UNTOLD STORIES OF A GROUP OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT THE APARTHEID ERA

E. J. VAN DER MERWE

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E. J. VAN DER MERWE Hons. B.A.

Dissertation (article format) submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium (Clinical Psychology) at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)

Supervisor: **Prof. C. A. Venter**

Co-supervisor: **Mr. Q. M. Temane**

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- My grandmother, who is no longer with us, for teaching me by example that humbleness is akin to greatness.

- My father - this is for you!

- The Lord, God; Thou hast provided through Thy superfluous wealth.

SUMMARY

UNTOLD STORIES OF A GROUP OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT THE APARTHEID ERA

Key words: [Untold / Alternative Stories / Narratives, Apartheid]

The aim of this research was to explore the alternative stories of a group of black adults who survived the apartheid years in South Africa. In common parlance it is held that there are two sides to a story and surely, there must have been alternative stories of how people in the black community survived the apartheid years, other than only the dominant stories of suffering that came to the fore during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings. It was surmised that the lives of many of the black adults, who experienced the atrocities of the apartheid years, might have been shaped by the dominant stories of hardship and that alternative stories of survival may not have played the important role in the shaping of their lives, that they should have played. The motivation for this research is that the data that were elicited may lead to further research and the possible planning of programmes to help people that experienced the atrocities during the apartheid era to incorporate their alternative stories of survival with their dominant stories of suffering.

Fifteen black participants, aged thirty-seven and older participated in the research project. A qualitative research design, more specifically narrative analysis, was used in the form of the categorical-content approach. Two methods were used to obtain data, namely a question in the biographical questionnaire, as well as an unstructured individual interview with the participants. Analysis of the data yielded eight prevalent themes, namely support, religion, role models, education, the struggle, culture, positive experiences facilitated hope, and acceptance. Results indicated that the eight themes are closely linked. Suggestions for future research projects were made.

OPSOMMING

NIE-VERTELDE STORIES VAN 'N GROEP SWART SUID AFRIKANERS AANGAANDE DIE APARTHEIDSERA

Sleutelwoorde: [Onvermelde / Alternatiewe Stories / Narratiewe, Apartheid]

Die doel van hierdie navorsing was om die alternatiewe stories van 'n groep swart volwassenes wat die apartheidsjare in Suid Afrika oorleef het, te verken. Daar moes ongetwyfeld alternatiewe stories gewees het van hoe mense in die swart gemeenskappe die apartheidsjare oorleef het, benewens die dominante stories van swaarkry wat tydens die Waarheids en Versoenings Kommissie (WVK) se verhore na vore gekom het. Daar is gehipotetiseer dat die lewens van baie swart volwassenes wat die gruweldade van die apartheidsjare ervaar het, se lewens moontlik gevorm is deur die dominante stories van ontbering en dat die alternatiewe stories van oorlewing moontlik nie so 'n belangrike rol gespeel het in die vorming van hul lewens soos wat dit moes nie. Die motivering vir die navorsing is dat die data wat ontsluit is, moontlik vir verdere navorsing en beplanning van programme aangewend kan word, sodat mense wat die gruweldade van die apartheidsera ervaar het gehelp kan word om hulle alternatiewe stories van oorlewing te inkorporeer met hul dominante stories van lyding.

Vyftien swart deelnemers, ouer as 37 jaar, het aan die navorsingsprojek deelgeneem. 'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp, meer spesifiek narratiewe analise, in die vorm van die kategoriese-inhoudbenadering, is gebruik. Daar is van twee metodes gebruik gemaak om die data te bekom, naamlik 'n vraag in die biografiese vraelys, asook 'n ongestruktureerde individuele onderhoud met die deelnemers. 'n Analise van die data het agt temas aangedui, naamlik ondersteuning, geloof, rolmodelle, onderrig, die sogenaamde "struggle", kultuur, positiewe ervaringe fasiliteer hoop, en aanvaarding. Resultate het aangedui dat die agt temas nou verwant is. Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsingsprojekte is gemaak.

LETTER OF CONSENT

We, the co-authors, hereby give consent that Ernst J. van der Merwe may submit the following manuscript for purposes of a dissertation. It may also be submitted to the *South African Journal of Psychology* for publication.

.....

Prof. C.A. Venter

.....

Mr. Q.M. Temane

INTENDED JOURNAL AND GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

South African Journal of Psychology

The manuscript as well as the reference list has been styled according to the above journal's specifications.

(Guidelines for authors on next page.)

SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY
INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

1. The manuscript should be typed in 12-point font (Times New Roman) double-spacing
2. The first page should contain the title of the article, the name(s) of the author(s), as well as the address of the author to whom correspondence should be addressed.
3. The abstract should be on a separate page.
4. The text of the article should be started on a new page.
5. Indicate the beginning of a new paragraph by indenting its first line two spaces except when the paragraph follows a main or secondary heading.
6. The headings should all start at the left margin and should not be numbered. The introduction to the paper does not require a heading.
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8. In the reference list, the first line of each reference starts at the left margin; subsequent lines are indented two spaces.
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"There is one purpose to life and one only: to bear witness to and understand as much as possible of the complexity of the world, its beauty, its mysteries, its riddles. The more you understand, the more you look, the greater is your enjoyment of life and your sense of peace."

Rice, A. (1996:135).

MANUSCRIPT

MANUSCRIPT TITLE, AUTHORS AND ADDRESSES

TITLE

UNTOLD STORIES OF A GROUP OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT THE APARTHEID ERA

AUTHORS

Mr. Ernst J. van der Merwe
P.O. Box 4176
Helikonpark
Randfontein
1771

Prof. C.A. Venter*
School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences: Psychology
North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)
Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom
2520
E-Mail: psgcav@puknet.ac.za

Mr. Q.M. Temane
School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences: Psychology
North-West University
Private Bag X6001
Potchefstroom
2520
E-Mail: psgqmt@puknet.ac.za

* To whom correspondence should be addressed

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to explore the alternative stories of a group of black adults who survived the apartheid years in South Africa. It was surmised that the lives of many of the black adults who experienced the atrocities of the apartheid years, might have been shaped by the dominant stories of hardship, and that alternative stories of survival may not have played as important a role in the shaping of their lives as should have been the case. Fifteen black participants, aged thirty-seven and older, participated in the research project. A qualitative research design, more specifically narrative analysis, was used in the form of the categorical-content approach. Analysis of the data yielded eight prevalent themes, namely support, religion, role models, education, the struggle, culture, positive experiences facilitated hope, and acceptance. Results indicated that the eight themes are closely linked. Suggestions for future research projects were made.

The apartheid era in South Africa was characterised by a whites-only government that imposed a policy of racial segregation. During this period of approximately fifty years, resistance groups such as the African National Congress (ANC) rebelled against the status quo. The government responded to this dissent with violence and imprisonment of black leaders (Facts on File News Service, 1997). This conflict resulted in gross violations of human rights from all sides and no section of society escaped these abuses (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003).

The policy of apartheid was finally abolished in the early 1990s, and Nelson Mandela, an ANC leader who had been jailed for 27 years, was elected president in 1994 (Facts on File News Service, 1997). At this time, many black leaders wanted to prosecute white officials for politically motivated crimes committed during the apartheid era. A tribunal similar to the one established in Nuremberg Germany during 1945, to prosecute those accused of war crimes at the time of World War II, was advocated (Facts on File News Service, 1997). Instead, the Mandela-led government decided to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to help deal with the atrocities that occurred during apartheid (Facts on File News Service, 1997).

