economic, and political rights of non-white groups, including Black Africans, Coloureds, and Indians. Based on the "Theory of Separate Development of Races," apartheid legalized racial segregation across various aspects of life, including living areas, education, and employment opportunities. Separate living zones were designated for Black and white populations, with

severe restrictions on the ability of Black people to stay in cities. Employment laws ensured that Black people were confined to lower-status jobs, while greater economic opportunities were reserved for whites. Education was also segregated, with Black children receiving substandard education to ensure their continued lower status. This legal framework systematically excluded non-whites from economic, social, and political life, entrenching inequality, and oppression throughout the apartheid era (Büyüktavşan 2021: 34-35). In 1994, following the release of political prisoners and the restoration of freedom of association, South Africa established a constitutional democracy founded on non-racialism (African Union n.d.). Largely inspired by Nelson Mandela, South Africa emerged from its long, dark years of injustice, hatred, and bloodshed in a remarkably smooth and humane manner, serving as a powerful example to the world. Mandela's unwavering commitment to peace, reconciliation, and equality, despite the immense suffering he endured, became a guiding light for the nation, allowing it to transition away from the brutal apartheid regime with a spirit of forgiveness and unity rather than vengeance. His leadership and vision were instrumental in shaping South Africa's peaceful path to democracy (Bauman & Donskis 2020: 50).

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, while the two primary anti-apartheid political parties, the ANC, and the Pan Africanist Congress, were banned, no effective national movement emerged to challenge the apartheid regime. A broad-based national movement only took shape in the 1980s with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which unified a diverse coalition of civic associations, student and youth organizations, women's groups, trade unions, church societies, sports clubs, and various other groups under its banner. The UDF’s creation was facilitated by the growth and spread of community organizations, a trend that began in the 1970s and continued through the 1980s. The first wave of township resistance following the 1976 uprising was sparked by the state's decision to introduce community councils in 1977. A significant cause of public resentment toward these councils was the state’s requirement that they be self-financing, which led to rent and service charges becoming their primary revenue sources. Community organizations mobilized resistance through various tactics, including electoral boycotts, calls for councillors to resign, and even physical attacks on some councillors or their property (Madlingozi 2007: 82).

The anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa exemplifies a successful social movement and is recognized as one of the most impactful movements of the 20th century. Its central aim was to dismantle the institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination imposed by the South African government through apartheid policies. The movement, which originated in the

1940s, gained significant traction in the 1980s as the international community became increasingly aware of the government's human rights violations. Utilizing various methods such as rallies, demonstrations, boycotts, and acts of civil disobedience, the movement sought to pressure the government into abolishing apartheid. However, these peaceful protests were often met with violent responses from the authorities, leading to the arrest, imprisonment, and in some cases, the deaths of protestors. The anti-apartheid movement garnered substantial international support from governments, human rights organizations, and civil society groups worldwide. One of its most remarkable successes was its ability to convince international actors to impose economic sanctions on South Africa. These sanctions had a profound impact on the country's economy, contributing to heightened poverty and unemployment. These economic pressures played a critical role in compelling the South African government to engage in negotiations, leading to a peaceful transition to a non-racial democracy. Additionally, the anti-apartheid movement was instrumental in advancing global human rights standards, particularly concerning racial equality. Its efforts helped classify apartheid as a crime against humanity, further undermining the legitimacy of the South African government's policies and advancing the broader human rights movement (Hussain 2024: 158).

Using a critical phenomenological approach, this analysis examines how culture influences social movements in South Africa, considering the lived experiences and social contexts of those involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and subsequent movements for social justice. To begin with phenomenological reduction (epoch), it is suspended preconceived judgments and focus on the experiences of South African activists as they encountered and utilized cultural elements in their struggle. This stage involves a detailed description of the cultural symbols, narratives, and practices that played a crucial role in these movements. Cultural symbols and narratives were central to the anti-apartheid movement. Songs like "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" served as anthems of resistance, uniting people across racial and social divides. These songs were not just forms of artistic expression but lived experiences that embodied the hopes and struggles of the oppressed. The collective singing of these anthems during protests and gatherings created a shared emotional and symbolic space, reinforcing solidarity and a sense of purpose among participants (Meyer 2023: 22).

