



Exploring young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past

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I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of:

- My dad, H.B.J. (Harry) Smith (4th April 1918 – 22nd December 1997), who made me deeply aware of the impact and consequences of unjust systems and powers on the human condition.

Summary

Exploring young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past

Key words: Narratives, stories, views, facts, social constructionism, apartheid, past, black youth, South Africa

The extant of available South African qualitative research which investigates issues of the post-apartheid youth appears to be diversified and increasing. A part of this corpus of research, seem to inform on post-apartheid identity formation. This current research explored the narrative forms located in the retellings of the apartheid past by 13 young black South Africans aged between 16 and 21. To this end, 68 different secondary narrative segments were obtained, by means of the analysed transcripts of in-depth interviewing, using a qualitative categorical–content framework. The data analysis yielded 12 themes, wherein the youth identified the primary narrators of the apartheid stories; contextualised settings and circumstances around narratives and explained apartheid social stratifications and treatment of black persons. They also conceptualized their understanding of apartheid laws and enforcement; explained apartheid experienced forms of loss and support; discussed apartheid education; talked about political figures and liberation; disclosed their own feelings about these stories; disclosed the impacts of stories on their own lives; considered the relevance of these narratives; stated what was learnt from it and provided a gauge of their interest in such stories. The findings suggest socially constructed second order narratives of racial hierarchies; marginalising the 'other'; vicarious experiences of affect; the incorporation of the logic of difference and a coexistence of tensions between these stories and present lifestyles. The research has located specific tones, imagery and themes within these narratives, which were duly incorporated in the metastory of this research. Recommendations were made concerning further

research to be inclusive of youth from a wider racial and cultural spectrum, as well as investigation into aspects of non-interest and denialism about the apartheid past.

Opsomming

'n Verkenning van swart jeugdiges se narratiewe oor die apartheid verlede

Sleutelwoorde: Narratiewe, stories, standpunte, feite, sosiale konstruksionisme, apartheid, verlede, swart jeugdiges, Suid-Afrika

Dit blyk uit die literatuur dat daar 'n toename en diversifisering is in die kwalitatiewe navorsing deur Suid-Afrikaanse navorsers oor die vraagstukke van die post-apartheid jeug. 'n Gedeelte van bogenoemde navorsing handel oor jeugdiges se identiteitsvorming tydens die post-apartheidera. Die huidige navorsing is 'n verkenning van die narratiewe oor die apartheidsverlede wat aan 13 jong swart Suid-Afrikaners tussen die ouderdomme van 16 en 21, oorgedra is. Agt-en-sestig narratiewe segmente is bekom deur die getranskribeerde ontledings van in-diepte onderhoude deur middel van 'n kwalitatiewe kategoriese inhoudsbenadering. Die data-analise het die volgende 12 temas aangedui, naamlik: die vertellers en bronne van die apartheidstories; die plekke en omstandighede waar dié narratiewe aangehoor is; verduidelikings oor die apartheidstratifikasie en die optrede teenoor swart mense; die deelnemers se konseptualisering van die apartheidswette en die uitvoering daarvan; vorme van verlies en ondersteuning vanweë apartheid; onderwysopvoeding tydens die apartheidsjare; bespreking van politieke figure en vrywording; die deelnemers se gevoelens oor die stories; die impak van die stories op hulle lewens; die relevansie en lesse wat uit die stories geleer is, en hulle belangstelling daarin. Die bevindinge dui op: sosiaal gekonstrueerde tweede-orde narratiewe van rashierargieë wat by die deelnemers ontwikkel het; 'n sensitiwiteit vir die marginalisering van die 'ander'; die belewing van emosies tydens die aanhoor van die stories; 'n integrasie van die logika van verskille, en die gelyktydige aanwesigheid van spanning tussen die stories en die deelnemers se huidige leefstyl.

Dit blyk verder dat die stories spesifieke stemminge, beeldspraak en temas na vore gebring het, wat op hul beurt weer saamgevat is in die metastorie van hierdie navorsing. Ten slotte is aanbeveel dat toekomstige navorsing deelnemers van 'n wyer spektrum van ras en kultuur moet insluit. 'n Verdere ondersoek na jeugdige se nie-belangstelling en selfs ontkenning van die apartheidera, kan ook oorweeg word.

Preface

The candidate chose to present an article format dissertation, with the support of her supervisors.

Prof. C.A. Venter
Supervisor

Prof. K.F.H. Botha
Co-supervisor

Permission from co-authors

We, the co-authors, hereby give permission that Cheryl Petersen may submit this article for examination purposes in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Artium* (in Research Psychology) and that it may also be submitted to the *Journal for Psychology in Africa* for publication.

Prof. C.A. Venter
Supervisor

Prof. K.F.H. Botha
Co-supervisor

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This dissertation will be submitted to the *Journal of Psychology in Africa* to be considered for publication and this manuscript and reference list has been styled according to this journal's specifications. The following is a copy of the guidelines for prospective authors set out by the journal.

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Manuscript for examination

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Abstract

This research engaged with narratives about the apartheid past through the retelling of 13 young black South Africans, aged 16 to 21. A qualitative categorical-content data analysis underpinned by social constructionism, explored these secondary narrative segments obtained via in-depth interviewing. The data analysis yielded 12 themes, which dealt predominantly with the 'storied' lives under apartheid and the socially constructed understandings and meanings attached to it. Concomitant with this, participants reflected their own feelings, interest and the relevance of stories. The research postulates a defined past/present connection when the content of apartheid stories became interlaced with the youth's own existential realities. The findings articulate with narratives of oppression, marginalisation and incorporated the logic of difference. Further research is suggested to be inclusive of a wider racial and cultural spectrum of youth.

Key words: Narratives, stories, views, facts, social constructionism, apartheid, past, black youth, South Africa

Introduction

South Africa has a long history of complex human interactions and social dynamics which are closely coupled with “centuries of colonial and racial oppression” (Villa-Vicencio, 2000, p. 199). The final phase of this history of oppression ended with the apartheid (separateness) era, which lasted from 1948 to 1994 (Gibson, 2004). A hallmark of this era was a minority-ruled white government and a political system which socially engineered the oppression and ethnic fragmentation of the vast majority of the country’s black population (Moodley & Adam, 2000). It was this system of apartheid based on political, legislative, social and economic segregation that afforded the country and the then ruling party an international pariah status (Ntsebeza, 2000). The middle to the late 1980s signified the emergence of strategies towards the remapping and the subsequent dismantling of apartheid. During 1990, with Nelson Mandela’s release from prison, transformation processes were channelled towards the establishment of a new South African political dispensation (Norris et al., 2008). This culminated in the birth of democracy in 1994 and this advent itself was considered one of the major social narratives of the twentieth century (Mangcu, 2003).

As a former secondary school educator, the researcher became aware of certain levels of disinterest and apathy among groups of post-apartheid learners, when topics related to the apartheid era were raised. This observation became a point of interest to her, as these learners schooled at a coeducational historically coloured school, with an enrollment profile of black, coloured and Indian individuals. Several learners categorically stated to the researcher (then, their educator) that they felt apartheid did not touch their lives and therefore it did not affect them at all.

A recent example of South African research which investigated students’ attitudes regarding study materials representing the apartheid past, revealed their opposition to it. According to McKinney and Van Pletzen (2004, p. 160), students at a historically white university showed reluctance to remember South Africa’s political

past and voiced their “desire to move on”, while they notably grappled, with discomfort, about the shadow that the past cast over their developing identities as young South Africans. Research by Van der Merwe (2005, p. 30) revealed that adult black participants, who were disadvantaged by the apartheid system, stated that their own children could not “comprehend the hardships” of their past. Bam (2000) and Gagiano (2006) accounted for such attitudes by many of South Africa’s youth, across cultural groups, as their discourse of justification because they felt they had nothing to do with it.

Vermeulen (2006) stated in his study that two black adults communicated that their own children were interested only in their own material needs and appeared to be disinterested in their parents’ past experiences as oppressed persons. These and other research inputs provide platforms for understanding that the apartheid past is not free-standing from the present democracy and that the continued effects and impacts thereof were still being felt (Mangcu, 2003; McKinney, 2004; Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006).