The predominant view was that what South Africa needed was a mechanism, that would open up the truth for public scrutiny. To humanise the society the idea of moral responsibility was proposed (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003; Krog, 2002). The Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, suggested a "combination of the amnesty process with the process of victims' stories." (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003:5).

The TRC was constitutionally founded in 1995 and officially started functioning on Reconciliation Day on December 16, 1995 (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003). It consisted of three committees: the first was the Human Rights Violations Committee, which had to investigate the accounts of victims through hearings and investigations. The second was the Amnesty Committee, which had to evaluate amnesty applications. The third committee was the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee, which had to formulate a reparation policy to restore and rehabilitate the lives of victims and survivors of human rights violations (Krog, 2002; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2003).

The objectives of the Commission were to return to victims their civil and human rights; to make amends to individuals; to restore the moral order of society; to seek the truth, record it, and make it known to the public; to create a culture of human

rights and respect for the rule of law; and to prevent the shameful events of the past from happening again (Krog, 2002; South Africa, 1998). The Commission had the power to provide amnesty to individuals who confessed in full and who were able to prove that their crimes were political in nature (Facts on File News Service, 1997).

The Commission started with its hearings in April 1996. It received 20 000 statements from victims and almost 8000 amnesty applications from perpetrators (Krog, 2002; Facts on File News Service, 1997). Many of these statements were horrific beyond belief. Amidst these terrifying stories there were victims who were able to voice their forgiveness (Wieder, 2005:2). According to Gobodo-Madikizela - a clinical psychologist involved in the TRC process - there was a sense that these people wanted to move on, to unburden themselves of this bitterness that they had been carrying for so many years (Wieder, 2005:2).

Whilst studying TRC documents and reading Internet articles on TRC activities, the researcher experienced a feeling of unreality, even disbelief. The researcher experienced resentment and repulsion and found it difficult to believe the atrocities that were committed and documented. An overwhelming feeling of astonishment took hold of him. How could such gross violations have happened without his and others' knowledge? It became clear to him that throughout documented cases handled by the TRC, propaganda, police- and political involvement played an integral role in these atrocities. It resulted in violence from all sides. Small groups of white people were aware of what was happening, and an even smaller group condoned it. It reminded him of the Kremlin in communist Russia during the cold war, during which people also "disappeared" or were imprisoned without explanation.

Criticism of the commission and its work started and it escalated (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998). Although the TRC was designed as an instrument to attain peace and reconciliation pertaining to gross violations of human rights during the armed struggle in South Africa, various sections doubted its ability to perform this function. The TRC was viewed by certain organisations and sections of the population as being biased in its attitude towards people appearing before the commission, and demonstrating incompetence in uncovering both sides of the issue of violations committed (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998). Principally the objection against the TRC's modus operandi was that conceptually an incorrect approach was adopted by the TRC - a kind of trade-off was expected to be made between perpetrator and victims. An

immediate visible reconciliation between the parties was expected, and too little attention was given to the paradigm shift that the parties involved would have to make in order to attain acceptance of incidents that had occurred (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1998).

The researcher's interest in Narrative Therapy led to many discussions with one of his lecturers. During one of these, a question that was proposed by Venter, within a narrative framework, was: How did people in the black communities survive the apartheid years in South Africa? (Venter, 2003). Surely, there must have been alternative stories of how people in the black community survived the apartheid years, apart from the dominant stories of suffering. It was his view that a disappointing aspect of the TRC was the fact that these people were not given the opportunity to talk about the factors which helped them in living with these hardships - in narrative terms, to tell their alternative stories of survival and not only their dominant stories of suffering.

White and Epston (1990), who are viewed as exponents of the narrative dimension in therapy (Guterman & Rudes, 2005), refer to dominant and alternative narratives in people's lives. Every person possesses a wealth of experiences; hence, only part of these experiences can be absorbed in their dominant narratives. Those experiences that fall outside the domain of these narratives, are called the alternative narratives or unique outcomes (White & Epston, 1990). The dominant narratives direct and shape a person's life because we select from our life experiences those events that fit into the dominant narratives that others and we have about ourselves (Venter, 1998). These dominant narratives are used to interpret further life experiences.

It can be surmised that the lives of many of the black adults who experienced the atrocities of the apartheid years might have been shaped by the dominant stories of hardship and that the alternative stories of survival did not play the important role in the shaping of their lives as they should have done. It is possible that these people live a life story which is not a true representation of their life experiences (White, 1995) and that they could be trapped in a limiting life story (Venter, 1998).

In view of the above-mentioned discussion, the research question is as follows: What are the alternative stories of a group of black adults who survived the apartheid years?

The motivation for this research is that the data that might be elicited can lead to further research and the possible planning of programmes to help people that

experienced the atrocities during the apartheid era to incorporate their alternative stories of survival with their dominant stories of suffering.

This research is also in line with the new, so-called 'Psychofortology' (Wissing & van Eeden, 2002) or 'Positive Psychology' (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) which has its emphasis on psychological strengths and happiness (Carr, 2004).

RESEARCH

Aim

The aim of the research was to explore the alternative stories of a group of black adults who survived the apartheid years in South Africa.

Design

A qualitative research approach, more specifically a narrative analysis, was employed. According to Neuman (2000) qualitative researchers emphasise conducting detailed examinations of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life and usually present authentic interpretations that are sensitive to specific socio-historical contexts.

The concepts of narrative and life story have become increasingly visible in the social science. Narrative methodologies on the other hand have become a significant part of the repertoire of the social science. Gradually they have earned a place among various disciplines including psychology (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998). Most of the work in narrative research includes studies in which the narrative is used for the investigation of any research question (Lieblich et al., 1998). The narrative is used to represent the character or life style of specific subgroups in society defined for instance by their gender and race. From a social, cultural or ethnic point of view, these social groups frequently are discriminated-against minorities, whose narratives express their unheard voices (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Researchers use narrative analysis because they believe that narratives yield information that is not accessible by more traditional methods and that narratives can

reveal themes that the researchers did not even think to ask about (Hoyle, Harris & Judd, 2002).

Largely the foregoing implies that some form of language is used to narrate life stories. The narrative approach falls within the Post-modernistic framework. Postmodernists focus on how the language that we use constitutes our world and beliefs. It is in language that societies construct their views of reality. To postmodernists, the only worlds that people can know are the worlds we share in language, and language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of pre-existing truths (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Participants

The participants consisted of personnel and students of the North-West University (Potchefstroom campus), the Western College (Randfontein campus) and a member of the South African Women's Federation. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Dean of Students and the Chief Director of personnel of the university, the Campus Manager of the College and the Director of the South African Women's Federation.

The recruitment was done by means of flyers posted on notice boards throughout the campuses of the University, the college and with the help of the Director of the South African Women's Federation (cf. Appendix A). As indicated on the poster black people over the age of forty were invited to participate in this research project. The motivation for doing so was that this age group of people in the black community had experienced the apartheid years in South Africa during their youth and early adulthood.

