

Identity Construction of Afrikaner Carguards in Durban

**By
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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment (*delete whichever is applicable*) of the requirements
for the degree of MSocSc , in the Graduate Programme in

Sociology , University of KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was / was not used (*delete whichever is applicable*) and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of MSocSc in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Chapter One

Introduction

„The past is never dead. It's not even past“
William Faulkner¹

1.1 Introduction:

The first time I read William Faulkner's remark that the past never dies but continues to live in eternity, it struck me that our present is but a continuum of our past. This was driven home further when I realised the significance and impact his words would have for me as my research on the Identity Construction of Afrikaner Carguards in Durban expanded my view of how our present interlinked with our past. Many authors such as Singal (1979: i) and Petersen (2010), also acknowledged the validity of this 1949 Nobel Prize winner's significant statement. I realised the truth in the context of post-apartheid South Africa where the apartheid past continues to shape South Africa's future.

1.2 What motivated me to research Afrikaner carguards?

In effect apartheid as part of our past is not dead, it is not even past. This is evident in that it still carries much significance for most South Africans. I am often amazed when I hear people talking, and am bewildered by the content of their conversations, because so much has changed in political and governmental structures but yet so little has changed in my social group.

I was born into an Afrikaner family and raised as an Afrikaner. I socialise in a large social group varying from intimate family and friends to mere nodding acquaintances. This group comprises different races, classes, nationalities and religions. In this introduction I want to mention my circle of Afrikaner friends as it is amongst this social group that Faulkner's words vividly came to the fore. I realised that there are certain common threads that run through most of their conversations and social interactions. These threads are the evidence that the past is very much alive and alerted me that something is amiss. Weaving these threads together a certain commonality struck me: although South Africa has been under a new government for over 16 years, the mind-set of this social group was still deeply embedded in apartheid thinking and Afrikaner nationalism.

¹From *Requiem for a Nun* (1951)

What was more surprising to me was that within this social group this apartheid „mentality“ was also deeply entrenched in the generation of younger Afrikaners who have been raised and exposed to a more multi-racial society for most, if not all of their lives. In amazement I would often listen to the younger generation“s perceptions of race; of the National Party (NP) government; of the African National Congress (ANC) government; and in fact simply to their general world view and I wondered how it was possible for young people to still carry these perceptions and convictions. It was the perceptions of this large social group combined with my concern for a group of white Afrikaner people, carguards, whom I viewed as marginalised, that gave me the impetus to initiate this research. Let me explain how I came to know and think about white Afrikaner carguards.

I first encountered white carguards, most of whom were Afrikaners, whilst living in Bloemfontein at the end of 1998. Bloemfontein has a large Afrikaner community living in the inner city and their reactions to these carguards that I picked up on were generally negative. They were considered and described as white trash, glorified beggars and even a „*verskoning vir „n wit vel*“ (an excuse for a white skin). In the following sketch insight will be gained into my personal interest in wanting to research Afrikaner carguards.

At a particular time in my life my husband was unemployed and financially we were finding it very difficult. We were partly supported by my parents who were also struggling and I worked in my father“s small photocopying business to help make ends meet. One extremely hot day I was sent on an errand which entailed going to the shopping complex. I drove into the complex“s parking lot which was mostly empty. I saw a shaded spot which was not an „official“ designated parking bay and decided that since there were only a few cars parked there and because I would only be running in and out of the building, it would not inconvenience anybody if I left my car there. On my return I found a huge sticker stuck on my windshield displaying a notice that I was illegally parked. This led to a heated confrontation with the Afrikaner carguard who had placed the notice on my windscreen. Although I knew I that was in the wrong, and probably more so because of it, I was very angry as my car was not obstructing anything or bothering anyone. Words flew back and forth with increasing verbal energy and in the heat of the moment I insulted him as being „white trash“ or something to similar effect. His response to my verbal attack stuck in my mind and came back to haunt me for years to come, eventually becoming the major contributing factor in deciding my research topic almost ten years later. His words were:

I lost my job and because I am white I cannot find another job, I am not a beggar, because I am working for my money it is not easy for me to do this job.

This confrontation troubled me as I began to worry whether my family would ever be placed in the situation where we would end up „descending“, as I saw it, to his level, that of being a carguard, in order to make a living, or even worse, becoming a beggar. Luckily for me, my fears were unfounded because shortly after this confrontation work opportunities opened up for us in Durban.

As a consequence of this argument I became more sympathetic towards white carguards and befriended a few of them over the years. I slowly began to view them differently and my research was a gradual progression from my interest in Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa with a more specific focus on Afrikaner carguards. I began to think about Afrikaner carguards more and more and view them as a group of people who were doing a particular form of work. Once I thought of that I started thinking of questions such as: who were their parents, and were they also poor?; Are they in this situation because of affirmative action policies in South Africa?; Why were so many of the carguards“ children in the same position as their parents, as it transpired that the majority of their children did not finish secondary school? These were some of the initial questions that came to mind and I wished to find out the answers by doing research. I realised that all the questions I asked were related to the socio-economic status which in turn informs the identity of Afrikaans carguards. I then knew I had my topic.

1.3 What is the rationale for this research?

As pointed out above, part of my social group consists of white Afrikaners. The discussions which dominated much of our conversations in the past 16 years led me to realise that Afrikaners felt strongly about issues that involved their identity construction even if they themselves were not aware of this. I also realised that they were not adapting to change easily, and perhaps a focus on a marginalised group such as Afrikaner carguards could help me to understand my own Afrikaner identity which is situated within the broader spectrum of South Africa“s multicultural society.. Although my research is focused on lower class Afrikaners I found it helpful to draw from my own middle class upbringing to understand my participants. Furthermore, since the participants are a segment of the Afrikaner ethnic group, in which they locate themselves, it will necessitate me to draw from research which is based on Afrikanerdom as a whole. However, due to the focus

of the study – on a small group of Afrikaner carguards, this research cannot be generalised into the wider Afrikaner population.

For example, in my social group conversations were often around what „we“ as Afrikaners had lost since 1994. The narratives were specifically about having lost „our“ flag, „our“ anthem, and „our“ country and how what was important to „us“ as Afrikaners was ripped away from us – torn from our hearts. In these stories South Africa was viewed as „our“ country, and „we“, i.e. the Afrikaner, continuously blamed „our“ leaders“ mistakes made under NP governmental rule. It was felt that Afrikaners were being ignored in the „new“ South Africa and pushed into a social abyss in that „our“ language and symbols were slowly being destroyed through new governmental actions and policies. These observations were often made in the context of failing educational standards, poor health care, and a lack of job opportunities. In fact the latter was often put forward as a reason for wanting to leave South Africa. The majority of my social group are highly skilled and also have the financial means to leave the country, yet they choose to stay. I started to ask the question: what would happen to you if you cannot leave South Africa due to a lack of skills, education and financial means? I asked myself if this was the case with white Afrikaner carguards.

Afrikaner carguards are not only regarded as being in a lower social class, but are also marginalised, not only for being white, but for being poor whites. This distinction made between white and poor white is important and is explored in this research. This marginalisation process is obvious within my social circle, where middle class Afrikaners seem to look down with some measure of disgust at „these“ social failures. To some people being a white failure, i.e. a poor white, is worse than being a black failure, as it is argued that black people can use apartheid as an excuse for not having succeeded. Researching Afrikaner carguards not only gave me insight into „their“ social world, but also afforded me an opportunity to look at Afrikaners from my sample group of carguards, because you cannot understand people’s present reality if you do not know where they come from.

In Chapter two, the literature review, I consider the literature available to assess whether the abovementioned perceptions can be substantiated. Several writers I studied looked at the development of Afrikaner identity historically, and how Afrikaners became a proud *Volk* (nation) through social engineering policies and through apartheid policies of separate development which offered Afrikaners particular privileges. The literature review offers a brief historical journey

through Afrikaner history beginning with the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). This offers an understanding of who Afrikaners are and where they come from which might lend insight into how the identities of some Afrikaners, as represented in my sample, are constructed. In addition, the literature review also lays out the „poor white problem“ as well as how the South African government set about rectifying this perceived social „problem“ over the decades. It is from this point of departure that I would like to introduce the concept of lower class Afrikaners to the reader with the goal to follow this „problem“ from the 1800s to the current post-apartheid South Africa. By analysing my participants who are currently from the lower class Afrikaner social group, I would like to answer the question if this group of people are a new „phenomenon“ or are they a result of the pre- and apartheid era. To enable me to answer this question we need to look at Afrikaners historically

It is from this historical perspective that the literature review shows how Afrikaner identities were constructed drawing from all elements of civil society particularly the family in which racial perceptions of difference were socialised from birth into the Afrikaner mind. The NP government invested much of its resources to ensure that Afrikaner identities were firmly embedded in the apartheid ideology of separate development which focuses on difference amongst race groups. These resources were religion, education, job reservation for white Afrikaners, and symbols to reinforce nationalism such as the Afrikaans language, „*Die Stem*“ (the national anthem), the South African flag, Afrikaner heroes, monuments and public holidays, for example, Republic Day on the 31st May which celebrates when South Africa became a republic but also symbolises the culmination of Afrikaners“ struggle for freedom from the British and self-rule on that day.

