

# The sociology of everyday life peacebuilding.

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## Chapter 3

### South African Voices

#### Introduction

The qualitative part of the South African project was undertaken in two separate fieldwork visits to Cape Town in 2011-12 by Natascha Mueller-Hirth, the first under the auspices and guidance of Professor Clifford Shearing, then based at the University of Cape Town, the second under the very active guidance of Fr Michael Lapsley's Institute for the Healing of Memories in Cape Town. It was because we had good prior contacts with Shearing and Lapsley that we restricted our fieldwork to Cape Town and the Western Cape. The Western Cape is unique in terms of its demographic composition, with a larger percentage of the population being historically defined Coloured and White than in any other province. All interviews were conducted in a mixture of urban (Cape Town and Cape Flats townships) and semi-urban settings (Oudtshoorn, George, Mossel Bay), and in most cases at participants' homes. Eight participants were female, 19 historically defined Black, 18 historically defined Coloured and one historically defined White.

The fieldwork had two components. First, victims from the Cape area who had not participated in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) were interviewed about their victim experience and victim identity and about their understanding of compromise and its mediating factors. This part of the research mirrored the qualitative interviews with victims in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland. We carried out 38 such interviews. We discuss here the difference between TRC-recognised victims and other victims and how this is significant for our understanding post-apartheid victimhood. Non-TRC victims in South Africa have a particular absent-presence, and are the most neglected. Secondly, we

undertook 11 expert interviews with organisers from the Cape and Gauteng areas who served as staff on the TRC or had worked closely with it in their capacities as civil society organisers dealing with reconciliation, in which participants were asked to reflect on their ambitions and expectations for the TRC and their sense of the outcomes, limitations and constraints of truth recovery in post-conflict South Africa. It is necessary to begin however, with a brief history of the South African conflict as context to the voices of its victims that we try to capture in later sections.

### **The South African conflict**

South Africa became a democratic, non-racial state in 1994. The first democratic elections were preceded by fifty years of legislated racial domination known as apartheid (literally apart-ness), denying the majority of South Africans their fundamental rights and subjecting those opposed to the regime to violent repression (for a selection of general histories of South Africa from a variety of different perspectives see Adam, 1971; Adam and Giliomee, 1980; Ashforth, 1990; Brewer, 1986; Gerhart, 1978; Lipton, 1985; Posel, 1991). The apartheid project aimed for a total transformation of South African society, with race determining individuals' access to political rights, education, employment, health and all other life chance opportunities. In other words, most 'African', 'Asian' and 'Coloureds', to use the apartheid-era classification terms, were victims of the apartheid regime, with types of victimisation spanning severe physical, psychological, financial and social effects. (Where we use the generic term 'Black', we are referring here to all three population groups.)

The victory of the National Party in the 1948 general election that first introduced apartheid legislation in favour of Afrikaners is not, however, the appropriate starting point. Racial segregation was built into the colonialization of Southern Africa from the seventeenth

century, first by the white Dutch settlers, who became known as Afrikaners, and then by the British from the nineteenth century with the discovery of gold and diamonds. Ideologies of racial segregation informed colonial policy from the outset (see Dubow, 1989; Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross, 2010; Marais, 2001; Rich, 1984). The British and Afrikaners struggled for dominance over South Africa to the neglect of Black South Africans, and in 1910, after the Boer Wars, the Union of South Africa was formed of four provinces, two under the control of Afrikaners (Transvaal and the Orange Free State) and two under British rule (Natal and the Cape), with the South African National Party under Generals Botha and Smuts attempting to keep peace between the two (White) colonisers at the expense of the subjugation of Black, Asian and Coloured population groups in a form of internal colonialism. White capital (not only Afrikaners), particularly the mining houses, not only benefitted from apartheid but also extended it.

The South African National Party, later known as the South African Party and then the United Party, followed generally a pro-British, White-unity strategy. The more radical Boers split away under the leadership of General Hertzog, forming the National Party in 1914. The Afrikaans National Party championed Afrikaner interests, advocating separate development for the two White groups and independence from Britain. Afrikaners were largely uneducated and impoverished and the 'poor White' problem motivated much of the National Party's hostility to the British, and set Afrikaners up in fierce competition for access to scarce resources with the fledgling wealthier sections of the Asian and African populations (for a study of racial segregation policies in the interwar years see Dubow, 1989). Displaced Afrikaner farm labourers flooded to the towns after World War 1 and their economic and cultural capital required economic policies that solved the 'poor White'

problem and racial ideologies that reinforced a sense of their cultural superiority. Largely mobilized around the 'poor White' problem in the context of post-World War 1 austerity, the National Party obtained power in 1924 in coalition with the Labour Party. In 1925, Afrikaans, previously regarded as a low-level Dutch patois, replaced Dutch and joined with English to be the official languages of the Union, and public appointments, such as to the police, began to favour Afrikaners (on the Afrikanerization of the rank and file of the South African police in the inter-war years see Brewer, 1994a: 73ff).

Internal colonialism was pursued through harsh racial segregationist laws, including denial of voting rights to Black people and dramatic land appropriation. The Union parliament enacted the 1913 Natives' Land Act, which earmarked only eight per cent of South Africa's available land for Black occupancy; White people, who constituted 20 per cent of the population, held 90 per cent of the land. The 1913 Land Act and its revisions in 1936 would form a cornerstone of legalised racial discrimination throughout the subsequent apartheid era.

Racist legislation during the apartheid era was a continuation and extension of discriminatory and segregationist laws, forming a continuum that had commenced under Dutch and British rule and continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Speaking in 1925, General Hertzog, leader of the Afrikaans National Party, said that 'the time has arrived for a definite native policy. The European is fully determined that South Africa shall be governed by the white man, and the white man will not tolerate any attempt to deprive him of that task' (quoted in Ashforth, 1990: 69). Crude racism was legitimized by the mantra of 'civilising the natives', such that labour policies that protected Whites, particularly Afrikaners, were called 'civilized labour' policies, and segregation policies that

restricted the material, social and political development of the so-called 'non-Whites' were referred to as 'civilised worker' policies (see Brewer, 1994a: 106). Various Wages Acts privileged 'poor Whites' and labour laws introduced the 'colour bar', which provided for the employment of a minimum ratio of White workers. Job reservation was extended to the private sector in 1925. Social segregation was secured by the 1927 Immorality Act, which prohibited sexual relations between Africans and Whites, the 1923 Urban Areas Act that confined Africans to townships, the 1936 Land Act, that further restricted the amount of land mass reserved for Africans; and various limitations were imposed on Black voting rights and the rights to ownership and property of Black business people. These policies won Hertzog power again in the 1929 general election.

The effects of the great depression of the 1930s were cushioned in South Africa by its gold reserves, but Hertzog was required nonetheless to form a coalition with Smuts, and their two parties merged to form the United Party. This in effect absorbed the Afrikaner National Party's race policies as mainstream, although Smuts's liberal wing broke away to form the Dominion Party and hardline Afrikaners kept the Afrikaans National Party going under the leadership of Malan. It was Malan's hardline group that won the 1948 general election. In 1949, all factions within Afrikaner nationalism, which had broken into several smaller parties, combined on victory to form one united Afrikaans National Party. One of its first deeds was to pass the 1950 Population Act that allocated every person to a race classification, which became progressively sharper and fine-tuned as the decade developed.

There is much academic debate about the National Party's break with earlier racial segregation policies (for example, Lipton, 1985; Rich, 1989; Wolpe, 1988), but it is best to see apartheid as slowly evolving in ways that amounted later to a radical departure with the past. The first phase of apartheid, between 1948 and 1959, showed greater continuity. The

later phase, beginning with the 1959 Separate Development Acts, marks the significant disjuncture (on this periodization of apartheid see Posel, 1991). What changed in 1948 was an increase in the number of administrative regulations that controlled the boundaries between the races in primarily White areas, the enforcement of existing ones by the police with more rigour, so that the everyday lives of the Black population became more intrusively regulated and legally controlled, and the political and industrial unrest that often grew as a resistance provoked public disorder on an intensified scale, resulting in ever more violent and aggressive forms of public order policing (see Brewer, 1994a: 195-6).

The trend toward urbanization in the 1950s, as Blacks flooded to the townships in search of work, reinforced the cultural, political and legal policing of racial boundaries in primarily White areas, leaving the townships largely un-policed, unregulated and out of control, save in public order situations. The townships were considered merely as dormitories for workers, to be tolerated because of the need for Black labour but not enhanced or made inhabitable. Life in the townships was thus highly brutalized, with high levels of ordinary crime, dysfunctional family lives, bad housing, considerable poverty and inadequate infrastructures to cope with the needs of the burgeoning number of residents, all while regulation of residents' entry into White areas was intensive through 'Pass Laws' that controlled population flows and determined areas where racial groups were permitted to live. There were high levels of inward-focused physical violence, as the townships became violent and murderous under gang crime (see Brewer, 1994a: 201ff), especially amongst unemployed youths known as *tsotsis* (gangsters) (on youth crime see Brewer, 1994b: 56), which the liberal South African Institute of Race Relations described as pursuing a reign of terror in the townships (quoted in Brewer, 1994b: 58), and very high levels of structural

violence, where residents experienced significant economic inequality, social injustice, dislocation, human rights abuses, unemployment and poverty.

As Posel (1991: 91-115) notes, the new government quickly promulgated laws that restricted further African urbanization, narrowing the categories who had urban residential rights and increasing police powers. The 1950 Group Areas Act restricted Africans living in 'White' areas to segregated areas, prohibited squatting and permitting the demolition of many long-established shanty towns in White areas. Africans without rights to be in White areas were deported back to the reserves in the rural areas, often splitting up families whose members had different levels of rights to be in urban areas. The migrant labour system, that allowed men to temporarily move to work in the mines, further disrupted normal family life, often leading to high levels of alcohol abuse and violent crime amongst the miners, and to many abandoned families and various forms of promiscuity (on migrancy and sexuality see Moodie, 1988).

It is also fair to say that the maltreatment, humiliation and rough-handling of Black people of former years escalated into systematic brutality. Instances of gratuitous violence by White people, farmers, police and security forces were commonplace, extending to sexual attacks on Black women and rape of under-age girls, although dismissals from police, for example, fell in the 1950s (see Brewer, 1994a: 217ff), which suggests that a culture of impunity marked race relations under the first phase of apartheid. Residents in the African townships were thus caught between the *tsotsis* and the police. Thugs raised the level of fear of ordinary crime in the townships while the police enforced race laws that gave them impunity to harass and brutalise. This impunity, however, was bolstered by strict legislation that gave the state enormous public order powers, sufficient to prevent prosecution of criminal misconduct by the police and to repress all Black political resistance and opposition



(for histories of Black resistance see Brewer, 1986; Davis, 1987; Gerhart, 1978; Johns and Davis, 1991; Lodge, 1983).

