

OUR SO-CALLED LEADERS HAVE BECOME THE BOLTS OF THE SAME MACHINE WHICH IS CRUSHING US AS A NATION. WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO THEM AND EDUCATE THEM. TIMES ARE CHANGING AND WE SHOULD CHANGE WITH THEM. THE MAGIC STICK OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GIVES IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE OF THAT A PERSON'S NATIONALISM IS AWAKENED MORE THAN ALL OTHERS. IT BEGINS THE LANGUAGE OF SORRY REPORT VANGUARD (79-1987) (SUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID) 3

# LIMPOPO'S LEGACY

43-7382 SA#

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WILL CONTINUE FROM VANGUARD

RHW VANGUARD IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALIEN RULE. OF WHAT USE WILL BE YOUR EDUCATION IF YOU CANT HELP YOUR COUNTRY IN HER HOUR OF NEED? IF YOUR **EDUCATION IS** NOT LINKED WITH THE ENTIRE CONTINENT OF AFRICA IT IS MEANINGLESS.

REMEMBER THAT MRS SUZMAN SA

D: THERE IS ONE THING WHICH THE MINISTER CANNOT DO: HE CANNOT BAN IDEAS FROM MEN'S MINDS'

IN CONCLUSION MR CHANCELLOR I SAY: LET THE LORD BE PRAISED, FOR THE DAY SHALL COME, WHEN ALL SHALL BE FREE TO BREATHE THE AIR OF **FREEDOM** WHICH IS THEIRS TO BREATHE AND WHEN THAT DAY SHALL HAVE COME, NO MAN, NO MATTER HOW MANY TANKERS HE HAS, WILL REVERSE THE COURSE OF EVENTS.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL  
ONKGOPOTSE RAMOTHIBI TIRO.

ENDS HOPE THIS IS READABLE OVER

ANNE HEFFERNAN

STUDENT POLITICS & DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

# Limpopo's Legacy

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# Limpopo's Legacy

Student Politics &  
Democracy in South Africa

Anne Heffernan



WITS UNIVERSITY PRESS

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For Mom and Dad, who always believed this was possible.

And for the generations of student protesters in South Africa, past and present, who have shaped history by reimagining the future.



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Knoxville, Tennessee  
July 2018