The role of religion, particularly liberation theology, was significant in shaping the movement's moral and ethical framework. Leaders like Desmond Tutu[†] utilized religious

[†] Desmond Tutu was born on October 7, 1931, in a section of Krugersdorp known as Makoeteng, a “black location” where Black residents lived (Maluleke 2015: 572). He was an Archbishop Emeritus of the South African Anglican

narratives to frame the struggle against apartheid as a divine mandate for justice. This theological perspective provided spiritual motivation and justification for resistance, resonating deeply with the lived experiences of the oppressed. The sermons and public speeches by religious leaders became moments of collective reflection and empowerment, intertwining faith with the fight for equality (Rowland 2011: 20). Sports also served as a crucial cultural domain where the struggle against apartheid played out. The international boycott of South African sports teams highlighted the global condemnation of apartheid and provided a powerful symbolic gesture of solidarity. For many South Africans, the exclusion from global sports events underscored the reality of their isolation and the moral bankruptcy of the apartheid regime. This collective experience of being marginalized in the sports arena mirrored their broader social marginalization and became a rallying point for resistance (Talimciler 2017: 79).

The media played a pivotal role in documenting and disseminating the realities of apartheid. Images and reports of police violence against peaceful protesters were not just news items but powerful symbols that galvanized international opposition to the regime. Activists' use of media to share their stories and struggles helped build a global awareness and support network. The lived experience of documenting these events and the subsequent international reactions highlighted the power of media as a tool for social change (Schlesinger 1994: 49).

Cultural identity was at the heart of the anti-apartheid movement. Embracing African cultural practices, languages, and traditions was a form of resistance against the cultural erasure imposed by apartheid. This resurgence of cultural pride provided a sense of belonging and empowerment, reinforcing the movement's resolve. The lived experience of reclaiming and celebrating African identity in the face of oppression underscored the deep connection between culture and resistance (Williams 1993: 119).

Post-apartheid refers to the period in South Africa’s history following the end of apartheid, beginning on April 27, 1994, when Black South Africans were able to vote in general elections for the first time after centuries of white rule. This historic moment officially ended apartheid, culminating a few days later when Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the country’s

Church. Tutu played a pivotal role in South Africa’s anti-apartheid movement (1912–1992). Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, he leveraged his global recognition to confront the injustices of the apartheid system, which the South African government used to enforce racial segregation. Previously serving as the Bishop of Lesotho from 1976 to 1978 and as the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) from 1978 to 1985, Tutu once remarked, “One day no one was listening. The next, I was an oracle.” Archbishop Tutu passed away on December 26, 2021, at the age of ninety. As the first Black Anglican Bishop in South Africa, he rose from humble beginnings in the impoverished Black community of Makoeteng near Klerksdorp in the Northwest Province to become a prominent leader in the fight to dismantle apartheid (Crethers 2022: 245-246).

first Black president (Lawal 2024). Mandela was the leader of African National Congress (ANC) (BBC Türkçe 2024). After three decades under ANC governance, many South Africans are increasingly frustrated by persistent poverty and inequality. Although some progress has been made in expanding education, housing, and welfare, deep-rooted challenges remain. South Africa, the world's most unequal country per the World Bank's Gini metric, still grapples with stark racial disparities, such as unemployment rates significantly higher among Black citizens compared to white citizens. Economic issues, including a declining GDP per capita due to infrastructure challenges and low investment, exacerbate these inequalities. Land reform and wealth redistribution have seen limited success, with white-owned farmland and economic assets still dominating. Social benefits have expanded, yet they strain public finances, while critics argue these grants can discourage job-seeking and detract from essential services. Education and healthcare access remain inequitable, with dysfunctional schools in Black areas and an overburdened public health sector. Although initiatives like the National Health Insurance aim to address these disparities, opponents express concerns over costs and quality. Amid these issues, South Africa continues to deal with the aftermath of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and recent years have brought frequent power outages, underscoring ongoing infrastructure struggles and the ANC's challenges in fulfilling promises of a better life for all (Gumbi, Kumwenda-Mtambo, Kongkunakornkul, Sen & Sachdev 2024).

Within the ruling alliance in South Africa, comprising the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP), alongside the de facto involvement of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the liberation movement was historically anchored by trade unions and civic organizations. The trade unions focused on production and workplace issues, while civic organizations addressed consumer-related matters in townships and villages. In the post-apartheid era, unions continue to play an active role, shaping policies related to formal labour practices, government employment of civil servants, and business labour practices. However, their ability to challenge the state's economic direction from within the ruling alliance has been limited, reducing their effectiveness in altering this path. The civic movement has been even more constrained, with SANCO recently described as a "moribund ally," functioning as an empty shell with minimal capacity for opposition (Ballard 2005: 78).

