

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI/UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
FACULTY EXCHANGE SUMMARY REPORT

MAKING SENSE OF APARTHEID:
FAMILY STORYTELLING AND CHILD SOCIALIZATION

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DATES OF TRIP:
July 15-August 11, 2018

Report submitted by Dr. Haley Horstman, January 8, 2019.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to advance an empirical investigation of South African parent-child conversations about apartheid. Research shows that South African parents to a child born in 1994 or after are tasked with helping the child make sense of the events that occurred surrounding apartheid. As a national trauma, the legacy of apartheid affects this post-apartheid generation's identity, worldview, and behaviors. In this project, we drew from narrative theorizing, which posits that families make sense of complex experiences, such as apartheid, through parents and children co-creating stories about those experiences. Through a narrative theorizing lens, UWC Department of Psychology lecturer Dr. Athena Pedro, UMC Department of Communication assistant professor Dr. Haley Horstman, and their team of students interviewed South African parents to explore how they discuss and make sense of apartheid with their children who were born in 1994 or after.

There were four objectives stated for this project. First, we will write articles that advance narrative theorizing and family communication scholarship in both the United States and South Africa. In the United States, family communication and developmental psychology scholars have recently called for researchers to test and expand concepts and theories into diverse populations around the world. South African research on family interactions has been largely focused on parenting styles/behaviors and child outcomes and ignored many of the intricacies of family dynamics that relate to child outcomes. As such, there is much potential to advance family communication research in both countries.

Second and thus, from the data gathered for this project, we will submit conference presentations and journal publications. Given the theoretical and practical significance of this project, we will write, submit, and present the first resulting manuscript to the National Communication Association annual conference, held in Baltimore, MD in November, 2019. After submitting that paper, we will then submit it to an interdisciplinary journal. Doing so will boost the reputation of these scholars, their universities, and the UM/UWC Faculty Exchange Program. Authorship on this paper will include Dr. Horstman, Dr. Pedro, and UWC Psychology graduate research assistant Tessa Goldschmidt.

Third, we will use our findings from this project to inform future efforts to support and educate families about how to talk about apartheid. Findings from this study may inform South African parents on best practices of talking with their children about apartheid. Describing parents' tactics may provide parents with a repertoire of possible approaches to talking to their children.

Fourth, the final and arguably most important intended outcome is to foster collaborations between UWC and MU researchers to continue this line of research. The topic of parent-child communication and sense-making about apartheid is ripe with future topics of study, and Dr. Pedro and I understand the summer 2018 collaboration as just the beginning of a long-standing research partnership.

REPORT OF VISIT

Dr. Athena Pedro and I partnered through the UMSAEP to interview South African parents on the socialization, identity work, and coping functions of conversations about apartheid in South African families. I arrived to Cape Town on the evening of Monday, July 16 and met with Dr. Pedro and her graduate assistant Tessa Goldschmidt on Wednesday, July 18. We sketched out a plan for data collection and refined the interview protocol, which we had already submitted to and been approved by MU and UWC's Institutional Review Boards (IRB). We divided the interview into three foci: the participants' story of apartheid (e.g., "Tell us what it was like for you to grow up during apartheid."); topics that parents discuss and avoid discussing with their children (e.g., "What, if anything, do you *not* tell your kids about apartheid?"); and motivations and advice for other parents to talk with their children about apartheid (e.g., "What advice would you give other South African parents – maybe younger parents – about how to talk to their kids about apartheid?"). We also decided to make a concerted effort to recruit equally from the four apartheid government-sanctioned racial groups: black, coloured, Indian, and white. Based on our UMSAEP funding, this would amount to 20 interviews total, five people for each racial group.

During my time at UWC, I engaged with undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of ways. I attended one of Dr. Pedro's large lecture undergraduate classes on Psychology research methods. I also attended a graduate seminar that was designed to assist Psychology master's students in creating and completing an empirical research project. The students presented the status of a current community-based project on women's health outreach. I also led a 90-minute workshop on qualitative data analysis for five Psychology graduate students who had collected and were about to analyze qualitative data. We reviewed the principles of interpretive research and several ways to analyze and validate qualitative data. I also worked very closely with graduate research assistant Tessa Goldschmidt, who helped recruit participants and fulfill administrative duties for the project, and undergraduate student Carushca de Beers, who helped recruit participants and shadowed a few interviews.



