THE CHALLENGES OF DIGITISING HERITAGE COLLECTIONS
IN SOUTH AFRICA:
A CASE STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the organisational challenges for an archive which is attempting to digitise its collections. While technical, organisational and managerial challenges are discussed, this research focuses particularly on whether the digitisation process alters the power relations within the archive and between the archive and other role players within the South African context. The role-players include the state and the archive's external management, artefact copyright holders, digitisation vendors and organisations and archive users. More importantly, it examines how the archive responded to the challenges it faced.

The research investigates: the rationale for digitising archival collections; who the stakeholders in a digitisation project are, how they relate to each other and what the power relations between them are; the financial implications of digitising, in particular for access to the collections; the risks of digitisation; and the implications of selection of materials for digitisation.

The qualitative research uses open-ended, iterative video and audio interviews to provide the data for the case study.

The research found that personal connections, serendipity, ad-hoc behaviour, trust, distrust and the fear of exploitation had an impact on the digitisation process, and concluded that the Archive managed to steer a course between competing interests to maintain its integrity.

Key words: South Africa; archives; digitisation; archives and power relationships; memory; national heritage; liberation archives.
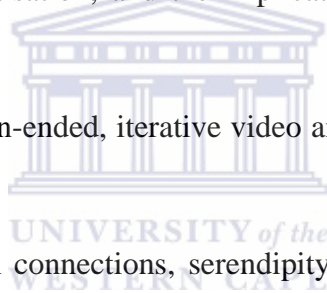
DECLARATION

I declare that *The Challenges Of Digitising Heritage Collections In South Africa: A Case Study* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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"The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed - if all records told the same tale - then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past', ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'. And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control', they called it: In Newspeak, 'doublethink'."

George Orwell, 1984
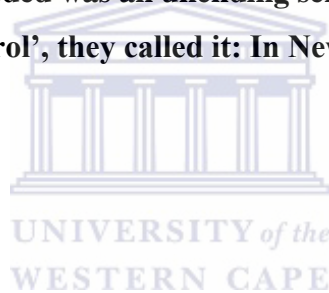
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The George Orwell quotation that introduces this dissertation encapsulates a number of issues relating to the digitisation of archives. Whose memory is recorded by the archive? And how do the power relations within archives and between archives and the outside world change, over time, as the organisation changes?

This dissertation uses a case study approach to analyse digitisation of a liberation archive, the UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Archive [Mayibuye], examining the political, social and organisational aspects of the process.

Digitisation is the "the process of transforming analogue material into binary electronic (digital) form, especially for storage and use in a computer": digitised materials are those that have undergone that process, as opposed to those "born digital" (Pearce-Moses 2005: 120). According to the Society of American Archivists, an archive consists of "materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator". In addition, it refers to the building housing such materials, and also to an organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations (Pearce-Moses 2005: 30).

1.1 The Mayibuye context

The term "liberation archive" has been used in a number of contexts, particularly for archives relating to the women's liberation movement and animal liberation movements. In the South African context, the term has been used to describe archives relating to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Typically these have included the repatriated materials from the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) (Maaba 2013: ii). However they also included materials donated, often anonymously, to international anti-apartheid organisations such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) and the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF). These materials were repatriated to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa after the unbanning of the liberation movements and the end of statutory apartheid.

It is not surprising that the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was chosen as a home for the collections. The University, established in the 1950s as a university for 'Coloured' (mixed- race) South Africans, was scornfully referred to as the "Bush College" because of its distance from the Cape Town urban centre. It was at the forefront of the anti-apartheid movement in South African universities. The Mayibuye Centre (as it was then known) was established by a history professor at UWC, Andre Odendaal, who was instrumental in arranging that the IDAF collections were housed at UWC. He was also appointed to set up and run Robben Island Museum after the end of apartheid.

The Mayibuye archive is unique in a number of ways: it was the first liberation archive in South Africa, housing resources about the anti-apartheid struggle and it was largely staffed by political activists to support political activity. It was unlike other archives of its time, such as the National Archive or academic archives. It was a support, resource and memory-keeper for the liberation movements, ex-political prisoners and the broader anti-apartheid movement. It has been used as a model for the creation of other liberation archives in Southern Africa, according to one of the archivists interviewed for this study. It is also unique in its organisational structure. It is part of the Heritage Department of the Robben Island Museum, but is housed at the University of the Western Cape in terms of a memorandum of agreement between the two organisations. The University, one of the under-resourced so-called 'historically disadvantaged' universities in the country, has provided facilities for Mayibuye but has not been able to provide much more support. Until recently it adopted a hands-off approach to Mayibuye, though it will be shown later in this document that this is changing.

1.2 The national context

The history of apartheid in South Africa is a history of state control of all spheres of life, and archives are no exception. Archives reflected the dominant ideology of the time, and explicitly presented the ideology of the powerful as the sole voice of society, while excluding the voices of the powerless. This was true both of colonial and apartheid archives. Lalu notes that "Since the nineteenth century, and in some instances much earlier, vast archives of discipline and punishment paint a harrowing picture of the complicity of knowledge in

achieving social subjection. The archive was never far from the needs of colonialism" (2007: 36).

Under apartheid this was also true. Harris notes: "By their silences and their narratives of power, their constructions of experience, apartheid's memory institutions legitimised apartheid rule. A vast simmering memory of resistance and struggle was forced away into informal spaces and the deeper reaches of the underground" (2002: 69). These "informal spaces" included the removal of resistance artefacts to safety in overseas repositories such as the AAM and IDAF. Harris also notes that "Apartheid realities and the State Archives Service (SAS) status as an organ of the state combined to ensure that many of its services were fashioned into tools of the apartheid system" (2002: 71). In the 1980s many anti-apartheid institutions deposited their archival materials in university libraries (2002: 74), possibly because of a perception that they were not seen as part of the apartheid system.

When it was clear that apartheid was to end, according to Harris, there was a "large-scale and systematic sanitisation of official memory authorised at the highest levels of government", not only of state information, but also of the "records confiscated by the security police from individuals and organisations opposed to apartheid" (2002: 70).

In the post-apartheid era, archives have had to confront their pasts and reinvent themselves. State archives which had previously positioned themselves as "apolitical" and "neutral" were accused of collaboration with the apartheid state; others, such as the anti-apartheid AAM and IDAF, had to reinvent themselves with the demise of formal apartheid.

At the same time, power relations within the archive, as well as between archive and external players have changed dramatically. Digitisation adds another layer of complexity to these changing power relations and struggles. In particular, questions of ownership and control of digitised versions of artefacts have become sites of contestation.

South Africa has seen a number of initiatives around the digitisation of heritage resources: the 2010 draft National Policy on Digitisation of Heritage Resources (Department of Arts and Culture: 2010) records the following events:

- A 1997 workshop funded by the Mellon Foundation led to the establishment of the Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA project) in 1999 (p17)

- The National Heritage Council (NHC) organised a national consultative workshop in May 2007 on Archives, Digitisation and Ownership, which led to the Heritage Transformation Charter in 2009 (p18)

- The National Research Foundation (NRF) conducted a national research project on digitisation and preservation (p18), with the first phase being an register of digitisation projects in South Africa in 2009 (Page-Shipp 2009: 17-18).

The work on the National Policy on Digitisation of Heritage Resources included a consultative workshop in February 2011 where stakeholders discussed the draft policy. Since then, however, there do not appear to be many developments:

- No copy of the final Heritage Transformation Charter can be found on the NHC website, and the NHC 2009 annual report comments that the project has been taken over by the Department of Arts and Culture

- The Department of Arts and Culture's strategic plan reports that strategic planning around digitisation can only take place once the National Policy on the Digitisation of Heritage Resources is finalised. This appears not to have happened

- The second version of the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, released in June 2013 mentions digitisation primarily in terms of libraries, rather than archives: "Transformation of libraries into digital-based institutions for information delivery (virtual libraries) will be considered in addressing the challenge of access and lack of facilities. Additionally, living heritage will be permanently recorded using the modern technologies of digitisation, and where feasible be placed in libraries, to ensure both long-term preservation and improved access to information. For example, materials such as electronic documents, photographs, CD-ROMS and videos contain information that will be digitally preserved to enhance public access to and to prevent loss through technological obsolescence" (Department of Arts & Culture 2013: 58). There appears to be no discussion of digitisation of archives, or of the potential pitfalls of digitisation.

It appears that, at a national level, progress has stalled (although Chapter Four does discuss some recent progress in this regard). Graham Dominy, until recently South Africa's National Archivist, has even harsher words. In a recent statement on his blog (in which he admits to "not being a neutral observer"), he argues that the Department of Arts and Culture needs to sweep away "the clouds of inertia masking incompetence, dysfunctionality and confusion"

(2013: 2). He argues that the Department's focus on artistic and cultural matters at the expense of archives has meant that archives nationally have been neglected by the Department (2013:6) and that its operations were "subject to the whims of junior officials in a dysfunctional department" (2013:11). The state's disregard for archives suggested in Dominy's words is one of the themes that emerged in the case study of Mayibuye and will be returned to in later chapters.

The quotation from George Orwell that introduced this dissertation sums up so many of the issues relating to archives as a voice of the past and as repositories of memory. What is memory? "1. The knowledge of events, people, places, and other things of the past. - 2. An individual's knowledge of the past. - 3. A specific recollection of something in the past" (Pearce-Moses 2005: 247). Harris uses the term "memory institutions" (2002: 69) to describe archives in South Africa.

The question is which memories and whose voices are to be heard. Archivists' decisions on what should be added to an archival collection, for example, can silence one version of history by excluding it, and raise another into prominence by adding it to the collection. The same holds true during the digitisation process: making a digital copy of one artefact and adding it to a website grants it prominence that it did not have before; the non-digitised artefact remains hidden in obscurity. It is vital that these unacknowledged power relations are put under the spotlight and taken into account during the digitisation process. Archivists need to be aware of the power that they have, and an obligation to use it to give a voice to those whose voices have been suppressed or ignored.

The author decided to research this archive for two reasons. A pragmatic reason was that he had been employed on contract by the archive (he catalogued the film collection at Mayibuye), so he is familiar with the collection and is in regular contact with the staff. It is acknowledged that this personal involvement could create a risk of a lack of objectivity by the researcher, which needed to be continuously guarded against; however, these personal relationships meant that interviewees trusted the interviewer and were perhaps more at ease during the interviews, allowing them to be more open and honest in their answers to questions.

A second reason is the fact that the archive has been used as a model for other liberation archives. It is hoped that an understanding of the issues surrounding the digitisation of its collections will shed light on these issues for other archives in Southern Africa.

1.3 Philosophical framework

Archives are traditionally viewed as repositories of cultural heritage, whether in the form of paper documents, audio-visual or physical artefacts. "Cultural heritage is formed by those things or expressions that show the creativity of people. These can be special monuments, like a building, sculpture, painting, a cave dwelling or anything important because of its history, artistic or scientific value" (South African History Archive). The definition of cultural heritage, which once referred almost exclusively to physical artefacts such as monumental remains, has now been expanded to include intangible items of culture, including such diverse items as performance, art or memory. It is the legacy of past generations of a society that are being preserved for future generations.

In the past, archivists saw their role as twofold – to preserve cultural heritage for posterity and to provide access to heritage artefacts and other resources. Much of the literature on archives reflects this logic: writing by archivists is dominated by discussions on technical issues relating to preservation or the organisational management of archives. Significantly, archives and archivists are seen as neutral: preservers and conveyors of heritage.

Changes in technology, in particular the ability to digitise images and documents, have had a dramatic impact on archives. Archivists have seen digital technologies as both a new method of preservation and as a way of increasing access to archival resources without damage to the artefacts. Again the literature reflects this: discussions amongst many archivists centre on the technological issues or the management of digitisation projects.

This perception of archives (and their digitisation) has been challenged, often (though with some notable exceptions) from outside the fields of librarianship and archives management. Theorists such as Manuel Castells link technology and power, arguing that "technology is society, and society cannot be understood or represented without its technological tools"

(1996: 5). Stalder (2006: 24) points out that technologies reflect their societies: "technologies reflect the values and goals of those who make, and remake them".

Historians in particular argue that archives are by definition not neutral, and that they must be seen as contested sites of struggle. What is selected for archiving, how it is presented and who is allowed to see it are all ways in which power relations are maintained (or changed). The digitisation of an archive is an opportunity to examine these relations and, where possible, ensure that power imbalances are addressed.

Power and power relations are at the heart of these debates. "As scholars … increasingly discover and focus upon context, it is essential to reconsider the relationship between archives and the societies that create and use them. At the heart of that relationship is power" (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 5).

What is power? The commonest understanding is that power is the ability of a person to make another do something they would not choose to do. The Penguin Concise English Dictionary considers it "The possession of control, authority, or influence over others and the ability to determine the course of events" (Allen 1995) A more subtle understanding is that "We have an intuitive understanding of power as something which may indeed come out of the mouth of guns, but also of people; which can be wielded evilly, but also for good; and which ultimately does depend on changing people's preferences" (Robertson, 1985" 271)

Archives do not exist in isolation from their societies and are not neutral preservers of heritage. Rather, they are sites of contestation, where the powerful and powerless each tries to ensure that their voice is heard.

Schwartz and Cook also point out that "by treating records and archives as contested sites of power, we can bring new sensibilities to understanding records and archives as dynamic technologies of rule which actually *create* the histories and social realities they ostensibly only *describe* " (2002: 7). Archives are used by the powerful as a means of creating an official worldview which legitimises their authority, and excludes the voices of those who oppose or threaten them.

In his seminal article "The virtual stampede for Africa", Lalu argues for a debate on the "politics of digitisation that aims to politicise the archival disciplines", while setting them in the context of digitisation initiatives in Southern Africa (Lalu 2007: 28). He argues that the lines between archivists and historians need to be blurred so that archives can be used to explore power structures and struggles in society.

This research focuses on relations of power between "the archive" and its stakeholders, and particularly how they change when digitisation occurs. In particular it uses critical research methods to "illuminate the hidden structures of power … and the disempowerment of others" (Cannella and Lincoln 2009: 55). Cannella and Lincoln argue that the foundational questions to research in the critical paradigm are:

- Who or what is helped / privileged / legitimated?
- Who or what is harmed / oppressed / disqualified?

The critical paradigm research lens provides a direct challenge to the notion that archives are purely spaces for preservation of artefacts, and that archivists are neutral functionaries in their work.

Rather than employing a narrow focus by using the work of one particular theorist, the case study uses a "grounded" approach that entails an open-minded exploration of how digitisation changed Mayibuye and its staff members. It does, however, certainly take into account three broad areas of research in the area of digitisation: technical research, organisational / managerial research and critical / "political" research. These will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two.

1.4 Chapter outline

The dissertation consists of six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Background to the problem

> This chapter sets the archive in context, relating it to South African archival history as well as the discussion of liberation archives. It discusses the philosophical framework used to relate theory to Mayibuye's digitisation operations, as well as the significance and limitations of the project.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review explores three major streams of thinking regarding archival digitisation projects: technical writing, managerial / organisational perspectives on digitisation, and critical perspectives which attempt to analyse changes in the "hidden" power relations exposed by the digitisation process.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology used

This chapter gives an account of the research site, discusses the research problem and research questions, and the research design and methodology used.

Chapter 4: Presentation of the data

Here the data uncovered by the research interviews and examination of Mayibuye documents are presented and analysed. Two broad themes are found: firstly, ad-hoc reactive behaviour, personal connections and serendipity are discussed; secondly, trust, distrust and exploitation are considered.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

This relates the themes of Chapter Four to the research questions, and discusses how Mayibuye managed to avoid many of the potential pitfalls of digitisation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion.

The final chapter discusses how case study research suited this research project, final conclusions, and potential areas for future research.

1.5 Significance and limitations of the project

The study focuses on only one archive, so this does limit the study, particularly since the archive is unique. A criticism of case study research is that it cannot be used to make generalisations which could be applied elsewhere. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 283), however, argue that it is possible to extrapolate case study findings, using analytical generalisation, by showing the linkages between findings and previous knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006: 225) also considers this criticism of case study research. He argues that the opposite is true: Galileo's famous experiment of dropping two balls of different masses from a height to demonstrate

that their time of descent was independent of their mass was a case study which was generalised to prove that Aristotle's Law of Gravity was false.

Flyvbjerg (2006:234) also challenges the view that case study researchers run the risk of subjective bias that other researchers do not: that they will tend to confirm their preconceived notions because they allow more leeway in their methodology. Flyvbjerg argues that the opposite is true: "experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias towards falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification" (2006: 237). His words might apply to this case study, where a number of the author's assumptions about power relations in archives were shown to be incorrect.

In employing a qualitative methodology this study explores the organisational and ideological issues associated with digitisation of heritage archives, an area which is often overlooked in favour of technical or managerial writing on the subject. It is hoped that the focus and findings will be of use to other archives, many of which used this archive's structures as models for their own archives.
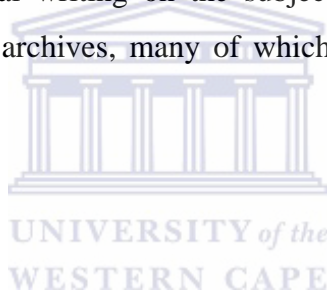
1.6 Ethical statement

At all times I adhere to the ethical guidelines of the Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape. I have respected the rights of participants. I obtained informed consent from my research participants based on adequate information on the project before the interview took place.

Respondents were promised anonymity and are not identifiable by name – pseudonyms are used. This was particularly important due to concerns expressed by interviewees that they might be victimised if the content of their interviews became public knowledge.

Participation in this research process was voluntary and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the research process. Participants were informed about the use of recording equipment and that they would be given transcripts of their interviews on request.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite being a relatively new field of research, digitisation of archival material has received a great deal of academic attention. The research can be divided into three broad groupings: *Technical* research, which deals with the specific the hardware and software issues related to digitising artefacts; *Management* research, which deals with the management of the digitisation process; and *Critical* research, which tries to look beyond the surface issues identified by technical and management research and uncover the power contestations which arise as part of the digitisation process. Although there is some inevitable overlap between the categories, they remain distinct.