A small group of twenty black participants were interested to participate in the research project, five were female and fifteen male. However, only fifteen were suitable candidates in the end because four were below the cut-off age and one was unable to participate due to ill health. Of the remaining fifteen, thirteen were male and two female. Only nine (seven male and two female) agreed to an interview, the reason being that they preferred to convey their views in writing. It was the researcher's impression that they were reluctant to participate in the interviews. Two of the nine interviewees chose to conduct the interview in Afrikaans, the others were conducted in English. The ages of the participants ranged from thirty-seven to sixty-

two years of age. The length of each interview was approximately fifty minutes. The original Afrikaans interviews were translated into English for the purpose of this article.

None of the participants had recently suffered trauma or displayed severe psychopathology. This screening was based on the response to a question in the biographical questionnaire (Appendix B) that asked: "Have you ever been diagnosed with any psychiatric disorders or mental illness?"

The narrative turn in psychology (Josselson & Lieblich, 2005) renders itself to a more personalised approach in order to allow for the research participants to be 'present' in the process of research, presentation of the findings and discussion thereof. In an attempt to establish the above, basic information concerning each participant is provided under pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The following is a description of the participants:

Lionel is a fifty-three-year-old Christian pastor by profession and also works in finance (debt collection). *Lionel* is married and has two children. As a result of the poor education offered at black schools under the apartheid regime, he joined the S.A. Student Organisation (SASO) during his high school years. As a student he had to choose between being involved in the military struggle or pursuing theology as a field of study. He decided on the latter because he felt he had a calling to help black people, but also because of his Christian faith. At this stage he left the organisation because they were preaching violence, which was against his moral principles. Many of his friends and relatives, however, went for military training, some of whom died in the process. *Lionel* proceeded with his career in theology and prayed for God to intervene.

Chuck is aged thirty-seven and works as a teacher and school principal. *Chuck* is single, has a daughter of eight and he is a Christian. His father, although not an educated man, was interested in education, and educated himself by reading a large number of books on various topics. After the new government had been elected, *Chuck* was involved in tracing families of people who lived in exile and reuniting them. *Chuck* himself has quite a vast education for a person with his specific background and obtained a university degree. He firmly believes that one cannot give respect to others if you do not have respect for yourself.

George is a forty-eight-year-old chief executive officer of a company. He is married and has five children and is also a Christian. He has a National diploma in

Human Resource Management. He had lost both his parents at the tender age of five. His mother was buried on a Sunday and the very next day officials from the local municipality evicted him and his siblings from their home because they did not have parents anymore. He was adopted together with two other siblings by their maternal grandparents. He remembered a gruesome medical examination before he could start working in 1976. This examination involved stripping down naked and his genitals being manhandled in the company of men old enough to be his father.

Matthew is a fifty-five-year-old pastor with a diploma in Theology. He is married and has one child. He is employed as a clergyman in the Christian religion. He had been involved in the uprising since 1976 till 1994. During this time he was arrested many times for not carrying the identification book ("dompas"). His life changed when he gave himself to God. His hatred turned into love and he decided to become an instrument of peace. He was subsequently involved in transportation of people to the TRC hearings and was witness to several traumatic stories that were told there.

Andre is a forty-eight-year-old campus manager with a B.Ed. degree. He is married and has two children. He identified himself as a Christian. As a small child he lived with his grandmother for a while before returning to his parents. He realised a few things at an early age, for instance that their home was raided by the police nearly every single day to check for the presence of illegal occupants and he consequently felt that they had no privacy. He takes pride in his achievements and believes that God answered his prayers as a young man, because now his children are able to attend a multicultural school.

Marge is a sixty-two-year-old Afrikaans speaking female. *Marge* is married, has three children and is a Christian woman. She is employed as a general assistant. She lived in Somerset East with her mother during her childhood. Her mother was the washing lady for a couple of white families, and they were very poor. She remembered not having had shoes to wear. She described herself as having been too dumb to notice things were wrong in South Africa. She merely accepted things the way they were. She remembered white and black children were separately seated in the 'bioscope', and that there were separate entrances for whites and blacks at the post office and separate toilets, too.

Johannes is a forty-eight-year-old Afrikaans speaking male and he works as a general assistant. He is married and identified himself as a Christian. He

remembered that he had to move around with a "dompas" and that he was afraid of white people. He remembered black people being attacked by white people in the streets. Curfew laws were extent during the apartheid years and no black people were allowed to move about in the streets after eight at night. He had to address white males as 'Baas' (boss), and had to say: "yes, boss, I'll do it right, boss, sorry boss." He remembered praying a lot and asking God to help him.

Simon is a fifty-six-year-old Christian male who is married and has two children. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, also obtained a master's diploma in Human Resources Management and worked in student support. As a university student, he became involved in the politics of anti-apartheid resistance. Education played a very important role in his life. He remembered that his father was forced to leave their home and that he had to go and live in Hammanskraal. He believes that that was what caused his father's death. After his father had passed away, he went to live with his elder sister and her husband. He is very proud of his daughter, who is an airhostess with one of the leading airlines in the country.

Mary is a forty-two-year-old woman. She is currently employed as a social worker, and very proud of her Bahurutshe culture. She only became aware of apartheid when she visited her mother in Johannesburg as a young girl. It was a terrible experience for her at the house where an Afrikaner family employed her mother, when the lady of the house yelled at her for speaking English and not Afrikaans. After the new government had come into power she worked on the reconstruction commission for Child and Female Care. She was involved in drawing up policies to govern their work.

The researcher

The researcher is a Masters student in Clinical Psychology currently in internship and is interested in Narrative Therapy and Psychofortology. His interest in this study began three years ago. He started to follow the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and he became aware of all the suffering that black people had endured, and realised that as a white man he could never fully comprehend this. It was then that certain questions came to him because of interest in people's stories. He would like to apply the findings of this study to a Ph.D. programme to facilitate the enhancement of strengths within individuals who have experienced

tribulations, but he also hoped that this research might be worthwhile to the participants of this study and help him as a researcher to better understand and console his disbelief.

Method of gathering information

Two methods were used to obtain the data, namely one question in the biographical questionnaire where the participants had to indicate which factors helped them to survive the atrocities of the apartheid years, as well as an individual interview. The biographical questionnaires were distributed to participants and collected after a week. These unstructured interviews (Rossouw, 2003) or 'unstandardized' interviews (Berg, 1998) prompted further clarification of the written data as well as elaboration on the topic.

The interviews were audio taped to ensure that the information provided could be accurately reproduced and notes were also taken for additional information, such as tearfulness and tone of voice (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Russouw, 2003). The interviews were conducted either at the participants' offices or at the researcher's home. The data of the questionnaires and the interviews were then analysed and interpreted.

Analysis and interpretation of data

According to Lieblich et al., (1998) two main independent dimensions exist for analysis and interpretation of narrative materials, namely those of holistic versus categorical approaches, and content versus form.

The holistic approach refers to the unit of analysis as a whole, i.e. the complete narrative. The life story of a person is taken as a whole, and sections of the text are interpreted in the context of other parts of the narrative. The categorical approach, on the contrary, traditionally refers to the original story being dissected, and sections belonging to a defined category are collected from the entire story (Lieblich et al., 1998). The categorical content approach also called "content analysis" focuses on the content of narratives as manifested in separate parts of the story, irrespective of the context of the complete story.