The second stage of apartheid is marked by the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, from which Black political opposition declined and went underground in exile, and, in the same year, by the country declaring itself a Republic. Apartheid transformed its nomenclature into 'Separate Development', which radically transformed everyday life for Africans, but which reinforced their status as third class citizens. Eight self-governing homelands or Bantustans were created, with boundaries based on the old 'native reserves', which became 'nations' in name with parliaments where Africans had voting rights. The land mass covered by this policy was more or less the same as in the first phase, about 13 per cent. Economic decentralization was supposed to occur to make these 'nations' economically viable and to stymie the influx of migrants to White areas. Representative councils were set up for Asians and Coloureds. The first African homeland to become 'independent' was Transkei in 1976.

Separate Development meant that overnight Africans lost residency rights in the townships, although those near to the borders of the 'reserves' had boundaries manipulated to exclude them from 'White' South Africa; residents in townships where this could not apply were forcibly removed. Policies of separate development had been presaged in legislation in the late 1950s (see Brewer, 1994a: 223-4) but the powers to legislate for such massive population relocation were enshrined in 1959. The homelands in effect became dumping grounds for the surplus labour of 'White' South Africa and for 'non-productive' Africans, such as the elderly, unfit, widows and children (Posel, 1991: 234). However, they 'bottled up' migrants stuck in the rural areas and did nothing to curb the need to work in 'White' urban centres (for Kwa-Zulu, see Taylor and Shaw, 1994: 41). Economic decentralization was ineffective, the South African government kept control over

key decisions and resources, educational provision in the homelands was inadequate, and the pull of informal work in 'White' areas meant that the homelands facilitated a form of political separation but not economic separation. Social engineering on this scale did nothing to make the homelands economically viable, adding to the economic impoverishment and material inequality of their citizens. Work by Taylor and Shaw (1994: 43-4), shows that with respect to Kwa-Zulu, residents in the rural reserves were economically worse off than even the informal shack dwellers in the shanty towns, let alone the settled residents with rights to work and live temporarily in 'White' areas. They estimated that 70 per cent of the African population in the Kwa-Zulu townships surrounding Pietermaritzburg lived in mud huts without electricity or water (1994: 43). Policing of the notorious pass laws that regulated African urbanisation thus intensified with Bantustanisation and became even more brutal and violent.

The shooting dead of Hector Peterson in the back as he and his school pals fled the police on the morning on 16 June 1976 in Soweto was thus typical crowd control tactics by the police force confident in its impunity. What was different on that morning was that the school children were taking part in a 20,000-strong mass protest throughout Transvaal's African townships against the recently imposed policy of being taught in school through the medium of Afrikaans; and the killing of another 175 children on that day sparked a conflagration that spread throughout the country, giving the incident the sobriquet 'the Soweto uprising' (on which see Brewer, 1986). African youth made the transformation from *tsotsis* to 'young warriors' (on which see Marks, 2001). The long period of quiescence in Black protest following Sharpeville in 1960 came to an end on that day in Soweto; and it was not to stop until White minority rule collapsed with the electoral victory of the ANC in 1994, such was the ricochet of that single bullet.

The township protests of the 1980s were very violent (on Black politics in the 1980s see Lodge and Nasson, 1991), the exiled external movement at last linked up with the growing organisational sophistication of internal Black opposition movements (on which see Houston, 1999), international sanctions weakened the South African economy and diplomatically isolated the country, and the state's policy of combining repression and reform merely made the situation worse, by heightening Black suffering and girding their resilience for the ultimate victory. The focus of opposition shifted from exiled movement to a mass movement supported by civics bodies and the student movement, centred around what in the 1980s became known as the United Democratic Front. These protests led to a state of emergency. Olivier (1994: 15-16) cites official statistics that show close to 90,000 incidents of civil unrest between 1984 and 1992, with over 8,500 deaths. Twice as many people died in the transition period between 1990-94 than did so under the entire apartheid era.

The unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela in 1990 spurred considerable violence as various factions vied for position as the new non-racial constitution was being negotiated. Violence changed its character. It was no longer between the White minority state and the disenfranchised Black majority; it took place principally amongst the disenfranchised and the poor as intra-civilian attacks. Describing this as Black-on-Black violence, however, is only partly correct, for while the Zulu Inkatha movement of Chief Buthelezi (on which see Brewer, 1988; Mare and Hamilton, 1987; Mzala, 1988), based in one of the homelands, and the ANC, led murderous campaigns against one another, the Afrikaner right-wing had active paramilitary groups and the state continued to deploy murder squads organised by the security forces under Eugene de Kock's notorious C10 unit in the hope of influencing the political outcome of the violence in favour of the state (on de

Kock see Gobodo-Madizikela, 2003). It was not inter-ethnic fighting but contestation over political control of post-apartheid South Africa.

The fighting was intense all the same (on the violence in this period see Manganyi and du Toit, 1990). Between 1990 and 1992 there were over fifty massacres with an average of 25 deaths per incident (Olivier, 1994: 16), illustrating the mass scale of the killings. Even if there was no ethnic motive behind the violence, the victims, however, were always Black. The suggestion that South Africa's subsequent democratisation was bloodless thus borders on blindness to Black South Africans. Caught between structural violence, in the form of systematic and fundamental disadvantage, and the intense direct physical violence of the unrest, Black South Africans experienced the constitutional interregnum with a combination of hope and fear. There was realisation that South Africa was in transition, but to what amidst all the violence was not yet clear (on the South African peace process in retrospect see Brewer, 2003a; Weiss, 2000). A sense of crisis dominated.

As it was, the first open election in South Africa's history in April 1994 successfully 'launched democracy', to use the title of Johnson and Schlemmer's analysis of the election results (1996). The collapse of apartheid was rooted in its own internal contradictions (the following analysis is taken from Brewer, 2003a: 112ff). The average annual population growth always exceeded the growth in Gross Domestic Product (and did so until 1999-2000), putting great strain on an under-performing economy to meet the social and political demands of its ever-growing population. The South African economy became less and less able to afford apartheid. To protect White resources under this tension meant greater and greater restriction of Black access to scarce resources. The inadequate provision of housing, schooling, roads, sewage, and hospitals in the townships caused social problems with huge political impact. On all measures of deprivation, Black suffering was intense. Even in 1998,

71 per cent of Africans did not have running water in the home; infant mortality rates were very high at 79 per 1000 live births in 2002 (compared to 7 in the UK). Life expectancy was 47 for African males in 2000, 49 for African females (compared to 75 and 80 respectively in the UK).

White minority rule, however, could not sustain itself without Black labour in the factories, in the police and security forces, and in the offices; a Black middle class was co-opted in order to make White minority rule work. Apartheid was therefore subjected to strain between a racial ideology that dictated separation and a modern economy that needed its Black citizens; and required well-educated ones. Black youngsters received a standard of education that no longer made them willing to accept manual labour or to be prepared to accept servility; nor who were willing to subsist in the rural homelands until jobs became available in the urban areas. The push by young educated Black people to participation in the benefits of a modern economy accelerated the trend toward informal and illegal urbanization. Group Areas collapsed because they were unsustainable under the pressure of demand for skilled and educated Black labour. The South African economy had always needed unskilled Black labour which Group Areas successfully managed by physical force; Group Areas collapsed when Whites could no longer run the state without well-educated and skilled middle class Black labour, whose everyday life could not be brutalised, regulated and controlled with the same racial legislation that in the past kept unskilled Black people literally 'in their place'.

Most wealthy Whites, including middle class Afrikaners, came to realise that their capacity to continue to enjoy economic privilege required a political response, leading to new fissures within formerly hegemonic ethnic blocs. This left a residue of poor Whites to oppose the peace process, but their intersectional location within the class dynamics of

White privilege was marginal, restricted to right wing Afrikaners who wanted a return to the Boer Republics, poor White immigrants from the former Portuguese colonies who were most in competition with middle class Black people, and unreconstructed racists in the rural hinterlands eager for a White homeland. Supporters of the peace process amongst Whites – big business, liberal and progressive politicians, wealthy middle class Whites – had class interests that meant their priority was to retain a prosperous South African economy. So too did the ANC. They wanted to inherit a viable economy and their willingness to support free enterprise in a market economy won them an alliance with pro-peace White class interests. Fiscal and monetary rectitude and free market rhetoric reassured middle class Whites and big business, who became supporters of a deal with the ANC, willing to give up control of the political system in order to maintain privilege within the economy. White minority rule was abandoned to protect White economic privilege.

It is racial and class dynamics such as these that explains why South Africa's peace process represents the classic colonial model. In this type of peace process, minority rule is abolished by effective regime change at the top, over-turning the race, ethnicity, religion or nationality of those in political power, while control of the economy continues to reside with the former colonial masters but in alliance with those from the majority group they have co-opted into positions of economic prosperity, realising little changes for the bulk of the population at the bottom who remain as poor as before. The majority are given the vote but not the economic power to transform patterns of socio-economic redistribution to their benefit.

Post-apartheid South Africa thus has its own tensions over social transformation and the failure of most Black people to experience any socio-economic improvement has led to accusations that they are subject still to 'economic apartheid'. The popularity of the

rhetoric of 'economic apartheid' amongst the poor reflects two realities: that their everyday circumstances remain impoverished; and that class is beginning to replace race as the main social cleavage in post-apartheid South Africa.

The very scale of apartheid's inequalities slows down the ANC government's capacity to meet Black expectations for social transformation and huge inequalities remain between racial groups, keeping the majority of Black citizens in poverty and impoverishment, intensifying political disillusion with the ANC, and fomenting xenophobic attacks on migrants from other Southern African countries flocking to South Africa for work (on which see Adam and Moodley, 2013; Landau, 2012). The prevalence of xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa is particularly surprising given the history of oppression by perpetrators. The most visible incident of widespread violence occurred when, in May and June 2008, 100,000 migrants from other African states were forced to flee their homes in urban areas and townships across South Africa and 60 people were murdered. In a 2006 survey, 84 per cent of all South Africans said there are too many foreigners (Landau, 2012) and xenophobia remains rife. It is in the disjuncture between political entitlement and the lack of economic transformation that 'outsiders have come to be understood as a threatening obstacle to achieving justice and retribution for decades of discrimination and indignity' (Landau, 2012: 3).

The end of apartheid is also characterised by the resurgence of coloured identity, which during apartheid was marked by its intermediate status and aspirations of assimilation into White society. 'After apartheid, a racialised conception of colouredness has grown stronger, with renewed affinities to whiteness and deepened racism towards African people' (Seekings, 2008: 6). Racialised social distance barriers persist, as witnessed by the fact that the majority of South Africans do not socialize with individuals from other race

groups in private settings: only about one-fifth does so 'often' (Lefko-Everett *et al.*, 2011).