As will be apparent from the discussions in Chapter One, this dissertation, while investigating all three of these research areas, uses the lens of critical research to focus on the power dynamics inherent in the digitisation process.

2.1 Technical research

The digitisation of archival material is a highly technical operation, so it is not surprising that this is reflected in the literature. A number of works are technical manuals, providing step-by-step procedures on digitisation. There is little reflection on why digitisation should occur, or the consequences of digitisation.

Mani's journal article *Digitisation: preservation and challenges* is a typical case. The technical reference work explains "charged coupled devices" and "photomultiplier tubes" (Mani, 2009: 69) before discussing issues such as digital quality standards.

Similarly, Pieraccini, Guidi and Atzeni's article "*3D digitizing of cultural heritage*" focuses on the techniques of digitisation. The "Why digitise cultural heritage" section discusses digital reverse engineering to create physical copies of damaged works (2001: 64), rather than social or political reasons for digitising.

The audience for these works is presumably those involved in the technical aspects of digitisation. As such they provide vital information for those about to embark on a

digitisation project. What is equally obvious, though, is that they do not provide any real insight into the organisational, social or political challenges surrounding digitisation.

2.2 Management research

This second grouping covers the management of heritage digitisation projects. While many sources cover technical aspects of digitisation, they do so at a less technical level. Instead, the focus is usually on the project management of digitisation programmes. Typically, this will include digitisation standards, selection criteria for digitisation implementation, staff capacity, the digitisation process, quality control and the preservation of digital images, as well as original artefacts.

Some items are aimed at institutions which are planning to digitise their collections. Maraso, for example, in her article *Digitisation as a preservation practice: look before you leap* (2003) gives invaluable advice whether to digitise at all: she argues that the appeal of being "on the cutting edge" is appealing to some people, but that this can be dangerous unless other factors (the start-up and ongoing financial costs of digitising; whether digitised images will be used enough to justify the expense; the fact that digitisation does not mean an end to preservation costs) are taken into careful consideration (Maroso 2003: 36).

Others comprehensively cover the entire digitisation project from inception to completion. Typical examples are the British Library's manual *Managing the digitisation of library, archive and museum material* (Youngs 2001) and D'Andrea and Martin's' article *Careful considerations: planning and managing digitisation projects* (2001). The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)'s *Guidelines for digitisation projects for collections and holdings in the public domain, particularly those held by libraries and archives* (McIlwaine 2002) also provides guidance on issues such as copyright and authenticity, budgeting and capacity building.

A number of these works come in the form of post-mortem case studies, often by the archivists responsible for the projects. Many describe in detail a particular case study and the problems experienced, but do not provide a thorough analysis or even recommendations for those following in their footsteps. Though one can use these case studies to see how archives

managed the process, they are not particularly useful for this mini-dissertation. Holley's conference papers *Developing a digitisation framework for your organisation (feel the fear and do it anyway)* (2003) and her *Born again: digitising the anthropology photographic collection* (2004) are typical examples. She provides step-by step accounts of the digitisation process: project steps (2004: 2), problems relating to the thesaurus and data entry (2004: 7), and a conclusion which argued that the project was successful because part of the archive was digitally preserved, because artefacts became more accessible, and because the staff gained experience in the field of digitisation (2004: 8). She argues that library managers need to "move with the times and prepare strategically for digitisation", "enabling us to successfully achieve our information goals and needs in a global digital society" (2003:7). What is interesting is that there is no interest on the possible consequences or dangers of digitisation: quoting Charles Darwin, she argues that digitisation is the wave of the future, and those who do not adapt to it will not survive (2003:7).

Others, such as Josias's Master's dissertation *Digitizing photographic collections with special reference to the University of the Western Cape-Robben Island Museum Mayibuye photographic archive* (2000), are considerably more analytical and comprehensive, discussing challenges relating to access, preservation and relations with copyright holders. She touches on some of the "hidden" issues involved in digitisation: for example, she points to the issue of photographers who donated their pictures, smuggled out of apartheid South Africa to the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF): their images formed the basis of the Mayibuye collection. Noting that some expected royalty payments if any of their (now digitised) images provided income for the Mayibuye Centre, her work touches on the areas of contestation in the digitisation process that this study explores in more detail.

Other authors have focused on very specific aspects of digitisation management. The article *Digital preservation: challenges and implementation* (Kirchhof 2008) concentrates on the importance of preservation policies; the article *Resistance to change and the adoption of digital libraries: an integrative model* (Nov and Ye: 2009) discusses archive users' willingness to accept new technologies, a perspective shared by Margaryan and Littlejohn, who investigate the relationships between digital repositories and user communities in their article *Repositories and communities at cross-purposes: issues in sharing and reuse of digital learning resources* (2008).

An article by Nakata, Nakata, Gardiner, McKeough, Byrne and Gibson (2008) comments on the often-troubled relationship between archives and indigenous communities. The authors point to an issue that will be discussed later in this chapter: who benefits from digitisation? They argue that the criteria for selection of indigenous materials for digitisation should be the benefit that the digitisation will bring to the community in question (Nakata et al 2008: 234). However, the article is very much written from the perspective of the digitising institution – digitisation should be done to preserve community information and the institution should ensure access to the digitised information for that community. While it does mention liaising with community and obtaining community permission for digitisation where possible, this is done to "manage and minimise risks" (Nakata et al 228) of legal or community action against the digitising institution. There is little discussion of who wields the power in the relationship, and what the community wants from the digitisation (if they want anything at all). These power relations will be the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Though having diverse foci, all of the management works mentioned above look at digitisation from an organisational perspective, rather than the purely mechanistic approach of the technical researchers.
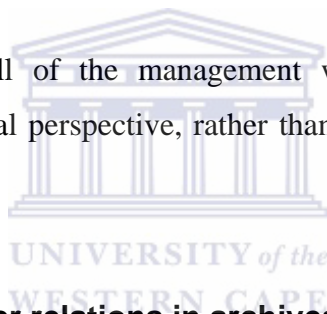
2.3 Critical research on power relations in archives

Both the technical and management research have one thing in common: they seldom question the ideological role of archives in the digitisation process (and in society). Digitisation is seen as a politically neutral affair which has no impact on the power relations between archives and society, or archives and the production of knowledge. Critical research, on the other hand, focuses specifically on these relations.

Many writers in the field challenge the idea of the neutrality of archives. Lalu argues that the colonial archive was a political tool, used to control what knowledge became the truth and to legitimate the colonial discourse (2007:36) and that this remains true today.

A number of theorists have investigated the dynamics of technologisation making a direct connection between archives, technologisation and social issues. Bourdieu in his book *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market* links globalisation, the technologisation of society

and "political apathy" (2002: 38) and Lalu argues that this kind of apathy limits archival discussions to "technical matters of preservation and access" (2007:34) and creates a "fetishism with technology" which ignores the hidden power constructs (2007:31).

As mentioned in Chapter One, the act of digitisation of archival collections has also come under scrutiny. Because of the expense of digitising collections, much work has been done by rich institutions from the North, leading to accusations of cultural imperialism (Carnegie Corporation digitisation meeting 2008: 2).

The neutrality of digitisation is thus as much an issue as the neutrality of the archives themselves. Lor, formerly Director of the National Library, argues in a journal article that "digital technology is not politically or culturally neutral" (2008: 126). Pickover, in her article *Digital imaging projects in the south: Access for whom?* is also extremely critical of the view that technology is neutral. She argues that digitisation is a form of cultural imperialism and that it also renders the non-digitised knowledge invisible, creating a monoculture. Information and knowledge become commodities so only the rich can afford access to them, and only the richer organisations can afford the digitisation: this gives them power and control over the knowledge in the archives (1998: 60-61) and this means that once again power rests with the rich institutions of the North.

> "Digital technology does not just add something, it changes everything, it brings social, political, cultural environmental and economic changes and it accelerates the globalisation process... Clearly cyberspace is not an uncontested domain. The digital medium contains an ideological base – it is a site of struggle. So the real challenges are not technological or technical, but social and political" (Pickover 1998: 66).

Marlene Manoff, in her 2004 article *Theories of the archive from across the disciplines,* points to the role of Jacques Derrida in seeing archives and archivists as actors in their own right, rather than neutral conduits for the preservation of heritage artefacts. According to Derrida, the technology used in archiving changes the nature of the archive and historical record itself. "The structure of the archive determines what can be archived and that history and memory are shaped by the technical methods of what he [Derrida] calls archivization" (Manoff 2004: 12). What is chosen for digitisation decides what will become part of society's memory and history, and what will not.

The methods for transmitting information shape the nature of the knowledge that can be produced. Library and archival technology determine what can be archived and therefore what can be studied. Manoff notes that "archivization produces as much as it records the event" (2004: 12). Or, as Derrida puts it, "the mutation in technology changes not simply the archiving experience, but what is archivable – that is, the content of what has to be archived is changed by the technology" (1998: 17).

Manoff argues that "Derrida's work has contributed to scholarly recognition of the contingent nature of the archive - the way it is shaped by social, political, and technological forces. If the archive cannot or does not accommodate a particular kind of information or mode of scholarship, then it is effectively excluded from the historical record" (Manoff 2004: 12).

The philosopher Carl Popper, well-known for his challenges to what he called "historicist" beliefs in absolute truth in scientific theory, argues that research is by definition biased. Ketelaar, in his journal article *Tacit narratives: The meanings of archives,* quotes him as saying "What the searchlight makes visible will depend on its position, upon our way of directing it, and upon its intensity, colour etc., though it will, of course, also depend very largely upon the things illuminated by it" (Ketelaar 2001: 133). Thus those who research archival digitisation will be biased, whether they see archives in terms of technical, managerial or critical perspectives.

2.3.1 Power and access

A thread which links all of these "critical" views of digitisation is that of power. Digitisation upsets existing power balances between those who interact with the archive and archival artefacts. Who are these role-players? They include those portrayed in the artefacts; those who originally donated the materials to the archive; copyright holders; international donors (especially those from the "rich North"); digitisation "partners", also from the North; other academic institutions and archives; private collectors of archival material; technology vendors; the state and controllers of the dominant ideology in the society; users of the archives; and last, but not least, the archivists themselves.

`Where are the major areas of contestation of power between these groups? They include ownership and intellectual property rights of digitised materials, access to digitised material and the choice of what is selected for digitisation (and linked to the latter, the neutrality of archivists). Power is linked to histories of inequality that take a particular shape in the South African context.

2.3.2 Ownership

Digitising an artefact (whether it is an image, a film recording, a document) creates a new object, even if it is an exact copy of the original. The ownership of this new object becomes an area of contestation:

- The person portrayed in a photograph, for example, could argue that the image is of them, and as such they should be considered part-owners of that image at the very least. Without them, the image would not have existed.
- Those who have donated artefacts may see the digitised artefact as purely a copy of something that is theirs, and claim the ownership of the digitised version as well. This is particularly true of copyright holders, who may believe that they own both original and digitised copy. This is complicated in this case study by the fact that during apartheid many artefacts were delivered anonymously and without provenance to overseas organisations such as the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF).Thus ownership can often not be confirmed.
- Donors argue that since they are providing the funding for the digitisation, they should take ownership of the end-product. The same is true of philanthropic "partners", who see themselves as dominant in the relationship due to their financial and technological advantages (Kagan 2006: 7).
- Digitisation vendors may expect, as part of the digitisation contract, that they will own the digitised artefacts (and will be able to make profits from them). International archives and academic institutions have been known to request ownership under the guise of "consolidating" collections.
- Finally, the archive's parent institution (or state departments) may feel that they own the artefacts, since they pay the staff salaries and archive expenses, and without them the archive would not exist.

These are all fairly overt sites of struggle, but some are more subtle. Northern partner universities have often wanted to host the digitised versions of the artefacts, arguing that their technology (and accessibility of that technology to a wider audience via the Internet than the archive which owns the original) makes them the logical choice in this regard. While this is often true, it also changes the power relationships: the hosting institution controls all aspects of the delivery of the images to a wider audience, and information "gets reinterpreted, processed and redistributed to suit the needs of countries in the North" (Pickover 2005: 9).

Another side to the issue of ownership is that digitised images are more easily copied and stolen than their physical counterparts. Pickover in her journal article *Negotiations, contestations and fabrications: the politics of archives in South Africa ten years after democracy* (2005: 6) gives an interesting example: a South African archive had film rare footage of Nelson Mandela, but the format was so old that no machines could be found by the archive to read the film. The curator of the British Museum offered, as a personal favour, to take the films to the British Museum to have them read. This was successfully done, but within a short while the films had, unbeknown to the archive, appeared on the British Museum's website without acknowledgement. Though they were removed after the archive complained, the fact that the staff of the British Museum saw no problem about displaying another archive's artefacts without permission is worrying. It is unlikely that they would have felt that it was acceptable to remove a physical artefact from an archive and display it at the Museum without permission, but because it was digital (and possibly because they had done the digitisation) they appeared to have no such qualms.

Perhaps it is also the fact that it is usually very easy to copy digital images that changes peoples' attitudes towards their theft. If it is easy to copy, people will do it, and the widespread and illegal copying of films and music off the Internet has perhaps made it more socially acceptable. But this does mean that the archive is no longer the sole owner of the images, and it may well be that the person copying the digital artefact will in turn sell the image for profit, depriving the archive of revenue. And it is often technically simple to slightly modify digitised artefacts and pass them off as different from the originals.

2.3.3 Access

Access (and the cost of access) to the digitised artefacts is also an area of contestation (Pickover 1998: 63). Proponents of digitisation argue that anything that increases access to artefacts is a good thing, pointing out that non-digital artefacts are only accessible to people who can afford to travel to the physical location where the artefacts are stored. However, this is a deceptive argument: digital artefacts are just as inaccessible to the poor. People who own suitable technology may indeed have better access to digitised artefacts than they do to physical ones, but this group is a minority, especially in Africa. The people who are subjects of films, photographs and interviews in liberation archives (and who perhaps most deserve access) are often those who do not have such access because they cannot afford the technology needed for that access. In many ways, the digitisation process perpetuates the inequalities of access that have always been a problem for archivists. This is not to say that digitisation is a bad thing, by any means: it does provide access to more people than had access before; it does mean that original artefacts can be better preserved, since they are not being physically handled by archive patrons, and it does mean that there is a backup copy if an original artefact is stolen or damaged. But we should not think that it is a neutral and value-free and accessible process.

A further issue relating to access is whether it is acceptable to charge for access to digital artefacts [and if so, how much] (Pickover 1998: 63). Some archives have charged subscription fees for access to digital archives; others charge every time the artefacts are accessed. And as mentioned earlier, digitisation vendors have in the past hosted the digital archives and charged for usage, with the archive getting a percentage of the income generated. Again, ownership has been effectively handed over to the vendor in this case. More to the point, such practices grant access to the rich, while limiting the poor of that access. If digitised artefacts become commodities, then it will be those who can afford them who will benefit the most (Pickover: 1998: 63). This has been echoed elsewhere: for example, Minckley, Rassool and Witz (1996: 27-28) argue in a conference paper that a Mayibuye Centre's Nelson Mandela exhibition at the Caltex exhibition Centre (opened by the MD of Caltex South Africa) commercialised both the archive and Robben Island. They point out that the shop at the Centre sold "rock from the limestone quarry on the island where prisoners did hard labour, costing R39.95" and that visitors could "buy into a 'symbolic rock-breaking ceremony' that the Mayibuye Centre organised for the 'Old Boys' reunion on

Robben Island in February 1995, taking home a fragment of the 'real' apartheid past from the site of its burial and Mandela's reconstruction, to place on their mantelpiece alongside a bit of the Berlin Wall and sand from the Holy Land".

A further complicating factor is where the income generated should be paid: if an archive charges for access, should the money be paid to:

- the subject (in a photograph, video, or interview, for example)?
- the copyright holder?
- the digitiser?
- the archive?
- the archive's parent body?

Once again, this is a political contest for resources that is likely to benefit one party at the expense of the other.

2.3.4 Selection for digitisation and the neutrality of the archivist

Historically, archivists have prided themselves on being neutral purveyors of knowledge of the past, and as preservers of history. But a number of authors have pointed out that the role of the archivist is inherently biased. Lalu's *Stampede for Africa*, a study of colonial and apartheid archives, argues that archives reflect the dominant social discourse, and that archivists are not neutral, even if the archivist bias is at a purely subconscious level (Lalu 2007). The choices that archivists make in selecting objects (that will become artefacts in an archive) involve making choices as to what is relevant and important for the archive and its patrons, and what should be ignored. Important questions that archivists should be constantly asking are "Who benefits? Who gains advantage from my choices"?

These 'critical' authors also see a very different role for the archivist: that of activist, fighting to give a voice to the voiceless (as are many of the subjects of archival artefacts). Pickover argues that archivists are "agents of change" (Pickover 2005: 2) and that non-state archives should be "instruments of empowerment" (Pickover 2005: 2), rather than providing support for the already powerful and justifications for their actions. This is perhaps even more critical in the case of liberation archives, if the liberation movements themselves may feel that they are the only legitimate voice of the voiceless. When the liberation movements have become

the state, as is the case in South Africa, this is even more pertinent. It is very easy for state entities to demand that their voice alone must be heard, since they hold the purse-strings.

The seminal collection of essays, *Refiguring the Archive* (Hamilton, Harris, Taylor, Pickover, Reid and Saleh 2002) draws a number of these threads together in the South African context, discussing archival theory; the origins of archives and their role as products of state machinery and its technologies; and how the boundaries that define "the archive" can be extended (Hamilton et al 2002: 14). The book acts as a call to "refigure" the archives: to contest and undo the power "figured" by the colonial and apartheid states.

It is clear that archivists need to be very aware of the pressures on them, and actively maintain their independence. They also need to reflexively understand the ways in which they themselves are implicated in setting up particular discourses or narrative.