The literature review furthermore considers post-apartheid and current perceptions within the intellectual community and the media on what influenced and influences Afrikaner identity construction. I considered several authors“ perceptions on the possible emotional and socioeconomic impact the new dispensation could have had on Afrikaners. Steyn (2001) wrote *Whiteness just isn“t what it used to be* in which she looked at how white identity was affected in the changing South Africa. One of the themes in Norval“s 1996 book *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourses* is on how identities were dislocated post-apartheid. Another author reviewed was J. Jansen (2009), who wrote on Afrikaners from a tertiary educational perspective in *Knowledge in the Blood*. I not only consulted several academic publications, I also researched media reports on Afrikaners. Newspapers such as *Rapport* and *Mail and Guardian* as well consulted on Sunday

newspapers such as *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Tribune*, and *The Sunday Independent* on a weekly basis in addition to internet searches. Authors and reporters, such as Krog, validated the conclusion that most of the participants' perceptions were not isolated emotional reactions, but perceptions shared possibly by many other Afrikaners.

1.4 How could Afrikaner caregivers benefit from this research?

Research on Afrikaners is not a new phenomenon, although it has diminished considerably. Blaser² noted: `

The experience of Afrikaners as individuals and as a collective appears to have dropped off the academic radar-screen in the post-apartheid era, with some notable exceptions. In contrast, in the early nineties, political and social developments among Afrikaners were broadly monitored.

Several authors, locally and internationally, have looked at Afrikaners in different contexts, apartheid and post-apartheid. Afrikaners, however, are not a homogeneous group of people and are stratified both socially and economically. By using the research approach of a participant observer and using methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups, I was able to look at this group of people not from the outside in, as most researchers are inclined to do, but from the inside out, thereby seeing their world through their social lenses and through their perspectives. The research methodology will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. I not only discuss the broader research approach I employed, but also on the reasons for taking this approach and the technicalities of the fieldwork as I conducted it. By taking this research approach I wanted to give the participants a voice; an opportunity to be heard both as individuals and as a collective. During the focus group, on the last day of my field work, one of my participants said:

² Blaser completed his doctorate at the University of Witwatersrand on Afrikaner identity (see reference section) noted in an email conversation with me Wednesday 27th October, 2010 11:48.

Nee [ek is]net baie impressed dat daar iemand is wat belangstel in ons. As carguards en Afrikaanssprekende mense. Dit is vir my baie goed. Dit wys dat daar is nog mense wat omgee.

I am very impressed that there is still someone who is interested in us; as carguards and as Afrikaans speaking people, it shows that there are still people who care about us.

Next, I want to explain who the Afrikaner is and how I identified my participants as Afrikaners, as this is a very important part of the research process.

1.5 Who are Afrikaners?

Growing up as an Afrikaans-speaking South African does not necessarily make you an Afrikaner. South Africans from many race groups embrace Afrikaans as their mother tongue. This fact presents a conundrum for the dyed-in-the-wool white Afrikaner. To attempt to create a homogeneous identity inclusive of white Afrikaners and the „others“ whose home language is Afrikaans, but who are not white, the rather artificial term "Afrikaanses" „was coined“.

To illustrate this diversity in South Africa as a multi-cultural country, I will give a personal example: although I grew up as an Afrikaner, and attended Afrikaans schools my father was a minister of a church which has its roots deep in American culture. Being part of this religious group exposed me not only to cultures other than the Afrikaner culture; it also gave me the opportunity to reflect upon my fellow Afrikaners. I witnessed the difference between the upbringing of English speaking (whites, coloured, American) children compared to the upbringing of my cousins and myself. This exposure to different social backgrounds made me realise that I did not want my children to be raised as Afrikaners and I sent my two sons to be educated in an English-medium school. Although my nuclear family speaks Afrikaans in our home, we still do not „speak“ the same language as our extended family. I realised that to „speak“ „their“ language I needed to speak „rugby“, „Afrikaans music“, „brandy and coke“, „racism“, and so forth. In other words, I rejected Afrikanerness from a very early period of my life, and since my husband shared my religious background and spent many years as a missionary’s son in Africa, it made it easy not to be „Afrikaners“ in this sense.

But the question then remains; who can be termed an Afrikaner? Giliomee (2003: 22) gives an account of the first written record when the word Afrikaner was used: Hendrik Beibouw (1707)

shouted „I’m an Afrikaner“ when he was sentenced by a judge for roguish behaviour. However, if you Google the words „I’m an Afrikaner“ different accounts are offered for the claim: some of the writers say they are proudly Afrikaners, others that they are embarrassed to be called an Afrikaner, and object to being stereotyped as Afrikaners just because they speak Afrikaans. To identify possible participants I decided on a method to distinguish Afrikaners amongst the white caregivers.

Initially I did the selection myself by identifying the participants through their ability to speak Afrikaans fluently but this was not sufficient. I would be simply doing what I explained above is incorrect: to assume that only Afrikaners speak Afrikaans. What was important was that I allowed the participants themselves to confirm their Afrikanerness, i.e. to self-identify as Afrikaners. Below I offer you some of their responses emphasising the „we“ which indicates the social identity of being an Afrikaner in their own words:

Kyk, ons Afrikaners is ,n ongedissiplineerde nasie meeste tye.
(We Afrikaners are an undisciplined nation most of the time)
(Flint) [and further on]

Dit is nie ons wit Afrikaner musiek nie ...
(It is not our white Afrikaans music ... (focus group))

En ek moet by sê ek is ,nAfrikaner myself ...
(I have to add that I am an Afrikaner myself ... (Jacob))

Ons Afrikaners word verdruk ... word verdruk ...
(We as Afrikaners are being oppressed ... (Sarel))

Ek is plein Afrikaner seun wat daar in Krugersdorp gebore is,
(I am a simple Afrikaner boy, who was born in Krugersdorp town...(Uncle))

Fredric was classified by the other caregivers as a white Zimbabwean. During my fieldwork he approached me and asked me who I was and what I was doing. After explaining my research objectives to him he wanted to know why I hadn’t yet approached him for an interview. When I pointed out that I was told that he was a Zimbabwean, he said (in a tone of voice indicating that he was not happy):

But I AM an Afrikaner; I was born in Stellenbosch in the Cape. I came from Zimbabwe; because I lived there for many years ... I was born in Stellenbosch ...

It is needless to say that Fredric became one of my participants. The classification of Afrikaner had to be confirmed by the participants and I had to be careful not to classify them myself and thus be guilty of making assumptions and of falling for the very stereotypes I wanted to avoid. I will now briefly discuss how I structured my research from Chapter two onwards:

1.6 The structure of this thesis

Chapter two deals with the literature review and is divided into three main sections: the first section looks at the literature which explains and describes the Afrikaners' roots from the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) as all the participants' roots lie within this historical matrix. In the second section I draw from literature which focuses on Afrikaners during apartheid (from the 1930s) until the democratic elections (1994) as all of my participants were born, raised and became economic entities during this period, thus their identities were forged during apartheid. The participants shared the methods of identity construction of Afrikaners in general thus the reference to the general Afrikaner literature; however not all Afrikaners share the same perspectives.

The last section of the literature review focuses on Afrikaners post-apartheid and what affect the demise of apartheid has had on them emotionally. I also explore the impact of this on their identities and whether it was possible for them to reconstruct new identities under the new dispensation. The goal of the literature review in general is to analyse the data obtained from the participants and use this to create a better understanding of their perspectives of South Africa.

Chapter three presents the epistemological position I adopted which was rooted in three principles: relativism, anti-naturalism and anti-essentialism. I chose this because it allowed me to draw on social constructionism and the emphasis which is placed on the construction of social identities notwithstanding people's capacity for agency. I examine how identities are constructed through interaction. I looked at discourse theory and how these different discourses overlap and contribute to identity formation.

Self-reflexivity is theoretically explained by Giddens (1984: 41) as a process of identity construction, as humans as active agents are able to monitor and reflect upon their actions. Billington et al (1998: 16) elaborates by saying that „it is through human action or “agency” that social life is also altered and changed“. Colombo (2003) brings the various strands of this

argument together by stating that stories are not only descriptions of actions, but that they involve the narrators' reasoning and motives for their actions.

Chapter four concerns the social construction and interpretivist paradigms I located my research in as they allowed me to adopt methods appropriate to my problem statement. Both paradigms focus on meaning and interpretation and assume that the world in which we live is constructed intersubjectively, that is through interacting with each other. I not only conducted semi-structured interviews but engaged in participant observation, spending time in the field as a caregiver. I used discourse analysis and narrative inquiry to understand the participants' stories, the interview scripts and focus group. This chapter also explains my ethical considerations, as well as the practicalities and challenges I had to face in collecting the data.

Chapter five is the data analysis chapter. This chapter is divided into two main sections: the participants' experiences, perceptions and identity construction during apartheid and the participants' experiences, perceptions and identity construction post-apartheid. Each section is thematised into several areas. This chapter draws from the theoretical framework, the literature review and also from my own experiences, as I reflected not only on the participants' responses but also on the experiences which resonated with my own Afrikaner upbringing and background.

Chapter six brings the thesis together by way of conclusion, followed by a bibliography. In an appendix, I include a letter from a person who took an interest in this research topic and not only read the majority of my work but assisted in sourcing appropriate material. This letter is self-reflexive in that he analysed his own Afrikanerness. I find that this letter not only complements my research but gives some insight from an Afrikaner located in a different class structure than that of my participants.