There were many post-apartheid social movements in South Africa such as the Concerned Citizens Forum, the Treatment Action Campaign, the Landless People's Movement, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), and the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF)

(Steyn 2016: 273). In contrast to many other transitional societies, where the post-transition political "honeymoon" period often lingers for decades, new social struggles in South Africa surfaced surprisingly quickly. These struggles coincided with the country's second democratic election and Thabo Mbeki's ascent to the Presidency. During Mbeki's term, social conflicts emerged across various fronts, driven by three related yet distinct developments. Some movements targeted specific government policies, such as the Congress of South African Trade Union's (COSATU) opposition to the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), which signalled the post-apartheid government's commitment to trade liberalization and economic growth as a pathway to social justice. Other movements focused on the government's partial failure in service delivery, as seen with the Landless People's Movement (LPM) and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which respectively criticized the slow pace of land redistribution and the inadequate response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Additionally, some forms of resistance aimed to challenge the direct enforcement of government policies, organizing marginalized communities to oppose measures like utility cut-offs and evictions. Notable examples include the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG), and the Anti Eviction Campaign (AEC). The scale and diversity of these social struggles have raised concerns within official circles and attracted the attention of scholars studying this emerging phenomenon (Ballard, Habib, Valodia & Zuern 2005: 616). Some of them challenged local government efforts to evict residents, opposed electricity and water cut-offs, and resisted the imposition of cost-recovery mechanisms like the installation of pre-paid water and electricity meters. These movements also drew attention to the top-down approach of government housing policies, the lack of community consultation in policy development, and the state's frequent intimidation tactics against social movements (Willems 2011: 492).

Concluding reflections on South African social movements with the obvious, yet mundane, observation that these movements are products of the post-apartheid era. This is not to imply that they emerged in a vacuum; their strategies, activities, and orientations clearly draw upon South Africa's extensive history and heritage of struggle. However, the post-apartheid context has imparted a distinct character to these movements. Influential factors include the economic crisis in post-apartheid South Africa, as reflected in its high unemployment and poverty rates, local government cost-recovery initiatives mandated by policy decisions made by state elites after 1994, and the democratic, liberalized political environment of the time. These elements have shaped the origins, development, strategies, and tactics of these

movements. Yet this is where their commonality ends—a crucial point to recognize. In the emotionally charged atmosphere of political debate, these movements are often implicitly portrayed by state elites, public officials, and even social movement activists as a single, unified entity. Some political leaders and officials have suggested that these movements threaten democracy through their extra-institutional activities. Conversely, certain social movement activists and intellectuals romanticize these movements, viewing them as spaces for free democratic debate, symbolizing principled internationalism, a socialist vision, and an independent, mass-based mobilization and struggle as an ideological and organizational alternative to the capitalist ANC (Ballard, Habib & Valodia 2006: 448).

African associational life in South Africa has a long history, with activities documented well before apartheid was implemented. Under segregation, these associations maintained their autonomy within non-white communities, as the state had not yet become a totalitarian apartheid regime. During this period, non-white associations often operated independently of the state, addressing community needs that the state neglected rather than seeking control over public resources. These cultural and professional associations played a key early political role, offering a platform for discussing grievances, although they rarely posed direct challenges to the state (White 2008: 184). Post-apartheid social movements and community organizations have emerged not only to challenge harmful neo-liberal economic policies but also to reject their accompanying political dimensions (Madlingozi 2009: 84).

In South Africa, the shift of marginalized cultures to the center has not occurred through traditional liberation struggles but rather through negotiated politics, necessitating a reconfiguration of the conventional center/margin dynamic to reflect a new "pluralism" or cultural diversification. This pluralism celebrates differences while maintaining a sense of "homogeneity." Such homogeneity is essential in South Africa, as it preserves shared memories of identity, shaped by a common heritage of struggle and suffering (Mistry 2001: 3). Post-apartheid social movements still struggle because they think that apartheid did not end. They think that apartheid still goes on with the cultural area. White supremacists systematically and collectively continue this tradition (Khan & Booysen 2024).