A possible future direction for digitisation of archives comes again from Lalu (2007: 42), who argues that digitisation should be used as an opportunity to reevaluate the role of the archive in society, saying that, "The digitisation of African materials … should clear the space for an investigation of our modernity … which would require a greater blurring of the distinction between archivist and historian, so that we may be better placed to expand what can be said about the history of liberation struggles". In other words, digitisation should be used as an opportunity to investigate power relations within archives, how archives have been used as sites of contestation between the powerful and the dispossessed, and the impact this has had on what we know about liberation struggles.

2.4 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has shown that three broad fields of research can be seen in the literature: technological, management, and critical (the latter incorporating research in questions of power relations in the archive). Chapter Three describes how the case study set about exploring how these three (and in particular contestations of power) have affected the digitisation process at this archive.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As explained in the previous chapter, the dissertation uses a qualitative or interpretive case study approach to analyse the digitisation of a liberation archive, examining the political, social and organisational aspects of the process. This is a particularly useful approach in this study, since much of the data cannot be easily quantified, and many of the concepts such as "power" are notoriously difficult to measure using quantitative methodologies.

3.1 Account of the site

As stated in Chapter One, the Mayibuye archive is unique in a number of ways. Under apartheid, the artefacts that were to form the basis of the collection were housed in England and the Netherlands. They were collected by members of the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF), and featured photographs, film and audio recordings and documents, many smuggled out of apartheid South Africa. With the end of apartheid, IDAF decided to disband and return the artefacts to South Africa, and they were shipped to South Africa in two shipping containers after 1990 (Goddard 2010).

The Archive was set up specifically to curate these artefacts, under the leadership of an anti-apartheid activist and academic. It was the first liberation archive in South Africa, housing resources about the anti-apartheid struggle and it was largely staffed by political activists to support political activity. As such it was unlike more mainstream archives of its time such as the National Archive or academic archives. It was a support, resource and memory-keeper for the liberation movements and the broader anti-apartheid movement. It has been used as a model for the creation of other liberation archives in Southern Africa (Goddard 2010).

Staff from the Archive were instrumental in setting up the Robben Island Museum as a heritage site, and Mayibuye later became part of that Museum: becoming the UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives in 2001 (King 2001: 5).

The collection consists of seven separate collections (Epstein 2005: 44):
- Art Works Collections
- Exhibitions Collection, with more than 30 exhibitions.

- Film and Video Library of over 10,000 items, which was catalogued by the author of this dissertation
- Historical Papers, housing 350 collections of personal and organisational documents
- Posters Collection, with more than 2000 posters
- Photographic Library, with over 100, 000 negatives, prints and transparencies
- Sound and Oral Collections: 28 collections of more than 2000 recordings.

Aside from administrative staff, the Archive employs:

- A director
- An audio-visual archivist
- A photographic archivist
- A documentary archivist
- A technical staff member responsible for the digitisation of artefacts, with an assistant.

Mayibuye is housed at the main campus of the University of the Western Cape (UWC): this is partly for historical reasons (the IDAF documents which form the core of the collection were donated to UWC), and partly because the climatic conditions (in particular the humidity) on Robben Island make it an unsuitable place to preserve artefacts. However, in terms of organisation Mayibuye is a department of the Robben Island Museum (RIM), which pays the salaries and administers the archive. RIM, in turn, is part of the state's national Department of Arts and Culture.

3.2 Research problem and questions

The research problem investigated by the case study relates to the challenges faced by archivists as they attempt to digitise their collections. As discussed in the literature review, the challenges can be broken down into three categories:

1. Technical issues
2. Management issues
3. Power relations in archives, which might well be thrown into relief by digitisation processes according to some commentators, as discussed in Chapters One and Two.

Part of the investigation evaluated whether archivists were even aware of these challenges, particularly those relating to power relations. The critical school of research discussed in the literature review could have led the researcher to expect that archivists would have a very

mechanistic view of digitisation, seeing it purely as a way of preserving artefacts and improving access to the collections. However, given the archivists' possible awareness of the dangers inherent in the digitisation process, the research also investigated how they attempted to avoid the pitfalls of digitisation.

3.3 Research questions

The review of the literature and the above articulation of the research problem led to eight research questions. In this section, the author outlines the key research questions and the thinking that underpins them.

3.3.1 Why should an archive digitise its collections?

There are usually two reasons given by archivists for digitising a collection. The first is that digitisation will improve the preservation, since researchers will use the digitised version of the artefact, rather than handling it themselves.

The second is that digitisation will make the artefact more accessible because researchers will be able to view the work without having to visit the archive in question.

But these views (which are themselves open to dispute, as shown in Chapter Two) are really just scratching the surface. There may also be deeper reasons: could it be Lalu's "fetishism with technology" (2007: 31), or the influence of a philanthropic partner or a digitisation vendor, either of which could have their own reasons for pressing for digitisation.

3.3.2 Who are the major role players in a digitisation project, and how do they influence the project?

There are a number of potential role players: other archives, commercial digitisation companies, copyright holders, philanthropic organisations, archive users and archive staff. What influence do they have on the digitisation process? And how much of their interaction with the archive was seen in the context of power struggles (both tacit and overt) over valuable resources.

3.3.3 What are the financial implications of digitising an archival collection?

Should archiving be done in-house or outsourced, and what will the two options cost? Who pays for equipment and training of staff if it is decided not to outsource the project? Should an archive accept foreign funding, and what strings will be attached to such funding? These were all questions that were investigated during the interviews.

A thorny issue is that of charging for access to the digitised images. Archives are expensive to run, but charging for access can undermine one of the major reasons for digitising in the first place: increasing access to artefacts. The same holds true if the archive allows an external agency, such as a digitisation vendor, to charge for access if that vendor is hosting the digitised artefacts on its website.

Thirdly, if access is charged for, how should the income be distributed?

Once again, the study focused on the hidden implications around the possible power struggles over financial resources.
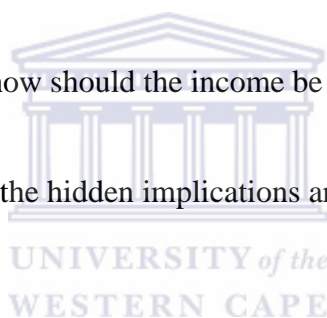
3.3.4 What are the risks associated with digitisation?

A digitisation project is not risk-free. Technical problems may cause the project to fail, and so can the failure to manage the process correctly. More importantly, were the results of the project to be that fewer people had access than before, or that the digitised artefacts became available only to those who could afford to pay for them? Did this not undermine the archive's mission to promote access to the collections?

Another risk was that by digitising the archive might have given up control over its resources to an external body, whether it be a digitisation vendor or funding "partner".

These are very real problems, and the question of how the archive managed these risks is one that was explored.

3.3.5 What are the project management considerations during a digitisation project?

While there are links to 3.3.4 above, this question deals with the management process itself. Is there enough internal capacity to manage the project, and how are staff to be trained to do the digitisation work if they do not have the necessary skills. If a decision is made to not do the work in-house, what are the criteria for selecting an external vendor?

How does one get buy-in from staff and copyright holders? And who will manage the project finances? These "management" issues are another area of possible contestation that is investigated.

3.3.6 What are the technical issues to be dealt with in a digitisation project?

If the digitisation is done internally, there are a number of issues that must be assessed. What equipment should be used? Should it be leased or purchased outright?

There are also a number of different techniques that can be used to digitise artefacts. Which should be used, and how can the digitisation be done without damage to the artefacts themselves?

Finally, how should the digitised images be stored and backed up? Should it be done by an external company or done internally?

3.3.7 Are the power relations within and beyond the organisation changed by the digitisation process? And if so how?

It is of interest to see who benefits from the digitisation process, and from the way access changes. In the case study, it was a difficult question, since much of the digitisation is already completed and it is difficult to assess the power relations before digitisation occurred. The author had to review earlier literature relating to the archive, as well as interview staff members, to investigate what changes had occurred.

3.3.8 What is chosen for digitisation, and why?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, digitisation is an intensely political process. What is selected is given a voice; what is not chosen for digitisation loses its power. In this case study the role of the archivist as a power broker must be carefully examined.

3.4 Research approach and data-gathering methodologies

Stake argues that "we study a case when it itself is of special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. We look for the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake 1995: xi).

3.4.1 Case study

The research used a qualitative case study approach. Stake (1995: 3) separates case study research into three distinct categories, though there is inevitably overlap between them:

1. Intrinsic, where the researcher is interested in what is happening in a particular situation, place or grouping of people
2. Instrumental, where the researcher wishes to resolve a particular research question and feels a case study is the best way of doing so
3. Collective, where a number of different cases are compared as part of a larger case study.

This dissertation clearly fits into the first two categories: The research question (what happens when archival artefacts are digitised) is clearly instrumental, while the archive in question is of particular interest, since it is unique in many aspects and has been used as a model for other archives.

But why use a case study methodology at all? George and Bennett point to a number of limitations of case studies:

1. They are prone to selection bias, where the researcher selects a case that is likely to support their hypotheses (George and Bennett 2005: 22)
2. While they are good at assessing what happens and how it happens, they are poor at measuring how much of an effect it has. Quantitative research is much stronger at measuring gradations of a variable (George and Bennett 2005: 23)

3. They may not be representative: because one uses only one case study, extrapolating the results to a broader population may be misleading (George and Bennett 2005: 30)

As discussed in Chapter One, a number of authors have tackled these criticisms (for example Babbie and Mouton (2001), Flyvberg (2006), George and Bennett (2005)). They claim that, while the researcher should always be aware of these issues, the benefits of using case studies outweigh these disadvantages. George and Bennett (2005: 19) argue that case studies are often strong where statistical methods are weak. Issues such as power and political culture are notoriously difficult to measure quantitatively (George and Bennett 2005: 19): the case study allows the researcher to take context into account. This is very much the case with this case study, where the study of power relations and political culture is a major focus. A case study approach draws these threads out in a way that quantitative analysis would not.

In addition, case studies allow the development of new hypotheses, since participants' answers to questions may open up new avenues of inquiry that had not been considered before (George and Bennett 2005: 20). The interview process in this case study is an iterative one, using repeated interviews to explore new avenues of enquiry raised by previous interviews.
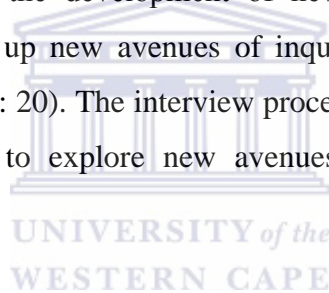
George and Bennett argue that case studies allow the assessment of complex causal relations in specific cases that would be difficult to assess using statistical methods (2005: 21). This case study set out to explore the possible relations between role players in the digitisation process pertaining to the digitisation process, so the case study approach was appropriate.

The view is confirmed by O'Leary (2010: 114) who argues that "The qualitative tradition … recognises the power of research on both participants and researchers, and does not necessarily shy away from political agendas. It also strongly argues the value of depth over quantity and works at delving into social complexities in order to truly explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences, and belief systems that are part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups, and even the everyday".

Having made the case for case study research, it is vital to ensure that the research is performed rigorously. The ground-breaking article by Klein and Myers (1999) provides a

number of principles which serve as guidance on how to avoid the pitfalls of interpretive research:

- In their overarching *Principle of the Hermeneutic Circle*, they argue that the research must use specific parts to inform the larger whole, and vice versa. The iterative process this entails will ensure that the "big picture" is fed by the specific issues arising from the analysis of the interviews and documents.

- The *Principle of Contextualisation* requires that any research must be grounded in its context; without this, the understanding of what has happened will be limited.

- The *Principle of Interaction between researchers and subjects* notes that the research does not only have an impact on the research subjects, causing them to see events from an outsider's perspective: it also has an impact on the researcher. The researcher must be open to having his or her preconceived notions challenged during the interview process.

- The *Principle of Multiple Interpretations* argues that it is quite possible for two different interviewees to have different perceptions about the same event, given their personal histories, and that neither should be considered incorrect. Interpretive case study research is not as cut and dried as quantitative research.

- Finally, the *Principle of Suspicion* (1999:77) makes it clear that researchers must constantly look beyond the obvious surface detail, and dig deeper to discover the hidden data. This will be a key part of the interpretation of findings in this dissertation.

Finally it is essential that the researcher is aware that, as the interviewer, his own personal context also shapes the interviews and research as a whole. If the author had not previously worked at Mayibuye, for example, his lack of knowledge about the relationships with UWC and Robben Island would have changed the way he conducted the interviews. Another interviewer (for example an ex-political prisoner from Robben Island) might have seen the relationships very differently and steered the research in a different direction.

3.4.2 Data gathering

The research design addressed the eight research questions discussed earlier in two intertwined phases of data-gathering: document analysis and interviews. The two components fed into each other. It was necessary to be alert to discrepancies between the documentary sources and the views expressed in interviews. The opposite is also true: documents were used to corroborate assertions made in the interviews.

1] The analysis of the documentation relating to the digitisation of the archive had two foci. Academic research conducted by staff of the archive (such as Josias's thesis) was examined to discover the extent to which it dealt with the challenges of digitisation of the archive. In particular the staff research explored the power relations surrounding digitisation, as well as the role of the archivist as power broker and as selector of artefacts for digitisation.

In addition, the author conducted a document analysis of internal archive documents and records. These included:

- Founding documents for the archive
- Management and strategic plans for both Mayibuye and Robben Island Museum (RIM)
- Digitisation policy documents
- Letter of agreement between Mayibuye, the University of the Western Cape and RIM dealing with the relationship, roles and responsibilities each to the others
- Copyright contracts between the archive and those donating items to the archive, those making use of the archive for research, and those wishing to make commercial use of the artefacts or digitised versions of the artefacts.
- The Mayibuye website.

These documents show how the digitisation work was planned and how it was expected to proceed. They provided direct answers to some of the research questions, and brought up questions which needed to be discussed in the interviews. They led to new avenues of inquiry.

2] Video interviews were conducted with those involved in past and current digitisation projects at Mayibuye. Interviewees were selected to represent the voices of Mayibuye staff past and present, academics and Robben Island Museum staff [initial interview questions can be found in Appendix C]. The interviews explored the links and relations among:

- Archive founders
- Technical staff at Mayibuye, who are involved in the mechanics of digitisation
- Archive management, who are the interface between the archive and external role-players
- Long-serving archive staff, who can provide insights into how the power relations have changed as a result of digitisation
- Those deciding which artefacts should be digitised
- Academics using the archive
- Representatives of RIM, who are involved in the management of the archive.

Seven persons, each given a pseudonym as anonymity was promised, were interviewed:

- Three interviewees (Andrew Solomon, Gray Barrack, and Blade Taper) represented current Mayibuye staff and the various collections in the Archive
- Ann Joseph represented historical leadership at Mayibuye and Mary Winner represented current leadership in the Archive
- Peter Layle, as a historian in the field, provided an academic voice
- Arnold Rimmer discussed digitisation from the perspectives of both Robben Island Museum and the Mayibuye Archive.

Most interviews were video recorded at the archive (with the exception of two interviewees who requested that only audio recordings be made of their interviews, and one interviewee living abroad who gave written responses to questions sent to her). Recording on video includes voice recording, and does allow the nuances of body language to be used to provide context to the words themselves. It can also act as an aid when the voices are not perfectly clear in the audio recording. An example is the interview with Gray Barrack "you know, so... um, they couldn't appreciate, um... <shakes head> I could say right up to now, they cannot appreciate what this place is, what it's done, what its unique, you know". The "shakes head" note in the interview transcription showed the disillusionment of the interviewee that would have been missed in a purely audio interview. In the same way he discusses the hands-off management style of the University: "it was autonomous … less of the University influence <hand movements 'pressing down'> came into it". Again, the hand gestures gave added impact to the words themselves.

The interviewees were initially put at their ease by being informed that their personal information and the recordings of the interviews would be kept confidential. Some had expressed concern that they might be victimised for the views they expressed in the interviews.

Interviewees were asked to describe their working careers and their personal history, as well as how they came to be connected to the archive. This allowed them to become comfortable with the interviewer and the camera. They were then asked about issues related to the research questions – technical and management concerns initially, but later about power-related issues. They were asked for specific examples to illustrate their answers, and also asked to discuss their views of the future and their place in it.

The interviews were tailored to suit the person being interviewed: for example, a person not involved in the selection of artefacts for scanning was not questioned in as much depth about the selection process as the person(s) who actually made those selections.

The interview process was iterative: once the initial round of interviews was complete, the author conducted follow-up interviews that investigated new lines of inquiry that were brought out by the initial interviews. It used triangulation between documentary sources and interviews (and within each) to find gaps and contradictions in both and explore those to find clearer answers to the original questions.
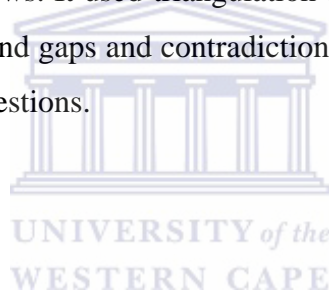
3.4.3 Data analysis

The interview transcriptions were analysed in order to understand exactly what happened in the course of the digitisation project and to explore the hidden histories the project contained. The interviews were analysed using both direct interpretations of the interviewees' responses to questions, but also through aggregation of instances (Stake 1995: 74) in comparing what was said by one person with what was said by others and trying to make sense of all the interviews as a whole. By looking for patterns that could be seen across all the interviews, the interviewer was able to draw broader conclusions about the digitisation process, and infer generalisations from these conclusions.

The initial step in the analysis was to get an overview of the situation being studied: what Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 161) call "perusal". This was to see if there were any broad themes that could be found without examining in detail each of the texts (be they archive documents or the transcripts of interviews).

The second phase was to create tentative categories of meaning or themes to be used to break down the mass of data. These were linked to the research questions:

- Reasons for digitising
- Role-players
- Financial issues
- Risks
- Project management
- Power relationships
- Role of the archivist.

However, other themes emerged as will be shown in the following chapter.