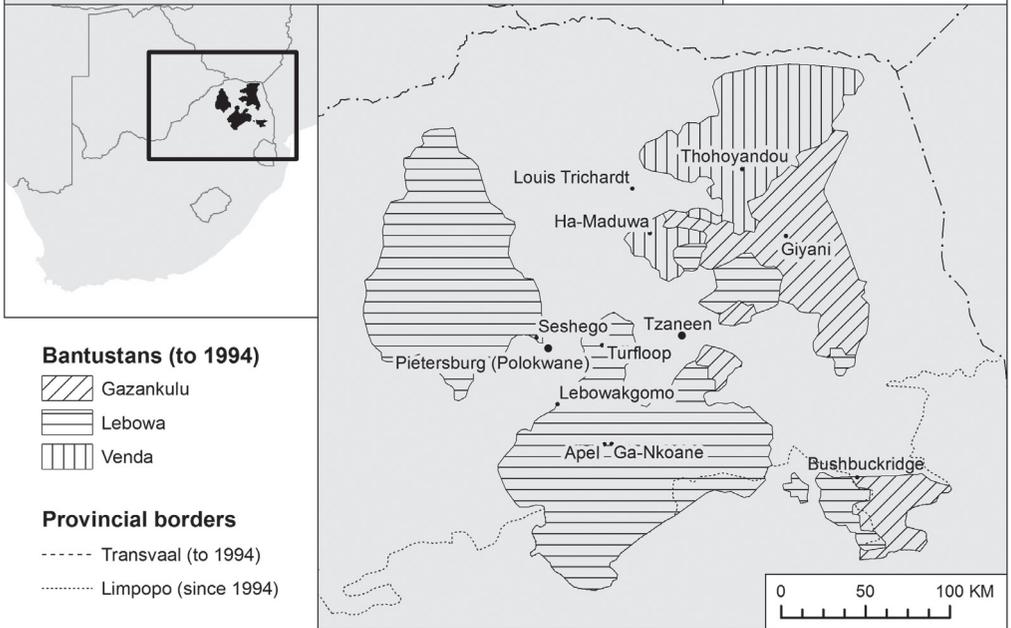
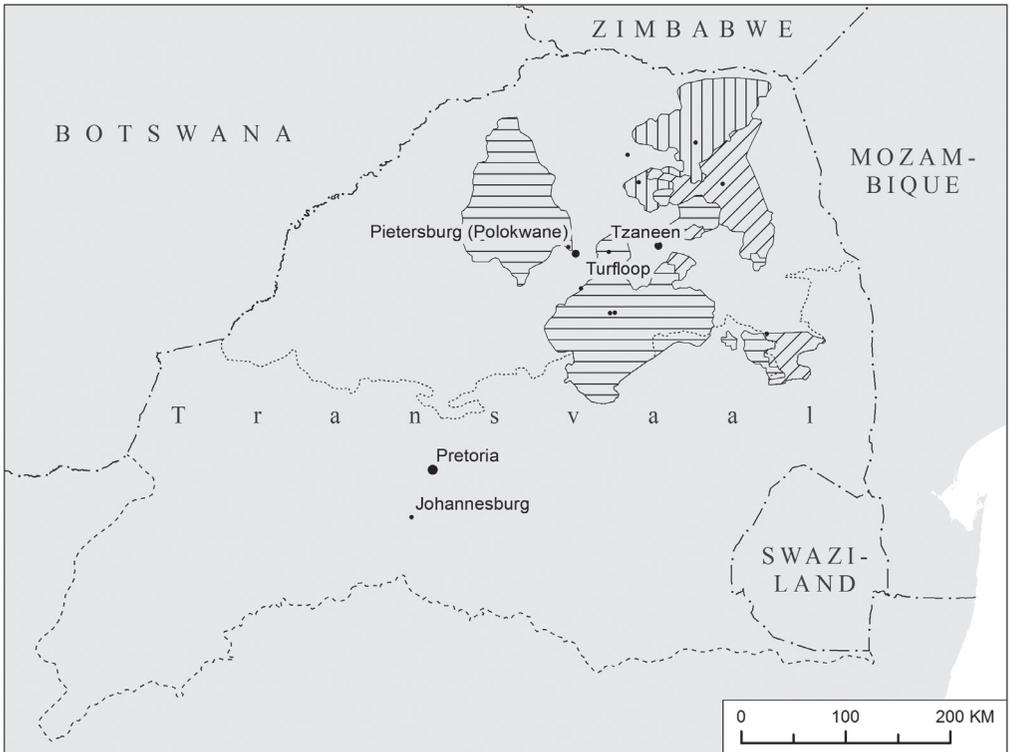


# Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
APLF	Azanian People's Liberation Front
ASM	African Students' Movement
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization
AZASM	Azanian Students' Movement
AZASO	Azanian Students' Organization
BASA	Black Academic Staff Association (of the University of the North)
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BCMA	Black Consciousness Movement of Azania
BCMSA	Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa
BCP	Black Community Programmes
BLS	(University Colleges of) Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland
BOSS	Bureau of State Security
BPC	Black People's Convention
COPE	Congress of the People
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRIC	Community Resource Information Centre
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FedSem	Federal Theological Seminary

FMF	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> (Mozambique Liberation Front)
FRELIMO	FeesMustFall
GSC	General Students Council (of SASO)
ICT	Inkatha Freedom Party
IFP	Institute of Contextual Theology
IUEF	International University Exchange Fund
MAYCO	Mankweng Youth Congress
MCA	Mankweng Civic Association
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	<i>Umkhonto we Sizwe</i> (The Spear of the Nation)
NEC	National Executive Council
NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NGK	<i>Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk</i> (Dutch Reformed Church)
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
NYO	National Youth Organisation (sometimes also abbreviated as Nayo)
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PEYCO	Port Elizabeth Youth Congress
PWV	Pretoria–Witwatersrand–Vereeniging
REC	Regional Executive Council
RMF	RhodesMustFall
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SASM	South African Students' Movement
SASO	South African Students' Organization
SANSCO	South African National Students' Congress
SASCO	South African Students' Congress