Religion has played a crucial role in South Africa's public and political life. The apartheid regime politicized Christianity in several ways: through the National Party's close ties with the Dutch Reformed Church, by promoting a political theology of racial segregation, and through the implementation of Christian national education (Chipkin & Leatt 2011: 40). Religious institutions have been instrumental in the political transformations in South Africa

throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Christian churches and interdenominational organizations, in particular, either supported or condemned apartheid, depending on the context. Numerous Christian organizations have contributed to South Africa's nation-building efforts, participating in initiatives like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and civic education programs. While scholars have extensively examined the role of churches in the political processes during the apartheid era, there is comparatively less material on the intersection of religion and politics in the post-apartheid period (Kuperus 2011: 278).

Religiously segregated communities in South Africa responded to apartheid in many ways, ranging from collusion and silence to active resistance. The Dutch Reformed Church offered spiritual justification for apartheid, while leaders of several mainline churches—including the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Congregational Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church—publicly condemned it, even if their congregations did not always align with this stance. Notably, Anglican priest and anti-apartheid activist Trevor Huddleston famously denounced apartheid as a heresy. Additionally, the Muslim community's substantial involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle has been well-documented, as have the significant contributions of the South African Jewish community. In this way, the history of apartheid and the resistance against it has permanently intertwined faith and politics, regardless of how explicitly individual churches, denominations, or belief systems chose to engage with political and social issues or participate in the anti-apartheid struggle. South African religious communities and organizations have a long and rich history of involvement in the fight to end apartheid (McEwen & Steyn 2016: 2).

Data from the 2001 Population Census indicates that 79.8 percent of South Africa's population identifies as Christian (Kuperus 2011: 283). In the post-apartheid context, national-level public statements by churches' leaders do not necessarily reflect their political effectiveness, as their pronouncements often resonate more prominently within the diverse voices of local civil society. Christianity in South Africa is marked by heterogeneity, with segmented communities whose leaders do not aim to articulate a unified political stance, act in concert nationally, or collectively endorse any specific political party. In this sense, Independent Christianity in South Africa resembles a fluid social movement (Bompani 2008: 671). In summary, churches in South Africa today engage with a democratic state that embraces religious pluralism, rather than an authoritarian state that enforces Christian nationalism (Kuperus 2011: 284). As an integral part of culture, religion can serve as a powerful force in creating and defining spaces within cultural contexts (Cilliers 2006: 20).

Media serve as crucial platforms for the construction and dissemination of social discourses (Iqani 2017: 106). The Bill of Rights in South Africa's Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) guarantees everyone the right to freedom of expression, encompassing freedom of the press and other media, the right to receive or share information and ideas, freedom of artistic creativity, academic freedom, and freedom in scientific Research (Zegeye & Harris 2002: 248). South Africa's mainstream media, controlled by four major print media conglomerates, a dominant public broadcaster, one commercial free-to-air television network, and two satellite television companies, offers limited opportunities for marginalized groups to voice their concerns. The economic motivations of these media corporations undermine their capacity to foster and engage in democratic communication. Hackett and Carroll identify several factors contributing to what they term the "democratic deficit" in media, such as inequality, power centralization, homogenization, corporate monopolization of knowledge, and elitist communication policymaking. In such a restricted media environment, marginalized groups often turn to smaller, grassroots platforms—referred to as "alternative," "community," or "radical" media—to express their perspectives. Miraftab suggests that many social movements in South Africa feel excluded from the "invited spaces" of citizenship, such as those established by local government structures and the mainstream media (Chiumbu 2015: 3).

The emergence of distinct youth cultures in modern societies is closely tied to the prominent role of mass media and rising affluence. As South African society becomes more affluent, a larger segment of the population is likely to gain access to mass media, thereby amplifying its influence (Zegeye 2008: 21). In the post-apartheid period, social movements addressing AIDS have particularly used the media as an active tool (Jacobs & Johnson 2007: 128). In South Africa, social movements blend traditional mobilization tactics, such as toyi-toying (a militant march-dance), stay-aways, road blockades, and sit-ins, with media engagement to communicate their messages. These movements also utilize various smaller and alternative media, including pamphlets, press releases, videos, and new media platforms, to share their perspectives and rally support. These alternative platforms are collectively referred to as nano media (Bosch, Wasserman & Chuma 2018: 19). Therefore, in addition to traditional media, it can be observed that social movements have also actively utilized social media in the post-apartheid period (Jacobs 2019: 9).