1.7 The participants

At this point I would like to briefly introduce the 17 participants to the reader.

Ben: a 43-year-old male; divorced; completed Grade 10 in a „special school“ as he was brain damaged as a child due to a hit-and-run accident; refused to live with family members; strongly independent personality; all four of his siblings completed secondary and some tertiary education; caregiving for six years.

Bianca: a 63-year-old female; began to train as a nurse, but did not complete her training; has a security certificate; is a mother of three children, one who is disabled and still lives with her; carguarding for six years.

Cody: a 61-year-old male; began his career in the post office and the railways; completed Grade 10. He is a widower, but at the time of the interview had a live-in-partner; he has four children; three of his children did not complete secondary schooling, the third is in foster care and doing very well scholastically; carguarding for 10 years.

Daniel: a 43-year-old male; single; completed Grade 12; trained in a trade but did not write final exams; has one sibling who works as a teacher; carguarding for two months.

Denise: a 50-year-old female; widow; did not complete schooling; never had a fixed job; no children; carguarding for 11 years.

Dennis: a 62-year-old male; married; completed Grade seven education; has three children; one child completed schooling; worked in the postal delivery service; was retrenched in 1995; carguarding for six years.

Flint: a 60-year-old male; married; wife is blind; completed Grade 12 education; has one daughter still in school; was a trained bookkeeper; carguarding for 16 years.

Francoise: a 53-year-old male; married; completed Grade eight; has three boys none of whom completed their schooling; worked for the railways until made redundant; carguarding for five years.

Fredric: a 62-year-old male; married; wife disabled due to a stroke and needs round the clock care; completed O levels; completed trade test up to N6 (N3 is equal to matric level); born of Afrikaans speaking parents in Stellenbosch but lived in Zimbabwe until a year ago; worked in management in the textile industry prior to becoming a carguard.

Jacob: a 48-year-old male; divorced; completed NT3 (Fire brigade) and tourism diploma; has two children; son did not complete schooling; carguarding for 11 years.

Jack: a 60-year-old male; single; completed Grade 11; worked at the OK Bazaars from the age of 16 prior to becoming a carguard; carguarding for six years.

James: a 48-year-old male; married; completed an equivalent of Grade 12; three children, the youngest one, a son, in school, the others did not complete their schooling. Wife and one daughter work as carguards.

Jo-Ann: a 47-year-old married female; completed Grade eight; mother of three children and grandmother of three, has one institutionalised, severely disabled son; daughter did not complete schooling, one son still in school; trained as a hairdresser; part time carguarding over several years.

Kathy: a 42-year-old female; married; completed Grade 10; has one daughter who completed Grade eight; worked as a teller in a retail shop; carguarding for 10 years.

Lorraine: a 48-year-old female; divorced; completed Grade 10; has one daughter who did not complete her secondary education; worked as a shop assistant prior to becoming a carguard. Her mother was also a carguard prior to her death; carguarding for 10 years.

Sarel: a 54-year-old male; divorced; completed Grade 10; father of three children; worked for the railways and as a sales assistant in a shop; carguarding for two months at the time of the interview.

Uncle: a 72-year-old-male; completed Grade seven; widower; has six adopted children; worked all his life in the railways; carguarding for 12 years.

1.8 The limitations of this research

One limitation of this research is the lack of focus on religion and gender in the social construction of Afrikaner identities. The lack of focus on these categories was due to several factors; the participants failed to highlight these categories themselves, thus leaving me reluctant to actively pursue this line of query; and I had to consider the length of this thesis if I included these categories.

Given my own upbringing I acknowledge that both aspects play an important role in Afrikaner identity construction and suggest this is examined in further research. Afrikaner stories are replete

with images of the Boer woman who is the mother and the man the warrior. In fact the Boer woman was viewed as the mother of the nation. Furthermore, these gendered images were imbued with a deep belief in God guided by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), otherwise known as the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)*.

1.9 Conclusion:

I have explained what motivated me to do this research: the key being that each of these participants has a unique story to tell about who they are working as white Afrikaner caregivers. Who they are, is shaped by their past; that is: where they come from, their ethnicity both historically, and today as Afrikaners within a particular social and political context. I arrived at this topic after a long journey, and having explained that and the structure of this thesis, it is to the thesis that I now turn.

Chapter Two

Contextualisation through literature

„You can’t walk alone. Many have given the illusion, but none have really walked alone. Man is not made that way. Each man is bedded in his people, their history, their culture, and their values“.

Peter Abrahams³

2.1 Introduction:

The poor white problem has resurfaced in South Africa, 80 years since it was first recorded as a social problem which needed governmental intervention in the 1930s. The most visible of poor white Afrikaners today can be found working in the informal sector as carguards or at traffic lights as beggars. This research focuses on a small segment of poor white Afrikaners: specifically the identity construction of Afrikaner carguards.

Identity construction never takes place in isolation but is interwoven within a specific historical context and often geographical location. One also needs to factor in the larger categories of ethnicity, race and gender as well as the macro structures of government, education, religion and so on. Culture with its attendant symbols plays an important role as well. The NP government tried to present race as being predetermined, consisting of four main racial categories. This was followed through with further division of the racial categories into a number of ethnic groups where difference was also emphasised, for instance Afrikaner, English, Zulu and Sotho. The change from NP rule to democracy in 1994 has led to these racial categories and identities being challenged. Afrikaner identity is only one of several which need to be reconstructed; however, it is not an easy process and not one that happens automatically. Although there are many Afrikaners who embraced the new democracy and actively reconstructed or are reconstructing their individual and social identities, there are many who resisted change, and still do. This was not always an active and visible resistance towards change against the new dispensation, but often it was a resistance which takes its stance from the internalisation of apartheid.

For us to understand the identity construction of white Afrikaner carguards in Durban, we need to first review the literature which describes the origins of Afrikaners as a social group, the context

³ http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/p/peter_abrahams.html

in which their identity construction occurred before the NP and during the NP government era. We also need to understand that this identity construction occurred over many decades as a process. This literature is significant to the research as most Afrikaner families' historical construction of identity construction took place within the context of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), the Great Depression (1929-1933), and later the social mobilisation projects of various civil society groupings, and social engineering programmes the South African government implemented to socially uplift Afrikaners and reproduce Afrikanerdom. The social engineering programmes included the use of the media, education, protective employment opportunities, sport and the construction of particular symbols to construct a social pride for the *Volk*. It is important to highlight the term social engineering. Giliomee (2003: 345) links the term social engineering in the South African context, with the research conducted by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, on the issues of the poverty amongst the white Afrikaners in the late 1920s. Norval (1996: 104), refers to the social processes within the „age of social engineering“ argues that it occurred in South Africa during the 1960s, when the government moved from more subtle social corrections to harsher methods, such as forced removals of black and coloured people and the banning of the ANC. However, to understand the identity construction of these Afrikaner caregivers we need to continue looking at aspects which influenced their current identity construction, or the possible resistance to the reconstruction of their identities.

The literature review will be used to reflect on different authors' perspectives on identity construction post-apartheid. This reflection offers insight into the emotional reaction of Afrikaners after the democratic elections. For instance Krog (2009) and Steyn (2001) wrote not only from their own experience but also from an academic perspective on Afrikaner identity, in general, in post-apartheid South Africa. This literature review acknowledged and drew on their knowledge in the development of this thesis. In addition to emotions the other themes included in this chapter, under post-apartheid are new social hierarchies post-apartheid; music's role in the development of Afrikaner identity; and the role symbols play in this reconstruction or resistance to the reconstruction of the social identities. Finally, the literature reviewed considers the identity of Afrikaners within the formal economic sector and the effect it had on many people when the new dispensation restructured the economy: this of course had a direct impact on many white Afrikaner workers and, in most instances, on my caregiver participants. The restructuring process impacted on Afrikaner identities, dislodging some. I am interested in these changes in identity.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section draws from literature which looks at the historical roots of Afrikanerdom beginning with the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902); and Afrikaners' historical background at the inception of apartheid and the symbols which played a role in their identity construction. The second section scrutinises literature focusing only on identity construction during the NP government era; social engineering as a tool of construction; the process of the racialisation of Afrikaners; how sport, specifically rugby, was used to unify the *Volk*; protective employment opportunities; hierarchies expanded within Afrikanerdom creating a marginalised Afrikaner group; and the influence that the border war and civil unrest had in the identity construction of Afrikaners. The last section looks at Afrikaners post-apartheid; some Afrikaners' emotional responses to the changes; music and identity; Afrikaner symbols post-apartheid; and finally, Afrikaner identities within the economy, particularly the informal sector where carguards are positioned. I do not offer a review of the vast literature in both psychology and sociology on identity construction. In chapter three on theory I highlight aspects of social identity and identity theory which are relevant to this research.