Stevens and Lockhat (1997, p. 253) referred to the black youth’s interest in the satisfying of their individual needs and own aspirations, as the “Coca-Cola culture”. This culture forms part of a Western ideology and social practices linked to consumerism, individualism and competition which seemed to have been adopted as a measure to maintain black youth’s “material and psychological integrity” (p. 253). Cross-disciplinary studies revealed that post-apartheid youth were exposed to newer societal metaphors and imagery of a rainbow nation; an ideology of national unity (Eaton, 2002); symbols of a new national flag and anthem (Bornman, 2005) and discourses of forgiveness and reconciliation by means of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Back, 2007). This indicates that their social world contained and transmitted influences of political metaphors and democratic discourses of the new South Africa, which in itself were persuasive political narratives (Bull, 2007) in the building of a democracy.

Diverse responses to the building of national identity were found in South African research by Norris et al. (2008). Their study followed a cohort of South African youth, born during 1990 and found that black and coloured adolescents (aged 14 at the time of their study) reported “feeling very South African” (p. 58) as opposed to Indian and white youth. Black adolescents, more than their coloured and Indian counterparts also felt more affiliated to “groups of people who shared their language, race, church or school” (p. 60).

Since 1994 to the present, a contrasting societal landscape with commensurate narratives have also gained prominence in the lives of the South African citizenry, which could be viewed as an antithesis of the rainbow-freedom-unity position. These narratives, once again, driven by the popular media, placed focus on discourses of corruption, crime levels, unemployment, faltering education and health care systems, electricity shortages, xenophobic attacks, poverty and municipal non-service deliveries (Corrigall, 2008; Jansen, 2009b; Smith, 2009).

A central tenet of this study is that narratives, whether told by a primary/first-person narrator or via secondary sharing, has inherently been a universal and cultural human activity since ancient times (Laubscher & Klinger, 1997; Riessman, 2002; Schneider, 2002). By placing the narrative in a focal position it becomes a psychosocial construct which reflects the storyteller’s cultural norms, values, assumptions and experienced social contexts (McAdams, 2001). By adopting the “narrative turn” (Gergen, 2001, p. 810), the present research falls within a post-modernist domain of enquiry, which is language dependent; socially constructed; provides views of multiple realities and rejects the idea of scientifically determined universal truths (De Vos, Schulze & Patel, 2005; Glesne, 2006). In alignment with this domain, Fontana (cited in Glesne, 2006) and Jones (2004), point to the distinction that the researcher is removed from a position of being the expert to that of being a collaborative partner in dialogue with participants and the data, while simultaneously using a self-scrutinising lens.

The rationale for focusing on the reflective narratives of persons, who were born during the latter years of South Africa's apartheid era, is to open a gateway into their understanding of the apartheid past, via knowledge and information gained from a position of their "post-ness", as proposed by Hirsch (2008, p. 103) and Hoffman (cited in Jansen, 2009a, p. 53). This position separates first-hand experiences and memories by a lapse of time from a second generation's knowledge. This places the participants of this research, in a position of being a descendant or "hinge generation" (Hirsch, 2008, p. 103) from the actual biographers of the original stories. Dolby (2001, p. 7) remarked, "... they are a generation whose past, present and future are neither completely defined by apartheid, nor completely free of it."

For the purposes of this research, the following terminologies are clarified: The term 'youth' incorporates both the developmental domains and stages of middle adolescence and young adulthood (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2009), but is also used as a collective pronoun when referring to the research participants. The period of 'youth' is signified, in particular, as a time where abstract cognitive and moral reasoning become enhanced and is considered a critical period in the formation of psychosocial identities (Shaffer & Kipp, 2007). The term 'black' is used generically to refer to both black and coloured participants of this study, while the term 'race' is regarded as a social construction (APA, 2003).

Aim of research

In order to gain an understanding into this topic, the following question was posed: What do young black South African persons understand and know about the apartheid past? Therefore the corresponding aim of this research was to explore a group of young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past.

Research Methodology

The Research Design

A qualitative research design, which incorporated the analyzing of narratives drawn from a specific sample of secondary narrators (Berg, 2007) and their interpretation thereof, was used in this study. By contrast, to the “fully performed conversational narrative”, the narratives of this study, originated from interviews, which according to Wolfson (cited in Cortazzi, 1993/2003, p. 55) “lacks performance features” and are usually shorter and to the point. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) suggest that narrative materials can be analysed and interpreted along two dimensions, i.e. on the one hand the holistic form (one whole story) and on the other hand a categorical-content form that includes one or more dissected stories with defined categories of meaning and structure.

The research was planned as an exploratory study in order to seek insight and comprehension (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) within units of analyses (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004) of how the participants could describe and explain what the apartheid past represented and how this was experienced, from what they had been told and taught or had read or seen audio-visually. This design incorporates an interpretive approach, which acknowledges that human life is complex and carries associated meanings and understandings of lived phenomena as social constructs (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Charmaz, 2006).

Recruitment and description of participants

The researcher directed telephonic and written requests to gain access to research sites and potential volunteers for this study. School principals and university directors, as well as regional education authorities in two towns of the North West Province were approached. When the necessary permission had been obtained from these individuals in “gatekeeping” positions (Berg, 2007, p. 185), she conducted information-sharing contact sessions at three institutions of learning to notify

prospective participants about the nature and aim of her research. She explained how data would be gathered and interested individuals were given the opportunity to ask questions about the process and the purpose of the research in order to make informed decisions prior to their involvement.

To this end, a purposive sample (Durrheim, 2006) of eight black female and six black male participants, between the ages of 16 to 21, studying at two secondary schools and one tertiary institution in two different towns in the North West Province were recruited for this study. As selection criteria of this purposive sample, the researcher modified Rubin and Rubin's (1995) guidelines and selected participants in terms of their being South African citizens; born during the last eight years of the apartheid rule; who have had exposure to verbally/visually-related information about life in apartheid South Africa; and who had the ability to communicate with the researcher either in English or Afrikaans.

Of the 14 participants who went through the interviewing process, one 16-year-old participant's interview transcript was excluded from the data analysis process due to the fact that he repeatedly stated that apartheid was a myth and denied that it had existed as a form of governmental dispensation. Although the exclusion of his transcript was carefully considered, it is imperative to view his position of denialism also as a social construct. All participants were given a language preference which resulted in ten interviews being done in English and four in Afrikaans. The researcher asked each participant to complete a brief demographic information sheet, prior to each interview, in order to compile a profile record of the research participants (see annexure A).

The following are brief demographic particulars of the 13 participants, whose transcripts were used for analysis: eight females and five males; ranging in age from 16 to 21; hailing from the Free State, Gauteng, Western Cape, North West and Northern Cape Provinces. Home languages were indicated as South Sotho, Sesotho, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, English and Setswana. Six participants were full-time tertiary

learners at a historically white university, while four were full-time secondary school learners at a racially integrated coloured school and the remaining three at a homogeneous historically black school. Two of the six tertiary learners had completed their primary and high school careers at fully racially integrated schools.

Process and method of data collection

Pre-arranged, face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants in private spaces, at their institutions of learning. The interviews were semi-structured to give an opportunity for “narrative potential” to emerge (Henning et al., 2004, p. 122). As suggested by Charmaz (2006), all interviews commenced with a few broad, pre-set open-ended questions and each participant was given sufficient time to give his/her personal inputs and responses. The duration of the interviews ranged from 57 minutes to 1 hour 45 minutes, while other variations were observed in terms of divulged details, depth of information shared and the tone in which it was done. All interviews were audio-taped and video-taped with parental and participants’ informed consent.

The first, two open-ended questions asked during interviews were:

- Tell me about the stories, information, or facts which you have been told about the apartheid years in South Africa.
- Who told you these stories, or, how did you get this information?