Inter-racial contact is still limited. Taking the example of inter-racial marriages, people consistently display more positive reactions to marriages amongst their own racial group than cross-racially (Seekings, 2008). There has been little racial integration in residential areas and, whilst schools can provide a site for interaction between historically defined race groups, this is only the case for middle-class children (particularly in urban and peri-urban areas). The latter reflects the fact that racial integration amongst the population at large mainly occurs amongst middle-class working professionals.

This is evidence of the way class is beginning to replace race as the central line of fissure in post-apartheid South Africa. Seekings summarises from a range of studies that 'racial discrimination in economic life (...) against black people has been largely ended' (2008: 2), or, where it persists, it is mostly offset by the effects of Black Economic Empowerment policies; racial inequalities reflect class stratification rather than racial discrimination. However, this conclusion can be sharply contrasted with the everyday experiences of racial discrimination reported by unskilled Black people, particularly when they lived in rural areas. Race still matters given that the vast majority of the poor happen to be part of historically-defined African or coloured communities. Race and class significantly overlap; as one respondent said, '*the White people they don't embrace Black people. People are still racist*' (P34).

To some first generation Black victims therefore who lived through it, the liberation dream has become a nightmare, and they are still exposed to significant levels of structural violence. Theirs is not a hope denied, for they have Black majority rule; it is a hope delayed, because they have yet to see much transformation in their socio-economic position.



It is in this context of a hope delayed that we conducted our interviews with victims in 2011-12, and its affects the content of the 'voices' we captured. We predominantly interviewed first generation Black victims (only one White victim), and respondents were of two kinds. The first were activists, largely ANC, some of whom had served time in prison for what was then illegal membership of the organisation, and who were heavily involved in post-apartheid civil engagements, including as organisers of the TRC and local political representatives. They were at the receiving end of the disillusion toward the ANC and were experiencing some of its frustrations themselves. We interviewed 11 of these. The other kind of respondent were ordinary men and women who had suffered the sorts of vagaries of apartheid described above. They were experiencing the problem of disappointed expectations; aware of the scale of the transformation that South Africa had undergone but which they had not fully seen in their own changed lives. We interviewed 38 of this type of victim. We interviewed no second or third generation victim, amongst whom anger and disappointment is severe.

### **Who is the victim?**

South Africa's conflict appears to leave no legacy of moral ambiguity around the definition of victim. Racism has no moral justification. Resisting it was morally permissible. The moral problems it leaves are for White citizens, not Black ones, none of whom we interviewed. The contestation over the distinction between victim and perpetrator from the Black victim perspective is thus meaningless (but very real, of course, for White, especially those in the security forces). As Mamdani (1996) has famously argued, it is the relationship between beneficiaries and victims that is the key to the injustice of apartheid, not that between perpetrators and victims.

What complicates this generous portrayal, however, is the extent of intra-civilian violence in the last decades of the apartheid in the 1980s and 1990s, when positioning in the Black political landscape was often accompanied by extreme violence. Intra-civilian conflicts blur the distinction between victim and perpetrator from the Black perspective, giving the same problems surrounding what we call 'multiple victimhood' as in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka. To highlight the shifting boundaries of the victim-perpetrator distinction, which we capture in our notion of multiple victimhood and which render the victim-perpetrator binary as useless, a TRC researcher recounted the following case that came before the TRC.

*'First he was a victim, because his sister got shot dead, this all happened in the space of about 2 hours. His sister was shot dead at about five in the afternoon which rendered him a victim. A crowd of locals then went to the house immediately of the policeman, and they got hold of the uncle of the policeman who shot. And this guy was part of dragging him out, and they set him on fire and burnt him alive. So now he is a perpetrator, one hour later. Within an hour the police had swept through the township, had gathered up lots of people, including him, and they were all severely tortured at the police station – back to being a victim' (Anonymous, interview 7 March 2011).*

The TRC, however, resolved much of the political contestation over the victim label by being able to impose its definition of victim, which had wide legitimacy but was not without its own problems. The TRC began work in 1996 with a very wide remit: it set out to investigate any gross violations of human rights between 1960 and 1994 (the period from the Sharpeville massacre to Mandela's inauguration). Gross human rights violations were defined as 'the violation of human rights through the killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment of any person emanating from the conflicts of the past and carried out or planned by any person acting with a political motive' (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, 1998: Vol. 5: 10). Thus, it excluded from its mandate victims of structural, everyday

violence in apartheid, such as forced removal, unequal education, discrimination and so on. Fullard (2004), for example, criticises the TRC's mandate because of this. She contends that its scope left out victimhood that resulted from racially defined poverty, constituting a 'victim historically abstracted from power relations' (2004: 9). Thus, paradoxically, by the TRC focusing on political violence, issues of race, class and gender were masked as categories of victim, even though these categories are key to understanding the apartheid system and the structural violence it inflicted.

There is another problem with the TRC's definition. In practice it imposed its own sense of 'innocence' on victims, wanting to ensure that there was no moral ambiguity by its victims testifying to having also been perpetrators. While the South African transitional justice experience has arguably drawn attention to the messiness of the victim-perpetrator category in post-conflict societies, the idea of the 'innocent victim' remained dominant in the TRC process, according to many involved in it. The TRC researcher quoted above added: *'you couldn't be a victim and be engaged in protest. So you wouldn't ever have someone testify and say, I was shot while I was throwing a stone at the police. I was shot while walking to the shop'* (Anonymous, interview 7 March 2011). The TRC had a sense, therefore, of the 'ideal victim', which underplayed the problematic nature of multiple victimhood under apartheid and which renders victim narratives more complicated than the TRC suggests (this idea is taken further in Bouris, 2007). For example, given that the 'innocent victim' narrative was one of the dominant scripts underlying testifying at the TRC, it de-contextualized victims' experiences from the violence that occurred in their community. Women were encouraged to testify about the loss of husbands, fathers or sons, for instance, but not to tell their own stories and portray their roles as activists and freedom fighters. Similar issues were raised by other TRC staff, noting, for example, that a mother

could never testify that her son was part of the military wing of the ANC. Examples such as these serve to highlight the imposition of an understanding of victimhood from within international human rights law that are unsuitable to understanding victimhood within liberation struggles that by their nature create multiple victimhood.

The work done on Black victims to date has overwhelmingly focused on individuals that were witnesses in the TRC process (see, for example: Allan *et al.*, 2006; Byrne, 2004; Hamber, Nageng, and O'Malley, 2000; Phakati and Van der Merwe, 2008; Stein *et al.*, 2008). This is seriously limiting for it reflects the definitions and discourses of victimhood shaped by the weaknesses of the TRC's approach. The individuals interviewed for our research could be characterised as victims in terms of the TCR definition – and as such would have qualified for compensation – but for the most part did not participate in the TRC. There are many victims who would have qualified for the TRC but chose not to come forward, or were unable to do so. In an interview with Marjory Dobson, for example, from Khulumani, the largest remaining victim support organisation in South Africa, she said that only 10 per cent of its 50,000 members had access to the TRC and were therefore eligible to receive the reparations payment (interview 7 March 2011). The fact that the TRC operated a closed-list approach with a strict deadline means that, even years after the end of the Commission, there are tensions in the victim community between those that were officially recognised victims and those who met the criteria but at the time did not come forward.

Our study highlights a variety of reasons for victims not to have come forward as witnesses to the TRC, chiefly – especially in the case of activists and ex-combatants – a refusal to admit to militancy at the time. Others said they were not aware of the process or submitted an application to speak too late. This was mainly to do with not seeing themselves as a victim. However, some also refused to submit because of seeing the

transitional justice process as unjust, an *'easy way [out] for the perpetrator'* (P24), or because of not wanting to be seen as desiring compensation, something they later came to regret. *'We did not do it for any compensation at that stage, our involvement in the struggle. We were saying, this was our sacrifice, we are free today, other people can speak, but we will not speak. But I think that was one of our mistakes.'* (P26). This sense of regret highlights the problem if truth recovery comes too early in a peace process, as South Africa's TRC did, for whatever the reasons were for non-participation, years later they can come to regret it. As one activist puts it: *'In retrospect, if the TRC was happening today, I would go. I think it is important to tell our stories. I think, seriously, it is important, and I would advise some other comrades as well: let us go and tell our stories'* (P35). Many accounts echo this sentiment: *'Definitely [I would submit to the TRC]. I think if it ever comes back, we are prepared to do that. Because many of them did not hear our stories'* (P26).

The voices of our Black victims that did not get to testify to the TRC speaks to a need for greater acknowledgement of these victims' particular stories, and, importantly, emphasizes the insufficiencies of official memorialization in South Africa despite its wider acclaim. Indeed, victims' own initiatives of commemoration that are informal, unfunded and community-based are increasingly springing up in locations across the Southern Cape, reflecting the voicelessness these non-TRC victims feel. One of the main contributions of this chapter is thus to isolate the specific victimhood experiences of non-TRC victims and to give them a voice, for they experience an 'absent-presence' of a different kind.

### **Victims and victim identity**

Of the individuals interviewed, just over a third would describe themselves as victim; about the same amount preferred to use a term like 'survivor', the rest did not want to

appropriate either status. This is despite clearly recognising and identifying their victimisation and the nature of their harm. For example, participants might show us their prosthetic leg, the limb lost after being shot by the police, or describe in detail the torture they were exposed to during political imprisonment; but when asked whether they would describe themselves as victims, almost two-thirds said no. Respondents cited a number of reasons why they rejected the label of victim. These included: the wish to ascribe themselves a more active role under the view that victim status meant passivity; associating victim status with an unforgiving attitude which they rejected; or comparing themselves to other victims and judging the degree of their victimisation as less. Other terms frequently used to describe their identity were 'freedom fighter', 'victor', 'activist' or 'activist-survivor'. It seemed to us that even for those who used the term victim, it signified the first step in a progression of their identity from victim to activist to victor.

The terminology of 'victor' is worth unpacking for a moment. One respondent described the progression from victim to victor as follows:

*'A journey [...] from being an object of history to becoming a subject of history once more. [...]. I have long felt that people if they have physically survived they are survivors, but that is almost passive – 'I survived' – and people can still remain trapped in moments of history even though they have physically survived. So that is why I conceptualised the idea of being victorious' (P11).*

This terminology was employed particularly by those who felt they had an active role in helping overcoming apartheid oppression. *'I actually saw myself as a victor, in the whole sense. As a conqueror. With my little efforts, and with what I have done, with my small contribution, we were able to overcome the system of apartheid' (P7).* Others used the word victim to describe their socio-economic circumstances today rather than any victimhood experience in the past. As participant put it:

*'I was a freedom fighter, I was an activist. I think the victim.... I was a victim, then I was an activist. I mean, I am still a victim, in this context, in [name of place deleted]. Even today I am harassed by the system here. You know at this point, we don't receive work here in [name of place deleted]. You know I am unemployed.'* (P26)

One of the most counter-intuitive features of our data was that some interviewees refused to employ the terms victim or victimhood despite clear evidence of conflict-related harm. Of course, even after the end of the TRC, the term victim continues to be adopted strategically by some in relation to resource claims. On the whole however, because of the passage of time since the transition, it is not necessarily advantageous for people to identify as victims. South Africa evinces a steady marginalisation of victim issues as time goes on. This is in part linked to disillusion with the TRC as a process of truth recovery and as a mechanism for receipt of reparations. Our non-TRC victims complained of late and seemingly begrudging payment of reparations by the democratically elected ANC government but also referred to the unwillingness to prosecute perpetrators who had not been granted amnesty for political crimes. Notably, the idea of a wealth tax resurfaced in the public domain during fieldwork when, in August 2011, Archbishop Tutu called once again for a welfare fund to be established by White South Africans who had benefited from apartheid. These senses of injustice amongst non-TRC victims, coupled with ambivalence towards the TRC, impacted on how they defined justice and their own senses of victimhood.