Once the video transcripts of the interviews were complete, they and the documents were each coded. Richards (2009: 96) points to three types of coding:

1. Descriptive (persons interviewed, their roles etc.)
2. Topic (what is being said)
3. Analytical (underlying non-explicit nuances and beliefs).

The transcripts were coded in a way as to assign each important section a place in one of the categories (or in a new category, if warranted), as well as assigning a type to each. This is an iterative process: items were moved between categories, or even deleted as the research progressed.
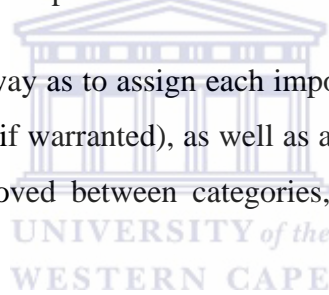
Once coding was complete, comparisons were made of similarities and differences, both within and between categories. The results of these comparisons were matched to the research questions (and theory) to directly address the research question. Braun and Clarke (2006: 90) recommend using thematic maps to graphically display categories and sub-categories: the thematic maps in Appendix B graphically show the categories uncovered during this research.

3.5 Chapter conclusion

What was interesting in the interviews was the high degree of awareness amongst interviewees of the potential dangers of digitisation, as well as its benefits: it was clear that staff did not go blindly into the digitisation process, as the author had assumed.

Chapter Four summarises and analyses the themes that emerged from the triangulation of Mayibuye and state documents, and interviews with role-players.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

This chapter is the result of the thematic analysis of documentary sources and interviews with the seven role players. The themes that emerged (as shown in Appendix B) will be used to inform the discussion on the research questions in Chapter Five. The numbering after each quotation (e.g. (Peter Layle, p17)) denotes the page number of the interview transcript.

Two broad themes emerged from the analysis. The first is that of the ad-hoc nature of the work, the lack of continuity and of strategy, and the way in which personal relationships often had an impact on the work of the organisation.

A second theme was that of exploitation and of trust (and more importantly, lack thereof). Competition for control of artefacts, their digital copies, and their potential financial value led to distrust and perceptions of exploitation. Trust problems were reflected in concerns about organisational management, as well as those about exploitation by outside groupings.

4.1 Ad-hoc actions, chance and continuity

As mentioned above, the ad-hoc nature of the work, the lack of continuity and of strategy, personal relationships had an impact on the work of the organisation. These are analysed below in terms of the archive itself (including staffing in the archive), of its parent bodies, of the state, and of international events and processes.

4.1.1 The origins of the Mayibuye archive, the impact of serendipity, and how personal connections affected the archive

Mayibuye's history is a story which reflects how chance interplays of circumstances and personalities can shape an organisation. The interplays and convergences of role-players and events in the establishment of Mayibuye and its approaches to digitisation often are described in the interviews as "chance" or serendipity or coincidence; however, to an outsider the social and historical context might well have made them foreseeable. It can be argued, for example, that interviewees' common backgrounds (community-based anti-apartheid activism is one such example) meant that it was inevitable that they would move in the same social circles,

and likely that they would come into contact with each other. Thus what is perceived as "chance" or "coincidence" by interviewees could be explained by their social background. Nevertheless, interviewees saw these convergences as chance, as serendipity, and used them to their advantage, and that of Mayibuye.

It was started as the Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture, and was part of the idea of

> "orienting the University to the notion of the Democratic Left without thinking about you know what pitfalls were, and Mayibuye grew out of that. Mayibuye was very much a project of … that imagination and it certainly had as its very core the idea of instigating a cultural argument at UWC; so it had no pretensions of being an archive: it was a Cultural Centre". (Peter Layle, p17).

As the anti-apartheid movement wound down with the ending of apartheid, questions arose as to what should happen to the resources collected by anti-apartheid organisations, questions which were given urgency by financial concerns.

> "NGO's working against the state and working in communities were then starting to close down in the early 90s due to funding problems, because they were funded as part of the anti-apartheid movement" (Gray Barrack, p2). They found this was a good place to deposit their collections …. We had produced exhibitions and stuff to popularise Mayibuye Centre, and there was nowhere else to for people to put their things. It was still more part of the left, that people were used to: they didn't trust many of the established archives" (Gray Barrack, p2).

In fact, Barrack argues, it was the University's status as a struggle university, not being a 'white' university [see discussion in Chapter One about UWC's history] that got Mayibuye its donations, rather than its being considered as an archive.

The origins of the collections (and the start of Mayibuye's change from cultural agitator to liberation archive) can also be found in the end of apartheid. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Mayibuye's director was a historian at the University, and when he heard that one of the major anti-apartheid movements was looking for a home for its collections, he suggested that Mayibuye take them over. And with the collection came some of the activists who had run the collection, and they also became part of Mayibuye (Arnold Rimmer, p3). Thus it was almost by chance that the Centre was staffed by political activists, and became an archive.

4.1.2 Staffing, employment and operations within Mayibuye: how coincidence shaped the staff profile.

It was notable (as discussed above) how often chance, serendipity and opportunism (making the most of opportunities as they presented themselves) played a role in how staff became involved with Mayibuye, rather than the more usual route of responding to employment advertisements.

Many of the staff came to be employed though personal connections: one studied with a Mayibuye Director; another wandered into Mayibuye with a friend and was offered work after being recognised by an IDAF leader at the Archive; another's military and political background ensured he was given a post on Robben Island.

Andrew Solomon (p8) also noted that a lack of capacity meant that Mayibuye had to use unconventional and opportunistic methods to get digitisation work done. Mayibuye's collections are currently being audited in terms of the National Treasury's Generally Regulated Accounting Practice (GRAP 103) audit of heritage organisations, and Robben Island paid for a number of interns to assist with the work. Andrew Solomon used the opportunity to use the audit process and interns to get digitisation (and improving the metadata for each artefact) done as part of the audit. "Robben Island having paid for interns as part of the auditing process … we then go full steam into digitising" (Andrew Solomon, p8).

Similarly a local lawyer (and UWC alumnus) who had become fascinated with recreation on Robben Island, was approached to fund the contract employment of students to digitise the Robben Island Recreational Collection at Mayibuye: "He came, he went through the collection and the first thing that he asked me was 'Andrew, has this been digitised? Do you have a plan of one day wanting to because if you want, I am willing to actually support the move'. And that's where it was taken from. The willingness from him wanting to assist and just by looking at the nature of the collection itself" (Andrew Solomon, p 5). Again, staff used the opportunities presented to them to get digitisation work done.

It is clear that Mayibuye made the most of opportunities to get the skills they needed as they presented themselves, but that it was also chance circumstances and personal links that drew

people into the Mayibuye fold. This is not to suggest that employment was based on nepotism (those employed in this way certainly possessed the skills needed of them), but rather that an organisation facing skills shortages used unconventional means to achieve its ends. Who a person knew, and what that person's history was, had an impact on their employment.

There was (and still is) a downside to using people with specialised skills for short contracts as the opportunity arises: a lack of continuity. Staff with expertise (or recently trained during their contracts) leave when their contracts expire. This has meant that there was a lack of continuity in Mayibuye's operations, and parts of the institutional memory are lost each time this happened. The lack of funding which would ensure that all staff positions could be made permanent means that long term strategic planning of work (and digitisation work in particular) cannot be put in place.

This has had an impact on the digitisation process. Though some of the bigger collections have strategic digitisation plans in place, the smaller ones do not have the staff capacity to methodically digitise their entire collections. Digitisation in the photographic collection, for example, is based on demand from researchers: as an item is requested, it is digitised and added to the digitised collection (Gray Barrack, 6).

This does not mean that staff were purely reactive: photographic items which are regularly requested have been digitised to ensure more efficient service for researchers, and "packs" put together of in-demand items:

> "also with the years, I know what people wanted; I mean, there's a lot of people that come in here get these jobs as researchers, and said, *Right, send me all the pictures you have on the struggle...* <bursts out laughing> Or, uh, *I'm looking for pictures on the history of the ANC*" ."I thought, *I'll make a decision,* I know what people want, based on the experience I have here; and so after – and find out what interesting stuff and that can be used, I would then digitise that" (Gray Barrack, p23)

This is certainly in stark contrast to the ad-hoc practices before Mayibuye owned a scanner, when Gray Barrack would take photographs to a commercial scanning company, pay out of his own pocket and be refunded out of petty cash (Gray Barrack, p6). This practice was halted when stricter financial controls were put in place by Robben Island after Mayibuye became part of the Robben Island Museum (Gray Barrack, p6).

4.1.3 Mayibuye, and its relationship to UWC and Robben Island

Once again chance and a convergence of events played a role in Mayibuye's incorporation into Robben Island.

The question as to what should be done with Robben Island, once political prisoners had been released, generated a great deal of debate, with proposals ranging from turning it into a luxury hotel to making it into a museum. In the end, the ex-political prisoners were asked what their preference would be, and they "decided it should be a museum and that was accepted …and the Cabinet felt that you can't have a museum without a collection" (Arnold Rimmer, p3). And Andre Odendaal, the then Mayibuye Director, was appointed the first CEO of Robben Island in 1997.

By this stage, Mayibuye had already been involved with Robben Island. The released prisoners from Robben Island had packed all the possessions they did not want to take with them into apple boxes and these boxes (which were to become the well-known Apple Box Collection) had been sent to Mayibuye for storage (Gray Barrack, p3). Mayibuye and Iziko Museums had also presented an exhibition on Robben Island "dealing with aspects of Robben Island …there was a connection immediately to Robben Island" (Gray Barrack, p3).

Gray Barrack argues that the partnership also came about "I think because of Odendaal's association with the Mayibuye Cen-... Archives, at the time. Um ... and because of the Robben Island Collection that he wanted to maintain, that... the university wasn't in any position to sustain the place..." (Gray Barrack, p5). Partnering with Robben Island would ensure the security of the collections. [The relationship between Mayibuye and the University of the Western Cape will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.3 below].

It comes as little surprise, then, that the combination of a government cabinet wanting Robben Island to be a museum with collections, Mayibuye having strong links to the Island, and the appointment of the Mayibuye Director as CEO of Robben Island Museum, meant that a merger of some sort was recommended.

The idea appealed to Mayibuye staff as well.

"Mayibuye had always run on a contract base, they were basically, um, fund-raising continually, and so they couldn't offer permanent positions because of the difficulties, um, you know, of having to perhaps disappoint people" (Arnold Rimmer, p3).

Or as Gray Barrack put it

"the funding was drying up, it was going to other projects, (which) were getting overseas funding. And obviously the staff were sort of... feeling like, <laughs> they were going to be unemployed...." (Gray Barrack, p5).

Another interview commented:

"Salaries come through Robben Island, – that was great at the time for us, because as we say we were only contract workers before that, so by... a long process that turned slightly ugly in, in... <nervous hand movement?> uh, on some occasions... for the staff it being absorbed into Robben island, getting a salary, getting the benefits... [which] we thought was great, I don't know about now, but anyway... (Gray Barrack, p6).

To merge with a state institution would provide security for both staff and collections.

A memorandum of agreement (which provided for a 99 year lease of Mayibuye Centre to the Robben Island Museum) was drawn up: "Recognising the potential synergy and historical significance of UWC's Mayibuye collections, the Cabinet of South Africa recommended on 4 September 1996 that "*in order to equip the new Robben Island Museum in an expeditious and cost-effective way, the Minister should request UWC to agree to the incorporation of the Mayibuye Centre ... in the Robben Island Institution*"" (Memorandum of Agreement between Robben Island Museum and the University of the Western Cape in respect of the UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Archives 2000: p3). The Mayibuye Centre was renamed as the University of the Western Cape Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archives and officially opened its doors on 13 June 2001 (King 2001: 5).

The agreement also noted that "The incorporation of the Mayibuye Collection into RIM will bring the New Archives increased funding and capacity, greater recognition of status, and possibilities of future growth. The agreement will benefit both institutions. The Archives will enrich RIM's collections and exhibitions and the continued presence on the UWC campus of the New Archives will broaden and ensure access of staff and students, help develop a vibrant close teaching and research cooperation between RIM and UWC Departments ...." (Memorandum of Agreement between Robben Island Museum and the University of the Western Cape in respect of the UWC Robben Island Mayibuye Archives 2000: p3-4).

Again, chance and personal motivations were central to the incorporation. The political prisoners' donating their possessions to Mayibuye and Mayibuye's hosting exhibitions on Robben Island established links between the two. Andre Odendaal's personal desire to preserve the Mayibuye collections, and ensure the continued existence of the Centre in a time of financial crisis gave impetus to the incorporation; his anti-apartheid credentials (it can be suggested) ensured that Cabinet (which included ex-prisoners) supported that incorporation. Mayibuye staff supported the incorporation because of their immediate fear of becoming unemployed. If these events and circumstances had not coincided, it might well be that Mayibuye would not have become part of the Island. This does have a downside, however: Mary Winner noted that there is a clear danger in allowing personalities to decide policy. She pointed out that the close personal support enjoyed by Mayibuye staff from Andre Odendaal was not sustained when he left (Mary Winner, p6), leaving Mayibuye as an "island between UWC and Robben Island" (Mary Winner, p11).

There has been some debate as to whether the move was a wise one as perhaps evidenced in the Robben Island Museum Integrated Conservation Management Plan (ICMP) 2007-2012, which notes that the collections "call for the development of a framework to supplement the Collections Management Policy already in place and currently under review" (Robben Island Museum Integrated Conservation Management Plan 2007-2012 [SD]: 71). It notes a number of collection management "issues", such as: a need "for a new building for the Mayibuye Centre"; "review and implementation of the agreement between RIM & UWC"; and "transforming the archives into a fully-fledged unit".

It became clear in some of the interviews that some Mayibuye staff saw Robben Island as a bureaucratic organisation which might not have a clear strategic understanding of the significance of heritage. As one participant put it: "I think there have been some moves to try and centre the institution around heritage. Um but then what needs to happen then is also that that then needs to also be expressed structurally. But that hasn't happened yet. Well, so far, what I'm aware of is that. . I haven't seen any changes".

They argue that ignorance of the role of heritage and archives meant that the archive has been "buried", being made a small part of the Heritage Department, meaning that it has lost its visibility and voice. This seems to have affected digitisation with for example a digitisation

policy written by the archives management never being approved by Robben Island. Andrew, however, believes that, despite the absence of formal policy, an informal digitisation policy evolved which categorised materials into three groups: sensitive items (which should only be digitised with extreme caution); items for which Robben Island did not hold copyright (which should only be digitised with permission); and items which could digitised at any point (Andrew Solomon, p6).

Perceptions of the lack of appreciation of the strategic importance of Mayibuye to Robben Island were evident in some comments on the archives' finances with one person claiming that the archives budget was a mere "phantom budget". One interviewee gave an example of when Mayibuye had requested scanners with very specific capabilities vital for digitisation, but cheaper inadequate ones were substituted without any discussion with Mayibuye.

Some staffing issues also had a direct impact on the digitisation process: the person with the technical and project management skills to manage Mayibuye's digitisation work (and the responsibility for doing so) was dismissed from his position, only returning to work a year later after a Labour Court ruling. This meant a year in which the process did not have a champion to drive it, meaning that digitisation probably was put on the back burner.

Despite the clear perception that the lack of strategic vision and of continuity has had an impact on the work of Mayibuye, the interviews also revealed that changes are afoot which could quite possibly improve the situation. Peter Layle, for example, noted that

> "there have been several meetings now between the Executives of, at Executive level between University Executives and Robben Island with a number of historians brought together; and so there's been an ongoing consultation about how to energise this partnership because it is an important one for the University … I think there have been very, very productive exchanges between the two institutions and all of this is consolidated in the shared programme 'The African Programme in Museum & Heritage Studies' where the students were brought in through Robben Island support to do their internships through Mayibuye" (Peter Layle, p11).

4.1.4 The state and societal issues, and what the ad-hoc nature of the state responses to digitisation meant for Mayibuye

In Chapter One the complicated national context was described. Until recently, the State was not actively involved in digitisation issues, or seemed to be confused as to its role. According

to Peter Layle "The other problem with intellectual property is that there had been no heritage or national input on this so the National Heritage Council hadn't spoken" (Peter Layle, p8). State departments appear to not have had a strategic vision as to where digitisation fitted into their systems:

> "The digitisation debate was a question that no State Department understood where it belonged. You know so between Arts & Culture, Science & Technology, Education you know it was all over the place, so no-one was making any comment policy or otherwise into this space"(Peter Layle, p12).

Things have changed to some degree: the Final Draft For Public Review Of The National Policy On The Digitisation Of Heritage Resources (2010) by the national Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) is mainly concerned with issues of preservation and access, though it does discuss challenges such as "lack of controls within foreign-funded digitisation projects" (2010: p20) and the "nature of ownership of digital heritage" (2010: p22). But this policy document has not yet become law, and strategic digitisation planning by the DAC seems to be on hold: the DAC's 2011-2012 annual report's strategic plan "to develop the National Archives digitisation strategy in line with the National Policy on Digitisation of Heritage" was on hold "pending approval of the National Policy on Digitization of Heritage, on which the Strategy is dependent (Department of Arts and Culture Annual report 2011-2012, 2012: 198)". No mention of non-State archives was made in this document.

According to the DAC Strategic Plan 2011-2016 (2011a: p18), "A digitisation policy, which is currently being developed, will provide national guidelines on the complex issue of the digitisation of heritage resources and the use of digitisation to improve access to our heritage collections as learning resources". The timeline provides for "digitisation strategy developed and approved by 2011/2012 and implementation of the digitisation strategy through selected digitisation projects" from 2012 to 2016 (Department of Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2011-2016, 2011a: 48). The 2012-2013 strategic plan (Department of Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2012-2013: 2011b), on the other hand, makes no mention of digitisation.