The discussions thereafter were fairly unstructured and probing remarks were used to guide the interviews, as recommended by Van der Riet and Durrheim (2006). To complement the interviewing process, the researcher kept brief, but comprehensive sets of field notes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), in which physical conditions of the interviewing spaces, participants’ non-verbal cues, voice inflections, nuances of speech and the general verbal tones of interviews were recorded. Upon completion of each interview and in the four instances of additional debriefing time, the researcher took about 30 minutes of isolation time to self-reflect on the process

and to write short memos of her own experience of each given interview. Some examples noted on her memos and field notes are: "... he seemed genuinely interested"; "...my sense was that she felt free to share her stories, without holding back, or to sound politically correct..." and "...she appeared a bit dramatic at times, or maybe merely animated... she was very verbal and at times drifted wide of the topic". The researcher was at all times aware to use "bracketing" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 170) to put aside, on a mental level, her own experiences of and feelings about the topic, during this research process, but through the process of reflexivity her own cognitive and emotional responses to the narratives were made explicit (Elliott, 2005). The transcribed interviews, field notes and self-reflection memos became the raw data of this study, while the non-verbal data (video images) were used to verify participants' emotional expressions and gesturing (Glesne, 2006) during interviews. The quotations drawn from the interviews which were conducted in Afrikaans were translated by the researcher and reviewed for accuracy by one supervisor. The themes of findings were selected on the basis of the number of times they occurred across interviews, the intensity and narrative detail disclosed and the appropriateness which the information contributed towards the thematic construction.

Data analysis and interpretation

Since the current research investigated stories which were relayed to participants and they, in turn, gave their own interpretations and meanings to them in order to do a retelling (Chaitin, undated; Elliott, 2005; Naidu & Adonis, 2007), the researcher preferred to look for "narrative tones, imagery and themes" (Crossley, 2007, p. 140) usually found in personal narratives to aid her with the analytical exploratory task of this study. Crossley (2007) describes narrative tones as features found within content of stories and the manner in which they are told, while imagery is culturally constructed through language use of images, metaphors and symbols. These are also culturally embedded and form linkages to "dominant discourses" of

belief systems, values and morals (Crossley, 2007, p. 140). Themes are narrative bound and indicate or reflect events, incidents and occurrences which pattern or structure the story.

As a preliminary function of analysis, the researcher read the verbatim transcripts several times due to the fact that each participant shared multiple stories per interview. The researcher was cautious not to fragment such stories, but tried to identify the “boundaries of the narrative segments” (Grbich, 2007, p. 130) within interviews. During this task, which spanned several weeks, the contained narrative segments were ordered in terms of what had been told, how and by whom. This was done to form textual bodies of what would get included and excluded in the “metastory” of this dissertation (Riessman, 2002, p. 226).

The practical execution of this process involved the recording, by hand, of all the narrative segments drawn from the raw data, for each participant. These were colour coded and sorted to indicate the individual contributions of each participant. Thereafter a follow-up sorting process took place to separate the narrative segments into clusters of tones, imagery and themes. This was followed with the making of visual collages of information, from which further identifications and refinements of narrative categorical contents could be derived (Lieblich et al., 1998). While working with the narrative segments, the researcher took cognisance that the narratives' origins were socially and culturally bound and no attempt was made to change language expressions, grammar or imagery in the details shared. Due to overlaps within and between stories, the textual bodies were themed around descriptions, understandings, explanations and explained impacts of the apartheid past, by means of a content-orientated approach (Lieblich et al., 1998). The researcher found 68 different story segments within the 13 analysed interviews.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 290-331) were used and are discussed below.

Credibility:

The interviewing process was intensive and allowed sufficient time for the establishment of rapport, openness and trust. All interviews were conducted by the researcher in person, who co-created a non-threatening space for a process of in-depth exploration. The transcription process was done solely by the researcher, which led to her having an intimate familiarity with the content of her data. Throughout this process, she could exercise control to prevent distortions and misinterpretations between verbal and word-processed textual data. While the transcription process originally relied on the audio/voice recordings, the visual inputs of the video recordings were also documented in the written texts as supplementary evidence. Each interview transcript was co-scrutinised, peer-examined and reviewed for accuracy by one of the research supervisors, who pointed out narrative structures and categorical details. In the absence of a member-checking procedure, co-scrutinisation compensated for enhanced verification and quality of accuracy. With regard to the corroboration of findings, the researcher did a preliminary presentation of her findings to her supervisors, who gave their inputs concerning further interrogations of the data. This iterative process allowed for additional rigour to the analysis process. The supervisors' co-reflections and recommendations were taken into account with the finalisation of the findings. In order to address the reflexivity aspect, records of comprehensive field notes and sets of self-reflection memos which detailed the researcher's own feelings, biases and assumptions which could interfere with or contaminate participants' contributions were recorded. Credibility was further increased through the authority of the researchers. The researcher received training in the scientific foundations of qualitative research and the application of various methodologies. The two supervisors, who have expertise and extensive experience

in qualitative research, supervised this study and gave advice and feedback during various stages of the research.

Transferability:

The sampling method was purposive, bound to the criteria described earlier and it did not involve pre-selections of any kind. The sample size was small and contained. Detailed descriptions of the research design and methodology allows for reader judgments about the transferability of this study.

Dependability:

The following records of the auditor's trail of evidence are in the researcher's safe keeping: computerised audio recording tracks, video recording tapes, field notes, self-reflection memos, collages of narrative themes, verbatim transcripts, research-related process notes and feedback recommendations.

Confirmability:

Confirmability occurred when literature searches located publications from other academic disciplines such as Education, History, Sociology and Literature Studies to form the foundation on which findings could be confirmed, compared, rejected and contrasted. A further strategy was to reduce investigator bias, in this regard the researcher consulted her supervisors regularly during the research process in order to maintain appropriate ethical, methodological and reporting strategies. The inputs emanating from the supervisors provided different interpretations of the data which curtailed the interference of biases, assumptions, stereotypes and beliefs held by the researcher, as a member of a previously disadvantaged group.

Ethical considerations

Ethical permission for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of North-West University (05K14) and additional approval to conduct this research at schools was granted by the North West Provincial Department of Education (see

annexure B). The purpose and process of this study, as well as voluntary participation, were verbally explained during information sharing sessions conducted by the researcher at the three institutions of learning. Informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants and written parental consent was obtained for participants under the age of 18 years, prior to the commencement of interviews (see annexures C, D and E). Participants were also informed of the right to withdraw from the research, if they desired to do so. The volunteers were ensured of confidentiality regarding their names and place names. The participants were informed that the researcher would be available after the interviews for further discussions should they wish to avail of an opportunity to speak about personal and emotional difficulties experienced during the interviews. Four participants requested and availed of such time, which served as debriefing sessions upon completion of their interviews.

Research Findings

Within several narratives there were dominant overlaps of information shared by the participants about the past, while a relational bond became evident between stories of the past and what is being experienced in the present. For the purpose of brevity only the most salient aspects drawn from narratives were recorded in this dissertation. The researcher attempted to select and report on an even spread of excerpts from each participant.

Identifying the primary narrators of the apartheid stories

It was significant to note that stories, information, facts and ideas about the past were largely shared by or obtained from parents, grandparents and the audio-visual media. Evidence which placed parental narrations in the foreground are: "...the stories, I heard, I got it from my father" and "...my mother could not tell [other] stories, but could remember their forced removals." The varying degree to which such narratives were shared by parents became evident by the following: "...my parents

told me, but just a little bit”; “...I know what my parents told me and my mother once told me the reason” and “...my mother told me, but she did not have many stories.” Narratives also appeared to be shared with reticence, “...my father would not tell [openly] but would only explain something to me.”

Narrations by elderly family and community members provided first-generation information about the apartheid past. A qualitative pattern emerged wherein eight participants specifically mentioned getting information and hearing stories from their grandmothers, grandfathers and great-grandparents. Such contributions included: “...I was told by my grandmothers and grandfathers”; “...all the information, I got from my grandmother and older people”; “...my great-grandfather also used to tell me about that” and “...older persons who worked on the farms previously told me stories.”

Other important sources, mentioned by all the participants as pivotal providers of information and knowledge about the apartheid past are television documentaries, dramas and film portrayals. “...I saw on documentaries, the life people had”; “...I have seen on TV how people were treated”; “...I saw a movie about fighting... how blacks were killed for liberation” and “...I saw it in the media... it was Youth Day.” These visual texts brought images and portrayals of this era to life and other narrators mentioned by the participants, as minor contributors, were teachers, older siblings, uncles, aunts, friends’ parents and acquaintances. Books, newspapers and magazines were mentioned by a minority of participants, as sources of information. Furthermore, only one participant stated that on a few occasions she talked with friends about the apartheid past, which pointed to an intra-generational exchange of information.