There are other cultural reasons that make use of the label victim problematic to some who clearly are victims. One often hears it said, especially amongst political and social elites and in the media, that it has long been time for victims to move on, and that the conversation about reconciliation (and therefore also about reparations) is over. For example, South Africa's president Jacob Zuma went on record in 2010 for saying that apartheid could no longer be blamed for the problems the country was facing in relation to

poverty, inequality and lack of service delivery. Many commentators in the public sphere read this as a long-overdue acknowledgement of responsibility for service delivery failure by the ANC. However, for many research participants, Zuma's statement conveyed yet another attempt by government to marginalise their concerns, which feels that by now victims should have moved on. Post-conflict South Africa can be characterised by clashing temporalities in the sense that experiences of past victimisation are still fresh for many and impact on their lives in a range of ways, but mainstream society emphasises the need to look forward and move on, with apartheid victimhood no longer seen as relevant to the challenges of post-apartheid South Africa (see Mueller-Hirth, 2017). This broader context almost delegitimises the victim category and further helps explain by some respondents refused to use the term.

It is for this reason that support structures for apartheid era victims are now declining despite evidence of clear traumatisation by the past. In interview with one of the organisers of a support group, the problems victims face was clear. *'We see a number of political activists very disillusioned by the status quo and at the same time we see people who are now in power who were political activists, saying in response to these people: but it is because you haven't been able to move on. It's because you are so stuck in the 80s'* (Interview with Valdi van Reenen-Le Roux, 14 March 2011). The few remaining organisations that provide services to apartheid-era victims or explicitly frame their work in terms of reconciliation find it difficult to obtain funding. The victim support organisations that are still active no longer work with the government on a range of victim-centred issues but have become largely adversarial, challenging new government policy on victim issues. The Khulumani Support Group is now one of the only remaining groups representing the interests and demands of apartheid-era victims, struggling to keep victim issues in the



spotlight and to attract funding for victim-focused activities and projects (Interview with Marjory Dobson, 7 March 2011). Many victims feel post-apartheid society had moved beyond them and left them behind.

Some in our sample clearly decided to move with the times and rejected the nomenclature of victim and victimhood; even that of survivor. Others, however, imposed their own hierarchy of sacrifice, which they felt obligated recognition and acknowledgement by wider society. This is not a case of outsider politicisation of victim issues by those imposing a hierarchy of victimhood that favoured their own group; some victims imposed an insider's hierarchy in order to receive their due deserts. What we choose to term 'hierarchies of sacrifice' describes the perceived divisions that were imposed by some victims, shaping how they understood their own victimhood. For example, an ex-combatant asked '*how can you compare me with a civilian*' (P1), saying that no one adequately recognised the sacrifices they had made. As other victims said:

*'We applied to government for the pension fund, and it is not because of the money only, but also for some recognition and that people can understand, it was not the people outside of our border. We approached the people of MK, the soldiers, the people who fought with the weapons, we respect them and for them to apply for compensation. But we will say it was not them alone who freed us here. It was not only the MK and all the soldiers inside and outside the country who liberated us. We are saying it was the activists who played a more... an important role in terms of the freedom of all of us. Because I believe it is because of the sacrifices of all of these young men and women who sacrificed their time and their life sometimes.'* (P26)

*'I feel that all the efforts that we have put in, although we didn't do it for our own benefit, we did it for our people, especially for our kids, we always thought of the generation that would come, we have to fight for them. But now it feels that our part that we had in it, there is no acknowledgement by government.'* (P14)

This is not a case of politicians ambivalent about a peace process demanding recognition for a sub-set of preferred victims; it is a case of victims who feel neglected

imposing a hierarchy in order to pursue their own campaign for recognition. This is not, however, a campaign based on levels of suffering, which is what outsider hierarchies tend to focus on; it is a hierarchy of sacrifice by insiders based on the contribution some victims feel they made and which is unheeded. These sorts of respondent pointed out that recognition is far more important to them than material benefits. *'I think it is just recognition that you have been a part of this thing, and that you have done something towards this'* (P35). Some ordinary victims from what in the past was called the Coloured community felt their failure to be recognised had racial overtones: *'the Coloured people also fought, we also got hurt. I was very young, I was young when I went into the struggle'* (P10). Others felt that ordinary victims in rural areas were being overlooked for their sacrifice: *'In the cities it's fine, there is no actual recognition, for those people in the rural areas'* (P25). Insider hierarchies of suffering, in other words, are used by ordinary victims themselves to differentiate victims according to the level of recognition they are accorded.

Paradoxically, this failure to recognise the sacrifice of ordinary victims was felt by some of their number to be explained because of the priority given to ex-combatants and perpetrators in the process of amnesty, leading to unfairness of treatment. One TRC committee member, who is now active in socio-economic development, made this point very succinctly:

*'I think precisely because the issue of amnesty and perpetrators were so central in the thinking of the political leadership, they never really followed through consistently on the issues of victims and the issues of reparations [for victims]. If they had followed through consistently I think the anger would have been tempered around perpetrators. But precisely because their agenda in the first place was not really about victims but about perpetrators, there is the bitterness and the anger'* (Interview with Russell Ally, 8 March 2011).

Ex-combatants themselves, who have already benefited from pensions and other reparations, or seen their careers progress in post-conflict society, demur from the idea that they are privileged or receive special acclaim, or deserve such. *'As a member of the African National Congress, we didn't join the organisation for accolades or for recognition. We joined the organisation specifically to change the country, and to better the lives of the people that were disadvantaged'* (P3).

Much of the above discussion illustrates the broad range of reasons why most respondents disliked the terminology of victim and victimhood despite all of them having experienced conflict-related harm. Their alternative nomenclature – ex-combatant, victor, survivor, and activist – are nonetheless conflict-related and show the impact of apartheid on their lives. It is to the nature of some of these impacts that we now turn.

### **Victims' Emotional Landscape**

A significant feature of our research was on victim's everyday lives, including their behaviour, actions and emotions. In this section, we discuss their emotional landscape, beginning with their own idea of compromise. In the South African context, there are several caveats to note from the outset. The vast majority of interviews were conducted with native Bantu speakers (using a translator), and compromise is not a readily available word in isiXhosa or isiZulu. Respondents most frequently linked their notions of compromise with political rather than inter-personal practices. The following extract exemplifies many respondents' understanding of the compromise settlement within the context of what we call 'hope delayed':

*'We were [...] disappointed with the kind of deal that was struck, with the sunset clause giving the oppressors opportunities and rights to continue beyond our liberation to still be in charge of the economy, to still be in charge of land rights and*

*so on. So it was a major compromise right from the outset. So we had a compromised victory, and an agreement, and the peace accord was that central document in 1991/92, that determined those particular kinds of processes and how we were going to be liberated, and form part of this democracy' (P6).*

Though characterised as 'sell out' by a small number, compromise was also identified by a far greater number as '*reaching a political solution in the interest of the greater good*' (P7), and as such was necessary at the time, although disappointed expectations about social transformation now cloud the view of some: '*I think in the beginning it was a good compromise. Because we did not know, we did not understand, because we fought for the freedom of our country, and to vote and to be free, and to use all the facilities of our country. And I think we actually in terms of that particular fight, we won that particular fight, but in terms of economic freedom, we did not receive that*' (P26). This sense of compromise as a necessary bargain was expressed in many of the interviews: '*Compromise was necessary, because what alternatives were there? We could have an armed struggle, we could have had a civil war. There are many examples in the world where people fight until there is no infrastructure left. So much damage done that you can't rebuild. So we were in a situation, objectively, where the compromise was the only option*' (P21). Thus, the individual and interpersonal process of practising tolerance is conditioned by the larger political and socio-economic context in South Africa and shaped by remaining socio-economic inequalities.

But if not best suited to definition, the practice of compromise resonated with a large number of participants, who were able to recognise the importance of practising tolerance towards their former enemies. The sentiment of tolerance and of mutual dependence between former enemies is arguably an integral part of the world view of many Southern African cultures. Often described as an indigenous African philosophy, *Ubuntu* (meaning

human kindness) has become strongly associated with a restorative justice approach, popularised by Tutu's definition of humanity's essential interconnectedness. Indeed, as a complex ethical code and value system, *Ubuntu* predates White settlement of Sub-Saharan Africa and is centred around the core values of respect, compassion, human dignity, sharing, universal brotherhood, communalism, interdependence, and hospitality (see Mapadimeng, 2007 for a review of literature on *Ubuntu*). What is interesting is that its practice survived the centuries of White repression in South Africa and was available as a resource to undergird and support the public practice of tolerance and reconciliation. Respondents thus did not connect the practice of reconciliation with disembodied transitional justice mechanisms but as an individual and interpersonal framework for conducting human interaction in everyday life. This highlights the way in which tolerance and reconciliation are invested with context-specific meanings in different locales and helps to explain why in the context of post-apartheid South Africa the term reconciliation was frequently used by virtually all participants.

There was a sense in which compromise, tolerance and reconciliation were 'expected', part of the patriotic, nation building behaviour in the light of the peace. This was about victims displaying 'leadership' through their willingness to be tolerant and reconciliatory. The following extract emphasises this association between the transition-era leadership and the performance of tolerance and reconciliation: *'The issue of tolerance towards those who violated us is a true fact, because in public it is expected from us to project the idea of a good patriot that needs to walk in the footsteps of Mandela, the great reconciler and for the sake of nation building'* (P2). The leadership model of the ANC and the healing discourse of the TRC undoubtedly helped contribute to victims' sense that society expected them to show tolerance in public. *'At times you have to display tolerance*

*and exercise control even towards previous oppressors. And that is coupled with assessing the situation beforehand and in the present, particularly your behaviour and utterances in public space'* (P6). The 'hope delayed' problem for the working class, however, meant that some were critical of the ANC, even though they still saw the necessity of practising tolerance in public.