Interviews revealed some doubt about the state of national policy on heritage and digitisation, and the levels of understanding relating to digitisation within the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), as reportedly revealed at a DAC workshop on digitisation. Blade Taper reflects the general uncertainty over government's role in his comment: "Arts and Culture is really interested because there is a policy. But as I said, … I had a feeling that that the level

of awareness around the policy at the workshop – that [DAC] people were aware of it but not at the level that I think people working on it thought [DAC] people were aware, when I came back and started discussing the policy. Digitisation is not the priority it should be, nationally, nor at Robben Island" (Blade Taper, p6). This is confirmed by Peter Layle (p13) who argues that there is a "disconnect between universities and the State" around digitisation.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the National Research Foundation is busy compiling a register of digitisation processes and benchmarking policies and the National Treasury is auditing heritage organisations in terms of GRAP 103, but the interviewees expressed doubts about these initiatives – for example in these words from Peter Layle: "I worry that that is exactly the technical kind of rendering of the question of digitisation so the thing is emptied of its content" (Peter Layle, p10).

Again, we see ad-hoc attempts to develop strategic plans, but it seems that these are being delayed by a lack of clear understanding of the issues involved.

A point to note is that the start of digitisation work at Mayibuye coincided with a number of national issues. One was the "crisis of history", where the "dominant State discourse was focusing on science and technology at the expense of history" (Peter Layle, p1). Heritage, in turn, became a "reduced version of history" (Peter Layle, p1), seen as of secondary importance to the State. According to Peter Layle who often contributes a historian's perspectives to the case study, the non-release of documentation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's proceedings, as well as Jacque Derrida's well-known book Archive Fever, opened up a major discussion on the role of archives in South Africa. In particular the debate on role of archives outside of the legislated national framings of archives came to the fore (Peter Layle, p4).

This discussion was given added vigour by early attempts at large-scale digitisation projects such as the ALUKA Project (which will be discussed below), funded by international donors, and often done by foreign universities. ALUKA is derived from the Zulu phrase "to weave" and was a project run by the non-profit digitiser JSTOR (later Ithaka) and funded by the Mellon Foundation. It was aimed at making African archival information available internationally. There was a serious concern about "Africa generating primary resources, but these resources being processed and housed in European and American Academies" (Peter

Layle, p8). This meant local archives had little control over digitised materials. In addition, access to source materials was being taken away from African academics to serve those in the North. According to Layle, the often heated discussions of a "new colonialism" again brought the pitfalls of digitisation to the awareness of archivists.

These synchronicities brought to the fore many of the concerns about the role of archives in South Africa, and also served to make many archivists, (including those at Mayibuye) aware of the potential "political" pitfalls that they faced. This, linked to the political activist backgrounds of many of the Mayibuye staff, meant perhaps they were better able to handle the digitisation problems they faced than many of their counterparts at State Archives.

4.2 Exploitation, trust and distrust

A thread which runs through the interviews is that of trust, distrust, and fears of exploitation. Mayibuye's relationships with Robben Island, the University, the State, digitisers, other archives, and copyright holders and subjects all reflect varying degrees of trust and distrust, and these will be analysed below.
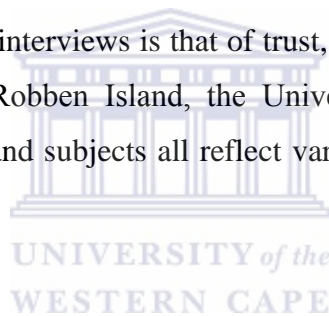
4.2.1 Mayibuye origins and operations: levels of trust within the archive and without.

While the origins of the Mayibuye Archive were discussed earlier in terms of chance and continuity, only part of the story was told. Another view is that trust was also important to Mayibuye's establishment as an archive. The IDAF staff who decided to donate their collections to Mayibuye did so because they trusted Andre Odendaal with them, as did other anti-apartheid NGOs as they wound down. And the same was true of individuals:

> "I remember going to a mass meeting at the Rocklands Civic Centre in the early 1990s (I think it was 1990) at which the UDF was formally disbanded. At the end of this meeting there was an explicit announcement about a museum or archive that was being set up at UWC, and a call for people to donate their struggle memorabilia" (Ann Joseph, p2).

The call to donate to Mayibuye was a clear display of the trust in the Centre displayed by "struggle" activists. Or perhaps the trust was in the University of the Western Cape.

And, as mentioned before, "there was nowhere else to for people to put their things. It was still more part of the left, that people were used to: they didn't trust many of the established archives. In fact, it was the University's status as a struggle university, not being a 'white university; that got Mayibuye their donations, rather than it being considered an archive (Gray Barrack, p2).

Trust was displayed in other ways as well: the ex-prisoners from Robben Island trusted their "Apple Box" possessions to Mayibuye, rather than a conventional archive because of the trust they felt for Mayibuye (Gray Barrack, p2).

The same could be said of Mayibuye staffing and operations. Ann Joseph noted that she:

> "viewed [her] employment at the Mayibuye Center firstly as a continuation of 'the struggle' and felt privileged to be working in this space and to be part of a team of people who were tasked with surfacing text-based materials, visual materials and material cultures that would never have seen the light of day in an archive or museum under apartheid" (Ann Joseph, p2).

As mentioned earlier, Gray Barrack's work on the Beyond the Barricades exhibition meant that he was seen as a trustworthy part of the struggle, and this trust helped him in getting work at Mayibuye.

There was a clear sense of mutual trust and unity amongst the Mayibuye staff interviewed, quite possibly owing to their shared struggle background. However, it can also be argued that this shared struggle background meant that staff were aware of hidden agendas and inclined to be distrustful of the motives of those with whom they interacted, particularly those involved in digitisation initiatives. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

4.2.2 Mayibuye and Robben Island: a shifting relationship of trust and distrust

It is interesting to see how levels of trust have fluctuated in the relationship between Mayibuye and Robben Island.

It was clear from the interviews that staff were initially happy to become part of Robben Island Museum. The ex-prisoners from the Island had trusted them with their apple-box "collections"; Mayibuye had been involved in the establishment of the Robben Island

Museum; Robben Island was seen to be a symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle with which many staff were involved. As Gray Barrack put it, "There was a connection immediately to Robben Island (Gray Barrack, p4)". In fact, some felt an almost mystical association with the Island "a sacred site – because it's got a history of banishment, you know, from the start, way back from – way… colonial times" (Gray Barrack, p31). Others saw a "communal spirit" which infused Robben Island (Mary Winner, p16). These views echo Murray in his book *Commemorating and Forgetting*, which portrays Robben Island as "a shrine, evoking near-religious veneration" (2013: 134) and as a "symbol of transcendence over oppression and an icon of hope" (2103: 129).

Andre Odendaal's vision at the outset was key. He proposed "creating this partnership; so you could have access to the material, and – the material belonged now to the University – so having this partnership between Robben Island, the Museum and the University and this place" (Gray Barrack, p5). There is little doubt that having the personal connection of Andre Odendaal leading the incorporation process (and becoming the Robben Island CEO) meant that staff bought into the process and had trust in it.

In addition, staff perceived this as a way of preserving their collections at a time when "the university wasn't in any position to sustain the place" (Gray Barrack, p5), and also providing a measure of job security: "staff were sort of... feeling like, <laughs> they were going to be unemployed" (Gray Barrack, p5). As one interviewee put it "for the staff it was being absorbed into Robben Island, getting a salary, getting the benefits... [which] we thought was great..."

The trust did not last. Mayibuye was incorporated into the Heritage Department on Robben Island, as part of the Collections Unit. Whereas before "it was autonomous, sort of standing on its own, with the University, basically, but less of the University influence <hand movements 'pressing down'> came into it" (Gray Barrack, p6), now it was a sub-unit of a department, having to compete for resources with other units. Despite the "key role played by Mayibuye", it now received funds "at the whim of Heritage" [Heritage is the Robben Island Museum Department under which the Mayibuye Archive falls]. The archives staff felt that their voices were not heard.

A key area of distrust became the relationship with Robben Island management. Robben Island has seen a high turnover of senior managers. Andre Odendaal resigned in the wake of a strike by tour guides, who were often ex-political prisoners. The IOL website on 11 June 2002 reported:

> "Director of the Robben Island Museum Andre Odendaal resigned on Thursday, saying the mass action campaign against him had become intolerable and had undermined his personal and professional integrity. 'While I absolutely refute any allegation of corruption on my part, I have decided to tender, with sadness, my resignation. I cannot even think of setting myself up against ex-Robben Islanders in this space. My role can, therefore, no longer be effective or constructive,' said Odendaal at a press conference" (Gosling 2002).

This meant that the person whom Mayibuye staff had trusted to support them in their work, and with whom they had a good personal relationship, was no longer their leader. In addition, the subsequent leadership did not have the heritage and museums background that Odendaal did. Mary Winner highlights the risks of the reliance on personal histories in her comment: "It gives you a sense of how dangerous it is to work with personalities, and not to have a broader vision about how things will move beyond your own tenure and place" (Mary Winner, p7), and also that the ad-hoc way in which Mayibuye operated held risks of its own. It is clear that the trusting relationship between Mayibuye and Robben Island changed with Odendaal's departure.

Since then, public records show that the staffing situation at Robben Island has not been stable with a number of dismissals and resignations of senior staff. One CEO (along with the entire Robben Island Council) resigned after racist pamphlets were distributed. Newspaper sources commented that the pamphlets saying that he was not welcome on the island because he was an Indian "were part of the "disgraceful" racist campaign against him" (Underhill 2009). His departure illustrates the lack of stability in management that led to deterioration in the personal relationships amongst staff at Mayibuye and RIM.

This comment is lent support by the perceptions amongst interviewees that the Robben Island management after Andre Odendaal's resignation was excessively bureaucratic, and had little understanding of the needs and operations of heritage organisations. As one interview put it:

> "Look, the management after Andre Odendaal left was... very difficult, and, um, they couldn't understand – on Robben Island, that is – they couldn't understand what the reason was for this place, and why... why this place

existed, and... and slowly our budgets sort of became phantom budgets, where... you know, so... um, they couldn't appreciate, they cannot appreciate what this place is, what it's done, what its unique, you know...".

There was also a common perception that income generation was considered more important than the Island's heritage. This is shown in comments like: "people on the ground without skills tended <laughs> to get [contract] renewals... because they were, in....core, core areas, but in terms of tourism rather than in terms of the role of a museum, archiving". It also meant that income-generating departments, such as Tours, were perceived to get preferential treatment. One interviewee complained:

"I mean so the island somehow has been burdened with this thing that it has to make money or its perceived as such. So the boats are running and boats are the main problem… so it never really looks, it somehow stops the project from really looking at the heritage side of things which is what this collection is about".

Another argued that only lip service is paid to the importance of the archives in these words: "when it comes to, for example, um, you know, the five-year planning, um, for UNESCO it's the heritage element which gets the most attention, because of the... the significance of the site, and how to protect that; but on a day-to-day element... tourism tends to... get the attention" (Arnold Rimmer, p17).

All of these factors led to the atmosphere of trust changing, to the extent that some interviewees were open about their perception that the move had been a mistake. There was no perception that the trusting relationship had deteriorated owing to maliciousness or exploitation, but rather to lack of understanding and interest by past Robben Island management in the challenges facing Mayibuye. However, there was also a clear undercurrent of fear in the perceptions of Mayibuye staff, who felt that the benign neglect could turn into victimisation if they spoke out too loudly.

As mentioned earlier, however, there appears to be an improvement in relations between Mayibuye, University and Island in the last year, with cooperation in terms of shared academic programmes. Peter Layle noted the increased willingness of Robben Island management to cooperate with University academics. This will be discussed in the section below.

4.2.3 Mayibuye and UWC: improving relationships

The University administration has taken a hands-off approach to Mayibuye, providing space and services, but not involving itself in its day to day operations, since this is the function of Robben Island. While not openly distrustful of the University, Mayibuye staff did feel that there could have been greater levels of collaboration. "We've become an island between the Island and the university. The university kind of feels it's not really theirs anymore, for a long time, that's been the way, I think its shifting again now, there's been more interest" (Mary Winner, p11).

There was also a perception that the University was interested in supporting the sciences at the expense of the humanities, since the sciences were seen to provide opportunities for income generation (in the form of patents) which the humanities did not.

> "Somewhere along the line you know part of the research will stick and there will be a patent and … if you fund the gamble the gamble will pay up dividends at the end of the day" (Peter Layle, p12).

The implication in this kind of comment is that Mayibuye and similar archives are not considered core to the University's business.

According to Peter Layle, the historian academic, Mayibuye came in for serious criticism by University academics in the past, both for its perceived commercialism and for its "nationalist orientation" [that is its lack of engagement with the critical and international dimensions of archival practice] (Peter Layle, p4). He claims that there had been, "fertile debate" around these issues. While staff were not actively distrustful in their relationships with these academics, the interviews showed that they were certainly wary of future criticism.

While there were no views expressed in the interviews that the University actively exploited Mayibuye, there was a perception that in the past there had not been support for collaboration from within the academic community, and a sense of caution from Mayibuye staff when interacting with academics was evident.

Again, it appears that things might be changing for the better. Peter Layle claims that academics are recognizing more the value of archivists to their own research: "archivists have a skill, you know, an expertise if you like, that I can only dream of having and so I've often

said so in various public kind of forums: I'm saying archivists are indispensable in some sense and in this University their collections are indispensable to teaching and research and to the formation of the idea of the University" (Peter Layle, p16).

In fact, "the attempt has been to build connections not only at Executive level between the two institutions but in working relations across the institutions" (Peter Layle, p14). This has seen practical cooperation between Mayibuye, Robben Island, and the University and discussions on how the three "partners" can increase the profile of heritage work. The interviewees appeared to be guardedly optimistic that things were going to improve.

4.2.4 State and societal issues: trust versus benign neglect

Staff interviewees did not seem to actively distrust the State in terms of digitisation, or see it as being exploitative towards Mayibuye: the perception seemed to be more that it was being neglectful, rather than malicious. State funding did come in for some criticism, however.

Mary Winner compares Mayibuye's position with other heritage institutions like the prominent museums in her passionate argument that government must provide more support for what is a national asset, entrusted to the archives for the nation:

> "of all the heritage projects for some or other reason, if you look at Freedom
> Park, all the large museums … even though you have to draw up these things
> called business plans these days, none of them actually have to show they are
> actually sustainable in terms of making money through audiences who walk in
> the door. I mean so the island somehow has been burdened with this thing that
> it has to make money or it's perceived as such. So the boats are running and
> boats are the main problem… so it never really looks, it somehow stops the
> project from really looking at the heritage side of things which is what this
> collection is about and that money shouldn't really be an issue. If you look at
> what has been allocated nationally to different projects where things are
> actually created out of nothing. Here we've got a collection that is so
> important, that needs to be preserved, for it was actually given to the nation
> when it was brought to South Africa. It's not only a university collection or
> whatever, a private collection. They've got a responsibility to look after it"
> (Mary Winner, p10).

Her words are echoed by Gray Barrack: "I don't think this kind of institution, Robben Island, and other institutions can be self-sufficient; I mean, to look at it say you've got to now – if

you want it, and it's a national heritage site, or organisation, you've got to decide, and people have to decide, whether we want it – this is important to us, as a nation. Is this part of us? If that is, then you pay for it, it's like having – if you want roads, you pay for the roads and you put it up, and you set money aside, through – taxpayers' money – so it belongs to the nation, basically, and you have a say in what it is" (p31).

While there were some doubts about state policy, these were muted. It seems that interviewees are adopting a "wait and see" attitude to state digitisation policy, rather than automatically distrusting it, or seeing it as exploitative.

4.2.5 Commercial digitisers and digitisation vendors: distrust of exploitation

Issues of exploitation came to the fore when the role of commercial digitisers was discussed in interviews: there was a very clear sense of distrust of commercial digitising organisers, and a belief that their actions were not driven by the purest of motives.

A key issue that arose was that of ownership. "In our case, we have people coming, offering to digitise our collection, with the intention of them, at one stage, or soon after digitising, having ownership of the digital format" (Andrew Solomon, p4). While some of these digitisers were open about their intention to take ownership of the digitised images, others were not as honest: "Yes, and you have you fine print that, most of the time, would not be made clear, certain things would not be made clear until everything, normally, is digitised, and then, they come and tell you…'by the way…'" (Andrew Solomon, p5).

Why did these vendors insist on ownership? It was clear to interviewees that vendors believed they could make money from the digitisation process. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, interviewees argued that the resulting loss of ownership of the digitised images was a matter for serious concern. This concern was not unreasonable, given experiences of other struggle organisations when dealing with digitisers. Gray Barrack quoted the case of CAVET (a Cape Town based community video NGO) which "partnered" with an American digitisation company. Attempts to get digital copies of a particular video failed when the American digitiser refused to give them to CAVET. "Look, he's desperate, you know, You've got the tape, you can give me a, sort of, version which I can use in creating a film that can be

broadcast... <takes a breath> you know, and just got no – so, it didn't work out." (Gray Barrack, p16).

Some digitisers had proved to be openly dishonest: one, for example, proposed that it would fundraise in Mayibuye's name from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and that the proposal would claim that all digitisation would be done by Mayibuye. The funds raised, however, would be directly pocketed by the digitiser who would do the digitisation themselves. "And I remember there was an incident where they actually approached us and said they would write a proposal on our behalf to get funding from the world heritage but then they would do the digitisation and I was like; this is entirely unethical, you know, you can't. We can't work like that" (Mary Winner, p7).

Another concern was that of control of items during the digitisation process. Most vendors wanted to take artefacts off-site to scan them, which meant a danger of theft or damage to items while they were in transit. Interviewees were deeply distrustful of these vendors, and believed that their operations were exploitative. It became an unofficial policy to not allow items to be removed from the archive for digitisation, and to require that the digital images be kept under Mayibuye's control. There was also a strong feeling that Mayibuye needed to build internal capacity, rather than outsourcing its work. "There's been a lot of that and people have made inroads I know into different organisations, but we've tried to steer clear of any of that. Because I feel it's about building capacity and we have proven that we can" (Mary Winner, p7).