2.2 Who are this group of Afrikaners carguards and how did they as Afrikaners become a significant ethnic entity?

2.2.1 Historical roots of Afrikaners:

The poor white problem has its roots in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) (Giliomee, 2003; Teppo, 2004: 14). It was during the 1930s that the term poor white problem was used to refer to white farmers and *bywoners* (farm hands) who due to the economic climate urbanised (Giliomee, 2003). The Carnegie Commission enquiry was conducted between 1929 and 1932 with the goal of investigating the poor white problem. It conservatively estimated that more than 300,000 whites (one sixth of the white population) were very poor and the majority of them were Afrikaans speaking (Norval, 1996: 16). Multiple factors caused this: a shortage of land in the countryside, capitalisation of brick-making schemes and cab-driving in the cities, the depression of agriculture and the influenza epidemic (Molapo, 2010). The Carnegie Commission research reported that poor whites accepted their lot with „dull and passive resignation“ (Gaule, 1997). Giliomee (2003: 322) elaborates on Afrikaners' plight by arguing that many Afrikaner farms were subdivided under the children as part of their inheritance, leaving the farmland too small to support large families, and that the lack of other options left them stranded on the farms

attempting to make a living out of land which was not viable. Subsistence farming left Afrikaners unable to feed their large families, leaving many with a stunted mental and physical development (Giliomee, 2003: 322).

After the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902), World War One (WWI) (1914-1918), the Great Depression (1929-1939), the prolonged drought in South Africa (in the 1930s which resulted in severe crop losses), and World War Two (WWII) (1939-1945), Afrikaners, as was the case with many other ethnic groups, suffered severe economic hardships (Norval, 1996: 12). This Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in unprecedented migration to the cities. By 1939 Afrikaner workers were the majority of unskilled labour (Norval, 1996: 16). It is noted by Van der Westhuizen (2007) that the Great Depression combined with drought and less land left whites in the lower socio-economic strata „traumatized, impoverished, unskilled, and mostly illiterate and (they) had no common social identity“. This lack of social identity as described by Van der Westhuizen (2007) was attributed to the fact that poor Afrikaners were stereotyped by their socio-economic statuses due to the fact that they lived in similar shanty towns which in turn were adjacent to the black shanty towns (Giliomee, 2003: 324). Thus the perception was created that they had nothing in common with the more affluent Afrikaner classes.

Attention was drawn to poor white problems in South Africa, during the 1930s as it was becoming an embarrassment to the then self-governing British territory, the Union of South Africa (Byrnes, 1996; Giliomee, 2003: 324). The embarrassment could be attributed to the fact that Afrikaner identities were becoming blurred and indistinct from the lifestyles and identities of black and coloured people who shared their social-economic situation (Terreblanche, 2005: 266). Therefore Afrikaners, as an ethnic group, were viewed as being under threat of becoming indistinguishable from the other ethnic groups. D.F. Malan, then a prominent Afrikaner church leader, built his political career by highlighting Afrikaners past and present suffering and encouraged an economic development movement to uplift the Afrikaner nation (Byrnes, 1996; Norval, 1996: 50). Not only did D.F. Malan seek to uplift Afrikaners economically, he also saw the need to uplift them emotionally, and he used national symbols to strengthen Afrikaner social and political identities (Byrnes, 1996; Norval, 1996: 20).

2.2.3 Symbols during apartheid:

D.F. Malan focused on symbols to etch in the minds of Afrikaners that their struggle for survival was not futile – to celebrate and acknowledge this a commemorative *Groot Trek* (Great Trek) was re-enacted in 1938, an event that brought Afrikaners nationalist sentiment to fever pitch (Giliomee, 1979b: 113). This was in remembrance of Afrikaners' past sufferings and a celebration of their survival (Byrnes, 1996). This re-enactment involved ox-wagon parades nationally and ended in a large festival in Pretoria on the 16th December 1938; the same day 100 years earlier when the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River (Byrnes, 1996; Uys, 1989: 224). Eleven years later on the 16th of December 1949, the Voortrekker Monument was inaugurated in Pretoria. This inauguration was one year after Malan's historic electoral victory, and was the second great event that ignited Afrikaners' sense of solidarity and of national being (Giliomee, 1979a: 161). Rev. J.D. Kestell, a prominent political figure, called for a *reddingsdaad* (rescue action) (1938) to save Afrikaners from poverty and despair, arguing that the only way for Afrikaners to save themselves was through ethnic solidarity (Giliomee, 2003: 352).

Solidarity and the upliftment of Afrikaners were cultivated with activities that were propagated as being inherently representative of Afrikaners cultural heritage. These upliftment programmes were used to isolate and redefine, what Terreblanche (2005: 266) termed as „blurred ethnic identities“, focusing on Afrikaners. One of these activities that featured prominently was *volkspele* (folk dancing). The female dancers were dressed in long flowing dresses and the men in embroidered waistcoats reminiscent of the fashions claimed for the Great Trek era. The accompanying music consisted of folk songs and ditties that were collected and eventually compiled by the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (F.A.K) (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations). *Volkspele* was introduced as a formal and professional activity by Dr. S.H Pellisier during 1912⁴ (Giliomee, 2003: 491). Organisations and groups called *laers* and the *Reddingsbond* or „Rescue Action Society“ (O'Meara, 1983: 78) which was established to assist poor Afrikaners nationally, held regular get-togethers.⁵ These get-togethers were usually characterised by songs and *volkspele* and succeeded to strengthen Afrikaner cohesiveness.⁶ These activities were some examples of several which were used to uplift Afrikaner spirits and cultivate Afrikaner ethnic pride. Battles for

⁴ *Volkspele* is a South African folk dance tradition, <http://www.volkspele.co.za>, accessed:14March2010

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

the upliftment of Afrikaners were fought on all levels, economic, cultural, religious and political (Norval, 1996: 17). I will be discussing these levels first under apartheid and then in how it was manifested under post-apartheid

2.3 Afrikaner political and economic power under apartheid

2.3.1 Social engineering as a tool to construct Afrikaner identity:

Social engineering, according to Giliomee (2003: 345), had its roots in the United States of America where attempts were made to address and correct social questions through a scientific approach. In South Africa, social engineering policies were used to raise the socio-economic status of poor whites to make them „good whites“ (Giliomee, 2003; Teppo, 2004), in other words, they had to develop an Afrikaner consciousness for Afrikaners to survive and develop into a dominant minority group. Nevertheless, the social question, in this period, which needed urgent attention, was the inability of the poor whites to maintain a „pure“ nation with pride.

This so-called social problem, of the social decline of white Afrikaners, became apparent when many impoverished Afrikaners in the 1930s, of which the majority were *bywoners* (farmhands), urbanised (Kingshorn, 1997: 139). Urbanisation increased rapidly between 1926 and 1936 when an estimated 50% of Afrikaners lived in urban environments (Giliomee, 2003c: 323). These impoverished Afrikaners moved into the same or similar living quarters as coloured and black people, all competing for low skilled jobs (Kingshorn, 1997: 139). These urbanising Afrikaners did not have the necessary skills or education for working in the cities as their skills were largely agricultural, and they were thus placed on the same social level as the black and coloured unskilled worker (Norval, 1996: 2). Poor white Afrikaners“ sense of who the dominant „race“ was became weakened due to their social integration with the coloured and black unskilled workers (Norval, 1996: 22; O‘Meara, 1983: 33). Malherbe further argued that the poor whites were „a skeleton in our cupboard, raising questions about the capacity of the ruling white race to maintain its dominance“ (Giliomee, 2003: 346). Poor whites were labelled as „weak elements“ in Afrikaners population groups and it was argued by Afrikaner intellectuals that they were in danger of reverting to escapes such as prostitution and cultivating a culture of „unwillingness to work“ (Norval, 1996: 23). This danger of the *verval* (decline or collapse) in morality was, according to O‘Meara (1983) a huge problem for the capitalists or upper class Afrikaner as they argued that the „capitalist farmer, poor white and intellectuals all came from the same *platteland* (rural

background) and a decline in Afrikaner values was not acceptable in the eyes of any of these classes" (O'Meara, 1983: 54). To create a unified Afrikaner ethnicity it was seen important to separate poor white Afrikaners from others who shared their socio-economic situation. To do this they had to racialise poor Afrikaners to prevent solidarity.

Social engineering policies not only emphasised the racialised differences between blacks and whites in South Africa but it also differentiated whites, namely Afrikaners and English, separating them into different white ethnic groups (MacDonald, 2006). This was probably due to the bitter anti-British sentiment in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War and can be seen as a continuation of Afrikaners' liberation struggle against British imperialism (Giliomee, 2003). It also was a struggle to rescue their language, their most precious national symbol, as post-Anglo-Boer War British authorities threatened to eradicate it (Giliomee, 2003; Marks and Trapido, 1989: 6).

The *Broederbond*, a secretive order dedicated to Afrikaner dominance directed the nationalisation of projects primarily to benefit Afrikaners; this organisation mainly comprised of teachers, lecturers and church ministers and they promoted social engineering policies through their teachings in their selected target groups. Their goal was to uplift and create solidarity amongst the *Volk* (Giliomee, 2003: 422). Their mission was seen as Divinely directed which can be seen in their motto:

"In every people in the world is embodied a Divine Idea and the task of each person is to build upon that Idea and to perfect it. So God created the Afrikaner People with a unique language, a unique philosophy of life, and their own history and tradition in order that they might fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa" (Moodie, 1975: 110).

The *Broederbond's* ideological war was fought on different fronts, for example in school textbooks which reflected „territorial history and identity" (Young, 2001: 170). By such means the sentiment of Afrikaner nationhood was not only imprinted on young minds, but also on currency, stamps, flags, sport (specifically rugby) and the national anthem (Young, 2001: 170).