Exploring the contexts for the telling of narratives

From the data three pertinent contextual categories of sharing, enquiring and deferred telling were found. The category of sharing was the most varied and

expansive and the following examples indicate their frequency of occurrence: "...so we can talk about two sentences or something... and a story will start... every time my grandma will pop up and tell me"; "...we had many such discussions as a family" and "...even when I'm not asking ...they will never forget those days... out of the blue an elder will talk." Evidently, elements of reprimands were merged with narratives as claimed by: "...when we did something bad, we were reminded how lucky and privileged we were – that's how these stories started" and "...maybe we went to town and an incident happened... something always triggers that anger... so that they can explode or say something." These examples pointed to a connectedness between the past memories and present living. Past/present comparisons were also made in terms of encouragement "...maybe some learners at high school will make me angry, she [grandmother] said, no, you just cannot cry... you can overcome...remember, I lived in apartheid years." Other comparisons pointed to social and economic enabling contexts for the present youth "...they say you are lucky to have this and that... we didn't have this and that" and "...they told me as a matter of me learning the hardships... that what I think is hard now... compared to them... was nothing."

One story was loaded with historic weight and showed a narrow connection between perceived unfair treatment which resonated with the apartheid past "...when we go to town, we experience that white people are served first [in shops], then my grandpa will say what racism is this, now?"

Contexts of enquiry emerged when questions about the apartheid past were initiated by the participants and provided a nexus for narrative exchanges. Examples of these were directly related to school projects and tasks, "I had homework about apartheid... five years ago... I had to ask my grandmother..." and "...at school they give us the homework – go out and ask what happened – like Youth Day, then the story comes out." However, limited evidence of personal curiosities emerged: "...I ask questions... a lot of questions ... how was life then?"; "I will ask people ... have conversations ... how, was life back then?"; "I remember when I was small... I used

to ask my mother [spoke softly, almost whispering] ... why, do you love Nelson Mandela? Especially when we were watching TV – she would follow up... with this kind of thing... about what happened.”

A third context was identified as one in which information or story sharing with various participants were deferred or withheld for the following reasons: “I went to a multiracial school from a young age... from then on they did not tell me these bad stories – so that I might not have impact towards white people” and “she [mother] kept it until I was about 12 or 13 [years old] and then she started to tell me ... she told me then because it would make more sense”. Withholding of personal knowledge resonated with feelings of discomfort “...they never come out and tell you... it is mostly that pain... that is with them” also, uncertainty of recipients’ reactions was reflected on by “they’re not telling... they don’t know how they [children] will react towards them [parents’ generation] – maybe they will treat other people bad.” Another reason for withholding information appeared to be emotive in nature, “...my uncles...we do not speak much about apartheid, because they’ll get angry... even now...” These three contexts were not only embedded with the lingering politics of apartheid, but they contributed to the structures of communication occurring in the present.

Explaining apartheid social stratifications and treatment of black persons

This theme explored and focused on what was told about the apartheid past. Complexities and constructions of ‘race’ came to the fore as both important and most frequently used concepts. Participants said, “...we were lesser people than the others... we were not as high as the whites, they were better, we were nothing” and “...we were not good enough... or ... having something which is common... maybe we were nothing.” Race, thus became constructed as both a hierarchy and an entity, which possesses certain qualities. This construction of higher and lower statuses attached to race were further underscored by “white people are there... at the

top...[pointed finger upwards]... black people are gardeners, housekeepers, babysitters, not suitably qualified teachers..." and "I can say – they thought nothing of us, we were just there to do the dirty work [tone of disgust]". The hierarchy detected in these extracts were further explained as "... the law made it like that... the white people, high status... power and the government made laws... black people cannot go over this [held outstretched arm just above ground level]." In these quotations the participants spoke of a collective "we", "us" and "they", although this was narrated information they seemed to have personally identified with the primary tellers' discourse on race.

Aspects of inequality in treatment also became race connected through: "...the white government had an unfair ruling on black people" and "...apartheid wasn't particularly fair towards them [blacks]." Forms of differentiated workplace treatment and conditions were expressed by: "It was difficult for them [black nurses] to prove themselves to doctors that they are able to do things like white nurses" and "...my grandmother was not treated as a human being... she got something like 5 cents for a month's work, with a sack of mealies [corn]... but then I'm not so sure of the money [with hesitation]." A participant spoke about the experience of her grandfather who was serving in the erstwhile South African Police Force "...my grandpa arrested a white woman on a farm... for illegally selling liquor ... he then had to sit in the back [lock-up facility] of the police van [vehicle], while she sat in front, with the white policeman."

Conceptualising apartheid laws and law enforcement

The content of this theme represented the crux around which the narratives of the apartheid past were centred. This theme became interlaced with aspects of dispossession, spaces and places of segregation, race identification, restrictions and control, monitoring of movements and lack of freedom. For purposes of clarity, the researcher will commence with the participants' retellings of what laws and their

subsequent enforcement represented. Laws were closely connected to migratory movements and were perceived as "...there were orders to walk around carrying *dompasses*" [plural form of a hybridised Afrikaans/English word for an identity document]; "if a black person was caught in town, they [policemen] would crush him or her, forcing... to tell if they had a letter or permission [said very loudly]" and "...another friend's dad told about carrying *dompasses*, they could not walk without it... they had to carry it in their own areas and when they went to town."

Participants created linguistic images representing law enforcement as harsh, punitive and unjustified. To this end, their own retellings reflected words, such as "beaten", "hit", "punished", "shot", "interrogated", "caught" and "fleeing". A participant stated that "blacks who were against apartheid, they were beaten and sent to jail, just for nothing"; another reported on an instrument of punishment "if they were caught in the streets by the police, they were questioned... punished... given beatings with a cane soaked in salt water." Disruptions to daily activities were described as "...where they were seated or held a meeting... suddenly police will come... there will be a fight, shooting and killing... whatever"; "we [his grandparents] lived near *Bluntville*... the cops used to come at night... start hitting people for no reasons..." and "...they told me they were walking in the streets... and they [policemen] were throwing bombs ... I don't know what they call these things." A field note recording revealed "I have observed how the reference to bombs became tied to a description of uncertainty, yet, it was meaningfully constructed to be an object which could do damage."

Laws of segregation were explained as the physical and social separation of the races "...blacks are not supposed to associate with whites." Contributions also focused on separate amenities and facilities, as revealed by the following: "...everywhere you go, you had a place... black peoples'... white peoples' schools, bathrooms, trains, churches." Different configurations of restrictions and separateness were represented as: "...my sisters could only go to certain places to

dance... could dance in church halls in the coloured community”; “...shops, malls and public places... there were different environments for blacks and whites” and “...little notice boards [signs of race group segregation] with: ‘only whites; no blacks’.”

The habituation of apartheid spaces, too, was understood and labelled in terms of conditions of hygiene, its’ physicality and demarcated as racialised spaces: “...the ‘whites only’ places were the best, the ‘non-whites’ places were dirty”; “there were two doors at every place ... for high people [white persons] ... and blacks.” These segments of narratives provided understandings of race as a divisive factor. They carried constructions of experiences which were forbidden; caused disruption in lives; intruded on choices; caused polarisation and conjured up ideas of what was considered good, bad, acceptable or unacceptable.

Explaining loss and support

In tandem with the theme of law enforcement runs a theme of loss and support. The concept of loss is discussed first due to its frequent occurrence. Loss of human lives featured as, “...sometimes when there’s [past tense implied] a strike, the police would shoot out the bullets... there would be funerals – some people are going to mourn their children” and “...most of my dad’s friends are late [deceased]... they were killed at that time.” A judgment was considered by, “I think it was very unfair and many people lost lives back then”. Actions of harmful intent were spoken into action by: “...black people were taken into that veld [field] ... after they [policemen] shoot them... people were killed there” and “...there was this [TV] story about how people lived... how people got killed...they [Broadcaster] show that.” Loss as a form of sacrifice for freedom was alluded to as, “...learners paid with their lives, their future... their education.”

An alternative form of loss was evidenced as damage to material goods and property, which were forcibly taken away from participants’ families or destroyed, as claimed by the following extracts: “...she [mother’s aunt] told me on a day... the army

came with bulldozers and demolished houses... they looked... Oh golly, there goes our house...clay walls fell on people... they ran... and they were forced to leave..." and "...my grandmother's family was forcibly removed... they had a beautiful home... then they had to leave... that place became a white suburb."