4.2.6 Other archives and donors: naïve neo-colonial exploitation?

Another issue which generated much discussion was the role of other archives and philanthropic organisations. Many archives have proposed digitising South African archival collections, often in partnerships with philanthropic organisations. While this can be tempting for local archives which do not have the capacity or money to digitise their collections, there are a number of drawbacks. The case of one prominent American university was discussed in details during the interviews. During a South African digitisation drive, this University

"wined and dined and trained" Mayibuye staff (Gray Barrack, p11), and raised the funding needed to cover the costs of digitisation.

However, the catch was that all images had to be housed on that university's computers, at that university. This raised a number of concerns. One was that control of Mayibuye's digitised images would be out of Mayibuye's hands, and that Mayibuye "would be side-lined" as a result. The risk was that researchers could use Mayibuye's collection without any involvement with or from Mayibuye.

These were not the only concerns expressed by interviewees. Another was that archives in the North were attempting to fund their own digitisation projects by digitising archives from the South: thus the digitisation equipment and electronic storage purchased with donor funding could also be used for other digitisation projects, though done in Mayibuye's name:

> "the Provost of the American university [mentioned earlier] who has no idea about the sensitivities and the political dynamics that operate in the space of archives, no recourse to the debate that had unfolded here post 1990, had spoken quite boldly about what it would mean to do this wonderful thing called digitisation. Clearly this was in that moment when the US Academy was already undergoing its greatest kind of corporatisation; it's moment of like massive rearrangement of how it would operate as an institutional site and basically what they were doing was fundraising on the basis of digitisation projects elsewhere. So there was already a suspicion at the inauguration of the first projects on digitisation and as you know that project was a dismal failure and it was a dismal failure because it was underwritten by kind of paternalism of some sort" (Peter Layle, p5).

Gray Barrack argued that there were also more subtle undercurrents: he believed that institutions targeted Mayibuye because of its high international profile: "They were making money for themselves, trying to popularise their institution by using us as a, as a means of saying, *Oh, we've digitised their collection.*" (Gray Barrack, p13)

It is also interesting to note that these digitisers on occasion tried to bypass the archives themselves, and reach agreements with their parent organisations:

> "they have the money and are usually from overseas universities who have been coming in and sometimes what you find is that … they approach the executive structure of an organisation. And the executive structure of an organisation is not necessarily au fait or sensitive to some of the issues around, the implications around digitisation, around copyrights… so sometimes agreements are made at that level, when they filter down the archivist says ', but…'" (Blade Taper, p5).

The overtures of the northern university were strongly contested from within the archives community in South Africa on a number of grounds:

- That it was an unfair exchange, with the advantage going to the northern university
- That ownership and control was in the hands of a northern university, rather than that of the home archive. This was seen as a form of neo-colonialism, with ownership and power over resources being removed from Africa
- That local archivists were considered to just be "collectors and technicians" who needed no say in how the information could be used
- That there was no consideration of how the digitised content could be used to open up the debates on colonial and post-colonial history – it was merely a technical exercise to improve access, without thinking about why it should be done (Peter Layle, p5).

The project was abandoned, but in its place came a new project, ALUKA, which was mentioned earlier. Having learned from the northern university project failures, the project was based in South Africa, and information was hosted in South Africa and the USA. Nevertheless, there were high levels of distrust:

> "So I was invited in and I remember there was a deep sense of suspicion already as I entered the first meeting and I was saying to people that I am committed to an open discussion, I'm not a representative of the Mellon Foundation, I'm a historian with interest and commitment to finding ways of building an archival project with all the recognition that was needed about the debates that were unfolding in the discipline that side" (Peter Layle, p6).

The project needed to avoid duplicating the "modalities and paternalism" of the earlier project by just giving it "a South African flavour" (Peter Layle, p6).

While successful, the project generated debate about who would benefit from the project. In particular, the issue of repatriation of artefacts came to the fore. The argument from the North was that the project would result in a "digital repatriation" of artefacts, something opposed vehemently from within South Africa:

> "'What does it mean to repatriate materials that was sent out of South Africa which are at Yale University and other institutions, to ask for a repatriation of those materials and then the way in which it got entertained was that there would be a virtual repatriation of those documents and that you know we would have access to the virtual documents; the point was 'no we will receive those documents then digitise them and then you can have the virtual copy of those documents' so that was the you know the very, very bitter story of that

project. It led to lots of tension lots of disgruntlement and I think it left behind a very bad taste in the aftermath" (Peter Layle, p9).

These projects brought the issues of exploitation, power and trust to the fore, creating an awareness of the pitfalls of using external organisations to digitise archives, and a deep distrust of external digitisation initiatives. It was interesting that interviewees did not see the projects as consciously exploitative attempts to gain control of resources. They saw them rather as emanating from a naive and paternalistic desire to do good:

> "I think there was a fairly fundamental misunderstanding and the misunderstanding was partly a result of not doing homework adequately"(Blade Taper, p11).

The project leaders did not consider that the debates and discussions around digitisation in South Africa might be more advanced than their own:

> "American institutions were coming in to support South African institutions without recognising that the debate in South Africa might have been so profoundly ahead of its time and ahead of the time of the American University that you know perhaps they would be learning the other way; and you know the kind of bravado of the South African institutions I think some of that was made clear that this thing doesn't necessarily work … as an act of benevolence and generosity and so on etc.". (Peter Layle, 9).

There was comment that in fact the projects hindered progress: "My sense is that the project [ALUKA] actually was a setback for digitisation not an advancement for digitisation" (Peter Layle, p10).

Another example of exploitation brought up in the interviews is that of the British Museum. Mayibuye had a digital copy of Nelson Mandela's speech from the dock, in a format which was no longer readable by South African machines. The Director of the British Museum, on a visit to South Africa, offered to create a usable version, and the Museum did so. However, the Museum immediately added a copy of the speech onto their own website, without acknowledgement of the source, or permission. The Museum initially refused to remove the speech from their website, since they saw the new digital version as their creation, and thus their property. Though the item was subsequently removed, it raised distrust levels amongst local archivists.

Another incident which created doubts was over the Tutu collections at the University of the Witwatersrand and Mayibuye, when a member of King's College attempted to take control of South African digital collections relating to Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

> "I mean we had the same thing with King's College, with the Tutu collection; we've got a collection of Desmond Tutu's stuff here because he was Chancellor and stuff, and his work is situated here and in some other universities, everywhere where he studied and so forth. But they went straight to Archbishop Tutu, and told him what a wonderful idea it would be; not coming to the institutions where his work [was]. And then come to us and tell us that, um, *Well, we spoke to the Archbishop and he said it's a good idea; so therefore you must co-operate with us.* Basically, they'll get copies and they'll run that whole thing, and – whatever it is, and they will take that whole glory, when *their* collection is smaller than *our* collection" (Gray Barrack. p16).

The project had been funded by the Carnegie Foundation, but when representatives of South African institutions suggested their Tutu collections also be funded, they did not succeed:

> "Basically after hearing proposals of what was going to be taking place in the Tutu collections our two universities host, (we hold the largest parts of the Tutu collection), she basically was not going to listen to any requests for funding to support the Tutu digitisation project and I think Carnegie then went and created a national consultation and of course those of us who were in part of this were left out" (Peter Layle, p10). At a practical level, what this meant was that those who had challenged the motives of the Carnegie digitisation campaign, and had warned of the effects the digitisation might have on South African archives, were excluded from the national consultation. Again, serious doubts surfaced as to the trustworthiness of these digitising institutions.

A final example is that of an incident with the SABC, which in the early 1990s proposed a partnership where they would house Mayibuye collections in return for publicity:

> "SABC came in, and so we had to fight this contract, because it was basically them taking stuff from us, and in exchange having adverts, <raises arms imploringly> now, who the hell needs adverts? I mean, we're already internationally known, way back from the beginning, we don't want to have like an advert running on, *So come to the Mayibuye Archives,* <laughs> or something like that!" (Gray Barrack, p19).

The partnership did not happen, partly over issues of control, but also because of confidentiality concerns from archivists, who felt that they could not place private personal items under the control of a broadcaster.

This section has painted a gloomy picture of exploitative outsiders trying to digitise local collections on their terms and for their advantage, and distrustful locals fighting against this.

However, a more positive exception is that of the Japanese government which arrived unannounced at Mayibuye to donate equipment.

> "They came in here – I don't know how they heard about this place, but they wanted to support us. But the nice thing, they wanted nothing in return, they wanted to give us equipment. No money – the money was going to Japanese companies, basically. They gave us scanners, and cameras, and stuff like that, you know and a system for copying, um, digitising video, for example. Most of the stuff has run its course, but I'm still using a brilliant film scanner that we have here that's still working, so... and they would come here every year to find out, *Is it working, do you,* you know, *has it...[are you] still using the stuff, where is that stuff,* and that type of thing. But that's all they really wanted...it was better than what – the other idea of finding, coming and giving you money and taking your stuff; they wanted nothing, other than that... to make sure that we were actually using the stuff and we [were] finding it beneficial" (Gray Barrack, p17).

4.2.7 Subjects and copyright holders: distrust of Mayibuye's intentions

Another area where trust is an issue is that of ownership of and access to artefacts in the archive. Some relate to the perceived value of artefacts: Mayibuye requested the right to publish one photograph housed in the archives and was quoted R6000 by the copyright holder:

> "We came to a point where I could not send out certain photographs, of people, I mean Pete Magubane's picture [Magubane is an internationally recognised South African photographer known in particular for his documentation of the Sharpeville Massacre and the 1956 Treason Trial] that was in here, they will say, you've got to pay us. And they would ask for huge, you know, six thousand Rands, and so I had to stop these things from going out, making the decision, [and] I'm still in that point where I make decisions about what can go out"(Gray Barrack, p10).

Other copyright holders have attempted to take back entire Mayibuye collections .

> "I think in a lot of cases it's the perception of money. Because around the Nelson Mandela foundation there's been a huge … the impression, you know that a name can be such an incredible pull that you can just get money… And you've had all these other foundations that … so many of them being set up – somebody was talking about a Kathrada collection. I haven't been able to get a very clear sense of what their different aims and objectives are. And we've tried to say to them when they've engaged with us … don't go and necessarily start another collection, because it's very costly to look after a collection; rather leave the collections where they are and have relationships, you know, it's always accessible… because if it was his collection being placed here, obviously he's got access, or the foundation will have access, but don't necessarily start another archive .. and I think they've been warned apparently

by some Americans. Because it's a very American thing to do, to start one foundation after another, and they were told that financially it's very difficult to sustain" (Mary Winner, p3).

These are clear examples of attempts to exploit the collections, but some copyright holders distrusted Mayibuye itself:

> "But it also works with collections, you're getting families coming up later on, saying, you know, Ja, my father should not have given you the collections, he's got no right to have done this, we're the family and we want, you know, [to] take it back; or We think it should go to, you know, [the] University of the Witwatersrand, which is a better institution than where it is, you know, and that type of thing" (Gray Barrack, p14).

In a similar vein, some Robben Island staff expressed distrust about a recent Mayibuye exhibition relating to sport on the Island, and few attended the opening of the exhibition. "there were certain people suspicious about it, from the Island, that thought, *Why [are] they doing this, what [are] they doing with the stuff,*. came around, but they never came to the opening of the exhibition, there was one or two ex-political prisoners, 'cause it was their stuff" (Gray Barrack, p28).

Maintaining the trust of copyright holders is vital for an archive like Mayibuye, as is protecting their artefacts from exploitation: "We are the custodians, not the owners" (Gray Barrack, p13). This had led to a number of unofficial policies: firstly, to not digitise and allow access to items for which the ownership is not clear.

> "I think we only look after things, we're not in charge of it, we don't own them. So we're sort of custodians of it, but I don't believe because we have it here it's open to anybody that [wants] to come in; I don't mean to censor it, I think you need to be accessible, but through a way where you – where (a copyright holder) can say, *We can trust you, you're not going to cause horrible problems;* [it] can happen [in] fifty years' time" (Gray Barrack, p13).

In such cases, items might be digitised for preservation purposes, but not made accessible.

In one case

> "We have one huge collection and we haven't listened to it all and a researcher found something by a very high profile politician in one of collections. Pretty much saying things that would discredit him quite significantly. We had the rights to the collection but at least this researcher said look, this is what he's saying um and I'm aware how damaging this would be to him, so can I publish? He had recorded this in the early 90s. Maybe the late 80s. Um and at the time he was an ordinary person as it were, he hadn't gone up in the ranks,

so the context was different. I mean it was the kind of thing he wouldn't say now – so we thought it doesn't necessarily reflect properly. We would have to clear permission….

So we decided then the rules would be if an interview involves an individual, the individual did not know necessarily that the interview is going to end up in an archive, that's for sure. So what we would then request is that the researcher would then request permission from the interviewer themselves if they were going to copy the item" (Blade Taper, p9).

Thus trust is maintained by requesting permission from copyright holders to copy items for researchers.

4.2.8 Researchers and users: theft and illegal use of artefacts

A final area relating to issues of trust and exploitation arising is that of users of the archive. Many are academic researchers; some are journalists using the archive for work purposes; others are individuals conducting personal research.

Theft of artefacts has always been a concern for archives, long before digitisation happened. Mayibuye, for example, had a famous work of art stolen.

"We acquired resistance art: Art Against Apartheid, it was a collection of artwork[s], mainly paintings, from international artists; and when we got it – it's a huge collection, but you know, you can't keep art in storage, it must be shown, it must be rotated round... So this was put up in Parliament. Somebody walked off with a Lichtenstein, out of Parliament, under their shoulder, walked out! And we only found out about it because somebody from Iziko was at a party, and somebody was drunk, and he said he found this famous artist there in a dark corner and he walked off with it; so we got it back. This person told us about this, and we happened to get the thing back." (Gray Barrack, p11)

While this was not a theft of a digitised artefact, it was enough to make staff aware that the danger of theft of Mayibuye artefacts was a very real one. Digitisation, however, did open up new challenges around trust and security. It is much easier to copy a digital image from a website than to steal a printed photograph under the beady eye of an archivist. There are ways to improve security, however.

There had been incidents when Mayibuye had been blamed for distributing items for which they did not have the copyright: a breach of the trust. Archivists understood this issue: "… because being an archive I think we only look after things, we're not in charge of it, we don't

own the stuff – I think we just look after the things. So we're sort of custodians of it …" (Gray Barrack, p18). So ways had to be found to ensure that the trust placed in the Archive was justified.

One way was to ensure materials were clearly marked if Mayibuye did not hold copyright, and to not distribute such items without permission: "Because every copy that we did not own, we made sure it was identified that 'we do not own' and therefore even though researchers would come in and have a look, we would then say 'but can you see "not for use"'. So that's what we had. So that would then make sure that even though you are looking at it, we are not going to give you the right to use, unless you contact the owner " (Andrew Solomon, p4).

Another way was to improve the security of digitised images. Theft of images is not difficult to do, so archives must put measures in place to improve security.

> "Ideally you should have your jpeg, watermarked, where people can see that okay. And if this is what they want they should then formally make a request, pay for whatever they have to pay and then sign a document. But then, again, how tight can your system be, how tight can it be? Some things can be controlled, others cannot. And just like someone coming in, a researcher, and requesting an actual copy. And you make a photocopy. When that photocopy is taken, they can also do anything with that. And the issue is, creating a credible system that's managed in a certain way. And people following a structure. And if they have paid for that particular service, then you render. To a certain extent what they do, at times you cannot control…" (Andrew Solomon, p11).

This is echoed by Mary Winner: "A lot of stuff that happens with websites etcetera and people will hack into stuff, nothing is foolproof" (Mary Winner, p8). There has to be some level of security, of course, but this has to be balanced against the need to provide access.

Another concern is that of people repeatedly using materials which they had agreed to only use once.

> "A lot of material is made available on a particular contract; so maybe it's a 'one-time use'... for a documentary; but that documentary, say it's made for SATV, it goes into their archive, and then the material is re-used, and trying to police that is just about impossible, so... I think, um, both eTV and SATV most likely benefited enormously, and I'm not sure how many, companies elsewhere. They haven't paid for it, basically, or paid for it once … and maybe it was even outsourced, so the contract was perhaps with someone else, and... I mean there is a clause that I might have spotted it at one point and introduced

it, which [says] the material can't be put into another archive, that, if you've, like, kind of got use of a particular recording, it's for the purpose of your studies or your research, and not for long-term use, and cannot be placed into another archive. But to actually police that <laughs> is, is just about impossible, with people coming from so many different parts of the world to access the archives. Ja. So you're basically relying on some degree of honesty... "(Arnold Rimmer, p12).

The archive requires those copying items to sign a clear agreement which specifies how the item can be used, copyright restrictions, and the fees payable for digitising, but at the end of the day, the system continues to work on trust and the honesty of those copying items.

There is little doubt that there will always be people who will abuse the system, but in the end the archive has to trust users to some degree.

4.3 Conclusion: chance, personalities, trust and exploitation

The analysis of the interviews showed two major points of interest, each with sub-themes. In the first, ad-hoc actions and lack of strategic planning had a strong influence on Mayibuye's operations, including the digitisation process. At the same time, serendipity and the influence of personalities had a major impact on its operations and relationships with the outside world.

A second theme is that of trust (and lack thereof), and exploitation. Mayibuye's origins and operations reflected trust in colleagues and management, but this was not always so in their relationships with external role players who were sometimes perceived to be exploitative. The reverse is also true, with an awareness amongst Mayibuye staff that they held items in trust, and had a duty not to betray that trust. Despite this, some external role players did appear to distrust Mayibuye staff's motives and actions.

The next chapter will relate the analysis of themes and sub-themes to the research questions that were articulated in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Chapter Four examined the themes that emerged from the analysis of interviews and documentary sources. These included the ad-hoc nature of Mayibuye's operations (including digitisation), the lack of continuity and strategy in many of Mayibuye's relationships with the outside world, and how personal relationships affected the work of the organisation. Another set of themes related to exploitation (both real and perceived), and trust and distrust.