Dr. Athena Pedro, teaching her research methods course at UWC.



UWC Psychology graduate students at Dr. Horstman's qualitative data analysis workshop.

Beyond the classroom, Tessa and Dr. Pedro took me on driving and walking tours of the campus and Dr. Pedro gave me a driving tour of the area around UWC. Dr. Pedro and her husband also took me on a tour of some of the informal settlements of the Cape Town area, Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain. I experienced Cape Town and its environs, including tours of Robben Island, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, the South African National Gallery, and District Six Museum, hiking Table Mountain and Cape Point, and exploring Bo-Kaap and Stellenbosch.



Dr. Horstman on campus at UWC.

OVERVIEW OF DATA: Between July 20 and August 8, we interviewed 22 participants – five for each racial group, except seven for the black racial group. The participants included eight men and 14 women, ranging in age from 29 to 69 years old ($m = 47.26$). Their professions included engineers, preschool teachers, university lecturers, corrections officers, library assistants, hygiene controllers (i.e., janitors), housewives, financial managers, and HR administrators. Thirteen participants were married, two were divorced, three were single, two were engaged, and two were widowed. They averaged 2.41 children, between four months and 36 years old. Participants reported on their youngest child, all of whom were born after 1994.

The interviews were conducted by me, Dr. Pedro, both of us ($n = 9$), and one interview was conducted by Tessa Goldschmidt. They were conducted in Dr. Pedro's office on the UWC campus, at the participant's workplace (e.g., the break room at a preschool), a public place (e.g., a coffee shop), or in the participant's home. Some participants generously provided us with coffee and dessert or even world-famous Cape Malay chicken roti. The interviews lasted from 35 minutes to about two hours long and were transcribed verbatim. Three transcriptions were provided through an online service and the rest by a transcriptionist in Cape Town.



Chicken roti served by a participant to Drs. Pedro and Horstman after an in-home interview.

PROGRESS TOWARD OUTCOMES & TIMELINE

After the data were collected, the team met several times to plan manuscripts and next steps for the project. Currently, we are analyzing the data for a manuscript on narrative resilience that will be submitted by March 27 to the National Communication Association national conference in Baltimore, MD in November, 2019. After that manuscript has been submitted to the conference, we will submit it to a reputable national or international journal. The focus of this paper will be

to analyze how, if at all, individuals demonstrate resilience in their stories of their experiences with apartheid. This research focus was initially a smaller objective in the study but became more prominent than expected in the data.

The next step in the project is to write a paper to submit on November 1, 2019 to the 2020 International Communication Association conference in Gold Coast, Australia and then to a reputable national or international journal. The focus of this paper will be on the intergenerational transmission of values through narratives of South African apartheid. Here, we will be interested in how, if at all, parents use conversations and storytelling about apartheid to transmit values to their children. There will also be future papers on narrative sense-making of cultural trauma and parents' advice for talking with children about apartheid, to be submitted to conferences and journals. These papers will fulfill the first two stated objectives of the project – submitting our work to national and international conferences and journals in order to advance work in narrative theorizing and family communication in the United States and South Africa.

Per our third objective, the findings of these papers will inform future efforts to establish workshops for South African parents who seek guidance with these difficult conversations about apartheid or other national traumas. We will be working toward this objective as we publish our findings and gain a wealth of understanding about issues of sense-making and having difficult parent-child conversations about these issues of apartheid.

Regarding our fourth objective, we successfully established and fostered a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship between researchers and students at MU and UWC. Dr. Pedro and I are continuing to work on the current data while planning for future projects, including those that will send Dr. Pedro to the United States and me back to South Africa. I have made progress toward Fulbright applications toward these ends, and will continue looking into other external funding for collaborative projects with UWC scholars.



Tessa Goldschmidt, Dr. Horstman, and Dr. Pedro after a research meeting in Bellville, SA.