*'I am as a public figure as ex-mayor and community leader responsible to agree to the concept of South Africa as a rainbow nation and to be an embodiment of a united non-racial South Africa. But amongst my close comrades I am the first person to criticise the fact that the liberation movement has sold us out. By creating this new black capitalist and elitist state where the gap between the rich and poor are everyday growing wider and the haves get more and the have-nots get less.'* (P2)

Apartheid had another legacy for some. The maintenance of shared public spaces as a counter to the rigid segregation of public space under apartheid was recognised by many victims as essential to the functioning of post-apartheid everyday life: *'I think private demeanour is more flexible and unconstrained whereas in public that is not always possible, being unconstrained and flexible. One's personal conduct in public space is very important, it's paramount'* (P12). Subscribing to the vision of a tolerant post-apartheid society – the rainbow nation – was universally thought to be essential. However, amongst our sample, it was particularly those engaged in public and political life that reported the social pressure toward 'responsible' behaviour and to practice tolerance in public. The value placed on upholding a tolerant self in public is very high for this kind of victim, who felt they needed to be the embodiment of a tolerant post-conflict society in the manner of Mandela, Tambo and the other giants of the liberation struggle. This extended to emulating Mandela's support for national sporting teams. As a former political prisoner said: *'Yes, of course, we need to support our national teams [chuckles], we defend our country where ever we can. We are going to wear South African T-shirts. We support our country. It is a journey which*

*we need to undertake. It is going to be give and take along the way and we will need to negotiate'* (P21). This magnanimity is not always easy, but, where it waxes and wanes under pressure of events, the need to be tolerant in public is felt as a necessity. As a member of the TRC organisation staff commented with respect to victims:

*'I see this, even if I think about victims, and people ask victims "have you forgiven the perpetrator?" What I see with victims is that they have moments. And maybe after the amnesty hearing when they heard the perpetrator confess they felt a bit better about it. And then later on as they see the perpetrator goes on and continue to become a wealthy business man and they are still living in poverty, their feelings change. So there is this notion that it is an absolute condition, to me it waxes and wanes'* (Anonymous, interview, 7 March 2011).

The 'hope delayed' problem, however, was ever present for poorer and more impoverished victims and public expectations of civility and tolerance were experienced by some of them as a constraint:

*'South Africans are made to believe in this idea of a rainbow nation at the expense of the poor of this country. Yet tolerance is preached everywhere to a point that talking about one's experience under the Apartheid Regime becomes a taboo. No radical changes were ever done in this country, no reparations were done. The perpetrators were simply assimilated in the new system. And they are getting away with it'* (P36).

This sentiment that the rainbow nation preaches tolerance only to conceal injustice and inequality points to the limits of narratives of reconciliation. Contemporary experiences of poverty and inequality were amongst the most important factors in limiting some victims' ability to practice tolerance, civility and compromise. This sense of constraint may well explain why some victims drew a distinction between public practices of tolerance and 'true' or 'genuine' reconciliation'. Here, public civility and tolerance appears as second-best option where deeper reconciliation has failed or has yet to be realised.

This sense that there is perhaps more reconciliation to come brings us neatly to one of the most significant parts of victims' emotional landscape, forgiveness. We encountered some magnanimous gestures of forgiveness:

*'What they did to us, we forgive them. As a Muslim and also as Christian, we believe God forgives. Don't we? And I will ask myself who am I not to forgive. Now this is a very good example: if you take Mandela, he was in prison for 27 years, and he was released in 1990. He could have declared war. But he said to the National Party: I don't hate you; I forgive you for what you did to me.'* (P28)

This extract allows us to identify three main themes relating to forgiveness. First, religion emerges as a strong factor in people's ability to forgive; forgiveness assists in victims' capacity to cope with memories and past experiences; and victims' own capacity for forgiveness is often linked to good leaders who speak on their behalf in what Brewer (2010) calls third party forgiveness.

People's capacity for forgiveness can be distinguished according to whether it draws on religion or on secular notions of forgiving. Perhaps unsurprisingly, religious notions of forgiveness were clearly discernible in many victims' accounts, such as in the following extract: *'I think it is only God who blessed me with it, because I can make peace with you. If you hurt me a lot, I will be with you and I will forgive'* (P10). This is linked in some cases to a religious conversion later in life. As one convert, now a Baptist pastor, related:

*'I didn't regard a white person as a person. I regard him as a person to be killed. Then after that I had to go into exile, via Lesotho, then I was trained as a soldier, a freedom fighter. First I was started in Zaire, and then we go down to Angola, where I was trained. So it was a very hard time in my life, before I came to Christ. But thank God, because my mother was a Christian, she was a born again, and she used to tell us we have to forgive, she used to tell us revenge is not for us, the lord is the only person that will revenge, not us. So that is what I can say. [...] I think I was around 19 years. So that was a great pain. Though now I am relieved, because I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my saviour and I had to forgive and to love the people [...] Although the scars are there, but I have forgiven.'* (P30)



It is noteworthy that a number of victims in our sample who had been combatants were 'born again' by converting to evangelism afterwards, and they showed high levels of compromise, forgiveness and reconciliation. The gestures of forgiveness in our sample is counter weight to those authors who have criticised the TRC for what they see as its over reliance on Christian discourses of forgiveness (Muldoon, 2008; Wilson, 2000, 2001).

South Africa is very religious, with nearly 85 per cent of the population considering themselves belonging to a religion in 2011 (Human Sciences Research Council 2011), of which 82 per cent belonged to Christian churches. Levels of religiosity are also high: nearly 60 per cent of those who belonged to a religion attended religious services at least monthly and about a third attended weekly or more frequently. While Christianity has a strong ethos of forgiveness, forgiveness was also rooted in a secular and moral worldview where some victims strongly identified with a vision of a common humanity.

*'When I got to prison the first time and I had interaction with the guy who looks after us, the warders, I came to the realisation that there is this common humanity. Because I was talking to this guy who was supposed to be the enemy, [...] and I realised that he was probably more of a victim than I was. Because psychologically, he was in prison, although he held the key and I was there in the little cell. He was imprisoned psychologically in a huge way, by fear, by lack of vision. He had no vision of the future. Whereas we had a vision of a non-racial, democratic future.'* (P21)

In some of the victims enthused with a sense of common humanity, there was an emotional empathy with their former oppressor, seeing them also as victims, including of their British colonialism (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008, has developed a concept of forgiveness through empathy): *'When I started looking at things, and I started reading and researching, and then I started looking at what the British did to the Afrikaner'* (P12). As another said:

*'When I went to prison I started to understand the police, the wardens of the prison, I started to understand the White people, the fear that they have. I was able to get into the shoes of the White people (...) Now I was angry then, but as I stayed there I*

*started to understand these things, I can't hate a White person, because that man is indoctrinated, he is full of fear, with fear of something we don't even know.'* (P5)

ANC cadres were particularly inclined toward the idea of common humanity as the basis of forgiveness, for not only did Mandela espouse it, it is enshrined in the tenets of the Freedom Charter – that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white'. Former political prisoners interviewed for this study spoke of the importance of their imprisonment for the development of a more inclusive and forgiving mindset (on Robben Island a source of political education, see Buntman, 2003). The following extract is from a victim that was exposed to the 'ANC university' during his imprisonment on Robben Island:

*'When I got to [Robben] Island I was an ill-disciplined young man. And the elderly comrades took me under their wings, and started to teach me, this is not the way things are done, and so on. And then we got involved in political discussions, and the history of the ANC, and global politics and all that. And there the ANC taught you, it is not the white people that's the problem. It is the system, it is there that the problem lies. So there you learnt that it is not about yourself, it is about taking your country forward.'* (P3).

Another former activist put it like this:

*Your period in prison it is a learning curve. Because in prison you meet all these ANC leaders, and see the ANC members. And for your time in prison, it is normally a period of learning, they have political schools, you learn more about the politics, more about society, more about international politics, so they equipped you...the senior politicians the likes of Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba and all others. Those are all very senior ANC cadres, and with those kind of cadres in prison, they actually teach you how to cope.'* (P33)

The above extract illustrates another feature of forgiveness in our South African sample, for many linked forgiveness with strong leadership, citing prominent 'reconcilers' such as Nelson Mandela as role models for forgiveness. Part of this was due to the prison experience; senior cadres of the banned organisations were identified by many of the ex-

prisoners in our sample as instructive in teaching victims how to cope. Mandela, as the first non-racial leader of the country, seemed continuously to embody both the moral virtue of secular forgiveness and the ability to transcend his troubled past.

The link between forgiveness and moving on from the past was raised several times by respondents. Moving on was not equated with forgetting. One victim put it like this: *'If you hurt me a lot, I will be with you and I will forgive, but I will not forget what you have done'* (P10). Another said: *'You are not going to forget, but you would rather forgive. Otherwise you are going to make a wreck of yourself'* (P12). Many victims made the association between forgiving and moving on; forgiving is understood as a necessary prerequisite to mental well-being after conflict. As such, forgiveness goes beyond a religious or secular moral feeling to encompass personal psychological survival.

Forgiveness, however, is not always viewed so benignly. Rather than assisting victims' healing, it can also be viewed as betrayal, as Breen Smyth (2007) highlights with respect to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina. The sense that forgiveness is an imposition was rarely present in our data, but one victim who was a witness in an amnesty hearing, described his feeling of what he saw as being *'pushed into compromising [...] It was the whole set up, and also we didn't have a part in whether there would be a truth commission process. If we had had an option we would have gone to court, to a criminal court, to charge these guys criminally'* (P6). On the whole, however, our data clearly demonstrates that amongst victims in South Africa, there is a strong current both of religious and of secular forgiveness, linked to political and academic education and perceptions of good leadership. It was rare for participants within our sample to express feelings of revenge.

Forgiveness does not necessarily involve the forgoing of anger or other negative emotions, but it does necessitate that citizens publicly affirm their commitment to restoring

civic relationships with their former enemies. Forgiveness, however, is not always the right term to describe this process. They can empathise with their perpetrators, seeing them equally as victims in their own way, but the absence of expressions of remorse from perpetrators means that some respondents had difficulty in recognising this as forgiveness, given the religious framework within which forgiveness is often understood.

*'I don't see them or know [the perpetrators], or know where they are. At the personal level the people who manhandled me and my sister, I don't think about them. And I think when you think about the system it is more at the general level, and at the general level, one can forgive, and say that those people were also victims of circumstances, and they did things in a particular era [...] I think if one has a broader understanding of the social context in which this happened, then one can say, we must move on. But of course, no one has come to me and asked for forgiveness so how do you actually forgive someone if they don't come to you. It is a difficult process. No one has come to us. There are not many white leaders in South Africa who have come forward and have said, we need reconciliation. Most people who have spoken about reconciliation are black leaders, like Mandela, Tutu, and so on.'* (P21).