Bottomley (cited in Mooney, 2007: 57) demonstrates that poor whiteism forced the NP government to intervene and re-direct the economy to prevent the social disintegration of Afrikanerdom. He also identifies three different strategies all geared towards the upliftment of whites:

“Policies designed to equip the rising generation with the education and skills to become part of the white labour aristocracy; policies orientated towards adults designed to stabilise and improve family life for the benefit of the children; and policies designed to increase the employing capacity of the economy so that there would be enough jobs for the white labour aristocracy”

2.3.2 Afrikaner identity construction around sport during apartheid:

Social Identity was constructed around sport during the apartheid era and continues to play a huge role in maintaining Afrikaner social identity. According to Piliso (2009), a reporter, Afrikaners are stereotyped as „beer drinking boor, passionate about rugby“. However, it is argued that Afrikaners were brought up to relish sport, specifically rugby, so they would be side tracked and not realise apartheid’s ongoing processes (Van Rooyen, 2009) Rugby originated in England. It was introduced to Afrikaners during the Boer War in the British prisoner of war camps, where the game was played as a diversion and as an outlet of aggression and frustration (Perry, 2008). Rugby was not viewed as a gentle game. For example, when the first recorded international game was played against the British and the Irish Lions on 12 September 1903, the expectations were that it would be a violent match as it was only one year since the Anglo Boer ended (Nauright, 1997: 41; see also Desai and Nabbi, 2007: 402, and Giliomee, 2003: 491). This historic game would go down in the history books as one where Afrikaners only had revenge on their minds and that they argued that the rugby field was the only place where they could fight the war all over again (Perry, 2008).

Many academics tried to explain why and how rugby became so important in South Africa. It was suggested that rugby was a legitimised „war“ zone, initially between Afrikaners and British, as Afrikaners could beat the British at their own game (Perry, 2008). A sports historian in Stellenbosch, Van der Merwe says rugby became so much part of Afrikaner identity „that it is possible to trace the whole history of South Africa and apartheid through rugby“ (Perry, 2008).

Nauright (1996: 238) argues that rugby is about the vigorous control of the ball and was promoted along with military parades as a public display of „defiant white South African power in the face of perceived hostile internal and external enemies“. Nauright (1996: 238) further states that:

Apartheid society was built on group identities, thus rugby can be seen as a public forum for the promotion of white „group“ identity along with the deference to authority.

Although many attempts were made prior to 1994 to racially integrate rugby it was strongly opposed by many, for example the co-ordinator of the White Sports Foundation also a Boksburg counsellor at the time; he was reported arguing that „allowing blacks to participate against us...only allows them to take totally over“ (Booth, 1998: 134). There is a long history, as well, of „black rugby, and even non-racial, as illustrated by the case of Cheeky Watson“.⁷ However, change was inexorable after 1994 and this included the sport arena (Booth, 1998: 134). After 1994, it was expected that rugby would follow the rest of Afrikaner-linked symbols and be downgraded, but due to Nelson Mandela’s support of the 1995 Rugby World Cup victory, rugby became part of the new South Africa’s symbolism (Perry, 2008; Booth 1998: 215).

As with many apartheid symbols, South African rugby and Afrikanerness is difficult to separate and many view the springbok symbol as „oppressive“ and excluding other races (McNeil, 1996). Politicians are now finding a battleground in rugby off the playing field as pressure is put on rugby managers to make rugby more „race“ inclusive and less an Afrikaner sport, as many black players are ready for selection for this sport on merit, rather just on affirmative action (McKleevers, 2008). Nauright (1997) looked at how former Springbok rugby players, who received no financial benefits from playing rugby, viewed the shift into professional sport.⁸ The former springbok rugby players frowned upon the fact that players are playing now for the money and not for the love of the sport, in that there are no „sacrifice“ involved (Nauright, 1997: 169). Sacrifice for the game and society... have been an important feature of white South African culture, thus former players are venerated while current players are seen as greedy (Nauright, 1997: 169)

When the South African rugby team won the 1995 rugby World Cup the sport was launched again as one of the new South African national sports, after having been excluded from the international arena for many years because of international sporting sanctions (Perry, 2008). The Springbok emblem, which had been seen as an apartheid symbol by many, was saved by Nelson Mandela,

⁷ "Cheeky" Watson declined an invitation to play trials for the white Springboks and joined Spring Rose Rugby Football Club in New Brighton. QUNTA (2007) Airbrushed out of rugby history, Mail and Guardian, Apr 26 2007, <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2007-04-26-airbrushed-out-of-rugby-history>, accessed 11 February 2011.

⁸ Nauright (1997:169) mentioned that the amateur springbok players were rewarded in other ways, such that some had successful political and business careers

who showed his full support for its retention during the Rugby World Cup by appearing at the final match with a green and gold Springbok jersey (Nauright, 1997: 118, 187). He thereby put his stamp of approval on this national sport and the emblem that represented it.

This can be coined as a „new national ideology“, as Booth refers to Balibar’s argument:

Nationalism requires people to produce themselves as a nation... A nation Ideology, he continues, takes the form of „an *a priori* condition of communication between individuals (the “citizens”) and between social groups ...” (Booth, 1998: 216)

I personally witnessed the celebration of the 1995 World Cup, when all races went into the street to celebrate this victory collectively, for a moment in time as one nation and similarly we will analyse the participants’ viewpoints on sport, specifically rugby, in Chapter 5.

2.3.3 Identity construction through culture:

To imprint Afrikaans as the language to be proud of, Afrikaans songs were written; stories about Afrikaner heroes found their way into the schoolbooks; and at the same time the economy was driven forward by the upward mobility of the now rising middle-class Afrikaner during the NP governments’ reign (Van der Westhuizen, 2007; O’Meara, 1983). This was encouraged by the translation of the Bible into Afrikaans (1933), and through popular literature, made available to the general Afrikaner public in magazines such as *Die Huisgenoot* (1917), *Sarie Marais* (1949) and *Die Brandwag* (1910). These magazines published articles that were used to teach Afrikaners, more specifically women, how to be a proud Afrikaner (Blaser, 2007).⁹ Newspapers, such as *Die Burger* (1916) and *Die Vaderland* (1915), also played a huge role in the promoting of Afrikaans as; „their task was to spread the gospel of Afrikaner nationalism and Afrikaner culture” (Uys, 1989: 230). Giliomee (2003: 364) said that Afrikaans was worn as a badge of social identity. Language played an important role in Afrikaners culture, as it is through language that our world is constructed. We use language as a filter through which we construct meaning and experience „our” world (Benhabib, 2002: 55). It is also through language that we can analyse a group’s culturally unique worldview, its members’ historical memory and how they construct their future

⁹*Die Huisgenoot* was first published in 1917 as a monthly magazine and in 1923 a weekly magazine. Markus Viljoen, editor from 1931 to 1949, focused heavily on culture and literature with top Afrikaans writers - Mikro, CM van de Heever and NP van Wyk Louw - making regular contributions. “*Huisgenoot*” <http://www.superbrands.com/za/pdfs/HUISGENOOT.pdf>. Accessed 15 March 2010

(Benhabib, 2002: 55). Not only was the focus on cultural upliftment of Afrikaners, Afrikaners had to be uplifted economically to enable them to live in better areas and afford them a higher living standard, and by so doing it would separate the „white“ from the „black“ (Teppo, 2004).

2.3.4 Protective employment opportunities for Afrikaners:

Lucrative employment opportunities were created for Afrikaners and this succeeded in dramatically reducing the Afrikaner poor white population (Terreblanche, 2005: 303). To achieve the goal of improving living conditions of Afrikaners certain jobs were earmarked only for this ethnic group. A good example is that of certain job descriptions on the mines which allocated certain tasks to whites only, for example the job of working and handling explosives. (Giliomee, 2003: 329). The SA Railways and Harbours served as one of the largest employers of semi- and unskilled white Afrikaner labourers:

Between 1924 and 1933, the number of unskilled whites employed rose from 4,760 to 17,683 ... The single largest employer of white labour in the country, the railways, employed over 100,000 unskilled and semi-skilled whites (Adam, 2000: 27).

This resulted in Afrikaners becoming dependent on the state to maintain their standard of living (Adam, 2000: 27), unless they continued their education and moved into the private sector. The goal of Verwoerd, Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 until 1966, to achieve social upliftment of Afrikaners through ethnic nepotism, was an „extreme and successful“ form of social mobility (Adam, 2000: 27). This upliftment, although successful, was at the cost of the „other“ and in the long term it was not to the benefit to all white people, which will be illustrated within the Chapter five as it created a false sense of security. This false sense of security seemed to have affected my participants who were mostly located lower on the Afrikaner hierarchy during apartheid.

2.3.5 Afrikaner hierarchies during apartheid:

Weber links status to honour and esteem (Rex, 1986), which is directly reflected in the upliftment of Afrikaners. The class differences between Afrikaners were highlighted when social engineering policies failed to uplift some and they were deemed failures and were relegated to a low status

within their own ethnic group (Rex, 1986:13).¹⁰ Weber (1968) describes status as being linked to honour and this in turn is linked to the standard of living people of an ethnic group can maintain and are expected to maintain if they want to belong to a certain class structure. According to Weber (1968: 932):

A status group (*Stand*) appears when persons share a style of life, consumption patterns, common conventions, specific notions of honor, and, conceivably, economic and particular status monopolies.