A content orientated approach endeavours to find out more about the unspoken content and the meaning conveyed by the story or part of it. Attention is paid to characteristics displayed by the individual or, for example, why a certain image was used by the narrator (Lieblich et al., 1998). At the other end of the spectrum some readings ignore the content of the story and refer to its form: the structure of the plot, the sequencing of events and various other stylistic characteristics for instance the choice of metaphors (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Data collected during the interviews were analysed qualitatively using the categorical-content approach (Lieblich et al., 1998). Content analysis makes valid inferences about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message (Weber, 1990). Categories of the studied topic were defined, and separate utterances of the text extracted, classified and gathered into these categories. This is also similar to what Johnson and Christenson (2000) refer to as segmenting. In this mode, quantitative treatment of the narrative is fairly common.

To strengthen the validity of the study, the trustworthiness of the data should be ensured. Triangulation is an important way to help ensure trustworthiness (Denzin, 1989 as quoted by Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) and was done by gathering data from multiple sources and using different types of methods to address the questions at hand from different perspectives or points of view (cf. Baker, 1999). Interviews available on audiotapes and transcripts thereof, questionnaires completed by participants, as well as personal experiences in the form of notes made soon after every interview formed part of the research. The interviews were re-read and verified by the study leader. The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Ethical aspects

Approval of this study was obtained from the ethics committee of the North-West University (Potchefstroom campus). Participation in the study was voluntary and participants had the option not to participate after they had been thoroughly informed about the research, or if they participated the interview could be stopped at any point if they so wished. Participants were asked to sign consent forms for participation in this study, including permission for the research findings to be published anonymously by using pseudonyms. Participants were given the opportunity to verify

all information before including it in the research findings. Participants were informed that should they experience emotional upheaval during the course of the interview, appropriate referrals to psychologists would be made. Participants were also informed about the follow-up study of Vermeulen (2006?) within a month's time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The prevalent themes (content categories) that emerged on analysis of the data are discussed below. During the interviews, some of the participants deviated from the actual question, which was "How did you, as a member of the black community, survive the apartheid years in South Africa; how did you deal with the problems, challenges and hardships of this era in South Africa?" Although attempts were made to redirect them, several deviated yet again. The main reason for the deviation from the question was that the interviewees became emotionally upset when certain themes were discussed and as a result of ethical consideration, they were allowed to continue telling their stories of suffering before redirecting them to the actual question. Another participant also focused on her survival since the abolishment of apartheid, attempts were also made to redirect her focus to survival during the apartheid years, but she deviated again.

Support

Many participants viewed the category of support as an important factor which helped them to survive the apartheid years in South Africa. This theme consists of self support, familial support, extended family support, communal support and illegal means of support. To have sexual relations and bear children as a means of feeling loved were also mentioned and the researcher is of the opinion that this can be viewed as a form of familial support.

A participant mentioned that he had to sustain himself and his siblings from a young age. "Now the going really got tough because of school fees and stuff like that, I actually started working by the age of seven just to sustain that and my siblings, you know...I started doing this garden jobs...Believe you me, for all those hours I got 25

cents...During the week I have to use it for whatever, buy some bread and whatever. Come the other Saturday I have to do the same thing again."

A participant captured the essence of familial support with the following words: "For one to survive, you cannot survive as an individual, there is always a support system, that one needs to be sustained by. The basic units will be the family, the family assisted through the basic requirements, because apartheid was designed in such a way that we were separated and that separation meant that we would not depend on each other...and the best way one would survive under that situation would be to depend on those closest to you." The same participant went on to illustrate that the family introduced him to other means of support, for example Christianity "...the family itself in essence introduced me to Christianity..."

Another male participant was of the opinion that having children and having sex was an important form of familial support for black people during the oppression of those years, "...you know the only comfort that people had, black people had was to have sex, and having children, that was, what really made them feel that they are somebody, feel that they are loved, you know..."

Support was also provided through extended families. Members of these families took it upon themselves to provide for the children of members from the family who were disadvantaged by the apartheid system. One participant told the story of how his family was evicted from their home the day after the burial of his mother. At the time he was five years old and his father had passed away when he was only two years old: "I grew up with relatives, actually there were three siblings, we were adopted by our maternal grandfather." The support of the extended family was evident in what one participant called "basic survival" wherein families exchanged some foods they had for others they didn't have: "we survived on subsistence farming...sometimes we diversify...maybe my mother deal with traditional sweet potato farming, and my uncle would deal with sorghum...that was the system of interdependence."

Support in the form of financial means was also provided through the extended families: "...my parents were not that rich as it were, you would find an aunt is coming in making a contribution towards your school fees, you would find even we would brew traditional beer, unqombothi...and if it's finished, it is sold out, you are late, well I am making a contribution of five rand towards that child's school fees..." Another participant stated the following: "...maybe your mother is a domestic worker,

somewhere your auntie is a domestic worker so you had to rely on those and say it's the month end, so I need R2 to go and buy a bread, I need 50c to go and buy a ballpoint pen...and this were very difficult to get because that aunt is not only supporting you, she is supporting the entire family, which is extended again, which means if she's got five brothers who are unemployed and she's the only one, she has to support the entire family."

Communal support was experienced by some of the interviewees. This consisted of support from friends, ministers, other prominent people in the community, and support from various other people in the struggle.

Friendships, which provided communal support, helped individuals to survive the hardships of the past. A female participant told about her friendship with the white daughter of her mother's employer. The participant related that she avoided her mothers' employer (her friend's mother), because she scolded her for not speaking Afrikaans: "...I avoided her, but later as months went by she realised that I had a very close connection with her daughter because even if I was home I would write letters to her and she would write letters to me so she couldn't just come between us, and we were so close and gradually she accepted me."

The communal support provided by reverends in the community was emphasised by many participants. Reverends played a crucial role in providing educational support: "...the reverend so he was taking the question papers to jail so that he other students can write." A reverend arranged for matriculants to write some of their examination papers in the church: "...he said: 'get into the benches' and then I wrote my Mathematics during that night..."

One male participant referred to the communal support that was given by reverends to families when their children became victims of the system of apartheid: "...and then we wrote our matric, but like I said, most of the reverends took us through. They were counselling us through the process because, you'll find out all the families most of them they were crying all the time. Children were dead, children in jail being dead, children leaving the country didn't know where they are, and then the family stays there and they don't know..." Money was scarce and psychologists were virtually non-existent "...so we were depending on the reverends, they were doing the counselling at that time...they were acting as psychologists, they worked very hard during that time."

The reverends were a major form of communal support for the children during that time: "For all people, what you could think of when you had problem it was a reverend, I must go and see a reverend, even we children, what we could not even convey to our parents, we would go to the reverend. Sometimes we've been running around from home, and when you want to go back to home and then you know at home there is also discipline, your parents are going to ask you where are you from, you are going to get a hiding and so on, then you would go to a reverend, and explain to a reverend and ask 'reverend please take me back home' the reverend will take you back to home and talk to your parents."

Some of the reverends contributed to the basic needs of people. A reverend said: "I was running around organising food for the displaced people because houses were burnt and we brought them together...you know so that people will live, so that people will have something to eat..." this indicates the commitment of the reverends, but also the support which was provided.