Acts of relocation and forced removals were also related to redundant workers: "...they were forced to get off the farm... had to live in other places" and "...they had to give their livestock to the take-over people." Disregard for possessions was narrated as "...my mother said their furniture... old wooden furniture... antiques... were thrown onto trucks... these people didn't care about damaging their goods." Other aspects of loss gained from the narratives, were the severing of kinship bonds caused by familial pressures and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act: "...my great-grandfather could not live with his mixed-race children... he was ... rejected... disowned by his white family" and "... it was very difficult for me to understand why then the white granny took me as her child [participant was fostered by a white family]... when I was 14 that granny died and I had to go live with my dad... I came to the location [historically a residential area for black persons] last of last year [two years ago]."

Minor themes of support could be extracted from narratives, in juxtaposing the two themes, support, seemed to be outweighed by loss. During apartheid the community showed this support by watching one another's houses and willingly helping with domestic chores. A participant stated that her mother's white employers treated her mother very well and offered support to her family in times of need. Support also took the form of protection when police officers would chase protesters during periods of township unrests, black residents would offer to hide the protesters in their homes, until it was safe for them to leave, "...my grandma had hidden my mother under the bed... *ja* [yes]... it was that time of the student march... saying no to Afrikaans..."

Discussing education as a pervasive narrative

A pervasive narrative, which emerged from all 13 interviews, deals with apartheid education. Evidence of incomplete schooling came to light: "...she [mother] left school while she was doing grade 9" and "...they didn't have proper education... so that's why most of our parents today are like this... some of them finished grade 6 or 5". Further probing of these story segments revealed that lower levels of education were connected to parents' financial income and that parents are blamed by teenagers for not providing them with the latest luxury goods and clothing. "...My dad left school in Standard 6 – coloureds had to learn a trade... now we are struggling... he can't always find work ...I won't be able to go to university."

Other educational restrictions were explained as "...they set a limit for you... your studies will be limited to grade 8" and "...they never had the opportunity to go to secondary or high school ... they just stopped at primary school...my grandma completed standard 1... all she can do now is, read hymns and she can sign [provide her signature]." However, one participant, told of relatives who completed their education "...my dad's younger brother, he went to college because my grandma... she made sure she was gonna get the money for him to go to college" she also said that "...my dad never got a chance to finish school, my mother also, but later on she did finish studies."

Conditions which have hampered educational progress were explained in terms of non-mother tongue medium of instruction as: "...my mother used to tell me... they used to learn their languages and subjects in Afrikaans"; and limited subject choices were perceived as stifling "...they were *never* [his emphasis] ... taught... physics... were only taught subjects like languages." Geographical distance and rural settings where no schools existed made education inaccessible "...my mother totally did not attend school due to growing up on that farm... Today, she cannot read or write..."

Periods of political unrest were understood to have caused social tensions which curtailed schooling, "...sometimes when there's a strike, some people would be scared to go to school." One participant mentioned the lack of infrastructure, "...where they lived... there were no schools." A cultural or survival practice was explained by a participant that young female relatives started working at an early age "...the oldest sister [in a family] would have to leave the school and go and work with her mom, so she could bring some changes [supplement income] into the family... this happened a lot" another reflected on the same topic, "...now my mother is a domestic worker ... she knows how to read and write, but she did not follow her dream" and "...my mother told me that if they went to school, there were trucks that stopped at the road... the trucks stopped them from going to school... they went back to sit at home." An applicable field note entry stated that "I have noticed she could not explain the phenomenon of the trucks in any detail. This incident could possibly have taken place during a state of emergency or a period of political unrest, with police and military presence in townships, but I did not want to impose this on her. This inability to elucidate on the truck story can be due to a number of factors and dynamics, or simply, because it is so removed from her, own experiential contexts."

Talking about political figures and liberation

The data revealed content concerning political figures, actions and forms of activism. Such content was featured in the stories told by eight participants. Participants' knowledge and understanding appeared to be influenced by the printed and audio-visual media. For purposes of clarity, narratives about political figures are being presented in a historical timeline. One participant mentioned that she understood from history books that "apartheid started with Dr. Verwoerd"; another reported an appreciation that "...Mr. F.W. de Klerk... was the person that decided that Mr. Mandela should come back from Robben Island... if I could get a chance to

say thank-you very much.” A political and historic figure who was mentioned by six other participants was Mr. Nelson Mandela. Some related statements are: “Oh that time when Nelson Mandela was going to jail – I saw it on the TV... the speech he made before he was going to jail”; “Mr. Mandela managed to fight for freedom” and “I heard about Mr. Mandela’s release... so that’s where he come free and all of us became free”. Similarly narratives revealed elements of admiration for Mr. Mandela: “Mr. Mandela spent half of his years not staying with his family, so like, why can’t I do it for my people... teach other children... pass on my knowledge... do a skill” and “I wrote a poem about Mr. Mandela.”

Details of family members’ political involvement in search of liberation were mentioned by two of the 13 participants. “My grandmother has been in the ANC for the past 30 years... she’s been to conferences, meetings – those kinds of things. There were some groups... ANCs ...whatever... these groups held meetings to discuss what they would do to fight ... it would cause some problems [animated and loud]” and “...he [dad] did mention there was some black people... they used to call them spies... and put rings ... like these tyres ... and just burn them [snaps his fingers; speaks matter-of-factly of ‘necklacing’ acts]”. A field note entry read: “The activist figures mentioned and the descriptions of their actions appeared to be articulated with reinforced tones of resistance talk. I felt concerned about how these impacted [cit] on the participants and enquired about this.”

Disclosing feelings about stories, information and facts

This theme reveals components of affect which became incorporated with measures of appraisal and psychological significance. Feelings which were aroused by stories, formed emotional layers around the retellings and exercised an impact on the tones of narratives. It was captured by video footage that sharing the stories promoted empathy in certain participants, while it caused distress or ‘traumatised’ reactions for others. Examples included “...it was painful for me... I thought, what if it

was me...”; “...they were beaten... had to accept what they were told... it was awful... how did those people feel...” and “I think it is very cruel... I am thinking... how about I lived in that time ... and I could experience why people have such anger inside them.” A participant’s distress came to the fore as he spoke at length about how “...it destroys one’s self-image... even if you just experience a little bit of what they went through.” These quotations could also suggest that the original stories carried with them a legacy of pain, which in turn, came to influence the stories of the youth.

Three participants expressed a sense of disbelief about what they have heard by word of mouth, seen on TV and read about “...the first time... I didn’t believe it... I couldn’t believe it”; another used the metaphor of being caged or detained “...it make me feel bad – how can people treat other people like that... they were trapped...” and “...at first, it was very horrible... I didn’t know how to react towards it... if somebody tells you ... maybe you are in shock... you don’t know...”

Other emotional influences felt by participants were expressed as sadness and “being touched” by stories. A participant’s response to his mother’s telling was “...I stalled her [from telling more] because it touched me a lot when she became emotional”; another mentioned a concern for others “...I get hurt... even if it wasn’t happening in my family” and “I was very terrified and every time ... I became emotional... every time I hear about those things, I get hurt.” Trans-generational anger and annoyance at what was shared was also revealed “...I became very angry, but can’t say anything, I was not there... I was not part of the struggle”; “I was angry – very angry – annoyed about those stories” and “I can’t think... I get very angry... I don’t like being angry, but after a long time... those kinds of things make me angry... even *now* [her emphasis].” Certain emotions seemed to have been temporary in nature. “I was annoyed, but got another perspective... as time went by... I’m not angry anymore, but I’m very disappointed” and “...at first, I took the stories badly, but now it is lighter.”

Feelings of relief were expressed about their own non-involvement and claims of oblivion about that era and the rescinded repressive laws. "...I'm so glad... there is [plural intended]... not anymore... these laws because... they don't make sense"; "...I was fortunate not to be involved with that apartheid, I was totally too young, I'm just very happy its past" and "I am very happy not to be in apartheid... Oh thank God... I wasn't born yet, in that apartheid time!"