SAYCO	South African Youth Congress
SCA	Students' Christian Association
SCM	Students' Christian Movement
SEYO	Sekhukhune Youth Organization
SOYO	Soweto Youth Organization
SPA	Soweto Parents' Association
SRC	Students' Representative Council
SSRC	Soweto Students' Representative Council
STAC	Soweto Teachers' Action Committee
UBC	Urban Bantu Council
UCM	University Christian Movement
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNICON	University College of the North (uncommon abbreviation)
UNIN	University of the North (uncommon abbreviation)
UNISA	University of South Africa
WASA	Writers' Association of South Africa
ZCC	Zion Christian Church



The north-eastern Bantustans showing the location of Limpopo

# Introduction

The news broke first on Twitter: Just before six o'clock in the morning, on 28 September 2016, the University of Limpopo announced it was closing its gates in the face of student protests. All students were required to vacate their residences and to leave campus by five o'clock that afternoon, giving them just eleven hours to make plans for transport home – for some, in other provinces and even neighbouring countries – or to make alternative arrangements. By the afternoon a handful of journalists were snapping pictures of students lugging duffel bags and dragging suitcases down the roads of Mankweng township, making their way to taxi ranks that would take them on towards destinations as far afield in South Africa as the Eastern Cape, or across the northern border shared with Zimbabwe and Botswana. For many who could not afford the unexpected cost of the trip home the only shelter to be found was in the churches of Mankweng, which opened their doors to the students who had been displaced.

The university administration made the decision to indefinitely suspend all academic activities on the campus – colloquially known as Turfloop – to protect 'the safety and security of our students, staff, and University property'.<sup>1</sup> They did so in the context of national university protests during the second wave of FeesMustFall.

Slightly more than a week before Turfloop sent all of its students packing, an announcement about the future of funding universities in the country was met with an outpouring of protest across campuses. The plan, announced by the Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande, was, in fact, a direct response to weeks of protest and a national shutdown of South African universities in late 2015. In October of that year, students at the University of the Witwatersrand shut down their campus in protest at the rising cost of university fees; quickly the movement gained a hashtag: #FeesMustFall, and a national following. It also

<sup>1</sup> N.M. Mokgalong, 'Notice to All Students: Indefinite Suspension of All Academic Activities', tweeted from the official university twitter account, @ULvarsity 5:55am, 28 September 2016.

evolved beyond the issue of reducing fees to include calls for decolonizing South Africa's universities, and, eventually, a movement for free education. In a matter of days the students had pushed the issue beyond their individual universities, to the heart of government itself. On 23 October 2015 then President Jacob Zuma announced a 0% increase in fees for the 2016 academic year, effectively freezing fees at the 2015 rate. He also declared that the government would convene a commission to investigate existing fee structures and the possibility of implementing free education. Students across the country had won a major victory.

The form and substance of their struggle would inform important aspects of South African politics in the coming years, reaching the highest echelons of power. The work of the Commission of Inquiry into the Feasibility of making High Education and Training fee-free in South Africa (or the Heher Commission, as it is called for the judge who chaired it), took nearly two years to release its findings. It concluded that fee-free higher education in South Africa was neither feasible nor sustainable. The Heher Commission delivered its report to President Zuma in August 2017, and the office of the presidency released the findings to the public in November of that year.<sup>2</sup> But despite the commission's contention that fee-free university education was not sustainable,<sup>3</sup> a month after the public release of the report at the opening of the ANC's December 2017 National Conference in Soweto, President Zuma announced that higher education would be made fee-free for all students from families earning less than R350,000 per year, beginning in 2018.<sup>4</sup> Zuma's disregard of his own commission of inquiry's recommendation speaks to the political currency that the FeesMustFall movement had generated since late 2015. In the wake of the report's release, student wings of major opposition parties – the Economic Freedom Fighters and the Democratic

<sup>2</sup> Statement of the Presidency on the release of the Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Feasibility of making High Education and Training Fee-free in South Africa, 13 November 2017. [<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/press-statements/release-report-commission-inquiry-feasibility-making-high-education-and-training/>] Accessed 13 March 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The report did, however, advocate for fee-free structures to be put in place at TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Colleges. Bianca Capazorio, 'Heher Commission recommends all TVET students receive free education', *Times Live*, 13 November 2017. [<https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-11-13-tvet-colleges-should-be-fee-free-heher-proposal/>] Accessed 13 March 2018.