Even though the focus of the lack of status of Afrikaners was highlighted since the Anglo Boer War, it was only during the latter part of the 1960s and the 1970s that poor whites became stigmatised, by their Afrikaner compatriots, as it became obvious that there were Afrikaners who despite all external efforts would not or could not be uplifted (Teppo, 2004: 53). Teppo (2004) researched an Afrikaner residential area, Ruyterwacht, formerly known as Eppington Gardens Village. During her research she noted that sympathetic support from the NP government and fellow Afrikaners dwindled when those from the lower class Afrikaners failed to climb the social ladder. This lack of empathy could be quantified against Max Weber's theory of Calvinist work ethic. This Calvinist or Christian work ethic could have its roots in the Bible according to Paul's teaching to the Thessalonians:

We command you, brothers to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching ... we were not idle ... we did not eat someone's food without paying for it. ... We worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you... we gave you this rule: „If a man will not work, he shall not eat“... If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him ... (II Thessalonians, 3: 6-14) (NIV).

Furthermore, this Calvinist work ethic was named by Weber as Protestant work ethic which has been internalised by Christians within Western capitalist societies (Schmidt, 2004: 201).

Class differentiation amongst Afrikaner people became more prominent during apartheid and policy focus shifted to preserve the identity of the middle / working class white people, thus protecting „whiteness“ in the process (MacDonald, 2006: 28). However, this protective barrier

¹⁰Rex (1986) uses status and class interchangeably

gradually fell away during the dying throes of apartheid and after the historic democratic elections in 1994 ceased to exist except as the continuation of the benefits which were accumulated during apartheid. These benefits served the middle and working classes if they took advantage of the „better“ education, skills development and by previously accumulated wealth. However, if Afrikaners did not take full advantage of these privileges they would lack a cushion to fall back on after the apartheid protective barriers ceased.

2.3.6 Afrikaner identity construction during the border wars and civil unrests:

During the Angolan „border war“ from 1975 and subsequent civil unrests in South Africa itself, of which the 1976 Soweto uprising is one of the best known, Afrikaners were not only fed Afrikaner ideology, but also warned of the *rooigevaar* (red peril/communism) which was an external threat (Jansen, 2009: 38). This perceived external or communist threat was described by the Department of Defence (1977) as a „total onslaught“ (O’Meara, 1986). The South African government feared the threat of invasion of communist governments (O’Meara, 1986). According to O’Meara (1986) the strategy to prevent a „total onslaught“ was planned as several steps: neighbouring states had to be prevented from actively supporting the armed liberation struggles led by SWAPO in Namibia and ANC in South Africa; they had to be prevented from harbouring activists and holding activist activities within their territory; and they had to prevent that „Soviet-bloc powers“ influencing or even coming near South Africa or neighbouring countries“ territories (O’Meara, 1986). This fear of a total onslaught was exacerbated by the arrival of large numbers of Cuban troops in Angola in 1975, followed in the early 1980s by East German advisors (Lobe, 2004). This was in addition to the Cold War and the anti-communist propaganda from especially the United States. Cuban President Fidel Castro, who had sent military advisers to help the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the summer of 1975, decided to send troops to Angola on November 4, in response to South Africa’s invasion of that country. Washington claimed at the time that South Africa invaded in order to prevent a Cuban takeover of the country (Lobe, 2004). All of these events served to reinforce that South Africa was indeed at war, that what the government said about the total onslaught was true.

Military conscription had been compulsory for all men at the age of 16 by 1967. By the mid-1970s national servicemen were routinely being sent up to do their duty in operational areas such as present day Namibia (Callister, 2007). But tensions escalated in the 1970s until the border war

became fixed into white South African men and their families' psyche. White females, who represented the home the men were supposed to defend, were actively involved in supporting their men: women's organisations such as the Southern Cross Fund provided comforts for the „boys on the border“, and through the Defence Force Ladies Association the wives of servicemen were involved in helping the military effort (Callister, 2007: 6). Between the 1970s and 1980s young white men were conscripted for military service to defend their country against communism (Baines, 2008). Perceptions as to what the reason for the border war was becoming blurred in the propaganda and the media reports available to the general population. During the 1970s South Africa experienced a surge of mass resistance inside of South Africa, and this resistance peaked during the mid-1980s and military force was used to curb these uprisings (O'Meara, 1986). Giliomee (2003: 615) also described the border war as being an „Afrikaner nightmare“ as all at once the government had to deal with simultaneously suppressing the internal uprising as well as keeping a perceived threat away from the South African borders. The young white male soldiers were deployed at three different levels: as regular soldiers or as conscripts fighting a war in Angola; patrolling the border with Angola in Namibia; or patrolling townships in South Africa (Giliomee, 2003: 593). So it is understandable that these separate wars were perceived by the public and the soldiers fighting them as one war, and one enemy that they were fighting against. The internal uprising and external threat were the one and the same threat, just on different fronts. After 1994 some Afrikaners became embittered as they argued that what they fought for during the border wars were a futile exercise, as they fought to keep communism at bay; not only did they lose friends and sons on the border, they also lost their country to the communists they fought against (Baines, 2008). The border war not only informed Afrikaner national identity, it also contributed to informing Afrikaners' personal identities and perceptions about race, which seemed to be very difficult to dislodge post-apartheid.

Refusal to report for military service training or refusal to participate in the war resulted in a range of punishments, from a fine to imprisonment (Connors, 2007: 75). Men who refused to serve were both ostracised and branded as *lands-verraaiers* (traitors to their country) by patriotic Afrikaners (Baines, 2008). And for those white families who „sacrificed their sons for the country“ by sending them to the border the pain of change from 1990 has been intense, and acceptance to the new government was difficult, if not impossible (Jansen, 2009: 46). It was now expected of the

„white tribe“¹¹ (Johnson, 2009) to accept a system which they had rejected and condemned for the past 50 years (Roberts, 1991: 52). According to Roberts (1991: 52), some Afrikaner groups regarded the then newly ANC governmental system as „evil and contrary to Afrikaners“ way of life“. I would now like to shift the focus on Afrikaners post-apartheid

2.4 Afrikaner social, political and economic power post-apartheid

Because the notion of race was presented as essentialist, the „notion“ of race was deeply entrenched in the way Afrikaners constructed the identities of „others“ and their own social identity (Ballantine, 2004: 106). It seems that because of this essentialistic thinking that some Afrikaners struggled with the transition at the end of apartheid. However there were some Afrikaners whom seemed to take this transition in their stride. For example, two Afrikaans-speaking editors, of the *The Citizen* and *Die Beeld* newspapers, expressed their viewpoint after 1995: „I’ve got a white skin, but otherwise I’m African ... we are a group of people in the process of becoming a new nation ...“; and „We’re from Africa not from Europe, we regard ourselves as Africans with paler skins ...“. However, some Afrikaners have found it difficult to broaden their social construct and feel that they were betrayed and sold out by „their“ government in the processes which led up to the 1994 elections (Adam, 2000: 87).

2.4.1 Some Afrikaners’ emotional responses in post-apartheid South Africa:

Steyn (2001: xvi) described her emotions, as she saw Nelson Mandela walk his walk to freedom in 1990, as irrational fear. However, it was an emotion she shared with many Afrikaners all over South Africa at that particular moment in time. A feeling of abandonment seemed to have descended upon the general white population during the period of change since Mandela’s release (Robinson, 2004). The political negotiations following Mandela’s release and the period during which political power changed hands were not sufficient for the whites in South African to absorb the inevitable changes which would follow (Jansen, 2009: 27). These changes came as a huge shock to a previously advantaged white population group - white people in general and Afrikaners in particular - who sought to blame someone who „sold“ them out (Jansen, 2009: 27). At the same time when those previously oppressed celebrated their victory, the pain of the people

¹¹Jacob Zuma used the term ‘White Tribe’ to describe the Afrikaans speaking white South African population. This term has been used by several other authors and public figures to describe and explain Afrikaners position in the ‘new’ South Africa.

who lost so much was ignored (Jansen, 2009: 30). Afrikaners were stereotyped as „rotten“ and „racist“ so nobody cared to acknowledge their loss (Jansen, 2009: 30). Jansen suggests that this feeling of loss could be equated to how Afrikaners felt in the period following the Anglo-Boer war: He says Afrikaners experienced trauma, loss and „the feeling of inferiority and the dread of economic insecurity...” (2009: 32). Taylor (1994: 25) argues that one’s identity is partly shaped by recognition or even lack of recognition of others. He further argues that misrecognition or total absence of recognition can do great harm to a group of people and create a distorted version of their identity if the people or societies around them mirrors back a negative image of themselves (Taylor, 1994: 25). Drawing on Taylor’s work it is therefore plausible that for Afrikaners this feeling of inferiority can be attributed to the lack of recognition that they experience as an ethnic group.