This invaluable communal support received from the reverends was honestly appreciated as indicated by the following participant: "...also the reverends they were close to us, fighting this because my reverend the late T from the NG Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) during that time it was also difficult for him because he was being paid by the NG, they didn't command any political orientation, and so on."

The religious network of communal support stretched beyond the borders of South Africa: "Fortunately among the staff we had very good missionaries. I think that guy Dr. G was a person who understood the situation and I think as students we identified ourselves with him because he stood up against other missionaries to say I think these people are wrong, what is happening in the country is very, very wrong. He had to leave because of this."

Communal support also came in the form of advice from prominent people concerning the conduct of individuals in the daily execution of their duties. A reverend stated the support he experienced as follows: "I had good friends, people who were in the struggle and in other words it was more like a network, and if I perhaps have to do something, I have to get advice from them. You know, people like K N who was the first president of AZAPO...he understood what was happening and had a network with other people outside the country." Another participant described the support network as follows: "...you link up with people who are already into politics and it becomes like a burning fire for you."

Various other people in the struggle also offered communal support. Students received assistance through political organisations that would send people to the community to provide support: "...there were other people, who would come to school, and address the students and help them...those were educated people." It seems as if support in education was another prominent theme: "...those people started the night school, where they say okay, now we want black people to be educated...they were people from the university...members of South African Student Organisation."

The value of communal support is evident in the following quote of a participant: "...coming together with people, sharing ideas, looking at things differently helped me quite a lot, sort of broadened my horizons and then it made me look at things differently..." Support in the form of advice or even encouragement from these networks assisted a participant with choices concerning his education: "...these people...assisted me in some ways. I think number one they felt very strongly that I must go for education..."

A male participant mentioned that in order to survive they would turn to illegal means. "...you had to find ways and means of doing some things which were illegal...you are now in a position to somehow smuggle...some drinks, maybe this beer, you sell it at a shebeen ...that way you are able to get something..."

From the discussion above it is evident that support provided in basic needs such as food, clothing and financial support for education. It represented survival to individuals and communities.

Religion

Several participants saw religion as an important factor that helped them to deal with hardship during the apartheid era in South Africa. It was evident that religion as a theme could further be divided into two sub-themes: religion as a means of survival and religion as a different perspective. Religion was evident through prayers and church involvement.

A reverend felt that what helped him to survive the apartheid years was the strength that he drew from his theology training. "But what helped me was ...theological strength, because I felt I had a calling...to help our black people."

Another participant had the following to say about the value of his faith: "All things turn for good, for those who believe, which means even if you feel you are disadvantaged, if you have got faith, your faith will put you where you want to be." Faith prevailed and encouraged people to endure even the most trying of situations "...to survive it's to believe in God, we knew that there was hope at the end of the tunnel, even if it was difficult we knew that God will never leave us, God is with us."

The inspiration that religion had, surfaced in the following words of a reverend: "I tried to commit suicide and each time, you know, of it, it always failed, you know and I regard that as the hand of God, that was God was watching over us and God was interested in us and he knew what we were going through by then." One of the participants, who was filled with hatred and saw life as senseless had the following to say about the healing power of religion: "...but what really changed, really changed my life was to come to the knowledge of Christ, as my personal saviour."

Christianity offered a different and positive perspective on the struggle amidst all the negativity surrounding the abuse and rejection that black people suffered. White people, who treated black people with respect and love, set an example of true Christians who practised what they preached. The black people with whom they associated held these people in high regard: "I think that guy, Dr. G, was a person who understood the situation...he was not like other missionaries where he would have special cups for black people to drink from, You know he treated us like human beings...."

A participant illustrated how religion provided a different perspective on the hardships of the past for him, but also brought about change in his personal life: "...I knew I was bitter before I found this conversion to be accepting the Lord as my personal saviour...when I got this new thing that came to me, you know, I said now I look at people as people created by God. It doesn't matter whether he is an Afrikaner or what, but that to me became an eye opener, so then my approach in life became different and I had to accept myself as a black person, but at the same time accept that a white person is an image created by God. That, because you see I don't think that I would have in one way or another abandoned the hatred that I had." He added: "You know the day I came to Christ, I realised I was wrong, I was wrong there are among white people a number of kind Christians who are very, very good, who are followers of Christ...and I discovered that sin affects both white and black...That changed me

upside down. And I began talking to other folks, I began to say no, politics was not an answer, Christ is an answer." The same participant later described the liberation he gained from his religion with these words: "I had that inner peace and the healing I had already, the anger was gone."

Prayer was a strategy that people employed in their survival. Religion through prayer is evident in these words from a participant: "So we have that belief and then we were constantly praying..." Another participant also mentioned prayer as a means of survival. "I prayed a lot – I get up in the morning, Oh Lord...I go there to that master, how will he say to me...sometimes I get angry, but when I am angry then I say: 'Lord, you that knows look how it is I can do nothing' – I have asked the Lord many times to help me even until now." The following is a portion from his prayer, showing the steadfastness of his religion: "...Oh Lord, I think this life let it change a bit..."

A female participant stated that her involvement with the church had its origin in her childhood, where her mother set an example by going to church, taking her with her and being in the company of church-going people. She said: "My mother, I grew up with the people who went to church, yes together to church with kids that grew up in the church."

It becomes apparent that religion, especially the Christian religion, provided people with emotional and mental endurance and tenacity to cope with the hardship they suffered under apartheid rule.

Role models

Participants mentioned role models as a critical factor that assisted them to overcome the challenges during that era. The family was a rich source of role models, some people served in the communities as 'communal heroes' or communal role models and other role models included national or international heroes. Black people emulating other cultures also served as role models.

A participant reacted to the theme of familial role models by saying the following: "...our parents, they were our models, although they did not have much to be proud of, for the way we treated them and did things without them knowing about it." As will be indicated later (cf. theme of education) parents were role models for their children with regard to education. A participant related the story of how his

brother-in-law came to be a lecturer, a position never held before by a black man. This inspired him to become successful: "My brother-in-law was the first black person to become a lecturer at Unisa...in 1971. He served as a role model for me, I emulated him, say I want to be like that, apartheid or no apartheid." A participant mentioned that specific family members had particular roles: "...aunt or uncle...got particular roles, they give advice...encourage us a lot...and impart values..."

Communal role models were identified on different levels. One would act as a role model for other people, at the same time one would also have role models to look up to and lastly one would find other people, equal to oneself, colleagues encouraging one another. A participant explained it as follows: "We have got mentors, those people we were looking up to...we have got people who were elevated in the community, people who were hero-worshipped...people who would encourage us...proteges, that we realised had potential and we needed to groom them...so that they could take over when we passed on...there were people like Steve Biko for instance...he had had a significant impact to the community and to the country." Communal role models were mostly positive and somehow emulated by others.

As could be expected certain national and international heroes were role models. A participant had the following to say about Nelson Mandela: "...he was in jail, but he was a leader in the community, his ideals were in the community." Another participant emphasised the importance of discipline and respect – taught by certain role models: "Nelson Mandela and all the leaders they were telling us you must always be disciplined in anything that you do, you must take responsibility for it" and "...he (Nelson Mandela) was the one who always said do your things, but you must be disciplined, you mustn't go around and become radicals you must be disciplined, our goal is to be liberated, we want you to be free, that is our goal, but not other things like becoming radicals."