<sup>4</sup> 'Zuma announces free higher education for over 90% of students', 16 December 2017. [<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/south-africa-to-increase-spending-on-higher-education-zuma>] Accessed 13 March 2018.

Alliance – along with the ANC-aligned South African Students' Congress (SASCO) all rejected the Heher Commission's recommendations.<sup>5</sup>

When Nzimande announced the new funding plan for 2017 in mid-September 2016, the Heher Commission had not yet completed its work, and his announcement that universities would be able to determine their own fee increases, as long as they remained below 8% of current levels, was roundly rejected by students. They were not appeased by the fact that the new increases would only apply to those whose family income amounted to more than R600,000 annually, in an attempt to protect poor students and the so-called 'missing middle'<sup>6</sup> from the increase. Almost as soon as the words were out of Nzimande's mouth, the Wits campus reverberated with calls for another shutdown, and the speech sparked another round of nationwide campus protests.

The University of Limpopo was closed for a mid-term break during the week that Nzimande's announcement was made. As students at other universities resumed protests, all was quiet at Turfloop during the week of 19 September. When students returned to campus on Monday 26 September, however, they 'promptly joined' in the nationwide protests.<sup>7</sup> Over the course of that Monday and Tuesday, the campus was embroiled in running battles between students and security personnel – both with police from the nearby police station in Mankweng and with campus security. Six students were arrested on charges of public violence, for allegedly damaging university property and attempting to burn down a building.<sup>8</sup> On Tuesday, 27 September, the electricity to campus was cut off, including to the residences where students stayed. Some student leaders accused the administration of compromising student safety in

<sup>5</sup> 'Students react to fees commission report', 14 November 2017. [<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/catch-it-live-sasco-reacts-to-fees-commission-report>] Accessed 13 March 2018.

<sup>6</sup> The 'missing middle' became a popular term during debates over how to facilitate access to higher education in 2015–16. It refers to students who are not eligible for the government-funded National Student Financial Assistance Scheme (NSFAS), because their families earn above the threshold for the scheme's means-testing, but do not have the means to self-fund their education. The threshold for NSFAS eligibility varies, but as of early 2017 it was around R160,000 annually. [<https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/everything-you-need-to-know-about-nsfas/>] Accessed 21 July 2017.

<sup>7</sup> 'University of Limpopo shut down indefinitely', *Wits Vuwuzela*, 28 September 2016. [<http://witsvuwuzela.com/2016/09/28/university-of-limpopo-shut-down-indefinitely/>] Accessed 20 July 2017.

<sup>8</sup> K. Brandt, 'UL students continue to protest until demands met', *Eyewitness News*, 27 September 2016. [<http://ewn.co.za/2016/09/28/University-of-Limpopo-students-to-continue-protests-until-demands-met>] Accessed 20 July 2017.

an attempt to disrupt protests, and one student reported an alleged rape during the black-out. The university administration countered that the power cut had not been their decision, but was the result of a fault at Eskom, the state-owned national utility provider.<sup>9</sup> Protests continued into Tuesday evening. By early the next morning university administrators had made the decision to discontinue the academic programme and shut the campus, sending students home only days after they had returned from the mid-term break.

The scene – of protesting students battling police officers, and being displaced from campus with little notice – was strikingly familiar at Turfloop. Nearly forty-five years earlier, when the relatively small, isolated university was intended to train the civil servants of nearby Bantustans, a campus-wide protest over the inequities of Bantu Education led to the shutdown of the university and expulsion of all 1200 students. That incident, in April 1972, put Turfloop on the national map as a center of anti-apartheid student resistance, and is discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Two years later, almost forty-two years to the day before the 2016 wave of FeesMustFall erupted at Turfloop, another cohort of student activists led a pro-FRELIMO rally on the university sports pitch in September 1974. Their celebration of Mozambique's newly won independence ended in violent clashes with the police, and the arrest of several students – including future state president Cyril Ramaphosa. Those events are analyzed in Chapter 2.