In the light of the theme and sub-themes that emerged, this chapter returns to the research questions posed in Chapter Three. The chapter then concludes with some interpretation of the findings to round off the "hermeneutic circle" of interpretative case study (Klein and Myers: 1999).

5.1 Research Questions and Findings

The questions are:

- Why should an archive digitise its collections?
- Who are the major role players in a digitisation project, and how do they influence the project?
- What are the financial implications of digitising an archival collection?
- What are the risks associated with digitisation?
- What are the project management considerations during a digitisation project?
- What are the technical issues to be dealt with in a digitisation project?
- Are the power relations within and beyond the organisation changed by the digitisation process? And if so how?
- What is chosen for digitisation, and why?

5.1.1 Why should an archive digitise its collections?

The two reasons commonly given by archivists for digitising artefacts, as described in Chapters One and Two, are to preserve the artefacts (and to make backup copies of those artefacts), and to make the collections more accessible to researchers and other users of the archives.

This is the case with Mayibuye to some degree. Mayibuye staff did make digital copies of artefacts that appeared to be deteriorating, and digitising was done to make items more accessible. However, it should be noted that this digitisation was often done in a reactive way, rather than as part of specific digitisation strategy or plan. The artefacts digitised were often those already suffering from some level of deterioration; in the same way, digitising was a reaction to user demand for digital copies, and proactive digitising was often done as a time-saving measure by staff members being repeatedly asked for copies of the same artefacts. Mayibuye staff were also aware of the geographical limitations on making their collections available to researchers, and believed that digitising would allow a wider audience for the collections.

Other factors also played a role, however. One was the ability of staff to take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves. Thus staff used the funding provided by the state to complete the audit of heritage artefacts to digitise these artefacts at the same time. The staff made the most of unexpected donations of equipment by the Japanese government; the personal connection with a donor lawyer resulted in the digitisation of Robben Island sport and recreation artefacts.

As interesting is why digitisation did not occur. Mayibuye staff seem to have avoided the "fetishism with technology" which Lalu comments on (2007: 31), for example: this could be explained by the fact that the struggle background of the archivists made them aware of the potential pitfalls of digitisation. Their awareness of the conflict around the ALUKA and similar projects also meant that they did not dash headfirst into a digitisation programme without considering the consequences. This awareness of potential exploitation also ensured that they rejected various digitisation proposals by digitisation vendors and funders which would have disadvantaged Mayibuye. Another reason for not digitising was the lack of funding, for Mayibuye as an organisation, for equipment, and more specifically for digitisation programmes. Finally, the lack of a digitisation driving force or champion on Robben Island meant that external pressure was not placed on Mayibuye to digitise.

5.1.2 Who are the major role players in a digitisation project, and how do they influence the project?

Which role-players had an impact on digitisation at Mayibuye?

- Firstly it was researchers using the archive (and in particular those who were not close enough geographically to visit the archive in person): their repeated demands for access to specific artefacts encouraged Mayibuye staff to digitise some parts of their collection
- Mayibuye staff were also important: their awareness of the deterioration of artefacts was a motivation for them to digitise their collections, as was their desire to make their collections more accessible to researchers and to those involved in the liberation struggles in Southern Africa. Their "non-archivist" struggle background also had an impact on how they approached the whole issue of digitisation
- Funders and philanthropists made digitisation economically viable. If the Japanese government had not donated digitisation equipment to Mayibuye, far less digitisation might have occurred. In the same way, the financial support of one person made the Sport and Recreation collection digitisation project a reality
- It can be argued that historians (particularly those at the University of the Western Cape and the University of the Witwatersrand) were instrumental in making Mayibuye staff aware of the potential pitfalls in taking on digitisation partners. They pointed to the issues of power and control when outside agencies offered to digitise collections and host the digitised images: the awareness that this created in Mayibuye staff doubtless contributed to Mayibuye's rejection of dubious attempts by digitisation vendors to digitise Mayibuye collections

What is interesting is that some role-players who could have potentially had a major impact on both the digitisation process (and on the work of Mayibuye itself) did not do so:

- Robben Island Museum's lack of strategic and financial support and purchase of inappropriate equipment hampered, rather than supported, digitisation. The repeated changes of executive management on Robben Island Museum meant that management "did not have a broader vision about how things will move beyond your own tenure and place" (Mary Winner, p7), as well as lack of understanding and interest by Robben Island management in the challenges facing Mayibuye
- While the GRAP 103 audit presented an opportunity for Mayibuye to piggyback digitisation on the back of the audit, the lack of state policy and of strategic and financial support hindered digitisation efforts. Mary Winner argued that the state had an obligation to support the archive's work: "Here we've got a collection that is so important, that needs to be preserved, for it was actually given to the nation when it was brought to South Africa. It's not only a university collection or whatever, a private collection. They've got a responsibility to look after it" (Mary Winner, p10)". State failure to do so presented an obstacle to the digitisation process. In addition, interviewees argued that there was a lack of understanding at the state level about digitisation policy: "(DAC) people were aware of it (digitisation policy), but not at the level that people working on it thought they were aware (Blade Taper, p6)

- The 99 year lease of Mayibuye to Robben Island by UWC meant that the University did not support digitisation efforts in the same way as academic departments or archives in the University
- The subjects of documents, films and photographs also had an impact on digitisation. Interviewees pointed to a number of artefacts which were not digitised because of the potential harm it could cause the subjects of the images. The archivists, for example, stumbled upon an old interview with a public figure who was unlikely to have known that the interview recording had ended up in a South African archive. The content of the interview, conducted many years before, could have caused serious embarrassment to the person concerned. Mayibuye staff decided to digitise the interview for preservation purposes, but not to make it available: "A copyright holder can say 'we can trust you, you're not going to cause horrible problems" (Gray Barrack, p13)
- Copyright holders also limited what could be digitised. A number of interviewees pointed out that certain collections were not digitised out of concerns that copyright did not clearly belong to Mayibuye, and that digitising these collections could result in legal action
- Digitisation vendors and philanthropic organisations had less of an impact than one could expect. This is quite likely because of an awareness by staff of the potential pitfalls of such collaboration.

5.1.3 What are the financial implications of digitising an archival collection?

Digitising can be a costly operation, and not all archivists consider this when digitising. In Chapter Two of this dissertation, for example, Maroso argues that factors such as the start-up and ongoing financial costs of digitising; whether digitised images will be used enough to justify the expense; the fact that digitisation does not mean an end to preservation costs are taken into careful consideration (Maroso: 2003: 36).

Suitable equipment is expensive to purchase and becomes dated quickly, and staff have to be trained in digitising methods. Interviewees noted that when Mayibuye ordered scanners, Robben Island management substituted cheaper (and ineffective) scanners in a bid to save money. Mayibuye simply did not have the money to embark on a large-scale digitisation project.

Mayibuye also saw their budget from Robben Island Museum slashed, becoming a "phantom budget" (Gray Barrack, p6); some interviewees saw this resulting from ignorance about the national role and importance of Mayibuye and its collections, as well as a perception that financially self-sustaining departments such as Tours deserved better financial support.

One potential solution to this problem was to outsource the digitisation process. A number of role-players offered to do so for Mayibuye. Some were commercial digitising agencies, others were funders or other universities. While these options would have not cost Mayibuye much financially, there was a price to pay in non-financial terms. External digitisers either expected to host the digital images, or to charge for access to the scanned images. Mayibuye rejected these options out of hand: there was a very clear distrust of the motives of these digitisers, and a sense that they were attempting to exploit Mayibuye's resources for their own benefit, rather than that of Mayibuye. Even more of a concern was the demand by some digitisers that artefacts be taken off-site for scanning, which could have resulted in theft or damage to the artefacts. It became a clear policy that Mayibuye would resist exploitative digitisation proposals.

How did Mayibuye manage the costs of digitisation? As mentioned earlier, staff took advantage of circumstances that worked in their favour, using the GRAP 103 audit to get digitising done. They also trained staff in-house, thus saving money. More importantly, they developed a policy to charge for the use of digitised images. Researchers were able to see low resolution digital images via the website, but paid a standard fee for better quality images. Users were charged on a sliding scale, so that large organisations such as government departments or foreign universities paid more than local students. The income generated did not cover all the costs of digitisation, but did at least reduce the cost to Mayibuye.

Mayibuye was also fortunate enough to receive donations of money for specific projects (such as the donation by the lawyer mentioned earlier), as well as donations of digitising equipment. This allowed them to digitise without making themselves vulnerable to exploitation.

5.1.4 What are the risks associated with digitisation?

The previous section discussed the financial risks of digitising collections, but these are not the only risks. There is also a danger to artefacts themselves when digitising. Older items which had not been disturbed for years might get damaged during the digitisation process

when they are handled by archivists. This implies a Catch-22 situation, since digitisation at Mayibuye was used to make copies of fragile items to prevent deterioration due to repeated handling of those items. An additional risk is that of theft of artefacts during the digitisation process; this is one of the reasons that Mayibuye refused to allow off-site digitisation.

The digitised artefacts themselves also pose risks. Interviewees noted that digitised images were found on a number of websites (some commercial) without attribution to Mayibuye, and without fees being paid: Stolen Mayibuye images were being used to make money for commercial ventures at Mayibuye's expense. There is also a risk that the publication of digitised images might result in financial demands from those claiming copyright who become aware of the artefacts in Mayibuye's possession only because of the digitisation of those artefacts. Interviewees quoted cases of demands from families of subjects of photographs, for example, for the return of the artefacts so that they could be used for financial gain.

Perhaps more importantly, the digitisation process has the ability to change power relations. As mentioned in Chapter Two, "Northern" philanthropists and universities saw themselves as dominant in the relationship with "Southern" archives due to their financial and technological advantages (Kagan: 2006: 7). Interviewees noted that many of the digitisation proposals submitted to Mayibuye would have meant that control of the digitised images would have rested with digitisers, rather than Mayibuye. The "Northerners" argued that this was essential because they, unlike Mayibuye, had the infrastructure necessary to maintain and share the images to a wide audience. While this might have been true in the past, the risk was that the digitised items would no longer be under Mayibuye's control. It is to Mayibuye's credit that it resisted this exploitation and determined to keep the digitisation process in-house, despite the constraints this placed on them.

5.1.5 What are the project management considerations during a digitisation project?

As discussed in Section 3.3.5, issues such as the availability of trained staff to do the digitisation, the funds needed to complete the digitisation, and even whether the digitisation should be outsourced need to be considered when embarking on a digitisation project.

It is interesting to note that many of Mayibuye's digitisation projects did not follow traditional project management methodologies, which require careful advance planning with clear allocation of responsibilities and resources (including staff resources) and clear timelines. Rather, the work was often done in an ad-hoc and reactive basis, taking advantage of specific opportunities as they presented themselves. Having said this, it was inevitable that some general management issues did arise:

- Ensuring that staff had the technical skills to do the scanning: in fact the digital expert's recruitment was a result of a personal connection with Mayibuye staff.
- Finding funding for salaries for specific digitisation projects – examples were the Sports and Recreation project, which was donor funded, and the piggy-backing digitisation onto the Treasury's GRAP 103 audit
- Getting support (both financial and institutional) from Robben Island management. Interviewees argued that one of the reasons that more digitisation did not occur at Mayibuye was an initial lack of a clear digitisation policy, and the fact that digitisation was not seen as a priority by Robben Island, since it was not income-generating
- Selecting how the digitised images would be widely distributed without allowing illegal use of the images
- Ensuring that Mayibuye was not exploited by external role-players such as digitisation vendors and other archives
- Deciding what would be selected for digitisation, something which constituted a political minefield. Issues of copyright and ownership were a major concern
- Publicising the digitised collection: in the past Mayibuye staff personally paid some of the costs of maintaining a Mayibuye website, since they felt that the Robben Island website did not provide all the functionality required by Mayibuye
- Ensuring that digitisation did not open Mayibuye up to legal action
- Perhaps the key concern was whether to outsource the digitisation work. While this would have made sense at some levels (the funding would be covered, technical experts would have done the work etc.) Mayibuye staff were clear that the risks of outsourcing outweighed the benefits.

5.1.6 What are the technical issues to be dealt with in a digitisation project?

The major concerns were that the correct equipment was used to digitise artefacts and to store the digitised images. Interviewees worried about the durability of storage media such as DVDs, which seldom last longer than ten years before deteriorating. In the end, the purchase of file servers for storage resolved this issue. Another concern was to have the correct infrastructure to disseminate information via the Internet. The Robben Island page for

Mayibuye did not have all the functionality required by Mayibuye, so Mayibuye created their own. At the time of the interviews, staff were occasionally paying out of their pockets to cover items such as the Mayibuye.org.za name.

The technical aspects of security also needed attention. Mayibuye staff were aware of the danger of theft or illegal use of images, and took steps accordingly: only low quality images, often watermarked, were available on the web page, and those who purchased higher quality images were required to sign a standard conditions of use agreement. This ties in with issues of trust: interviewees noted that they had to be constantly vigilant to prevent theft of images or breaches of the usage agreements signed by those making use of the images.

5.1.7 Are the power relations within and beyond the organisation changed by the digitisation process? And if so how?

It was somewhat surprising to see how little the power relations were changed by digitisation. The critical school of literature referred to in Chapter Two argues that organisational and personal relations could be profoundly changed by the digitisation process. The digitisation could expose a layer of exploitation which had not previously been visible, but could also leave the archive vulnerable to new attempts at exploitation by digitisers or other archives who hoped to themselves benefit from the digitisation process. This could either be through controlling access to digitised images, or by making money from the digitisation process.

In practice this didn't seem to happen to any great degree. Interviewees were very aware of the potential political pitfalls of digitising: the ALUKA project, for example, and the reactions to it had shown the dangers of allowing outsiders to gain control of digitised materials. Interviewees acknowledged that they distrusted outside role players offering to do the digitisation work for Mayibuye: it was clear from the interviews that Mayibuye staff would resist any attempts to alter the power relations between themselves and "geeks bearing gifts" such as digitisers and funders. Mayibuye rejected proposals by commercial digitisers which would have allowed much of the collections to be digitised, because it was felt that these proposals would have entailed behaving unethically.

In fact, the interviews revealed that Mayibuye staff perceived their colleagues to be highly ethical people, who refused to allow personal advantage or financial rewards to stand in the way of their doing what they felt was right. This, combined with their political awareness and struggle backgrounds, meant that they did not fall into the potential pitfalls of digitisation.

There were a number of other areas where power relations could have changed: with Robben Island, with the University, and with the state. These did not appear to have happened: interviewees reported no pressure on them to digitise (or not digitise) specific items. It may well be that the benign neglect experienced by Mayibuye may well have worked to their advantage. More importantly, the struggle background of staff and the negative publicity surrounding digitisation initiatives such as ALUKA meant that staff were very aware of the power relation issues surrounding digitisation and were able to avoid many of the pitfalls experienced by other archives.

5.1.8 What is chosen for digitisation, and why?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, archivists have traditionally prided themselves on being "neutral" purveyors of knowledge of the past, and as preservers of history. But a number of authors have pointed out that the role of the archivist is inherently biased. Lalu argued, for example, that archives reflect the dominant social discourse, and that archivists are not neutral, even if the archivist bias is at a purely subconscious level (Lalu: 2007). The choices that archivists make in selecting objects involve making choices as to what is relevant and important for the archive and its patrons, and what should be ignored.

The Mayibuye interviews showed that Mayibuye staff displayed a high level of awareness of the potential dangers which could be encountered when deciding which artefacts should be selected for digitisation. A number of the interviewees acknowledged that the selection process by definition could not be objective, since all those selecting items would have their own personal biases. The argument they made is that a selector must be aware of their own biases, and take them into account when making decisions.

As highlighted in Chapter Four, much of the digitisation was in an ad-hoc way, in reaction to repeated researcher requests for items, and was done to improve efficiency. This was not always the case, however. Collections where ownership or copyright was in doubt were simply not selected for digitisation at all, in order to avoid conflict around ownership issues.

Finally, there appeared to be a strong "do no harm" ethic running through Mayibuye's digitisation projects. A number of items were deliberately excluded from the digitisation process because of the harm they could have done to the subjects of the documents or films.

Mayibuye staff were aware of the potential dangers in the selection process, and managed to avoid them. These challenges will, however, undoubtedly rise again in the future, and Mayibuye will need to tread carefully as it continues on this path.

5.2 The balancing act

Klein and Myers (1999: 69) argue that in "interpretive research" it is vital to look at the context of a situation and the processes that influence that context. Most importantly, they argue, is the principle of the Hermeneutic Circle: here, the research moves repeatedly between specific parts of the research and the research as a whole. These iterations each inform the other – a global picture provides a context for a specific part, which in turn informs the global picture. Thus one can provide meaning to the research results.

This has been the case in this research, where examining the context of Mayibuye's operations and relationships has shed light on the digitisation process, and vice versa. The previous chapter used interviews and documentary sources to answer the research questions posed in Chapter Three. However, the interviews also brought out a research thread which had not been anticipated when the research questions were formulated: that of a balancing act.

An image springs to mind when examining how Mayibuye managed its digitisation process. It is that of a tightrope walker on a high wire, balancing opposing weights on each end of a long pole: if the pole becomes unbalanced, the walker will fall to the ground. Mayibuye has managed to maintain that balance over a great distance and long period of time.

The weights on the poles can be seen in a number of contrasts:

- Idealism and pragmatism
- Optimism and disillusionment
- Suspicion and trust
- Commodification and preservation of heritage.