Disclosing the impact of past narratives on young people's own lived experiences

The following disclosures emerged concerning the participants' own behaviour and actions, which formed a synergy with stories told to them about the apartheid past. An element of an internalised 'frozenness' can be detected in the following partial narrative which deals with post-apartheid racial interactions: "I played chess – I was good at chess... when we played white schools, I could not concentrate just because I sat opposite a white opponent." Another participant explained how she felt degraded by fellow library users, "... while I was in grade 8... it was my first time in the public library, these white students was like ...can you [blacks] also read? – I was like, hmmmff – of course... and they laughed about that." Present influences were considered to have been shaped by past mindsets: "I still think some people still carry that apartheid thing in their mind because... still people treat us... like, the younger [white] generation ... some of them still have that thing because maybe their parents told them." Remnants of old racial interactions surfaced, when a participant referred to the Reitz Hostel incident, at the Free State University, where four young white male students filmed their 'initiation' of black housekeeping staff, "...you need to look at the mentality that those boys still have... is, to a certain extent, apartheid."

Black/white and victim/aggressor dichotomies were constructed by the following conclusion drawn by the youngest participant "...you know that saying,

history has a way of repeating itself? Take for example the xenophobic attacks... in the past white people used to treat black people in a bad manner – now African black people are taking that anger out on other Africans.” A participant described how she was rejected by her peers at primary school because she lived with a white family, “...I was different from them...they were black and then... I have been like someone white ...they didn’t want to play with me... I played alone... they treat me badly at school.” This excerpt underscores the fluidity of the term ‘race’ and captures the ambiguity attached to a sense of belonging to a ‘race’ group.

Current acts of hostility and rejection were described as: blacks being called derogatory names; blacks chastising whites and blacks being blamed for lost property: “...we saw the [white] students shouting at us in the streets and they started cursing and swearing at us... calling us names...like people did back then... and I was just like aagh ... never mind”; “...last month I went to town... some people especially blacks, see maybe a white person asking money [begging] or something... they say, no!... Go away! Look what you did to us” and “...there was a time when things started disappearing from hostel rooms... there was this white guy, who came around to all the rooms to ask and look for missing stuff in our rooms, later he discovered the culprit was someone of his own race.” Equally of psychological significance is the aspect of social inertia which emerged as part of the story of one participant “...I’m going to feel ... I have no power to do, to say, to act ...it happened then and it is still happening, now. Sometimes one allows your own thoughts to oppress you and you act accordingly...you act according to the story in your head... other people think on my behalf... a whole generation starts to feel that way...”

On being socially immobilised, a participant related “...teenagers from the past, they also had potentials – they had dreams, goals, but they were unable to do that because of apartheid... so... now, us teenagers we are not doing anything.” An inference could be that the current democracy is seen as an enabling context by this participant, but that opportunities available are not being utilised.

Assessing the relevance of apartheid narratives

The following insights were gained, as a result of a question posed concerning the significance of stories about the apartheid past. In response to this question very diverse inputs were received. One participant was of the opinion that information received this way, was biased in favour of the narrators, themselves, "I think that each generation transmits a story and only tell their own positive side... we suffered... we did this... and that... oh it was so bad", by inference she proposed that rival stories could emerge out of rival memories. Another, cautiously expressed the desire to distance himself from stories "...the less I know, the less trouble will there be, I realize it's difficult for those who went through it – to keep it for themselves, but the way it is told... that is how youth can turn on one another."

For another, stories appeared to serve a purpose of knowledge and empowerment "I think it is relevant – it is! We should hold onto that, but just to know this is what happened, but now we can make a difference and not repeat what happened". Other positions included ideas of proactive sharing in the future "...one day your children are gonna ask – mommy, why did this happen? – What are you gonna say?" and "...we do need those stories to be... told a lot...I will tell them to my children... I will keep that link to the future, so that our kids can keep on knowing. The thing about information is, you forget it and the next thing, it happens again." A participant acknowledged the contributions of stories towards the shaping of her identity "...my personal opinion is that [stories] made a large impact on my personal history... understanding my mixed heritage." Another said that it can influence his actions "...stories are important to understand about the past, history and what happened... and to know how to treat [act in] situations." Yet, another participant highlighted the historical impact of narratives: "...it's important to know stories to see ... where does this democracy thing come from."

Learning lessons from narratives

A small lesson constellation emerged around personal strengths, resilience, hope and motivation. Examples include, "...in life you have to go through some challenges... which some of our parents went through, but then those challenges... just made them stronger"; "... what I've learned is never give up, no matter how hard... always fight... always believe in your morals, values... never stop fighting for something which is right" and "...it serves as a drive for me, to a certain extent, that I should push hard and that I mustn't judge people."

Certain excerpts reflected a reconciliatory tone, while others revealed limited influences of the popularised post-apartheid rhetoric. Examples include: "I've learned that everybody is unique... where the different races come from... we are a big South African family ... we have to love each other" and "I'm proudly South African". Considerate tones of acceptance of diversity came from: "I've learned to take other people into account"; "I've learned that my white friends were not part of the previous government" and "I have taken something very positive out of these sad stories – no one is better than another, whether black, white or coloured."

Several participants voiced their desire not to underestimate, or discriminate, nor to be judgmental of others. These positions were evidenced by appeals for peaceful coexistence "I've learned not to seek revenge it won't change anything" and "...don't relate or judge people by the colour of their skin or language they speak or by what they do". One participant expressed his confusion and doubts about what was learnt, while another felt impartial to the subject of apartheid narratives. The following narrative reflections were made in this regard: "...one learns a lot, but sometimes it's confusing because everyone has different stories" and another purported "... from my point of view, the world has changed, but not that much".

Establishing aspects of interest or disinterest about stories

A pertinent driver in the exploratory function of this research relates to the youths' interest or disinterest in the apartheid past. In this regard, the researcher enquired into the participants' own interest as part of her interviewing repertoire. The results which follow disclose that seven participants reported having an interest in the topic, while two more reported no actual interest in it and the remaining four chose not to comment. The following statements reveal dimensions of interest in the topic: "I am very interested because people have different stories about what happened"; "I'm curious and like to explore... when you tell me what happened in your [pointed finger at researcher] generation... I'm interested"; "... when my grandparents are talking... then I'll ask – now why did they do that... and then my grandpa will explain again" and "...I think what happened to us in, like, South Africa, in the apartheid era, is not told... like it's told in Germany, like the World Wars... it's not told to that high level... and I think it should."

The following responses illustrated non-interest in narratives about the past: "I'm...not actually [interested]...for me it is ... life should continue and obstacles should be overcome..." and "I am actually not interested, but I need to know... for what happened should not happen again." Apart from their own interest or disinterest, ten participants commented on the disinterest and/or dismissive attitudes shown by their siblings, friends, peers and fellow learners. A participant commented "...they are not interested... every time they hear about apartheid... they get infuriated." A sense of apathy and self-interest was conveyed by "...guys like me, my age, will say OK, this is the past, it belongs in history... they don't care about what happened in the past... we've got what we want"; another used a metaphor of locking stories and memories away or taking them out of sight, "...the friends I have, feel this has happened [stories] should be locked in a special vault." Distinct references were made to the extent and reasons for this disinterest: "... the majority I know... they don't show an interest"; "... just no interest... It didn't happen to me... so why should

I care”; “some of them say... my parents were not involved... I will not get involved”; “75% of people I know... don’t deal well with it”; “... they think if you are doing History, you are going backwards... you are just wasting time.”

Discussion of Findings

This research located the primary narrators of apartheid stories by means of the retellings of the secondary narrators. Primary narrators were mainly close and extended family members, community members and to a lesser extent, acquaintances, friends’ parents and school teachers, while the secondary narrators were the participants of this study. Weine et al. (2004) concur that the family context proved to be an important site for communicating stories and the transferral of memories, while the audio-visual media played a considerable role in the facilitation thereof. Attias-Donfut and Wolf (cited in Naidu & Adonis, 2007) concur that stories relayed by older persons are crucial as these carry individual, family and social memories over to younger generations. In the case of this research, the role of media forms as “narrators” is acknowledged because as objects of simulation, they could expand on meaning and elicit the telling of stories themselves (Schneider, 2002). Liu and Liu (cited in Liu & Hilton, 2005, p. 7) proposed an idea of “historical affordances” that are flexible symbolic representations found in “media practices... and the stories people are told as children...” Such representations change along with political situations and are open to renegotiations by narrators.