Turfloop, in its iterations as the University College of the North, the University of the North, and the University of Limpopo, is central to a great deal of the history this book explores, and the argument it makes about the regional impact of South Africa's rural north on national political ideologies. The development of new forms of political thinking and activism among students at the university – and their connection to networks and groups far beyond its gates – form the crux of the story told in Chapters 1, 2, and 3. During the 1960s and the early 1970s Turfloop became a hotspot of political activism in the Northern Transvaal, but it was also an important node in networks of student and youth anti-apartheid activism that connected the entire country. The expansion and development of those politics and networks beyond the university is discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, in which I link urban townships and rural villages in a history of connected and interdependent student and youth activism. Chapter 7 addresses this legacy, and the remnants of these networks and important nodes, like Turfloop, in the post-apartheid era.

<sup>9</sup> 'University of Limpopo shut down indefinitely', *Wits Vuvuzela*, 28 September 2016.

### **The argument and structure of this book**

This book traces several strands of ideological history over the latter half and end of South Africa's apartheid era. It argues that regional and local experiences played a critical role in the transmission and transformation of the political ideas and practices of generations of youth and student activists, and that these have been broadly neglected in favour of a scholarship that focuses on urban politics. Through its focus on the Northern Transvaal (contemporary Limpopo Province), it considers the way that rural and peripheral histories have been marginalized in the national story of struggle, despite the prominent roles that local activists, institutions, and communities played in developing the ideas that went to the heart of national movements. It tells a history that cuts across movements, ideologies, and geographic spaces, and sometimes blurs the politically constructed boundaries between these by tracing the intersecting histories of generations of activists who were rooted in Limpopo, either by birth, family, or education.

The book is structured in three sections, each of which considers the political development of local institutions and activists, and their interactions with regional and national entities. It looks first at the genesis and growth of anti-apartheid politics on the campus of the University of the North, or Turfloop. The first three chapters deal with the increasing radicalization and national impact of politics on that campus during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular this section adds a new dimension to the growing scholarship on the history of Black Consciousness, by offering a deeply local perspective of its development on campus.

Chapters 4 and 5 adopt a wider lens than the previous section and consider the organizational decline of Black Consciousness and the reemergence of multi-racial Charterism at the regional and local levels. This section moves beyond the university student organization at Turfloop, and looks at the expansion of anti-apartheid activism in secondary schools and among non-student youth. Chapter 5, in particular, considers the changing ways in which violence came to be a form of political tool and expression. It includes analysis of the wave of witch-hunts that swept the northern Transvaal in the late 1980s in this context, and argues that these were both social and political acts.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the ways that youth and student organizations positioned themselves during the final years of apartheid and the early years of democracy – in relation to one another, in relation to various liberation movements, and finally in relation to the state itself. By following the biography of two of Limpopo's most famous political youth leaders – Peter Mokaba and Julius Malema – these chapters pull

together many of the ideological and organizational developments that the previous sections discuss. Mokaba and Malema are perhaps Limpopo's most famous young politicians, and both were well known for their firebrand style. But as preceding chapters argue, the province has a deep history of radical student and youth politics that transcended both movements and generations.

### **Limpopo – a place of physical and political frontiers**

Limpopo is democratic South Africa's northernmost province, lying between the urban conglomeration of Gauteng to the south, which includes both Johannesburg and Pretoria, and the northern borders shared with Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Botswana. It is predominantly rural; though the capital city of Polokwane is the country's tenth largest municipality, and is home to more than 600,000 residents, the overall population density of the province is only approximately forty-four people per square kilometre, in contrast to neighbouring Gauteng, where it is 675 people per square kilometre. Limpopo is also overwhelmingly poor. During South Africa's 2010 census, nearly two-thirds of Limpopo's residents were defined as 'dependents' (of non-working age – either below 15 or above 65 – and supported predominantly by state grants), and for those of working age, more than 38% were unemployed. For youth, defined by StatsSA as aged 15–24, this number was drastically higher – hovering just below 50%.<sup>10</sup>