These victims find forgiveness at the interpersonal level more difficult than at the societal level, because the former is assumed to obligate face-to-face interaction, which either has not taken place yet or which they would find difficult. This is echoed in the literature where a distinction is made between interpersonal forgiveness, and public socio-political (Montiel, 2002) or political forgiveness (Misztal, 2011), which Brewer (2010) sees as the distinction between two-party and symbolic or third party forgiveness. Third party forgiveness is always easier than two-party, since it does not obligate the other within a two-party exchange to formulate the specific words that the first party will only accept as an apology.

In line with this observation, the following account exemplifies the sentiments of many respondents about the one-sidedness of two-party forgiveness, where forgiveness without apology is weak:

*We as Black people, we have forgiven White people. Already, we have forgiven them, and they keep on asking for forgiveness. And what we need now from them is to embrace. Then they asked me, what I mean about embracing. I said, we must embrace us equal, because right now, if I... Like with you now, if your car outside can be broken in or stolen here, I am the first suspect. But if I am with you in a White suburb, and my car got broken in or stolen, you as a White person are not the first suspect. You understand? (P34)*

Forgiveness at a general societal level thus seems easier than at the interpersonal level, when the latter is not backed up by remorse. But forgiveness at the societal level can be threatened if not undergirded by justice. Political forgiveness thus has a temporal dimension, for it can dissipate when injustices persist. The following victim's narrative is worth citing at length:

*'The people who killed [name deleted], killed him with a spade and then shot him, they bludgeoned him with a spade. They created bombs to go off, dummy bombs, they bombed out community centre and blamed it on us, we were at the time of the bombings off all those bombings they would create the notion, in their media, that it was our failed attempts at bombing that detonated these bombs. So it's a great request to just forgive, it's this whole Christian notion of forgiveness. And so we have agreed to forgive, but we can't forget our experiences because it has become part of my psyche to often think or remember these things when I get angry about stuff. If you see corruption in the present-day government, if you see nepotism and they were they are doing things then it hurts. When you know people have sacrificed with their lives to be liberated and the end result is not what we thought it would be, when the issues that you fought for are not being dealt with, basically.'* (P6)

Forgiveness is interpreted here as a 'great request' in the service of peace building; something the oppressed 'agreed to' in the service of building a democratic South Africa. This highlights the condition of reciprocity. Consequently, forgiveness can be withdrawn if other parties do not keep to what is perceived as their side of the bargain. It is therefore crucial that forgiveness be combined with the establishment of post-conflict justice. Forgiveness is not an absolute, reflecting some personal moral disposition; it is conditional and mediated by perceptions of justice. In this respect, our qualitative findings chime with

the SARB survey which reports a decline between 2006 and 2009 in the percentage of South Africans who are 'trying to forgive those who hurt them under apartheid' (Lefko-Everett *et al.*, 2010: 12). Hope, too, is conditional.

### **Hope and optimism for a better future**

Hope is part of the emotional landscape of victims and when delayed by continued injustices can come under the same threat as forgiveness. Feelings of hope refer to individuals' personal and societal expectations for the future. Victims interviewed for the South African project overwhelmingly focused on societal goals when asked about their vision for the future, or articulated personal goals through a wider social vision. For example, hopes for the future of their children would regularly be expressed through hopes for effective implementation of government policies on education and job creation. Their negative expectations for the future mainly related to worries about the future generations, concerns about unemployment, and anxieties about crime and corruption. Poverty and inequality clearly impacted on victims' ability to envisage a positive future. This blurring of boundaries between personal and societal hopes was perhaps most pronounced for the former political activists, by whom disappointed expectations were frequently expressed as betrayal by the liberation movement. This comes across very clearly in the following:

*'For me personally? It is really dark. Because I don't understand the ANC anymore. The ANC of now. I knew the ANC before '94. Because what happened within the ANC it is just, to me, the top brass are making money looking after themselves, fighting one another, don't worry about these people that are still struggling here, to get something out of what they fought for.'* (P25)

This 'hope delayed' is not restricted to ANC cadres. The vast majority of respondent stated that they are less hopeful about the future now than they were in 1994; that they had hoped *'it would be better, more than now'* (P27). *'I don't know where to hope now. That time it was a good hope. We are going to get work we are going to get everything! For our children. But now there is nothing, and I am worried about these youngsters'* (P10). *'If there is a slogan that says you see the light at the end of the tunnel, then there is a hope. The problem here, we don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, more the fire who will destroy'* (P30). *'You find out that people don't care, they give up hopes, and if you notice, some they start doing criminal activities [...] there are people who are just waiting to die.'* (P31). *'From 1994, we thought that things are going to be much better. Maybe if Mr Mandela was still younger maybe the things were not going to be like now, maybe they were going to be better [...] every year it is getting worse.'* (P32)

Yet this is hope delayed, not hope denied. Given the overwhelmingly negative expectations of the future voiced by participants, there are at the same time seemingly contradictory expressions, often within the same interview, for people did not give up on hope altogether. For example, *'I think we have a bright future. It is just that it is not happening fast enough'* (P14); *'I think there is hope. I think nothing is impossible in South Africa'* (P26). The hope is merely delayed, for the time being:

*'I still feel hopeful. Maybe not as hopeful as than when Mandela was released and we were having our first free and fair election. But still hopeful, because I think it is a slow process and I still think that eventually we will get to the stage where people can really live together, and it doesn't matter.'* (P35).

As another put it, *'if this government decides to focus on the poor and to relieve the issues of the poor, then there will be hope'* (P6).

An important dimension of 'hope delayed' is the patience of the long-time oppressed to wait for circumstances to change. Theirs is a generation, as one older interviewee put it, that has seen 'history unfolding' (P8), and they are not inclined to give up on hoping for the expected post-apartheid dream to come true. Conversely, the so-called free-born generation which has always known political freedom will be less patient, pointing to a potential inter-generation conflict amongst Black South Africans sometime in the future.

This points to the conditional nature of hope as much as that of forgiveness. One of conditions that moderates victims' emotions is their sense of the fairness of the negotiated settlement and of White people's reciprocity in keeping to it. Gibson (2002) concludes from his national survey of public attitudes in South Africa that justice considerations influence fairness assessments. What emerges from our data is that distributive justice considerations for victims do not merely concern individual recompense but broad social compensation. It is worth recalling that regardless of the TRC's limited understanding of victimisation, the victimisation of millions of others was structural and indirect, requiring extensive social and economic transformation measures rather than individual reparations. In the immediate aftermath of the transition, amnesty to White perpetrators – albeit seen as inherently unfair – was widely accepted by many sectors of Black society, but only on the necessary condition of another kind of distributive justice that would redress centuries of inequality. With this condition violated almost two decades after the settlement, the very bargain at the heart of the transition can be seen to be damaged.

One of the key findings from the South African data is that victims were initially willing to accept the non-racial constitution, but this is now under threat. The settlement was, by the majority of those interviewed, never seen as entirely fair, but it largely accepted



because it was perceived as essential to the establishment of a democratic and equal society.

*'We sat at the table, and in order to stay at the table, they said, unless there is amnesty these negotiations are going nowhere. And purists would say, well, we should have simply gone on fighting. But what were the alternatives? The strongest military machine on the African continent, with nuclear capabilities on the one hand, and the determination of a people to be free on the other – and what our negotiators were facing was that if to continue would mean that we would die in our millions.'* (P11).

This assessment included the condition of reciprocity; that is, that concessions were made by all parties:

*'With the peace process, generally we were quite happy that there was no bloodbath in our community, and that there was compromise, and that as a nation we could build and work towards a new and just society. And those are still the things we believe in. A just and equal society where all people can live to their full potential, and where people are safe, where people can have access to work, access to education. That is still our belief. But there are underlying issues which are still a problem.'* (P13)

With ongoing injustice, victims' perceptions of fairness have decreased:

*'I think in the beginning it was a good compromise. Because we did not know, we did not understand, because we fought for the freedom of our country, and to vote and to be free, and to use all the facilities of our country. And I think we actually in terms of that particular fight, we won that particular fight, but in terms of economic freedom, we did not receive that. And still, few, the minority, 80% of the wealth belongs to them. They are still the rich people of this country, and they don't want to share.'* (P33)

Political freedom alone is no longer sufficient. One interviewee pointed out: *'maybe 10 years ago we thought that it was part of our sacrifice, to be free. But there are still those people who do have a lot, and those who don't want to share'* (P26).

One of the key points in relation to reciprocity is the perception by victims that the erstwhile enemy, usually understood as the White population, is unwilling to compromise.

The idea that the 'other' has not done enough compromising – that all the hard work of practising tolerance is being done by one's own group – parallels the victim hierarchy that is common to multiple victimhood. Research carried out during the TRC found that 'the majority of white South Africans are unconvinced that they played a role in apartheid abuses' (Theissen and Hamber, 1996: 1). Blame was only attributed to direct perpetrators, not to the injustices of the apartheid system. Yet it is that system and its legacies that is the key threat to the future.

The lack of effective redistribution of wealth in the post-apartheid era played a significant role in respondents' accounts of the unfairness of the negotiated settlement as they see it now, with the majority blaming the White population for not wanting to share the wealth and resources of the country. The distinction made between political and economic freedoms is central in most narratives of the one-sidedness of the negotiated settlement: *'In 1994, we got political freedom. But at the current moment, we don't have economic freedom. Business is still in the hands of the big rich White companies and people'* (P26). Poor people thus have contradictory experiences: on the one hand, they share the culture of struggle in the liberation movements and their active participation in realising the collective dream of freedom; on the other, they perceive betrayal in the post-conflict era by sections of the very same liberation movement that keeps them poor.

When asked what specific injustices they perceived, victims mentioned the following: a) unequal treatment of veterans. This was a frequently-voiced concern by interviewees who had been part of the liberation movement's armed forces: *'The MK and the APLA veterans or soldiers do not have the same advantages as the old SADF veterans. We still have to fight for our pensions, (...) these guys got it automatically. Their graves are being cleaned'* (P1); b) impunity for perpetrators. The issue of amnesty was a metaphor for

the lack of reciprocity and fairness. For example: *'Especially the kingpins, who almost beat me to death in prison, are still today not being accountable for their actions. They have [got] off very lightly'* (P24); c) The broken promises of the freedom struggle. Social justice demands have replaced demands for retributive justice and revenge. *'They have amassed obscene wealth, and at the same time, and at the same time they have created abject poverty. And something is terribly wrong with this whole '94 issue, with this freedom'* (P5).

The demand for social justice was framed around issues like land reform, education, housing, and welfare. There is a strong perception amongst apartheid-era victims that 'nothing has changed' at the bottom and that they have been 'left behind'.