2.4.2 Hierarchies in post-apartheid South Africa:

Ballantine (2004) points out that the post-apartheid government’s policy to rectify the racial dominance of the past had severe social consequences. Research has shown that white households that were struggling financially during the apartheid era became poorer after the election (Erasmus, 2005: 13; Terreblanche, 2002: 414). This could be due to the fact that they no longer benefited from the secured paid labour that came with their previous race privilege (Erasmus, 2005: 13). In other words, whites in the lower economic strata not only lost their race privileges; they also lost their economic power stemming from these privileges (Erasmus, 2005: 13). An estimated 430 000 Afrikaans and English speaking whites are said to be „too poor to live in traditional white areas“ in South Africa, and this is an addition to the estimated 90 000 who are struggling for survival since 1994 (Robinson, 2004). These figures have been increasing by 15% a year since 1994 (Robinson, 2004).¹² These are working class Afrikaners who became increasingly desperate financially and this could be attributed to the lack of marketable skills and working capital (Robinson, 2004). Robinson argues that some Afrikaners“ clung to the driftwood of their religion, xenophobia and racism and many still believe that they are above menial labour (Robinson, 2004). It is interesting that Giliomee (2003: 324) argues that this perception that white people are above menial labour have been a phenomenon already in the early 1900s, as

¹² I also referred to Statistics South Africa, Census 2001, which confirmed and supported the above mentioned statistics: Primary tables South Africa, Census 1996 and 2001 compared
<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/populationstats.asp>.

even then white people preferred unemployment above that from unskilled labour usually performed by black people. This perception seemed to have been carried through time and a few, if any, white labourers performing low-skilled jobs are seen, for example working as refuse street cleaners.

Some working class Afrikaners found it very difficult to amalgamate with other races with which they share similar socio-economic situations and rather resigned from their job than to be classified on the same level as unskilled black people (Robinson, 2004). Those Afrikaners who are from the lower class are there because of their lack of education and low skills levels. For Terreblanche (2005: 383) there is a very strong correlation between educational achievement and poverty. Only 50% of the white population could, in 1985, be classified as located in the higher skilled category, that left 48% of the white population in lower skilled and 1.2% in the unskilled category (Terreblanche, 2005: 389). Statistics which compare 1996 and 2001 censuses, drawn up by Stats SA (2004: 37-38) show a decrease in the general level of education and that fewer white people over the age of 20, who are potential economically active entities, are completing their education. This could be an indication of how many whites were left to compete for the lower skilled jobs 10 years later, in post-apartheid South Africa. Poor Afrikaners' struggle for upward social mobility is carried over from one generation to the next. The reason why poverty is transmitted to the next generation, according to Terreblanche (2005: 401), is that apart from physical neglect of poorer children, they also suffer from spiritual, psychological and moral neglect.

I am going to be unorthodox and cite from two newspaper articles in the *Mail and Guardian* as they demonstrate that the poor white problem has returned to the extent that the issue is entering the public domain through newspaper coverage. Hutton (2006) reported in the *Mail and Guardian* on poor Afrikaner whites who are seeking for ways to adapt in the new South Africa, since their sheltered existence during apartheid. She drew a link between the „rescued Afrikaners“ in the 1930s and the whites begging at the traffic lights today: „it is evident that not all were rescued from poverty and many (general public) think that it is the poor whites own fault“ (Hutton, 2006). She also argues that one can compare lower class Afrikaners to American „white trash“, who are stereotyped as „morally deficient, stupid, fat, lazy, drug-addicted drunks who are a “waste of white skin”“ (Hutton, 2006). However, even within their socioeconomic situation, the poor „whites“, reported on by Hutton, have a strong sense of independence, since they would rather work for

themselves than work for a „boss“. Low skills were the result of job reservation policies during apartheid and Afrikaners“ lack of foresight to study for trade certification, writes Hutton. Another example is the article by Williams (2008) who notes that very few poor white Afrikaners have any expectations of obtaining help from the government. Afrikaners in all classes have felt the impact of the new dispensation – some positive, some negative. However, Afrikaners in lower classes report that even if they apply for financial aid or government housing it is declined due to their skin colour (Williams, 2008). This problem had been highlighted in 2008, when President Jacob Zuma spoke to a large group of poor Afrikaners. It had then been estimated that between 1997 and 2002 white unemployment had increased by 106%. The fact that many people are shocked when they heard of Afrikaners living in squatter camps, such as the squatter camp at Coronation Park in Krugersdorp are a indication that these marginalised people has become invisible (Joubert and Hoffman, 2009). Just as poor Afrikaners are struggling for recognition, Afrikaners in general are looking for new ways to express their new and lost identities and some have found an avenue in music.

2.4.3 The role of music in Afrikaner identity construction in post-apartheid South Africa:

Music gave Afrikaners a platform to express current Afrikaner sentiments. For example, popular and controversial musician Karen Zoid“s lyrics convey the younger Afrikaners“ frustration: „what do you do with the anger when you“re not allowed to hate anyone anymore“. Karen Zoid points out that Afrikaners felt that they lost everything, which, as discussed previously, equates to recognition, „their“ country, „their“ flag, „their“ anthem, and so forth (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 287). Zoid also expressed the feeling that Afrikaners are confused because they no longer know who they are they have lost their social identity (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 287). Van der Westhuizen (2008) asks the question: „You can take the Afrikaners out of apartheid, but can you take apartheid out of the Afrikaners?“ For the Afrikaner ethnic group to remove apartheid from their system they need to be reflexive on who they are and what their role is in South Africa. „The Afrikaner identity was to a great extent forged in the fires of apartheid“ (Van der Westhuizen, 2008). When looking at the above arguments of Zoid, quoted by Van der Westhuizen, and also at before mentioned authors such as Steyn and Jansen, they all acknowledge that a feeling of loss was and is experienced by some Afrikaner groups; for example, some Afrikaners are seeking to reconnect with who they are and are seeking new symbols as they recently have done with the

controversial song De la Rey¹³ which has become a symbol to many and gives expression to their search for identity (Jansen, 2009: 48).

De la Rey (the song) became a symbol of hope and the words relate to the need of Afrikaners for a leader of their own who would take their destroyed social identity seriously again and restore Afrikanerness to its former glory (Jansen, 2009: 48). According to Ballantine (2004:108), white identity construction after apartheid happened on two levels: on the one hand, many Afrikaner musicians used music to acknowledge the „new South Africa“ and they did that by incorporating different ethnic tones and lyrics into Afrikaans songs; examples of these can be found in musicians such as Johnny Clegg who blended English lyrics and Western melodies with Zulu musical structures.¹⁴ On the other hand, there were Afrikaner musicians who rejected the „new South Africa“ by ignoring the „new“ sounds of South Africa and embraced music and musical rhymes that have their roots in Britain and America, or their lyrics present the notion of a mystical Africa, which is a colonial ideology (Ballantine, 2004: 112). Some white music also carries the patriarchal ideology to the listener, which is historically rooted in colonial and apartheid eras (Ballantine, 2004: 113). However, white musicians such as Valiant Swart and Battery 9, reflect upon white identity and present it to the listener as being angry, lost, restless, hateful and full of resentment (Ballantine, 2004: 118). Music can relay frustration or help with the reconstruction of identities. However, for the social identity reconstruction process to occur there is a need to create meaning through new symbols.

2.4.4 Afrikaner symbols in post-apartheid:

With the loss of economic power poor whites also lost the symbols claimed by Afrikaners as their own. These symbols informed their social identity, for example „their“ flag, anthem, and the pre-eminence of „their“ language. Afrikaans as a language was seen as part of the construction of Afrikaners“ social identity (Giliomee, 2003: 365). In the post-apartheid South Africa, there is an on-going debate about the importance to hold onto Afrikaans in its academic capacity in schools and tertiary educational systems (Prince, 2009; Medewerker, 2009). However, at the same time that Afrikaners fight to keep their language it is argued that Afrikaans as a mother tongue

¹³ Bok van Blerk wrote a song based on General De la Rey, a General during the Anglo-Boer war, which has caused controversy as despite his intentions it has received a lot of support from right wing Afrikaners

¹⁴ <http://www.johnnyclegg.com/biog.html>

education platform is used to exclude the „other“ from Afrikaners“ social space (Jansen, 2009: 36). In other words, Afrikaans schools are set aside for Afrikaners which enrol mostly white students and only a few from other race groups. On the other hand, having mother tongue education in Afrikaans prevents Afrikaners as a minority from becoming a non-entity and disappearing in the larger multicultural educational system (Jansen, 2009: 37).

Newspaper reports mirror the cry for recognition of Afrikaners and a continued call to give Afrikaners a chance to prove that they can and are willing to play a role in the development of the new South Africa (Kruger, 2009). Although there are Afrikaners who fight for the recognition of Afrikaans and Afrikaners at the highest levels, there are other Afrikaners who have taken an indifferent stance, not recognising any part of the new South Africa. This form of indifference is also a silent way of showing resistance.

An example of this indifference could be seen in Orania,¹⁵ and in how Afrikaners of Orania reacted when visited by the ANC youth leader Julius Malema prior to the national elections in 2009 (Steenkamp, 2009). The residents of this Afrikaner enclave received the youth leader as they would have received any other ordinary visitor, with very little acclaim. Many residents from Orania only shrugged their shoulders and responded: „I do not even know what he (Malema) looks like“, and „We are so busy on Saturdays, there are more important things to do“ (Steenkamp, 2009). In other words they received the news about the ANC youth leader’s visit with a sense of indifference. This indifference indicates to me not only a form of resistance against political change but could also be a resistance against the reconstruction of one’s social identity.