One male participant described his view of national and international role models in the following manner: "Michael Cassedy, Tutu, Frank Chikane, Beyers Naudè – great man, you know the story...those are the people that helped us." Education, especially reading, also introduced people to role models. "...I then started reading books of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, that actually prepared me to know how to go about this." (cf. theme of education).

It seems as if the national and international role models that people had in those days were very diverse and this helped to retain a balance: "...you would find

out that there are people from all settings who were very much open minded, you find people like Retief for instance, a great leader...people like De Klerk, those guys were visionaries...even if they were forced to maintain the divisions that there were, they will still say lets not fight, they were coming in as pacifiers, and they were coming in as proper icons for us to learn from, that in a war there is no winner, there is no loser, everybody will suffer...those are things that brought about the balance that [was] lacking in our lives..."

A few participants introduced the theme of black people emulating other cultures "...doing things never done by blacks..." These cultures would then serve as role models: "We would travel to nearby townships, good friends – they'll have music, play American music, you know, and we'll look up...and made us to look beyond this stupid apartheid thing, and we emulated Americans."

It is also important to note that one male participant mentioned that he had no role models: "...you can act responsibly when there are role models – I had no role models at all...there were no role models, you know...even if they were there you were not exposed to it, you were far away from them..."

It seems as if a variety of role models across a wide spectrum exerted an influence on individuals, families and communities.

Education

Many of the participants thought that a lack of proper education was used to oppress the black people of South Africa. They felt that because of their being mostly illiterate, the white people could use that to oppress them, because they did not know of any other way to fend for themselves, and could not get a proper education to improve their situation.

An interviewee said that the quality of the education that black people could obtain in South Africa was inferior. This was the reason his brother went to England - for a better education: "The education we got here was raw, it was junk, man!...my brother also felt the quality of education was poor, he felt he could get a better education in England. He obtained a B.Sc. degree there."

Participants felt strongly that education was an important factor that helped them to survive the apartheid years, either as a weapon against oppression or as a means of preparation for the future and to uplift their spirits. A participant

highlighted the importance of education for the future: "...a nation that is not literate, won't do anything...we are your leaders now don't expect to be my leader if you are not educated, so we are fighting this but you must know that at the end of the day you must be educated..." Education as a way to empower children for the future was explained by a participant as follows: "...this inspired me to give my children the best education I could, not to go through what I did, by giving them education and education and education."

The following words from a participant indicate how difficult the circumstances were under which black people received their education: "So we were [supposed] to go and write the final examination and it was during the uprising, all the people were in jail, the students they were in jail, so they couldn't go and write the examination." Due to these difficult circumstances individuals required some form of support to acquire education. Education was inspired by the self, the family and also by the community.

Individuals survived by educating themselves. A participant said: "...he (his father) used education as a survival scheme, he himself was not literate, but he made himself semiliterate...he would sit and read and [teach] himself how to write, he made it." This participant saw this self-acquired education (of his father) as an important survival tool that the children again obtained from their father (cf. theme of role models). "He taught himself and used that as a vehicle for us to ride on, so he will educate my eldest brother and my eldest brother would then educate me." Education was inspired and initiated by parents: "I was fortunate that my father was somebody who was interested in books and he passed that on to me."

Familial and communal assistance supported individual education: "...they (the community) assisted me in some ways...they felt very strongly that I must go for education, because there was also a feeling that I must go for military training..." Not only individuals or communal sources, but also role models emphasised the importance of education: "You know you look at a person like Nelson Mandela who got his degree in prison, then you realise there is importance in education." Familial support in education is also evident in the following words of a participant: "...you would find an aunt is coming in making a contribution towards you school fees..." (cf. themes of support).

Another participant illustrated the communal support idea with these words: "Why should I go on with education, because when I go on with education I will still

work for a white man, why should I ...that's when the community would come in, and say it is better for you to be an educated servant than to be and an illiterate, unemployed and unemployable person..."

As was previously indicated (cf. theme of support) the reverends and people from political organisations played an important role to support the people with their education. It was indicated that reverends took question papers to jail and allowed matriculants to write some examination papers in church, whilst the people from political organisations started evening schools.

A participant frequently emphasised the importance of education as a means of survival during his interview: "My response was education, education, education – it can uplift all of us." Upon further exploration he replied: "...to be able to read perfectly and be a perfect English speaker, It makes you unique and gives you the ability to respond to situations around you." This participant also commented on the exposure that he received through education and his love for reading: "It introduces you to other cultures...we could travel to...good friends, they'll have music...play jazz, and that made us to look beyond this stupid apartheid thing..."

Taking the above-mentioned support for the importance of education into consideration, it is clear that no circumstances could keep these people from obtaining education. Even though their surroundings were not ideally suited for acquiring education, their spirit prevailed: "You know I had to study hard because firstly you have to comprehend a concept in a language, then transfer it into another language, so I was studying double"; "...the police started raiding all the houses, taking us to jail...and then we were students by day."; "...then those people (from political organisations) they also started the night schools, the night schools where they say okay, now we want black people to be educated" and "Sometimes we went to school without food...that disturbs your concentration because you are hungry and you have to concentrate the whole day..."

Another sub-theme that emerged through education was reading as a way to explore new worlds: "So when we got books I would console myself through reading and explore and meet the world, because there are areas which we were not allowed to visit or be in..." The female participant who was friends with a white child (cf. theme of support) described reading as a means to 'escape' and console herself: "...when I was there, and I would just buy books and read and then I actually avoided her."

The importance of education as a means of survival was frequently emphasised. Participants felt that proper education improved their situation, either as a weapon against oppression or as a means of preparation for the future. Individuals received much support from family and extended family members, and various people from the community.

The struggle

The struggle seems to have been an important mechanism for the participants to survive the apartheid era. In order to solve the problem of apartheid and all the hardship it encompassed, people turned to activism, unions and went all out to do something and thus oppose apartheid.

Black people struggled on various levels during the apartheid years in South Africa. For instance black people were not allowed to own property, to vote, even language posed an obstacle because they were forced to receive their education in Afrikaans, which in most instances was only their third language (cf. theme of culture).

Participants highlighted the theme of unification through a common goal. This united goal was to oppose and thus overcome apartheid, and it had many forms – whether it was to join unions or to be prepared to lay down their lives to achieve this one goal. This struggle united them and empowered them to draw strength from each other, share advice and encourage each other - unity is strength. "...interacting with my colleagues, for a common goal, a common purpose."

One of the participants whose family was evicted from their home during forced removals considered this eviction "...the most damning incident..." that he could recall. This participant saw this eviction as the single most important incident leading to his father's death: "I lost my father because of that...it's painful to lose a father..."(his eyes filled with tears). He added: "My sister wanted to kill herself, she wanted to stop the bulldozer crushing our home." These and other incidences mobilised this family to contribute to stopping the hardships that were endured: "...we had to do something about the politics and the government of apartheid, which I did by becoming politically very active and joining the movement taking place at varsity...joined this movement to do something...I will contribute to stop this from happening again."; and "We went all out to oppose apartheid – become active in the

struggle against apartheid, to become activists, to contribute to breaking this stone, this rock."