Our research was conducted in the Western Cape, in both urban and rural settings. Feelings of anger were notably more dominant in the rural areas where arguably there has been a slower pace of change since the end of apartheid. It was also mainly interviewees from rural areas in the south of the province that reported continued experiences of racial discrimination, such as the use of racist terminology like 'kaffir' by Whites. This differs from the experiences of participants living in metropolitan areas. Participants in rural areas moreover felt that they were most disadvantaged in terms of service delivery, redistribution and patronage networks:

*'What also happens was that we are in the rural area. And we are away from town, and most of the guys that was with us they all benefited due to the fact that they are in an urban area. And our problem is that because we are in the rural area, and we are disadvantaged by that. And we felt that if they are in a position to assist us, because they are in a position of power and influence. But they are not using their position of power and influence to assist their comrades now. And that is also the gripe why a lot of the guys left the rural party, because of a sense of betrayal.'* (P14)

The feeling of being 'left behind' by the post-conflict democratic project was particularly pronounced in the interviews with rural victims:

*'I mean, you see it on TV, you read it in the newspapers, they forget about the rural area. Every time they speak they talk about the rural people. But they are not living up to that speech. I don't think a lot of these things have been clearly documented, like what happened in the rural areas. Because the focus, and especially the international focus was basically your urban areas, your cities and you metropolitans.'* (P13)

### **A shared non-racial future?**

The Western Cape is unique in terms of its demographic composition, with a much larger percentage of the population being White and Coloured than in any of the other provinces. What is more, the governing party in the province is the Democratic Alliance, traditionally seen as a White interest party. Geographical segregation is more persistently stubborn in the Western Cape than in other areas, rendering inequalities across race and class in society very visible. Continued segregation also serves as a reminder of post-conflict continuities with the past, standing in contrast with the discourse of change and renewal that post-apartheid South Africa strongly relies on.

The lack of integrated social networks in favour of continued segregation featured strongly in our interviews amongst rural dwellers. Racial integration is strongest amongst the professional urban populations of South Africa, but remains largely absent for the large majority of South African who continue to be geographically totally separated from 'the other', especially in rural townships. It is not unusual for township residents in the Cape Flats to have never visited Cape Town for example. In the words of one interviewee: *'In a way, the Western Cape illustrates just how much damage apartheid did. The differences are starker. Cape Town is a stunningly beautiful city and yet you have this depth of an apartheid reality'* (P11).

This isolation is significant since social connectedness in integrated social networks is an important mediator in the development of tolerance, civility and compromise. Social networks can help develop or diminish people's capacity to learn to live together. They can do so because people's senses of fairness and reciprocity are developed in relation to others in their networks, but also because social networks help constitute the spaces in which memories are inter-subjectively constituted. The idea that cross-cultural social networks support the development of the capacity for tolerance draws on work in the social sciences that, by extending early contact theory, argues that deep social contact – including common goals, inter-group cooperation and quality of status – across racially diverse groups reduces prejudice and contributes to positive attitudinal change (see Emerson, Kimbro and Yancey, 2002). In the South African context, Gibson's (2004) work has proposed that interracial reconciliation can be measured through willingness to trust the historically defined other and to reject racial stereotypes.

Some of our participants themselves had internalised this 'contact hypothesis', and consciously sought social connectedness across racial boundaries:

*'I have a lot of friends that are pastors, White pastors, and we try to break the barriers between the Christians. We started a team, a soccer team, and I have white friends who have joined our churches and we have sports together, playing together and eating together. That I think is bringing healing to the other people. Because I myself am healed.'* (P30)

Social connectedness of this kind was rarely possible in apartheid South Africa, except perhaps within the anti-apartheid movement itself. However, the end of apartheid has not on the whole meant that most people's social networks now include people from other race groups. The notable exception here is middle-class professionals in specific urban neighbourhoods, though this group is small in real numbers. For the victims in our study, the

lack of racial integration, most notable in relation to residential matters and education, remains an important issue and one that was identified across the board as obstacle to genuine reconciliation.

Racial and class stratification reflect and reproduce one another: while interaction and socialisation might have increased for the wealthiest South Africans, the same is not true for the poorest households, posing a significant obstacle to improved social relations (Lefko-Everett *et al.*, 2011). The following extract from an interview with a public-sector worker in a town in the Southern Cape represents the experiences of a strata of well-educated former activists, highlighting as it does the obstacles to leaving the racial segregation of the past behind:

*I would like to move forward. But I am still thinking, my children are at a school, a predominantly White school, but their mother is teaching at a predominantly coloured school, and where the access to equal amenities are not the same. They are there, but integration is moving to one side. Because my children, who are Black, are moving to a predominately White school, where it is not going the other way around for racial integration. Racial integration is only moving where Whites predominantly are. Because you don't see White children in Coloured and African schools. So why is that? It is a one-way street. And that is the same with anything else in terms of racial integration.'* (P2)

Education is a key site for integration, as schools can clearly contribute to building peace-sustaining social networks into the next generation. One middle-class Cape Town resident similarly emphasised continued segregation and lack of racial integration as hindrance to reconciliation:

*'Around here, there is [name of poor school] and so on, you don't find any White people in those schools, it is now just coloured and Africans. Which means that Whites have moved out, as Coloureds and Africans have moved in. So then, one question: you know, we are ready to reconcile but other are actually not wanting to reconcile, they are actually moving away. And they are saying that they are going to leave the country because there is no future for them here, and so on. So you get those signs all the time.*

*And then one questions, how do you reconcile in the absence of other parties that want to reconcile with you? (P21)*

Of course, many victims simply do not have the opportunity to interact with the historically defined other race group on an equal footing in post-apartheid; they do not always work in professional occupations and they live in townships which are perceived as 'no-go areas' by Whites. Consequently, inter-racial socialisation in the home remains relatively small: 21 per cent 'often' or 'always' socialise with people of other race groups, while 60 per cent 'rarely' or 'never' do so (Lefko-Everett *et al.*, 2011). Patterns of residential segregation have remained largely unchanged since the end of apartheid, with at best a 'slow desegregation' (Seekings, 2008). The small minority of South Africans that live in mixed neighbourhoods cannot necessarily be described as 'meaningfully integrated across racial lines' (Seekings, 2008: 14). There has been some modest desegregation of schools, although it largely remains limited to middle class schools in urban areas.

As a result of these dynamics, social connectedness was little different now than during the apartheid era. This is important in that it restricts new social relations that can build trust and respect. It is also critical because it is in these mixed networks and friendship groups that experiences of the past are spoken about, and new memories are constituted. One fortunate victim who was in such a mutually reinforcing mixed group said: *'When we are now together, and then something will come up and it will trigger the memories of a night, or being in the cell, and what was said. We still share our experience amongst each other. And that is important, and it keeps the friendship also'* (P3). Importantly, after such a long period of cultural social distance, even people who did work in mixed workplaces or lived in mixed neighbours often operated a distinction between what we might call surface

social contact and dense social relationships. Segregation in the mind is sometimes longer to dismantle than on the streets.

*'So, [victimisation] is a lifelong experience, people are psychologically scarred. And one of the issues is, I can only relate to people who understand the struggle, I can't relate to other people and be friends with them. I only have friends that are people who were involved in the liberation struggle and that I call my personal friends, no other people outside of that sphere. And I can't deal with people who don't understand the political struggle that we went through.'* (P6)

Segregation in the mind can lead to social withdrawal rather than social connectedness, further distancing people from new social relations that build trust and respect. Participation in the liberation struggle, with its strong sense of community, can when combined with disillusion with the outcome, lead to individualisation and withdrawal. Social networks thus have a dual and at times contradictory role. That they can contribute to maintaining individuals' identities as 'struggle activists', 'survivors' or 'victims' is an expression of this duality, on the one hand reaffirming the contribution and sacrifice they made to the building of a democratic South Africa, and on the other keeping them attached to a painful and sometimes traumatic past and to a sense of alienation from the future. As one victim remarked: *'I am so lonely and I am sitting there alone in the room, and I am thinking back, how it was at that time, and how it is now. And the difference. Because at that time everything was ...how to say that, everyone was willing to do something, but now nothing'* (P10). Part of this alienation stems from the radically different mode and temporal logic that democratic South Africa is based on: an individualism ('sitting alone in the room') that this interviewee contrasts with the collective experience of participating in the resistance against apartheid; the expectation that victims should have moved on when their victimisation is a 'lifelong experience'.



## Dealing with the past

Social disconnectedness can contribute to feelings of alienation and potentially to an inability to be reconciled to the past by freezing people in their traumatic memories.

Sometimes the memories flood back even with social connectedness, or at least with friendships that bring back the past.

*'You know when you are in a family environment, and you feel like you want to block it out, but if you are amongst your comrades again [...] you always have memories all those comrades that died, and you realise you cannot walk away from the past. [...] It is still there, but it depends how you go through it. I have moved away from camps where there is negativity. I don't go to meetings with my comrades anymore, I don't drink for the last 5 or 6 years.'* (P1)

Social networks thus constitute 'communities of emotion' which can support, but also undermine individuals' capacity to overcome troubled pasts.

There is a paradox however between the value of remembering and value of forgetting. Speaking to this duality, one respondent used the metaphor of the mythical Sankofa bird that flies with its head backward to highlight that it is important to look to the future but acknowledge the past: *'we need to know where we come from in order to know where we are going. So you have to combine these things constantly'* (P21). This renders paramount the question of how the past is remembered and managed by a successor state; both remembering and forgetting were practised by the democratic state in South Africa and both practices were objects for governmental policies. Data on how victims related to their memories of the conflict can be broadly split into four themes: what the interviewed were able or willing to forget, what they chose to remember or could not forget, how they remembered (that is, forms of own memory work), and, more generally, how the past should be remembered on a societal level (that is, social memory).

With respect to the value of forgetting, there exists pragmatic knowledge amongst our South African victims that it is not healthy to live overly in the past: *'I don't want to think the back way because then I am going to get sick'* (P27). Actively working on not 'thinking back' has parallels with forgiving as coping as it was discussed above. Some also made a link between leaving the past behind and progressing in life, as this respondent does: *'So of course, there are instances when you remember things in the past and you feel like, if it had not been for the apartheid government, I would not be where I am today. Maybe that's where the victimhood comes in. But of course, one tries hard not to really dwell on that. Because dwelling on that really keeps back one's progress in life'* (P36).

It is certainly also the case that in modern South Africa generally there is a fatigue with what is sometimes referred to as 'always blaming the past'. As one interviewee put it, *'it is not necessary anymore to remember the things from the past'* (P17). This form of memory as blame can be seen as negatively sustaining a victim identity: *'Because if you are going to look back and blame the system all the time, saying I am a victim, then you will stay a victim'* (P12). Notably however, the claim that people should have long moved on is most often voiced by political and social elites whose access to resources in post-apartheid has allowed them to better deal with the past.