The contexts and formats of sharing narratives gave impetus to an *emic* or relativistic perspective (Ponterotto, 2005) of when, where, why and how these narratives about apartheid took place. This research confirms that the primary sites of narratives are everyday conversations, discussions, reprimands, encouragements and these were mainly contained in “sense-making processes” (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1027) of socio-culturally specific structures of communication. Riessman

(2002) confirms that narratives are uniquely part of everyday life and reflective of the social interactions which surround them.

The theme, *'Explaining apartheid social stratifications and treatment of black persons'* introduced descriptive evidence of hierarchies which emerged around race. The positioning of race found in this research resonates with the pervasive race embedded discourses that Walker (2005) found in her study of post-apartheid black and white university students. According to Soudien (2001) the ideology of race continues to re-inscribe itself in different existential realities. Hierarchies were assigned to personal actions, ideas, impressions and qualities of race and culminated in the way black persons were treated during the apartheid era. The dichotomised positioning of race groups as high-low, inferior-superior and top-bottom as reflected in these stratifications and treatment narratives, formed a dialectical relationship with what Foster (2004) describes as apartheid dominators and the dominated. The 'other' was spoken into an existence as being inferior, by images of lowness, nothing-ness and not having authority. According to Hook (2003), such hierarchies and degrees exist because of the dynamics of race and class which are embedded with inequalities of various forms.

Furthermore, it was found that references to and conceptualisations of the apartheid era laws and their enforcement ran through several narrative themes. In certain instances, references to laws were generalised as "rules" and "orders" and the "government made it like that". Due to the participants' under-specification in naming legislative Acts and their adoption of the more generalised descriptions mentioned, Oppenheimer and Hakvoort (2003) propose that this occurs where narratives of the past are more closely connected to the narrated personal experiences of significant others, rather than by factual or historically transmitted knowledge.

Laws were inferred in narratives of forced removals; non-compulsory schooling for blacks; police shootings; severing of kinship bonds and Mandela's jail

sentence. Several and different permutations of the narratives in this study seemed to fall under this law 'umbrella' which served as a cornerstone for explanations of discriminatory practices of the apartheid past. Participants developed meaning-making patterns around pass laws and laws of segregation which became enmeshed with constructs of isolation, polarisation, prohibition, restrictions and separation of a racially divided society and contexts of conflict. These, according to Volkan (2009, p. 7) were "externalised structures" of the "guidelines of apartheid", which did not disappear when policies and laws were replaced or substituted with more humane ones, but continue to exist in the psyche of the victims and their descendants as interiorised yardsticks, for whom they often create post-oppression confusion.

The participants' references to the apartheid era mainly carried representations of a period of deficit, disadvantage, loss and suffering and to a lesser extent, communal and personal support. Deaths of certain persons were linked to harmful and deliberate intentions of the state machinery. However, loss was also acknowledged as being a sacrifice to gain freedom for the future. Other forms of loss were associated with jobs, kinships, material goods, livestock, incomes and dwelling places. Apartheid losses are also synonymous with loss of dignity and the lowering of quality of lives (Naidu & Adonis, 2007). Participants' descriptions of losses carried cognitive and linguistic representations of black persons being pushed to the margins of society or as suggested by Bar-Tal (2003) as being victimised by an opponent.

The findings also reflected elements of support as communal care, the offering of protection from impending danger, cordial relationships and employer assistance. According to Hernández (2002) the offering and acceptance of support and protection build trust and solidarity, within the networks of relationships which enable communities to gain hope and build collective resilience.

Narratives concerning apartheid education became the turning-point of where the narratives which focused mainly on lack of parental education started to blend with the consequences thereof on the participants' own lives. Narratives of apartheid

education revealed imagery of curtailed schooling, restricted opportunities, lack of infrastructure, few subject choices and conditions which impeded or halted academic progress. In the findings of this theme the past/present connection became more prominent, which supports Dolby's (2001) argument that the present youths' lives are inextricably coupled to the historical residues of apartheid. The conveyed understandings of the mechanisms of apartheid education were inferred by "they, set a limit for you" and "coloureds had to learn a trade". The references to 'they' and 'had to' could find validation in the ideological systems of education authorities that came to influence the extent of educational levels reached (Stevens & Lockhat, 2003). For certain youths in this study, these "structural remnants of apartheid" remain in the guise of poverty and continued "unequal social relationships" as asserted by Naidu and Adonis (2007, p. 5).

The findings suggest a consistent level of vicarious experiences of affect which was reflected in the disclosed feelings about stories and information obtained about the past. According to Volkan (2009) and Hernández (2002) it is possible for oppressed populations to be traumatised by political systems. The generation who suffered the trauma directly through protracted exposure, often by means of perceived victimisation, acts of hostility and humiliation, experience such trauma on both an individual and a collective level. Hernández (2002) claim that political traumatic experiences are often accepted as normal, especially in situations where low-intensity conflicts are being experienced. Memories are constructed around such experiences and as generational information exchanges take place it is not unusual for trans-generational transmissions of 'trauma' to occur (Naidu & Adonis, 2007; Volkan, 2009).

An increased body of research, started to emerge around aspects of trans-generational influences of narratives and the location of "post-ness", mainly because of studies into post-generational impacts of the Holocaust (Hirsch, 2008; Jansen, 2009a; Naidu & Adonis, 2007). This trend of enquiry was extended to include other

populations in current and previously conflict ridden parts of the globe, such as Cyprus, Columbia, Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda and Argentina (Adonis, 2008; Chaitin, undated; Hernández, 2002, Lindner, 2002; Tandeciarz, 2007; Volkan, 2009). The current research suggests that the array of feelings which were evoked as responses to the primary narratives and the intensity with which these were verbalised during the interviewing process could fall within the ambit of this paradigm.

According to an assertion made in Van der Merwe's (2005, p. 30) research, that the present youth are living in contexts "free of discrimination", this research refutes this position as participants' experiences of post-apartheid racial interactions reportedly continue to be affected by discriminatory and stereotypical elements. The theme disclosing the *'Impact of narratives on young people's own lived experiences'*, spoke of interiorised discomforts such as feeling unsettled by a white chess opponent, being degraded by white students in a public library, being called derogatory names by white youths and experiencing forms of social inertia by not being assertive or being indecisive about matters concerning one's own life. These, according to Hook (2003, p. 116) occur because of a "continual sense of dissonance" in or between beliefs and actions. Volkan (2009, p. 5) couples the dissonance to a sense of being "blocked in motor activities", these are experiences of restrictions or being prohibited from using certain facilities and the "blocking of mental activities", as the withholding of showing forms of protestations because of an impending sense of danger to the self. These can result in establishing a problematic sense of identity (Hook, 2003), while promoting a sense of helplessness and an inability to develop assertiveness (Volkan, 2009).

By considering the relevance of apartheid narratives in their lives the findings showed that the majority of participants thought that speaking and learning about such stories was relevant to varying degrees. Relevance was mainly linked to building a knowledge capacity about apartheid to prevent it from happening again.

Throughout the narrative segments evidence of positioning occurred. The manner in which stories are told, their subsequent interpretation and retelling brings into focus a position which places the narrator, context and circumstances in a 'favourable' position *vis-à-vis* the listener. According to Henning et al. (2004, p. 123) this positioning refers to "discursive indicators of the preferred self" and it yields an influence on the purpose of the story told.

One participant wished to distance himself from these stories as he cautioned that such stories could fuel antagonistic racial interactions in his own generation because of the manner in which they are told. By clustering the thematic relevant aspects with those that had been learnt from narratives, the findings suggest that the lessons learnt, provided predominantly positive influences around coping, perseverance, striving for better relationships, peaceful racial coexistence and reconciliation. However, the credibility regarding the accuracy of primary stories was also queried, but one participant still felt that he has nevertheless learnt something, irrespective of the confusion he experienced.

As discussed in the theme '*Establishing aspects of interest or disinterest about stories*' seven participants stated that they were interested in these stories, while two indicated their disinterest and four were indecisive. Ten participants stated that many other of their fellow black youth did not show any interest in such stories. Their speculation for this disinterest was that stories conjured up unpleasant feelings for those individuals and that they generally did not want to know about the past. This is indicative of what Naidu and Adonis (2007, p.21) call the youths' "sense of detachment" from the past. It is considered a distant context in which parents and grandparents shared an involvement, despite the fact that the reminders of the past are still a part of their daily lives.

Limitations

The results of this research should be considered in the light of the listed limitations. Given the large volume of dense transcribed data recorded on 160 pages the researcher could only include limited contents due to space constraints in the reporting of this study. The reporting possibilities are hence not exhaustive.