One male participant joined "...the movement taking place at university..." because "...we knew we had to do something about the politics and the government of apartheid." Another participant formulated the unification through a common goal in the following way: "so then we started with the uprising, and then we start getting now in the influence of the ANC, the PAC the black consciousness that we feel now, filling up ourselves in the structures because they were telling us they wanted to dismantle apartheid. And I would tell you now, people were close at the time, they were because the goal was one."

Unification materialised in the form of resistance movements that supplied the black communities with a means of combating the abusive system of apartheid: "I started joining unions, and I started a union there. That was the beginning of things, resisting whatever the white man [says] and then calling strikes...we brought the post office down to its knees..." This resistance also took the form of spreading the word to join together to oppose the system of apartheid: "...for instance people who were in exile they were also communicating, and people from exile they were taking the message inside the covers, saying we must fight this, we have our site we are fighting for, so carry on with the struggle."

It seems that the anger against apartheid kept the black people going. A participant indicated that to oppose the regime made them 'blind' in that they became one sided in their thoughts. He said: "...you know if any uprising comes up you are part of it you don't have to think twice, because you see that's how to vent your anger" and "...you came to a point when you are in bus, whatever you get, you can scratch, even the bus, you know you didn't care because you thought that the system was so bad it was one side, you know. But anger makes you blind, it becomes such a huge mountain and the only thing you think you can progress with life is to do something with that person, and that's what has happened in our country. How can you destroy your school, which tomorrow you will need money to rebuild, and we thought it was in the name of justice. Justice has got a head and a tail, that's love and justice, and we only used the tail, punishment and justice and we forgot the other side, the other side is love."

Even amidst their fighting of the system of apartheid these people had to struggle to remain disciplined and not to take advantage of the situation: "Like they

(leaders and role models) were saying okay, fine, fight the regime to be liberated but don't be radicals...they will say you should be disciplined, we want a nation that is disciplined." (cf. theme of role models).

Culture

A few participants advocated that the various cultures amongst black communities were a preserving force for those particular cultures, which helped the individuals to survive. The moral values and norms of discipline, pride and respect derived from the culture of an ethnic group, united the people from the group and gave them the will to preserve that which was of value to them.

Traditional or cultural values and norms such as 'Ubuntu' forms the basis of certain cultures. These values and norms were usually imparted through the community from generation to generation. "I can not neglect the traditional values as well as that imparted by the community, things like what we call 'ubuntu' – what you give out is what you receive - which would make you who you are...that simply means humanism and if you are a human being you treat other humans with the same respect that you would wish them to treat you..." The emphasis here is on the group (collective), and not on the individual as in traditional western cultures.

One male participant accentuated the manner in which cultural values were passed down in his culture: "...we had groups whereby we would sit down, usually with our grandparents, they usually held that responsibility of passing on those values, especially through story telling, folktales ..." He went on saying: "The foundation on which I stand is Christianity, but at the same time it cannot be entirely isolated from these other experiences that I've had ... they are basically, the way we grew up...So these are some of the things that would constitute one's soul, one's being, one's existence, ...so my lifestyle has to be designed according to my cultural background.

Some culture's basic perceptions of sharing was in contrast with the 'apartheid laws': "Because you are, lets say in our Tswana culture, you have a visitor you are always there to cater for that person and you share whatever you have with other people. Then suddenly, lets say in the apartheid system, you know some things are meant for whites, some things are meant for blacks irrespective of where you come from, so it is really problematic."

Some participants argued that traditional moral values and norms served to help people to retain their humanity amidst the struggle for freedom from an inhumane political dispensation. Without these, the hatred and the struggle to survive would have dehumanised them. An interviewee had the following view about this issue: "...things that helped us [were] moral values, because some people were behaving in a way that was not accepted even by their own, the black people, becoming tsotsies, becoming hooligans and so on..." and "In those days, teach them how to stand firm as people with all the challenges of life, that you must be pro-active, you must be able to stand on your own and those things, leadership skills and so on."

As previously indicated (cf. theme of role models) the discipline demonstrated by leaders in the community served a role for preserving the dignity of people in their resistance against an unfair system. According to a participant role models like Nelson Mandela taught them discipline. "...all the leaders they were telling us you must always be disciplined..." and "...to be liberated but don't be radicals."

One participant's culture led him to the symbolic meaning of the word 'African', that really made him proud: "...The word African it is there from two words 'afri' which means children and then 'can', which is spelled 'kan', meaning sun, so it is 'children of the sun' and the sun representing light and civilisation...I somehow have a heritage I can be proud of." A number of participants were very proud about some of their achievements during the hard times they suffered under apartheid rule. The quote given below demonstrates the pride a participant took in his matric results: "I wrote my mathematics during that night of which I am still proud because I got an A..." Pride as a means to overcome hardships also seems to have been an individual strength that inspired people to continue.

A few participants felt strongly that respect was an important factor that supported them in coping with the apartheid years in South Africa. A male participant felt that respect for older people and parents was important and another accentuated respect towards white people or authority figures. An interviewee illustrated this theme as follows: "The respect regardless of their gender, regardless of where they actually come from, even regardless of racial origin. So those were the things that positioned us to survive." Respect is also evident in the following: "...if I hate a system, I don't hate individuals..." Respect also included respect for reverends in the community (cf. religion as theme).

It is evident that culture served a preserving purpose in the apartheid era, and that the cultural values and norms prevented people from going beyond humanely acceptable behaviour.

Positive experiences facilitated hope

Participants viewed positive experiences as a contributor to their survival of apartheid, as it created hope for the future.

Positive experiences, according to the participants, consisted mainly of being treated well by certain white people. "You know he [treated] us like human beings where for other you were like a garden boy, even though you are a student – you don't even get into the house." They felt that the experience of being treated as an equal human being restored their human dignity. One participant put it in the following manner: "...it was one of the greatest experiences to be treated like a human being...these white people, they begin to see the light." He added: "For the first time in the country something I experienced in Pretoria, I was a student by that time, we were able to stay in white mans place...the mere fact that they are offering their beds, we were eating together, for a week, it was wonderful, it really meant a lot for me."

Some of the above-mentioned positive experiences generated hope for black people that things would eventually change for the better. This hope contributed to assist people to overcome the atrocities of the past. A female participant said: "...we knew that there was hope at the end of the tunnel..." and "But maybe the next generation will see the light." Another participant described that hope drives you, inspires you and keeps you going in the following manner: "We still live in different worlds out there, the township and you know totally different, nothing has happened that much, but then there is still hope, I still have hope, like I used to have hope in the past." One participant summarised hope accordingly: "You don't listen like your mother or your father (addressing the interviewer), because of the difference, you attended school with blacks in the same class, you share the same dormitory. Things have changed you know, you won't be seeing things the way your parents see them."

A participant emphasised the value of a positive attitude: "...apart from that you will also discover that it's not necessarily the situation and the circumstances that we find ourselves in, that helps us to survive, but rather the attitude and if you have got a positive attitude every single human being regardless if you have favourable

conditions or not, we always encounter ugly situations in our lives. And now if the attitude that one has got, is negative then it becomes detrimental to your progress but if it is positive then you will be able to get some positive results and life becomes, even your trials and tribulations they can actually become blessings under the situation."