In South Africa, freedom songs and their accompanying dances were instrumental in mass mobilizations against apartheid, and they continue to thrive in the post-apartheid era (Jolaosho 2015: 443). South African freedom songs were so deeply intertwined with the

nation's struggles for independence that the renowned trumpeter Hugh Masekela once speculated that the Zulu warriors' loss in the decisive Anglo-Zulu war of 1879 was due to their singing on the battlefield. Freedom songs in South Africa have played a key role in liberation struggles, resisting the impacts of war, colonialism, and, most prominently, apartheid. Their roots can be traced to historical forms, such as the Zulu amahubo empi, or war songs, which were significant in precolonial and colonial warfare, as well as to oral traditions embedded in everyday life. Gatherings for events like weddings and funerals have provided opportunities for singing, which both inspired and were inspired by the creation of many freedom songs (Jolaosho 2019: 11).

Freedom songs, whether subtle or bold in their criticism of the apartheid regime, served as powerful tools for protest, frequently evolving to reflect changing social issues. Their adaptation involved alterations to lyrics, all while maintaining essential melodic and rhythmic structures. Songs also adjusted to the contexts in which they were used. Since many freedom songs originated as work songs, their musical elements often needed to align with the tasks being performed—such as transporting materials, laying tracks, and working in coordination with a team (Jolaosho 2014: 2-3). Some studies conducted in the post-apartheid period specifically emphasize the relationship between punk music and issues of identity. Through the example of punk, these studies highlight the impact of subcultures on identity construction (Basson 2007: 83). Kwaito is a genre of music associated with Black youth in post-apartheid South Africa. Primarily a form of dance music, kwaito is typically apolitical and symbolizes music that emerged "after the struggle." However, "kwaito" also refers to an entire youth culture, encompassing its own vernacular and fashion trends. The term actually represents a variety of differing—and sometimes conflicting—ideologies; viewing kwaito as something consistent or stable can often limit our understanding of its complexity (Steingo 2005: 333).

Throughout the twentieth century, various sports attracted mass spectatorships and became integral to both national and international popular culture. As a result, sports took on new political significance, often serving the political agendas of governments and the international community, most notably through the Olympics. From 1970 to 1992, South African athletes were banned from participating in the Olympic Games as a clear signal of international condemnation of the apartheid regime. Many other international sports organizations soon followed the Olympic committee's example. Supporters of South Africa's democratic movement, along with allies worldwide, rallied against South Africa's participation in international sports under the slogan, "No normal sport in an abnormal society" (Dunn 2009:

1). South Africa's relationship with sports in the post-apartheid era is highly significant. Evaluating nation-building efforts and collective behaviours expressed as solidarity—such as those linked to national team victories or hosting major sporting events—is challenging and often shaped by political rhetoric and propaganda. Politically marginalized voices are frequently excluded from the dominant narratives of proclaimed nationhood and global citizenship. South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup made minimal, sustainable progress in bridging gender, class, and racial divides within the framework of equality and human rights (Burnett 2019: 12).

The FIFA World Cup provided just such an opportunity: media images broadcast worldwide depicted South Africans of all racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds proudly waving the national flag, blowing the iconic vuvuzela, and steadfastly supporting the national team, Bafana Bafana. These media portrayals reinforced government rhetoric emphasizing the unity and modernity of post-apartheid South Africa. For the government, the World Cup certainly represented the pinnacle of the "Rainbow Nation" achievements since 1994 (Cornelissen 2011: 2). In sports, while significant resources have been funnelled into mega-stadiums and the professionalization of athletics, this investment has created a class of highly paid players from all backgrounds but has done little to address the deep-rooted inequities left by apartheid. Two distinct sporting landscapes are evident in South Africa: one includes high-performance sports centers and impressive stadiums built for the 2010 World Cup, as well as elite White schools boasting multiple rugby fields, floodlights, Olympic-sized pools, and highly skilled coaches. The other consists of makeshift football pitches in sandlots, a lack of basic equipment, and a decline in organized school sports. In shack areas across the country, footballers often carve out small pieces of land as home grounds for several teams, only to lose these spaces to further shack encroachment. In cricket, instead of taking a broad approach by focusing resources on township clubs and schools, the emphasis has been on ensuring international competitiveness. Most Black players now either come from middle-class backgrounds or have been relocated to private or middle-class schools to receive the necessary training, diet, and education. In this environment, school sports in public schools are almost non-existent. A contributing factor is the lack of cricket facilities and the government's limited support, focusing instead on meeting basic needs in schools. This approach aligns with the ANC government's Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) strategy, which aims to promote a Black middle and upper class, often at the expense of the African poor (Desai 2021: 174). Thus, while sports may not have a direct connection with social movements in the post-apartheid period, it is a significant indicator of

inequality, as it remains one of the areas where the disparities inherited from the apartheid era continue to persist.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has argued that the anti-racist and equality-driven social movements, which once operated in a centralized and organized manner during the apartheid period, have given way to identity-based cultural movements in post-apartheid South Africa. These movements, deeply rooted in cultural identities, engage in struggles that reflect the country's ongoing socio-economic challenges and complex political landscape. Through a critical phenomenological approach, the relationship between culture and social movements has been examined, revealing how cultural elements such as media, music, religion, and sports have become powerful platforms for identity-based resistance and expression.