Idealism and pragmatism

This balancing act has manifested itself in a number of ways: One is that of idealism versus pragmatism. Mayibuye staff came across as idealistic people. Many were political activists before they joined Mayibuye, and saw working for Mayibuye as a logical extension of their activism. They saw Mayibuye as a national treasure which deserved support, and were unhappy that did it not get that support. They were very aware of the dangers of digitisation, and did not allow outsiders to digitise their collections even when it would have meant financial and organisational benefits to the Archive. However, they also displayed a high degree of pragmatism where needed. They did not hesitate to integrate Mayibuye into the Robben Island Museum when funding was in short supply, and were happy to take practical advantage of GRAP 103 to get digitising work done.
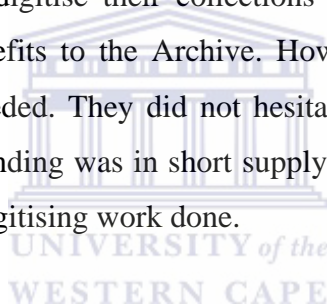
Optimism and disillusionment

The same can be said of balancing optimism and disillusionment. While staff were often disillusioned by the perceived lack of support from state, Robben Island and the University, they remain optimistic about the future of Mayibuye, and about their colleagues' capabilities and support. In addition, they were willing to admit that Mayibuye's relationships with Robben Island and the University were improving.

Suspicion and trust

Suspicion and trust also had to be balanced. While there was no doubt that staff were very trusting of each other and their immediate leadership, there was open distrust of digitising vendors, some philanthropic organisations, and past management of Robben Island. They were constantly aware of the possibility of exploitation, but were not afraid to collaborate with state organisations to help information digitisation policy. Staff went out of their way to

ensure that the trust placed in them by copyright holders and subjects of images was not abused in any way.

Commodification and heritage

Mayibuye managed to avoid Lalu's "fetishism with technology" and commodification of their collections to ensure that they are treated as the invaluable heritage that they are, and to avoid losing control of their collections; but they were also pragmatic enough to charge for use of their images and to put practical systems in place to ensure that digitised artefacts were not stolen.

It has been interesting to see the contradictions in Mayibuye's operations: they are complex and ambiguous: Mayibuye operated in a surprisingly ad-hoc fashion, taking advantage of circumstances and personal relationships to achieve its ends rather than strategic planning, but nevertheless managed a balancing act which allowed it to successfully survive the numerous pitfalls it faced.
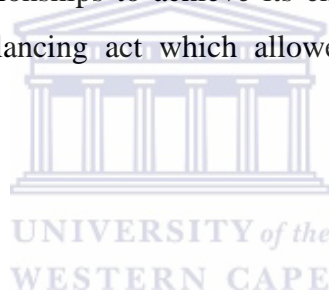
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This research has been fascinating for the author. It overturned a number of his assumptions regarding digitisation of archives, in particular his initial assumption that the archivists at Mayibuye were unaware of the hidden dangers inherent in digitisation of "struggle" materials. It has also made it clear that Mayibuye staff have been able to fend off external attempts to control the digitisation process.

6.1 Case Study Research

This dissertation has used a case study methodology to investigate digitisation at Mayibuye. Case studies are useful at uncovering what is often hidden or difficult to measure using quantitative methodologies. To quote Stake (1994: 240) in qualitative case study "ideas are structured, highlighted, subordinated, connected, embedded in contexts, laced with flavour and doubt". In this dissertation, many of the themes that emerged were connected and embedded in the context.

This does not meant that case study methodologies have not been criticised: they have been viewed as "unscientific"; as mentioned in Chapter Three, Flyvberg (2006: 221) notes that opponents of case study research have argued in particular that:

- One cannot generalise or develop theory from a single case study
- Case study research is biased towards verification of the researchers own preconceived notions.

However, he cites Galileo's experiment at the Tower at Pisa (discussed in Chapter Three) as a clear example that a single case study can be used to generate theory. He also shows that the charge of bias towards verification is not grounded in fact, and that often case studies disprove the preconceived ideas of the research. This was certainly the case in this dissertation: the author's preconceived perception (informed by the Critical School views found in Chapter Two) of archivists as technicists who were unaware of the organisational and political challenges was found to be completely unfounded.

There is no doubt, however, that case study research needs to be conducted with a cautious eye. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the seminal article by Klein and Myers is an excellent way to avoid the pitfalls of interpretive research:

- In their overarching *Principle of the Hermeneutic Circle*, they argue that the research must use specific parts to inform the larger whole, and vice versa. This case study has done so, linking individuals' experiences to more general issues of digitisation (1999:71).
- The *Principle of Contextualisation* (1999:73) requires that any research must grounded in its context; without this, the understanding of what has happened will be limited. This case study made extensive use of this principle, arguing that the personal backgrounds and political awareness of interviewees was a major reason that Mayibuye managed to avoid the political pitfalls of digitisation.
- The *Principle of Interaction between researchers and subjects* (1999:74) notes that the research does not only have an impact on the research subjects, causing them to see events from an outsider's perspective: they also have an impact on the researcher. As mentioned above, this was particularly true in this case study, where the researcher's perception of archivists was changed by his interaction with the interviewees. In turn, the Principle of Dialogical Reasoning (1999:76) requires the researcher to confront their possible prejudices during the research design, when the data does not match the design. In this case study, it became clear that technical concerns were not as significant as assumed during the design phase, and the findings showed that this was the case.
- The *Principle of Multiple Interpretations* (1999:77) argues that it is quite possible for two different interviewees to have different perceptions about the same event, given their personal histories and that neither should be considered incorrect. One interviewee in this case study, for example, argued that digitisation work at Mayibuye could not be considered ad-hoc and reactive, since he planned his work strategically. Others felt that this was not the case, and neither side was wrong. Case study research is not always completely cut and dried in the same way as quantitative research.
- Finally, the *Principle of Suspicion* (1999:77) is clear that researchers must constantly look beyond the obvious surface detail, and dig deeper to discover the hidden data. This research's findings of ad-hoc behaviour, serendipity, personal power, trust and distrust, and exploitation have all been revealed because of this principle.

This research would not have uncovered so much of this "hidden history" if a case study had not been used. Using a survey, for example, would have meant that much of the findings would not have become apparent to the interviewer. It was the personal interviews that brought the hidden findings to light.

6.2 The way forward

In Chapter One, Mayibuye was described as a potential role model for other liberation archives. Can the findings of this dissertation benefit other liberation archives? There is little doubt that Mayibuye has managed to successfully navigate the troubled waters of digitisation because of the political awareness of its staff, and its own historical context. Other archives' operations and digitisation projects may be as successful as Mayibuye's if digitisers are constantly aware of the forces and role- players that are trying to use the digitisation process for their own ends. And archivists who are flexible enough in their operation to identify serendipitous events and use their advantage will benefit as Mayibuye has.

There are definite possibilities for future research in this field, since relatively little has been written about digitisation in the specific context of liberation archives. One such direction might be to conduct a comparative study of how different liberation archives have managed the digitisation process. Maaba's extensive discussions on digitisation in his 2013 doctorate (the content of which was received too late to discuss in this dissertation) on the liberation archives at Fort Hare University, for example, could be compared to the digitisation done at Mayibuye.
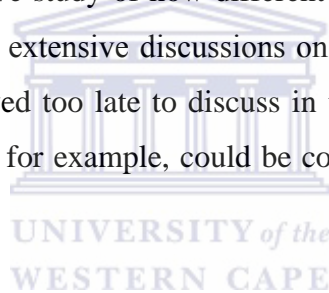
6.3 Conclusion

The study of Mayibuye and the digitisation of its collections has been a fascinating one. The critical theorists discussed in the literature review portrayed archivists as largely interested in the technical or managerial issues surrounding digitisation, naively unaware of the power dynamics which were altered by the digitisation process. This research found that this portrayal was unfair in the case of Mayibuye archivists: their struggle background meant that they were aware of issues of power, and their location in the national debate around digitisation. It can be argued that staffing the archive with political activists has served the organisation well, and that they have managed to walk the tightrope with great success.

It is perhaps appropriate to end this dissertation as it began: with the bitter and disillusioned words of George Orwell in his dystopian novel 1984:

"The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed - if all records told the same tale - then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past', ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'. And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control', they called it: In Newspeak, 'doublethink'."
(1992:37)

Perhaps what this dissertation has shown is that the staff of the Mayibuye did not "accept the lie", and managed to steer a course which allowed them to maintain their independence and integrity.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

FIRST NAME	
SURNAME	
PLACE OF INTERVIEW	
CONTACT NUMBER	

Mr. Steve Anderson has requested that he be allowed to interview me for his Master's mini-dissertation entitled *The Challenges of Digitising Heritage Collections in South Africa: A Case Study*.

He has informed me that:

1. I will be able to withdraw from the interview at any time
2. I will not be identified by name at any stage in the dissertation
3. My participation is voluntary and I will be able to withdraw from the project at any time without having to give reasons for my decision
4. He will be using video and audio recording equipment to record the interviews
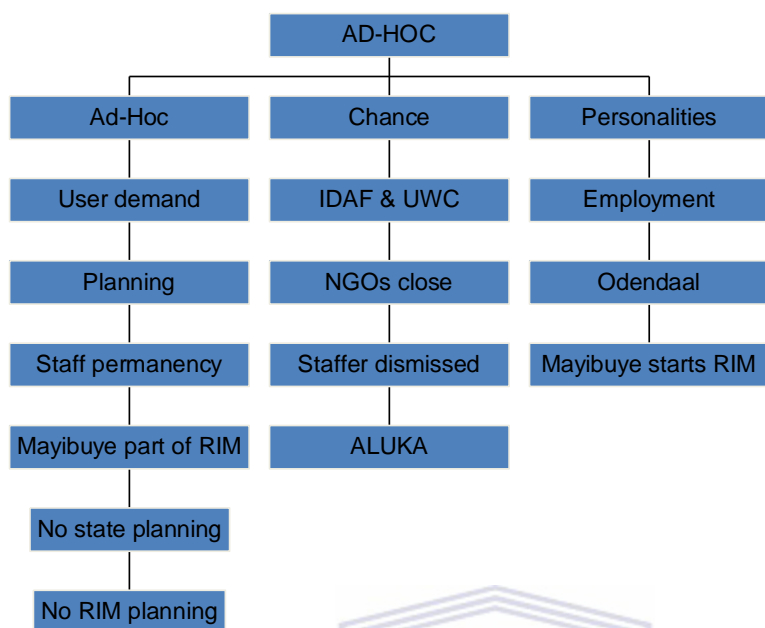5. I may request transcripts of the completed interview/s.

I, _____, agree to be interviewed by Steve Anderson about the digitisation work at the Archive.
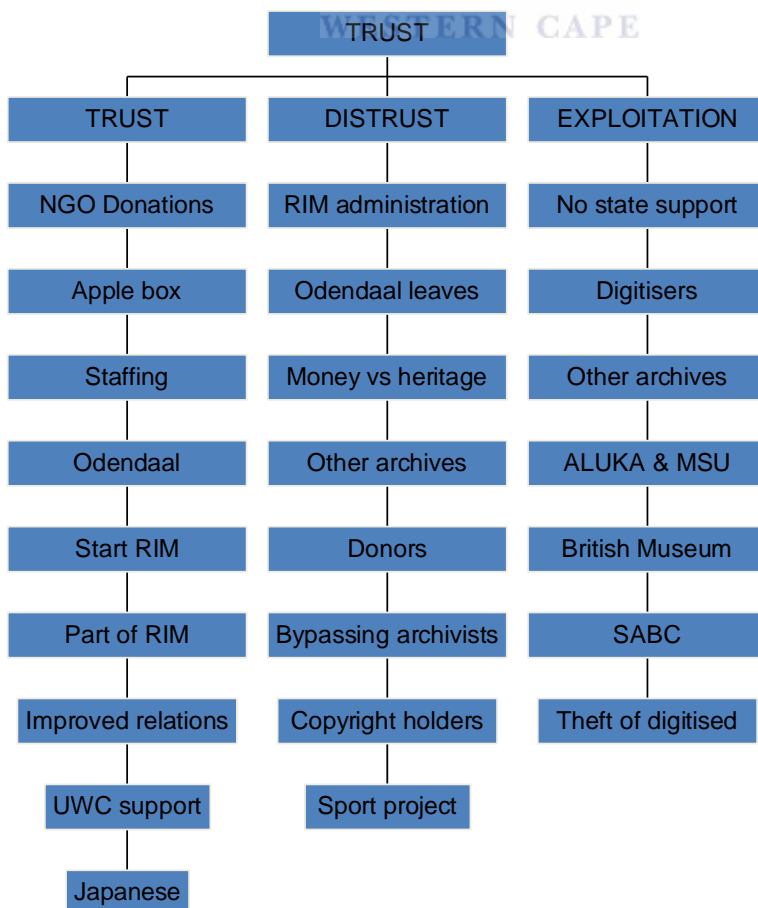
SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWEE): _____

SIGNATURE (INTERVIEWER): _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX B: THEMATIC MAPS

AD-HOC

Ad-Hoc	Chance	Personalities
User demand	IDAF & UWC	Employment
Planning	NGOs close	Odendaal
Staff permanency	Staffer dismissed	Mayibuye starts RIM
Mayibuye part of RIM	ALUKA	
No state planning		
No RIM planning		

TRUST

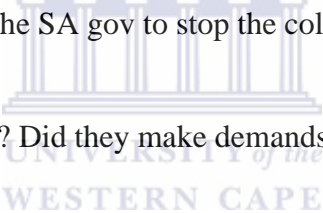| TRUST	DISTRUST	EXPLOITATION
NGO Donations	RIM administration	No state support
Apple box	Odendaal leaves	Digitisers
Staffing	Money vs heritage	Other archives
Odendaal	Other archives	ALUKA & MSU
Start RIM	Donors	British Museum
Part of RIM	Bypassing archivists	SABC
Improved relations	Copyright holders	Theft of digitised
UWC support	Sport project	
Japanese		

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Though the interviews were open-ended and not highly structured, the author approached each interview with a series of questions to ensure that the research questions were covered. Specific and relevant questions were asked of each interviewee: thus a manager being interviewed would be asked specifically about managerial issues, whereas a technician would be asked to discuss technical issues relating to digitisation.

HISTORICAL

These questions were asked of those who had been at Mayibuye for a considerable length of time and knew its history well.

- Was there any attempt by the SA gov to stop the collection of items / sabotage the collection?
- Who funded the collection? Did they make demands relating to the collection in return for the funding.
- Why did was the IDAF collection donated to UWC?
    - Was there opposition to the donation?
- Why did Mayibuye become part of Robben Island Museum, rather than UWC?
- Relationship between Maibuye, RIM and UWC. Is it contested territory?
- Did you think of digitising at any stage? If so, why?
- Background as activist – how changed your view of the work
-

MANAGEMENT

These questions were asked of those who had been in managerial / leadership positions at Mayibuye.

- What was it like running the archive – was it an extension of your struggle work?

- Was there opposition to the digitisation programme?

- Was making collection accessible a concern? Was Mayibuye accused of hoarding / not doing enough?

- You decided to digitise: why?

- Where there risks associated with digitising? What were they, and did any of them materialise?

- Digitising isn't cheap: how did you do it without sacrificing independence?

- Tell me about the actual digitisation process, especially the challenges?
    - from a management point of view
    - from a project management point of view
    - from a technical point of view
    - how did you select items for digitisation

- Did relationships change as a result of the digitisation process? Did any of the following try to influence the digitisation process.
    - Vendors
    - Donors (Carnegie etc.)
    - RIM
    - UWC
    - Political parties
    - State
    - Academics in the field
    - Political movements
    - Copyright holders
    - Subjects of images
    - Other archives
    - Mayibuye staff
    - Mayibuye users
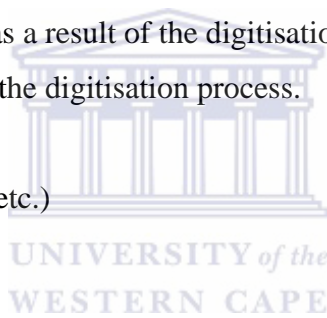
ACADEMICS

These questions related Mayibuye's digitisation to the national digitisation context

- You have written extensively about the politics of digitisating heritage (and particularly archival) collections. At a broad level, do the power dynamics in archives change when you decide to digitise?

- Why is digitisation such a site of contestation?

- Is it all about money? Is it about power? Can they be separated?

- What are the risks of digitising heritage collections?

- Who are the major role-players in digitisation process?

- How do these role-players have an impact on the digitisation process, if at all?

- You were critical of a number of national digitisation initiatives Why?

- How would you describe Mayibuye's relationship with RIM and UWC?

- What about Mayibuye's digitisation project?
  - Did you agree with the decision to digitise?
  - Who attempted to influence the digitisation process?
  - What did Mayibuye do right?
  - What could they have done better?
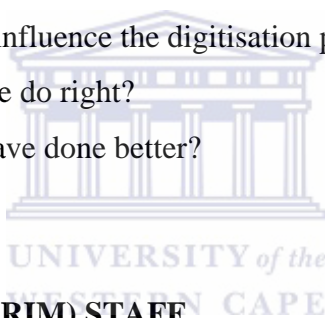
ROBBEN ISLAND MUSEUM (RIM) STAFF

These questions attempted to highlight the relationship between Mayibuye and Robben Island Museum.

- Tell me about RIM – Mayibuye – UWC relationships

- Were you involved in digitisation at all at Robben Island

- How did RIM view digitisation at Mayibuye?

- What were the problems in digitisation from a management perspective?

- Did Mayibuye and RIM staff get on with each other?

TECHNICAL STAFF

These were questions posed to the technically skilled Mayibuye staff

- Why digitise at all

- How do you select for digitisation

- Technical challenges for digitisation

- How did you and management work together on digitisation

- How did you and RIM management work together on digitisation

- Did anybody try to influence the digitisation work?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW DATES

For a more detailed description of the role of each of these interviewees, please see the discussion on Page 39 of this dissertation.

Andrew Solomon: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 14th January 2013.

Ann Joseph: was e-mailed a list of questions on 8th August 2013, which she answered on 20th August 2013 by e-mail.

Arnold Rimmer: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 19th December 2012. Informal follow-up discussions 15th January 2013.

Blade Taper: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 14th January 2013.

Gray Barrack: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 19th December 2013. Informal discussion 14th January 2013 to clarify some points discussed in the interview.

Mary Winner: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 19th December 2012. Informal discussions 22nd February 2013.

Peter Layle: interviewed at the Mayibuye Centre, 2nd July 2013.