These contemporary statistics are heavily informed by the past. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, under the Afrikaner *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) and the subsequent Union of South Africa, the area that is today Limpopo was the northern part of the area called Transvaal – during its iteration as an independent republic, and then as one of South Africa's four provinces. Before the arrival of the Voortrekkers and their conquest and establishment of the ZAR, the area was home to the Pedi polity under the rule of Paramount Chief Sekwati and then his son Sekhunkhune. This history, of negotiation, conflict, and conquest is best chronicled in Peter Delius' *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi polity, the Boers, and the British in the*

<sup>10</sup> StatsSA, Analysis of Limpopo by municipality, relying on 2010 census data. [[http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page\\_id=964](http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=964)] Accessed 1 August 2017. See also J. Lestrade-Jefferis, 'The South African Labour Market: Selected time-based social and international comparisons' (Pretoria: Statistics South Africa, 2002).

*nineteenth century Transvaal*.<sup>11</sup> *The Land Belongs to Us* and Delius' later volume, *A Lion Amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and resistance in the Northern Transvaal*, offer the most extensive political history of this part of South Africa, from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century.

After their election in 1948, the National Party began to develop and implement apartheid's racist spatial segregation across South Africa. Rural areas, already shaped in their racial composition by the Natives Land Act of 1913<sup>12</sup> and subsequent legislation, became a key site of 'grand apartheid' planning. Apartheid was fundamentally concerned with controlling African mobility in South Africa. Building on earlier legislation like the Natives Land Act and onerous pass laws, National Party apparatchiks endeavoured to extend and expand the racial segregation of previous eras. Their goal was to wholly separate white South Africans from black, Indian, and coloured ones. Homelands, or Bantustans, were the envisioned pinnacle of achieving this control; apartheid planners aimed to eventually transform existing native reserves into self-governing territories that were organized by ethnic group. Ideally, in the minds of the planners, all black South Africans would now have citizenship in a particular homeland, based on his or her ethnicity. Their right to travel or work in 'white' South Africa would be carefully controlled by pass. The legal groundwork for this plan was laid in 1959 with the passage of the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act. As Saul Dubow has noted, the idea of Bantustans was couched in terms of nation-building for each ethnic group concerned, and allowed the South African government to attempt to 'wrong-foot its external critics by mimicking decolonization elsewhere in Africa'.<sup>13</sup> Initial planning provided for eight ethnic homelands, and this later expanded to ten.

Three of these new Bantustans were carved out of the farmlands, reserves, villages, and towns of the Northern Transvaal. Lebowa was the largest of the three. Delineated for the BaPedi/Northern Sotho people, it stretched, in several non-contiguous pieces of territory, from north to

<sup>11</sup> P. Delius, *The Land Belongs to Us: The Pedi polity, the Boers, and the British in the nineteenth century Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983).

<sup>12</sup> The Natives Land Act (No. 27) of 1913 restricted black Africans to owning land on reserves that made up approximately 7% of South Africa's land, leaving 93% of the land under white control. It resulted in forced removals and dispossessed Africans from land they had – in some cases – lived on for generations. This spatial segregation and land alienation was reinforced by subsequent legislation, including the Urban Areas Act (1923), Natives and Land Trust Act (1936) and the Group Areas Act (1950).

<sup>13</sup> S. Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948–1994* (Oxford, 2014), p. 106.

south across the center of what is now Limpopo Province. It covered more than three times the area and had two to three times the population of its smaller neighbours, Gazankulu (for the VaTsonga/Shangaan) and Venda (for the VhaVenda). These both bordered the Kruger National Park on Limpopo's north-eastern edge. They shared a substantial border with one another, and with small Lebowan exclaves.