The study has shown that while the formal structures of apartheid have been dismantled, its legacies persist, shaping South Africa's contemporary social and cultural terrain. Issues of inequality, exclusion, and marginalization remain prevalent, influencing the ways in which new forms of social movements have emerged. Unlike the centralized movements of the apartheid era, these newer movements operate through dispersed, often informal networks, reflecting a shift in how resistance is organized and expressed. These movements are intertwined with cultural practices and identities, reflecting a more nuanced form of resistance where identity and lived experience play central roles. By drawing on cultural elements, these movements have managed to foster a collective consciousness that extends beyond traditional political channels, enabling marginalized groups to assert their identities and challenge the status quo in a way that is both immediate and deeply personal.

Moreover, critical phenomenology has enabled an exploration of how these movements experience and enact resistance within the social contexts shaped by South Africa's past and present. This approach has shed light on how the movements' strategies, tactics, and narratives are informed by lived experiences and deeply held cultural meanings. The critical phenomenological framework also emphasizes the importance of understanding how the historical and socio-political contexts shape individuals' and groups' experiences within these movements. Thus, these movements do not merely react to specific policies or political decisions; they also reflect a broader struggle to reclaim and redefine cultural identities within a society that is still grappling with the remnants of its apartheid history.

The study's findings underscore that social movements are not only political entities but also cultural phenomena. They are expressions of collective identity that embody the hopes, grievances, and aspirations of individuals navigating a society marked by stark inequalities. In South Africa, these cultural movements actively challenge dominant narratives, asserting alternative conceptions of identity and belonging. The media, for example, remains a contested space where the voices of marginalized communities seek representation, often in direct opposition to mainstream narratives controlled by economic elites. Likewise, the persistence of cultural expression through music, such as freedom songs, demonstrates that art continues to play a significant role in social resistance, echoing the historical struggles for justice while addressing contemporary issues.

Sports and religion further reflect the dualities within South African society, serving as both spaces of inclusion and exclusion. While sports have become a unifying force that highlights the spirit of the "Rainbow Nation," they also reveal persistent inequalities in resource distribution and access. Religion, particularly liberation theology, has offered marginalized groups a moral framework for resistance, connecting spiritual beliefs with social justice objectives. These elements highlight how culture remains an essential aspect of social movements, providing both a foundation for collective identity and a mechanism for challenging systemic inequalities.

The shift towards cultural and identity-based movements also underscores a broader trend where traditional political actions are supplemented—or even replaced—by cultural forms of resistance. These movements engage in a continuous dialogue with South Africa's past, reclaiming cultural symbols, narratives, and practices to assert a reimagined identity for the present and future. This study suggests that the ongoing struggles are no longer about achieving legislative or institutional reforms but also about redefining what it means to belong in a post-apartheid society. By doing so, these movements contribute to a broader vision of an inclusive South Africa, one where cultural diversity is not merely tolerated but celebrated as a fundamental aspect of the nation's identity.

In conclusion, this study has shown that the social movements in post-apartheid South Africa are complex, multi-faceted, and deeply interwoven with cultural expressions. Through critical phenomenology, it has become clear that these movements are not only sites of political resistance but also powerful embodiments of cultural resilience and transformation. They offer alternative pathways for engaging with social issues, challenging the remaining structures of inequality, and fostering a more inclusive society. These movements highlight the potential for

cultural practices to drive social change, demonstrating that the struggle for equality and justice in South Africa continues to evolve, adapting to new challenges and embracing diverse forms of expression. In doing so, they reflect the dynamic interplay between identity, culture, and social action, underscoring the importance of recognizing and supporting the several ways in which people collectively pursue a just and equitable society.

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Çıkar Çatışması:	Çalışmada kişiler veya kurumlar arası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.	***Conflict of Interest:***	The authors declare that declare no conflict of interest.
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