Except for four, the remaining nine participants did not make their contributions in their first language, as the researcher could only speak Afrikaans and English. Should the researcher have accommodated the first language preferences of the differently lingual participants, a wider scope, deeper intensity and nuances of stories might have been gained, as was the case for the mother tongue speakers.

The ages of participants clustered around the ages of 17 and 19 years old, while a nominal number of younger and older participants were included. This situation arose out of the unsuccessful negotiations which the researcher encountered to gain access to a larger spectrum and number of schools and FET (Further Education and Training) colleges in the intended recruitment areas of the study.

Although no intended enquiry was lodged into the socio-economic status of the participants, self-disclosure revealed that the participants' families of origin were straddling between a working and lower middle-class backgrounds. Such statuses were correspondent with the levels of education mentioned in the findings and these could have influenced the linguistic and factual exactness as well as the interpretive quality of the first level stories and information and could consequently have exercised an impact on the contributions of the participants.

During the data collection process the researcher observed that two participants displayed utmost caution and circumspect when giving their inputs and this resulted in them rendering, what was perceived to be, sanitised versions of stories, information and facts, despite encouragements to freely elaborate on their

topics. An additional measure of data collection such as focus groups could have provided the researcher with a wider scope of data for added trustworthiness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research contributes to an understanding about the existing knowledge, insight and narratives of the study's participants and no generalisations are implied to larger samples or different populations. From the numerous social commentaries which aligned perceptions of disinterest and apathy (Baines, 2007) found among the youth, this specific sample of participants proved the contrary. Since this study's participants were born during the latter years of the apartheid era their growing years are merged with those young South Africans born during or after the commencement of democracy and this could account for their inclusion into the 'post-ness' category. This research has shown that its participants have relatively consistent levels of insight, knowledge and understanding of the past, but vary in terms of their levels of interest. Further participant elaboration divulged that many other youths known to them, are disinterested in talking and knowing about the past.

By taking into account that oral narrative practices are congruent with communities which share a collectivist orientation (Schneider, 2002), this research gave prominence to the family setting as an important site of collecting narratives which enabled the retelling process co-created by participants. The generational divide between family members who actively encountered apartheid and the participants' own non-engagement with that context, could also account for the diluting of details and generalisation of information conveyed.

Consonant with this position is the coexistence between the past and present as evidenced in many narratives. This shared historical and contemporary enmeshment could not be separated as it aided in the production of socially constructed realities reflective in narratives. It is recommended that further research, in particular, a separate follow-up study be conducted to further interrogate these

types of narratives, inclusive of participants across a wider cultural and racial spectrum. A further recommendation is that more focused and participatory learning programmes be developed by the South African education authorities for implementation in schools, which could support and/or expand existing knowledge about this topic. However, caution has to be exercised in the planning and implementation of such programmes to take into account the sensitivities which prevail around apartheid as a topic. Although not all apartheid experiences were explained as being traumatic in this research, the traumatic experiences and memories which do exist appear to be loaded with their own painful legacies. Further investigations could probe into the purported reasons for the youth's non-interest in or even their denialist view points regarding stories about the apartheid past.

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Annexure A

Title: Exploring young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past.

Participant's Particulars

Kindly complete the information below:

1. First Name and Surname:
2. Date of Birth:
3. Age:
4. Gender:
5. Home Language:
6. Grade or Level of study:
7. Place of birth:
8. Country of birth:
9. Information and stories about the apartheid years were told to me by:

| Column A | Column B (Mark with a tick ✓ in Column B) |
|---|---|
| Grandmother | |
| Grandfather | |
| Mother | |
| Father | |
| Aunt | |
| Uncle | |
| Older sister | |
| Older brother | |
| Cousin | |
| Friend | |
| Other persons or media (please specify) | |

Annexure B



education

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Enquiries: MR H MOTARA
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SOUTHERN REGION

CES: PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

20 February 2008

Mrs C M Pietersen
Department of Psychology
North West University
Potchefstroom Campus

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
POTCHEFSTROOM AREA**

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research entitled "Exploring young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past" at secondary schools in the Potchefstroom APO under the following provisions:

- > the activities you undertake at school should not tamper with the normal process of learning and teaching;
- > you inform the principals of your identified schools of your impending visit and activity;
- > you provide my office with a report in respect of your findings from the research.
- > you obtain prior permission from this office before availing your findings for public or media consumption.

Wishing you well in your endeavour.

Thanking you

DR S H MVJLA
ACTING REGIONAL EXECUTIVE MANAGER
SOUTHERN REGION

cc: Ms S Yssé! – APO Manager, Potchefstroom



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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SCHOOL OF PSYCHOSOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL
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Tel: (018) 299 1482

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E-mail: Cheryl.Petersen@nwu.ac.za

Annexure C

March 2008

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT: RESEARCH PROJECT (ETHICAL CLEARANCE NUMBER: 05K14)

You are hereby kindly requested to participate in a research project entitled: Exploring young black persons' narratives about the apartheid past. The purpose of this investigation is to find out what stories, information or facts were conveyed to the present youth about the apartheid years. In order to find out what the youth know about this topic we need your assistance.

We need approximately 30 - 50 minutes of your time to complete a biographical form and to conduct an interview with you. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts in participating in a study such as this and you can withdraw from the study should you wish to do so. Your responses to questions will be both audio-taped and video-recorded and will be treated with complete confidentiality. In writing up the research report your inputs, responses and discussions will be treated anonymously. We will, however, need your most truthful and reliable responses during interviews.

In signing this letter, you declare that:

- o You have been verbally informed about the purpose of this research.
- o You understand that there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if you agree to participate in this study.
- o You understand that the research findings may be published, but that your name and identifiable information will not be revealed.
- o You have been informed that all records, forms, material and recordings will not be made available to any other person, organization or entity that is not involved with this research.
- o You have been informed that you will not be paid for your participation in this study.
- o You understand that you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time of the research process.
- o You have been informed that any questions you might have about this research will be answered by the researcher of this study.

I, _____ hereby declare that I understand the content of this letter, and that I willingly wish to participate in this research and that information obtained from me may be used anonymously for this purpose.

Participant's signature

Date

Mrs. C. M. Petersen (Researcher)
Cell: 072 845 6677

Prof. C. A. Venter (Supervisor)



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Annexure D

March 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian

We will be conducting research with adolescents and youth on stories, information and facts which they have been told / know about South Africa's apartheid past. For this purpose, we are looking to select a number of participants to assist us with this research.

About the research:

The proposed research is an exploratory study aimed at collecting second-generation narratives [stories] from the youth's perspective, about South Africa's apartheid past. Learners could derive benefits, such as reflective insights into their contextual history and gain an understanding of identity formation by participating in a study of this nature.

The requirements:

Participation in this research is voluntary and personal consent will be obtained, prior to interviews. Participants will not receive any payment, or any other form of compensation for participating in this research. Should any participant wish to withdraw from the research he/she may do so without suffering a penalty or loss of any form. Should a participant wish to discuss the research/findings with the researchers after the study, this can be organised.

The procedure:

- We will arrange an interview appointment with your child/ward, at a suitable time, outside of his/her normal learning activities.
- Mrs. Petersen will be asking learners a few questions about this topic to which they will be asked to respond.
- During this 30-50 minute interview, questions, comments and the participant's responses will be audio and video taped.
- Thereafter, these conversations will be transcribed into a written text.
- This written text will be used as the data for our study.
- We will not reveal the real name of your child/ward, as a participant, when writing up the research report.
- All the information gained from this research will be regarded with strict confidentiality and it will not be made available to any unauthorised person.

Should your son/daughter/ward be willing to take part in our research, we kindly ask for your consent in this matter. In this regard, we would appreciate it if you could complete the attached Consent Form and place it in the envelope provided and return it by _____.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If more information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. C.M. Petersen
(Researcher) Cell: 072 845 6677

Annexure E

CONSENT FORM

Name and surname: _____

Name of school / institution: _____

Please make a cross in the block which you select.

1. I/We give permission for my/our minor son/daughter/ward to take part in the research study on narratives about the apartheid past.

2. I/We do not give permission for my/our minor son/daughter/ward to take part in the research study about narratives about the apartheid past.

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Date: _____