Each of these has a distinct political history. Delius' aforementioned books chronicle the history of Sekhukhuneland, which constituted a large part of southern Lebowa. Ineke van Kessel and Sekibakiba Lekgoathi have each written extensively about political organization in this area under the United Democratic Front during the 1980s, and in Lekgoathi's case, during the formation of homelands.<sup>14</sup> Barbara Oomen has traced the history of chiefly power in the area in relation to traditional authority in post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>15</sup> Scholarship on the area occupied by the two smaller homelands has been predominantly anthropological. Fraser MacNeill's *AIDS, Politics, and Music in South Africa* offers a rich, nuanced view of contemporary life – and biomedical understanding during the AIDS crisis – in the former homeland of Venda. MacNeill does an admirable job of historically grounding this story, particularly in his treatment of contestation over the succession of the Venda king. Isak Niehaus has taken a historical-ethnographic approach to analyzing the phenomena of witchcraft and occult beliefs in Bushbuckridge municipality, once a part of the Gazankulu homeland. But the history of these areas – though not incidental – is not at the core of either Niehaus' or MacNeill's scholarly concerns; their arguments lie fundamentally in the present. Alan Kirkaldy, Lize Kriel, and more recently, Michelle Hay, have written deep histories about these areas. Kirkaldy and Kriel's work on the history of religion and missionaries among the VhaVenda in the late nineteenth century details a contested local history on both ethnic and gendered lines nearly a century before the creation of the Venda homeland.<sup>16</sup> Hay has written of the protracted struggle for land rights

<sup>14</sup> I. van Kessel, 'Beyond our wildest dreams': *The United Democratic Front and the transformation of South Africa* (Charlottesville, VA, 2000), pp. 75–150; S. Lekgoathi, 'Teacher Militancy and the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994', *South African Historical Journal*, 58(1) (2007), 226–52; S. Lekgoathi, 'Chiefs, Migrants, and North Ndebele Ethnicity in the Context of Surrounding Homeland Politics, 1965–1978', *African Studies*, 62(1) (2003), 53–77.

<sup>15</sup> B. Oomen, *Chiefs in South Africa: Law, power and culture in the post-apartheid era* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 123–62.

<sup>16</sup> A. Kirkaldy and L. Kriel, 'Converts and Conservatives: Missionary representations of African rulers in the Northern Transvaal, c. 1870–1900', *Le Fait*

and access over the course of the twentieth century by communities in present-day Letaba district, once part of the Gazankulu homeland.<sup>17</sup>

These assorted histories and ethnographies cover a range of periods, and a variety of places and communities. They each offer rich local detail, and some provide deep historical context, but none considers the region of the northern Transvaal as a whole, or the particular interactions – at a regional level – between the government and authority structures of Venda, Gazankulu, and Lebowa. This book argues that the interaction of these three governments with the South African government in Pretoria, and occasionally with each other, shaped conditions for young people in their territories in ways that affected political ideas and activism at the national level. The confluence of frequently impoverished and oppressive local circumstances with national liberation movements often confronted collaborative policing efforts, which aimed to repress resistance to apartheid. This was particularly true for events at Turfloop during the 1970s and 1980s, where students from around the country gathered and exchanged political ideas and developed forms of action. The university was responsible for educating students from all three Bantustans, as well as urban townships and other rural areas, but it was physically based in Lebowa and subject to policing both by local Lebowa police and by the South African police, and eventually the South African Defence Force. This particular confluence of national and local political interests and security forces are a recurrent theme throughout this book.

The regional history that is explored here is important because it has not been told collectively, and this raises new ways of thinking about both the local and the regional in the formation of anti-apartheid ideology. It contributes to the regional literature described above, and to the growing scholarship on Black Consciousness, and student politics in South African history. But it is also important because it makes a broader argument for the importance of geographically peripheral spaces in influencing national political trends that can be applied and tested beyond South Africa.

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*Missionaires*, 18 (2006), 109–44; L. Kriel and A. Kirkaldy, ““Praying is the work of men, not the work of women”: The response of Bahananwa and Vhavenda women to conversion in late nineteenth-century Lutheran missionary territories’, *South African Historical Journal*, 61(2) (2009), 316–35.

<sup>17</sup> M. Hay, ‘A Tangled Past: Land settlement, removals, and restitution in Letaba District, 1900–2013’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40(4) (2014), 745–60.