Acceptance

Some participants viewed acceptance of their circumstances as an important means of overcoming the hardships of the past. Acceptance, at least for the time being, softened some of the severe blows dealt by the apartheid system. One participant said that his life changed with acceptance: "...I had to accept myself as a black person, but at the same time accept that a white person is [an] image created by God."

Some of the comments made during the interviews were: "but, I have to accept it, now it is the government that says it..." and "...we, it was hard to live that time, but we accepted it that time." When this participant was asked about the things that he thought helped other people to survive he replied: "They had a hard life, but I think they accepted it. Like I accepted it..."

From the above-mentioned quotes it is evident that this participant resigned to his fate, got clarity about the situation and, although his spirit was broken, he still had faith. Another participant illustrated that acceptance was the result of deprivation, ignorance, and fear: "You see we were dumb...It is the law, we can't do anything..." and "We were afraid."

It seems that acceptance was used as a survival strategy by more rural people, the poor and the uneducated. The reason for this assumption is because of the fact that during the interviews it was the less educated participants who showed acceptance of all the hardship of the past and less bitterness and resentment. These people accepted their fate under the apartheid government with the help of their religion.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Primary and secondary themes emerged from the results. The prevalent themes concerning the factors that helped black people survive the apartheid era, indicate coherence within families and communities. This coherence relates to themes such as support, education and respect. Close-knit extended family support runs like a golden thread throughout the interviews conducted. However, themes of continued resentment and even hatred, occur in tandem with the previously mentioned themes. These secondary themes illustrate that there is still much bitterness, resentment and misery about the hardships of the past. This seems to indicate that all the emotions evoked through these difficult times, have not yet been dealt with and that a need still exists to work through the emotional residues of this era in South Africa.

The researcher's experience in the conduct of the interviews was that sometimes it was difficult to assist the participants to concentrate on the question at hand, because of the emotions that were evoked by the discussions. In hindsight, more leeway might have been allowed for interviewees to allow them to vent their feelings, instead of attempting to return to the actual question as soon as possible. Whilst conducting the interviews the researcher at times found it difficult to believe the atrocities that were committed and experienced repulsion and resentment. The researcher is of the opinion that, as a result of the intimate nature of the interviews, he has become more culturally aware than he would have become by studying published material concerning other cultures.

As indicated it is apparent that the themes are interrelated especially those of support, religion, role models, education and culture.

The researcher attempted to supply a 'thick description' of the participants' narratives in order to comply with Henning, van Rensburg and Smit's (2004) description of competence concerning qualitative research, namely "A competent qualitative researcher is distinguished by the expert analysis of the data and craftsmanship displayed in capturing the essence of the data in writing." (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:10). This was difficult, due to the restricted space of the article.

In conclusion, the observation can be made that, although the study sample consisted of an age-specific group of a black population, results cannot readily be

extrapolated to the Black population as a whole because different themes might have been gathered from rural communities. Only two of the participants were from rural communities, which may not be sufficiently representative.

A direct comparison of this study with results from other studies is limited since similar investigations have not yet been conducted. Future studies may be conducted bearing the above in mind. Another aspect that could be addressed in future studies, might be to consider aspects such as the specific religion and ethnic groups of participants – especially seen in the context that the latter was mentioned by one participant as posing a barrier for ethnic communities to overcome in post-apartheid South Africa.

It was surmised that the lives of many of the black adults who experienced the atrocities of the apartheid years might have been shaped by the dominant stories of hardship and that the alternative stories of survival did not play the important role in the shaping of their lives as it should have. It would also be of importance to determine whether the participants used in this study, experienced a sense of relief from their emotions surrounding the topics discussed i.e. were able to better integrate their stories of survival with their stories of suffering and also to determine whether these dominant narratives are now used to interpret further life experiences. Simply stated, did this telling of their alternative stories (of survival) have an influence on their thoughts, feelings and behaviour? Vermeulen's study (2006?), which is a follow-up of the present study, might address some of these questions.

A wide field of possibilities exists for research in the new dispensations in South Africa, and could help to bring to full fruition the ideal of a true democracy, the first glimmer of which can be detected in comments such as that of one participant, namely that their own children cannot comprehend the hardships of the past. This is mainly due to the fact that they grew up in an atmosphere that has largely been free from discrimination and also attend multicultural schools. This new climate is preparing the new generation for a better existence in this country.

The researcher believes (and trusts) that the manner in which this research was conducted, contributed to the integration of participants' dominant stories of suffering with their less prevalent or 'untold' stories of survival. The factors (themes) that contributed to their survival of the apartheid years and most probably prepared them to adapt to a new political dispensation in South Africa, is metaphorically described in the following words of one of the participants: "You learn from the past, what you

forget about the past is the pain, but you remain with the past so you don't make the same mistakes again...but the pain is like a scar, you know, with a scar there is no pain, but the scar reminds you that this thing happened."

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Appendix A

PARTICIPATE IN AN EXCITING RESEARCH PROJECT

All the information will be regarded as strictly confidential

RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE:

Untold stories of a group of black South Africans about the Apartheid Era

WHY THIS RESEARCH

To deal with issues of the past

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THIS STUDY

- 40 years of age or older
- To communicate in English or Mother-tongue or Afrikaans

RESEARCH AGENCY

Department of Psychology, North-West University (Potchestroom Campus)

RESEARCHERS

Mr Ernst van der Merwe
Prof Chris Venter
Mr Michael Temane

CONTACT DETAILS

E-mail: IPVEJVDM@puk.ac.za
Office phone: 018 2991743

ERNST VD MERWE 018 2991743

Appendix B

Untold stories of a group of black South Africans about the apartheid era

Biographic Particulars

{Would you please indicate your answer by marking it with an 'x' where appropriate}

1. Surname and First Names:.....
2. Date of Birth: .....
3. Age:.....
4. Gender:.....
5. Date of completing this questionnaire.....
6. Home Language:.....
7. Ethnical Background:.....
8. Denomination (church):.....

   .....
9. Country & Province of Birth:.....

   .....
10. Did you leave the country during the period of 1946 to 1994

    Yes = ☐ No = ☐

    If Yes, for how long did you live outside of South Africa?.....

    .....
11. Marital State

    Married: Yes = ☐ No = ☐

    Divorced: Yes = ☐ No = ☐

    Remarried: Yes = ☐ No = ☐

    Children: Yes = ☐ No = ☐

    Number of children:.....

    Age(s) of child(ren).....

    Gender:.....

12. Were you at all involved in the apartheid struggle in South Africa?

Yes = ☐ No = ☐

* If yes can you explain briefly:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. Contact Number:.....

14. Hobbies:.....

15. Highest Educational Qualification:.....

16. Occupation:.....

17. Have you ever been diagnosed with any psychiatric disorders (Mental illness)?

Yes = ☐ No = ☐

If yes, what was the diagnosis, by whom was it made and when?

.....

.....

.....

A. *My answers to these questions are a true reflection of my thoughts and feelings*

I think so = ☐ *I am not sure* = ☐ *I don't think so* = ☐

B. *I have responded to all of the statements? Yes* = ☐ *No* = ☐

C. *Have you entered your responses in the correct areas? Yes*= ☐ *No*= ☐

Own experience

18. Briefly explain what, according to you, helped you to survive the indifferences, hardships and injustice of the apartheid years in South Africa?