With respect to the selectivity of what to remember and what to forget, a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' memories was fairly typical for many victims, especially those who actively participated in the struggle. This might perhaps reflect their dual experiences of suffering and triumph: *'Sometimes when you sit your past comes back and there are good memories, but there are very bad memories also, and then you just try to ignore it. I try not to think about it'* (P9). 'Bad memories', though, are sometimes hard to forget. For perhaps a surprisingly large percentage of interviewees, traumatic memories are still fresh

and continue to negatively impact on them in their everyday life, even after a long time has passed. As one victim put it: *'People sort of glibly talk about "you know we mustn't talk about the Apartheid era, and let's forget about it". I can't forget about what I experienced, I can't forget the deaths of people that I knew. Of youngsters. I can't forget the attack and bombing of the centre where our youth members were busy and they bombed it, you know'* (P6).

Interviewees often linked the persistence of traumatic memories to factors such as a lack of counselling, or a lack of education to help one cope:

*'If you are not educated that is a key... Not educated, you find out that you've got the wounds, spiritual and physical wounds that are not easy to heal, because if you have got the wound and each and every day you see that wound and each and every day there is a pain that is caused by the wound. [...] I can hear a lot of stories that you should forget the past. You can never forget. You can forget the past if it did not affect you. Really, it is very bad.'* (P31)

'Bad memories' seemed particularly persistent when there was continuity with the past, either in terms of socio-economic circumstances or when victims continue to live in the same community as their perpetrators. For example:

*You see the problem is this, in this area. That most of the police, of the special branches were hurting us and were doing bad things to us. There is even a lot that have been killed here. Even the guy they just mentioned. He hit two children. I picked them up. One of them died straight away, the other one was in a bad condition. Still now. Even here, there were a lot of people that have been shot, and been killed. But now, the people that did that are walking in the street, without being charged or anything. So when you see that person, alright its long years, but when you see them, something comes out. Because you see him. But you won't say you will grab him or do something to him, but that feeling is always there.'* (P23).

Respondents who struggled to overcome their traumatic memories often linked this inability with notions of failed and incomplete reconciliation, highlighting that at least for them, new social relations in themselves help deal with the past by disconnecting and

transcending it. *'So for me there was not real reconciliation, because for me reconciliation is a two-way road, you see, we meet each other half-way, so ultimately people...and that is why people have that attitude to you today, they will tell you, forget about the past. How can you forget about the past if the past has not been healed.'* (P1)

The value of remembering was also recognised as important, especially for ex-combatants. For activist-victims, it was almost always the struggle not the victimisation that was remembered. This again speaks to the issues of ongoing memory work and identity, transcending a victim identity in favour of other forms of self-identification. As one respondent put it: *'if you are fighting for your rights, you don't have a grudge (...) I don't like that word victim, because that word is for the person who has a grudge'* (P18). Many of those interviewed were deeply attached to their past, cherishing the often painful memory of the struggle as having brought about freedom and as defining their identity as freedom fighters and active contributors to liberation. *'It was the best time and it was a tough time'* (P10); *'it is quite nostalgic'* (P13). Combat status confers respect and position in post-apartheid South Africa. One participant explains:

*'In such a small community like [...], when you walk around in the community, people tell their kids: look, you see that guy here, he is one of the struggle heroes, it is one of the people that assisted us in becoming free. Even in your social circles, with friends and family members, people will always remind you of the past. [...] From my side personally, when I am with my friends and activists of the past, and we are socialising, then we discuss what happened in the past. And that is actually nice now.'* (P33)

Such victims engage in their own memory work and the communities of memory that they form part of are empowering, confirming their place in the new South Africa. Others, however, talked about their lack of belonging in the new South Africa, illustrating that some forms of remembering might reinforce feelings of alienation or strengthen separatist

identities.

It is noteworthy that our interview data consistently shows victims' dissatisfaction with official state memorialisation and the perception that their stories have not adequately been told. One participant described his feelings as follows:

*'There is no opportunity for us at this moment, there is no platform for us to speak our minds, to speak our inner feelings, how we felt at that moment, when we went through that. Because people are saying today, Apartheid was here, it's gone, and don't speak about Apartheid, because it is gone. So you are not supposed to refer to Apartheid, because you are not supposed to speak about it. But there is a lot of people who did not receive any counselling about what happened to them. So for us to speak out, that is important to us.'* (P26)

In the Southern Cape area where some of our non-urban research was conducted, victims' own informal initiatives of commemoration were just springing up in a number of locations, in an attempt to empower victims and to assist in them releasing the hold the past had over them. *'Locally we are starting a process, and we are saying we need to acknowledge in a way all the activists that were involved in [name of place], no matter how minor their contributions were'* (P14).

It is thus worth addressing what participants felt was left out from their stories and what they wished to include. One of their main concerns was to communicate their past to the younger, free-born generation, so they would not be forgotten: *'If we had all these places that commemorate, even if it is not commemorating in terms of having a monument, but just commemoration in terms of having reading sessions, people reading out what happened, poems which would create a conversation'* (P36). *'Most of the youngsters don't know of the past. Because if you don't tell the youngsters now, then they are older and their children are going to ask them and then they know nothing. And that is about democracy'* (P10). Many wished for a localised form of commemoration that specifically speaks to local

experiences and dynamics, suggesting for instance *'oral history in the local museum'* (P3), *'because each and every place has a history'* (P7). There is a common perception that official commemoration has only dealt with the national leaders, whose stories do not represent participants' own local experiences. Hierarchies of sacrifice and contribution are intimately linked to the struggles of memory for the non-TRC victims whose voices we captured:

*'There is no actual recognition, for those people, in the rural areas, who actually gave their life. What first of all I would like to see is from the national level, that they must commemorate the contributions that were made by the individuals wherever they are. The special pensions and that, that is materialistic, that is important, but to me that is materialistic, but [long pause]. I mean, you see, high school kids they heard of something, but they don't know who the people are that actually fought for them, for better schooling, in their communities.'* (P25)

This was often tied to an overall sense of dissatisfaction with the truth recovery process and the perception that the TRC was *'not for them'*: *'I don't think [the TRC] gave enough opportunities for guys like us to tell our side of the story'* (P35).

Paralleling the earlier observations that rural areas felt most left behind some respondents also felt that the contributions of Coloured activists to the struggle in the Western Cape were not adequately told in official commemoration projects. There is moreover a perception that particular stories have come to stand in for what are in reality extremely locally diverse and uneven experiences of victimisation and struggle under apartheid. For example, residents from one township took issue with the fact that the experiences of oppression in Soweto have dominated history teaching. Such an under-representation of local history in the social memory of the country can have significant implications for citizenship in the post-conflict dispensation, as this victim's account highlights very well:

*'One googles through, one tries to search for what happened in [name of place*

deleted]. *You will only find a small part of what happened. But now, if one can revive that memory, just for people to remember where they are coming from, maybe [...] they will begin to take responsibility for their own area. Maybe, maybe they will take the pride. Because there is no sense of pride amongst black people in the townships. And of course that pride has gone with disillusionment. People are so hopeless.'* (P36)

The perceptions of the incompleteness of narratives about the past highlights the importance of civil society to contribute to the reconstruction of social memory. As one participant states, *'it is not up to our government to keep it alive. It is up to us to keep it alive. I mean we are communities and people of history. We are very good in continuing oral traditions of our history'* (P24). Our data show that non-profit organisations were once very involved in peace-building activities through memory work in the post-transition era in range of areas, such as story-telling and trauma counselling, cross-community memory work, citizenship education and oral history work, healing workshops and so on, but work has largely ceased today. Very few civil society groups continue to work in the field of memory and peace-building, notable exceptions being the Institute for the Healing of Memories (intergroup and cross community healing work) and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (oral history and citizenship education).

## **Conclusion**

We have sought in this chapter to give life, embodiment and meaning to the voices of our South African respondents by focusing on the key themes that emerged from the data with respect to their views about the victim category and its ambiguities in relation to the TRC, the emotional landscape of victims, especially with regard to emotions like forgiveness, empathy, hope and reconciliation. We have given a glimpse of the complexities of this landscape in a setting where the majority of Black South Africans are experiencing 'hope

delayed' through continued social injustices and inequalities. The enduring hopefulness of the apartheid-era generation, grounded on the slow patience learned through oppression, contrasts with the impatient disappointed expectations of the post-1994 generation. This chapter has also looked at how victims deal with the past in the context of a hope delayed rather than, as yet, a hope denied. It will not have missed the reader that there is great variety in victims' voices. In conclusion, the idea that victims live in a different temporality because of their victimhood offers one way of understanding these contradictory narratives.

Clashing temporalities have become visible in a number of important ways: some felt pressure to move on in time; others that the past halted their progress into the future; some saw the elite's mobilisation of time to marginalise them by accusations that they are stuck in time (these arguments are developed further in Mueller-Hirth, 2017). More broadly, much of the data has shown the continuities with an apartheid past for many victims, especially with respect to social injustice, as if time has not moved on. There is undoubtedly a disparity between the demands of national reconciliation and the time and pace of victims' healing. Wilson and Hamber argue that the state's efforts to build a new post-conflict society often means for victims that the past is shaken off too early, 'asking survivors to engage in a premature closure before all the psychological processes around truth and recompense are fully internalised' (2002: 44).

The ambiguous temporalities of post-apartheid South Africa reside in the reality that 'nothing has changed' for most Black South Africans. This reality encompasses a number of inter-related experiences: continued racial discrimination, a lack of social redistribution, the sense that reconciliation is one-sided, and continued poverty and impoverishment. Material inequality is arguably the most significant factor to account for contradictory temporalities. A large number of interviewees commented directly on how renewed experiences of



poverty in the present evoked memories of apartheid for them: *'If I stay in a shack, prior to '94, then here comes '94, the country has changed, we are in a democracy, my needs will be answered, and we have been promised that things will change. Housing will be there, electricity will be there, water will be there. But now you are still sitting there, still waiting, for a house, still waiting for whatever. And don't get. And that brings the bitterness'* (P25).

South Africa's status is still one of the most unequal societies in the world despite the transition. Poor South African can feel locked in time's past.

*'It [traumatic memories] comes from time to time, to be honest with you. Especially when you find yourself in the position, like [Baker] said, unemployed, you have a family that you need to support, and you ask yourself, what was all this effort that we put in, and not that we ....it was a principle fight, but if you look at yourself and where you are now, and the same people that fought with you, alongside, they are no longer with you, they are at another level again. And it seems as if they have turned their backs on you.'* (P13)

The ANC asks for poor people's patience as they deal with problems inherited from the past, as if delaying time is necessary in order to inherit the future. Time, however, risks running out for the government with a general breakdown in the consensus around keeping a civil tongue and practising tolerance, compromise and reconciliation. Protest actions by those poor Black South Africans who feel time is running out on them reflect a diverse range of issues but they primarily cohere around resistance to poverty and material inequality. Many victims articulated feelings of betrayal and neglect. As far as victims are concerned, an everyday life that remains brutalised threatens South Africa's conflict transformation despite its international acclaim. Time seems short for the new South Africa to address their concerns.