### The Global Sixties – Student activism from south to north

The period in which this text begins its analysis – the late 1960s – is famed for the cultural revolutions that swept America and Europe. 'Paris 1968' has become a watchword for the flourishing of revolutionary ideas during this period, while referring specifically to events in May of that year when French students and workers joined forces in a multi-faceted protest against fascism, imperialism, and hierarchies of all sorts, and for freedom of political, cultural, creative, and sexual expression, as well as a strike for better working conditions and higher wages. Paris in 1968 followed student demonstrations in the United States against the Vietnam War and in support of civil rights and women's liberation, and the *68er-Bewegung* students' movement in West Germany against aggressive policing and a conservative state. It was in turn followed by the Italian worker's movement in late 1969 – known as *maggio strisciante* or 'the drawn out May', recalling the Parisian influence.<sup>18</sup>

Europe and the United States have dominated scholarship and broader discourse about this period,<sup>19</sup> but new scholarship is extending the analysis of the 'global sixties' to the global south. Andrew Ivaska has written compellingly of the emergence of Dar es Salaam as 'a key nodal point for transnational activism' during the 1960s, when it was a haven for exiles from white settler regimes in Southern Africa as well as for over a thousand African American activists who were 'fleeing FBI harassment'.<sup>20</sup> Ivaska tells an explicitly transnational history, positioning Dar es Salaam as a hub for international activists who were moving between and across national spaces. But some events in the 1960s were globally linked, despite being nationally bounded. In 1968 the eyes of the world were on Mexico City as it became the first city in Latin America to host the Olympic Games. But just ten days before the opening ceremony, on 2 October 1968 Mexican police and soldiers fired on a student meeting in the public square of Tlatelolco, killing an untold number of

<sup>18</sup> M. Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian students and workers in 1968* (New York, 2004), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> In addition to Seidman, for the Parisian revolution and its enduring impact on French contemporary history, see K. Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago, 2002), and C. Reynolds, *Memories of May '68: France's convenient consensus* (Cardiff, 2011). For a cross-cutting analysis of cultural and political protests across Western Europe and North America, see G.R. Horn, *Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> A. Ivaska, 'Movement Youth in a Global Sixties Hub: The everyday lives of transnational activists in postcolonial Dar es Salaam' in *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. R.I. Jobs and D.M. Pomfret (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 188, 189

students and bystanders. Brewster and Brewster have detailed how the Mexican student movement arose from local and national proximate causes, but came to global prominence owing to its connection to the Olympic Games.<sup>21</sup>

Bahru Zewde's *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian Student Movement, c. 1960–1974* does an exemplary job of situating that student movement among the global panoply of student protests in the 1960s and 1970s, including South Africa's Soweto Uprising.<sup>22</sup> Zewde spends a chapter setting the global stage on which the Ethiopian Students Movement emerged, and he argues that its growth was influenced by national, continental and global factors. Zewde is somewhat unusual in including South Africa in his historiography of student politics of the mid-twentieth century; Soweto 1976, indisputably South Africa's most prominent moment of student organization, occurred nearly a decade after 1968, often taken as the global zenith of student protests. Even the South African historiography has traditionally considered the 1960s as a period of political 'quiescence' domestically or at best regrouping in the wake of harsh state repression.<sup>23</sup>

This book situates the rise of new political ideas among South African students earlier – in the late 1960s, sometimes in conversation with (or even appropriation of) global student and anticolonial discourses. It also, in contrast to most of the literature on student politics elsewhere – which, from Mexico City to Paris to Dar es Salaam, is predominantly urban in its focus – endeavours to highlight the contribution that rural local and regional politics made to the development of the new political ideas and forms of action that went on to inform national movements.

### **South African students and youth, from Sekhukhuleni to Soweto**

This book addresses the variety of ways young people in Limpopo have engaged in formal politics, both in opposition to the apartheid state, and later in association with the ANC in government. My analysis extends across organizations, ideologies, geographic boundaries, and historical periods, but the theme that unites it is its focus on young political actors. I

<sup>21</sup> K. Brewster and C. Brewster, 'The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic perspective', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26(6) (May 2009), 814–39.

<sup>22</sup> B. Zewde, *The Quest for Socialist Utopia: The Ethiopian student movement, c. 1960–1974* (Oxford, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> One recent exception to this trend is Julian Brown's *The Road to Soweto: Resistance and the Uprising of 16 June 1976* (Oxford, 2016), which is discussed further in the next section of this introduction.