Along with the changing structures and symbols Afrikaners were facing the need to adapt by renegotiating their social identity which would have been an indication they have some agency. We should not underestimate individuals’ capacities to shape and transform their own identities, however Ballantine (2004: 106) also argues that race has not been deconstructed in post-apartheid South Africa and I would debate that because of this lack of racial deconstruction that there was some lack of social identity reconstruction. Thus we can argue that because a caregiver’s social identity is being constructed in the new regime, it is also possible that they never properly

¹⁵Orania is described as an Afrikaner movement for Afrikaans speaking whites. The members of this movement retreated onto land they bought in the Northern Cape. They regard themselves as separate from the new government and even have their own flag, which is a variation of the old South African flag (Berry, 2008: web4)

deconstructed their previous social identity and therefore are unable to appropriately reconstruct a new identity. Krog (2009), in a news report, analysed the struggle of Afrikaner youth as having to go through a process of re-construction of the new Afrikaner. She explains how Afrikaner youth are struggling to criticise their „apartheid supporting“ parents and at the same time understand the struggle of „black“ people in South Africa (Krog, 2009). Often Afrikaners attempt to show the world that they want to be part of the social change in South Africa is rejected or scoffed at as not being sincere: „research has found that where people were not allowed to redefine themselves, they solidify into an intransigent and destructive entity“ (Krog, 2009). Krog further argues that to prevent Afrikaners from hardening their stance, their efforts to redefine themselves should be respected and accepted by society (Krog, 2009).

Redefining personal identity does not only happen in the private and social sphere for Afrikaners but also in the work sector. Next I will argue that many Afrikaners“ identities became displaced when they lost their job security and often their actual jobs with the implementation of the ANC government“s affirmative action policies.

2.4.5 Afrikaner social identity in the post-apartheid work environment:

Mercer maintained that identity only becomes a crisis when it becomes displaced (Du Gay 1996: 1). Displacement of Afrikaners“ social identity did not only happen in the larger society, but also in the workplace which occurred post-apartheid when some not only lost their protected government jobs, but also the additional race privileges that went with it. Because work is fundamentally part of our culture it becomes a defining factor of the self, for example, when being introduced to a person, we often ask, „what work do you do?“ rather than, what are your hobbies? (Fryers, 2006). Thus work is not only perceived for its function – to provide a livelihood – but also to give a social legitimacy to one“s life (Fryers, 2006). A person“s position, as an economic entity, is to many a source of their social identity and gives value and self-esteem to one“s life (Fryers, 2006).

Many Afrikaners“ social identities were shattered when they realised that they lost their ability to continue their comfortable lifestyles due to the secure jobs in the governmental sectors. Afrikaners had to adapt to the changing economic situation in South Africa and a small sector of Afrikaners found themselves in situations where they had to enter the informal job sector, for example as carguards. Carguarding is often not perceived as a „job“ by the public but rather a nice

way to „beg“ money. This perception can delegate carguarding as an insignificant activity; however it plays a much larger role in the carguard's life. Fryers (2006) pointed out that „whatever the job, it can give a sense of belonging, of being a contributor, an important part, however menial ... a valued part of society“ (Fryers, 2006). The importance of having a job has more significance than just earning an income; it makes you part of a community of like-minded people who share your goals and often share your social-economic status as well. Having a job also structures a person's day, week and year, it gives a reason to get up in the morning and to participate in society (Fryers, 2006). Work also gives a person the opportunity to share his/her private life with others; it provides a friendship group and emotional support when needed (Fryers, 2006).

On the opposite side of the spectrum, to be without a job can break a person, as it means „low or no income, lack of status, loss of purpose, loss of dignity and loss of pride“ (Fryers, 2006). Not having a job can deprive a person of a „culture“, which has its own defining powers. When the new government came in the government and state institutions were reorganised and many Afrikaners were retrenched (Visser, 2004: 6) and even though the majority received retrenchment packages, if it was not invested or utilised properly it did not last very long, leaving the former worker not only unemployed, unemployable and financially destitute (Momborg, 2007), but, by my own observation, also emotionally broke. Therefore, if Afrikaners fell within the lower social-economic strata during apartheid, the probability that they would have to compete for jobs against other races who share their educational and skills level was great. Affirmative action often rendered this group of Afrikaners jobless and unable to compete for work which previously gave them the standard of living they were accustomed to. In other words, without any work the participants were and are forced to re-negotiate their social and personal identities not only in the greater social arena, but also in the job sector.

2.5 Conclusion:

Olivier reports that the „economically active South Africans seemed to be to be blissfully unaware that two entirely disparate, socially, culturally and economically irreconcilable worlds exist side by side in South Africa ...“. He also points out that it is this situation can be seen by just driving through the streets and seeing carguards, inter alia, trying to make a living doing a so-called „job“ (Olivier, 2008). He further argues that by just observing the interaction between carguards and motorists that there is a need, created by crime, for this job description, but that it also is important

to see how carguards seem to demand a level of recognition for their job description and that they are recognised as working individuals (Olivier, 2008).

The identities, both personal and social, of Afrikaner carguards, born and raised during apartheid, were constructed within the NP government's ideological paradigm. It is with this context in mind that the research reported here was conducted. Furthermore, as identities are constructed within a historical context and with historical influences, the research will keep in mind that there is a possible link to be drawn from the socioeconomic situation of 1930s poor whites and that of the current, post-apartheid, poor whites. Both groups seemed to have suffered a loss of social status, and loss of economic power. This loss seemed to have had an impact on their social and personal identity construction. However this will be further explored within chapter six which deals with the data analysis.

Chapter Three

Theoretical perspectives towards studying the identity construction of these Afrikaner carguards

Theory not only formulates what we know but also tells us what we want to know, that is, the questions to which an answer is needed.

Talcott Parsons¹⁶

3.1 Introduction:

Afrikaner carguards are a segment of the poor Afrikaner population. Their current social and personal identities, in the post-apartheid era, are constructed through a complex socio-historical process. Identities are not constructed in a vacuum, but in relation to a particular time and place, with the individual carguards actively participating in this construction. Identity construction is processural and does not occur in a linear fashion as if one is simply born, develops identities along an age continuum and then dies.

This process of identity construction, faced by the participants, occurs within a particular social context which is always changing, as well as the individual who is changing, as people are not static beings, but rather thinking and reflexive ones. Each individual also holds many identities simultaneously and these to changes and in addition some change in significance over a person's lifetime.

In this research I argue that the construction of Afrikaner carguards' identities necessitates an understanding of the construction of Afrikaners' identities per se. In this historical process Afrikaner was constructed as an ethnicity with concomitant symbols of nationalism to bolster this development. An understanding of this process takes us back to British colonial rule, through to apartheid, and then to the change after the 1994 democratic elections. Furthermore, I argue that in the 1930s some Afrikaners were viewed as poor whites and a particular identity was constructed by the South African government around this notion of poor. During apartheid the colonial belief of races being different was institutionalized into a policy of separate development with attendant

¹⁶ http://www6.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/t/talcott_parsons_2.html

ideological structures such as laws designed to separate race groups, different education policies for different race groups and so on.

This created even more definitive notions of differences amongst race groups which were based on essentialist notions of whites being superior to all other race groups. I will show that „Afrikaner“ as an ethnicity ties up with an essentialist view of whiteness. But none of this means that Afrikaners caregivers simply accepted these identity constructions, firstly, as Afrikaners, or secondly, as poor whites, in a uniform way. This would suggest that people have no agency. The different threads of these identities need to be pulled out in order to make sense of the identity construction of Afrikaner caregivers today. I am going to do this using social constructionism as it allows me to look at individual and social identities which are socially constructed historically and culturally allowing for agency.

3.2 Social constructionism

Social constructionism is much more than a theory. It comes from an epistemological position (our grounds of knowledge), rooted in three principles. These principles are relativism, anti-naturalism and anti-essentialism. The first principle, relativism, is the doctrine that experience is a function of a particular conceptual scheme (Fay, 1996: 77). Because social constructionism has a relativist epistemology it means that its theories are historically located and that the value and meaning of things are culturally and historically specific. This allows me to understand Afrikaners historically looking at the development of Afrikaner ethnicity. Underlying the principle of relativism is meaning. In order to study meaning I highlight interactions between people and language. Gergen, an original proponent of social constructionism, said that „It is human interchange that gives language its capacity to mean, and it must stand as the critical locus of concern“ (1994: 264). Consequently I am studying how people construct reality given that meaning is open to negotiation and contestation. Understanding meaning leads me to discourse theory. Suffice to say that discourses of race, ethnicity, language, nationalism and gender overlap and need to be understood in how they contribute to the formation of both personal and social identities. The principle of relativism allows me to consider reflexivity, mine as the researcher, the actual research in which I have engaged, which by necessity includes both my own and that of the participants. It is necessary to acknowledge who I am as my identity shapes the research right from the beginning, as I elaborated in the introduction, and continues to do so to the end.

Regarding the research, being reflexive lets me see how the manner in which I thought of this research, the research questions asked, and the rest of the process, limited and more significantly, constructed my findings.

The second principle is anti-naturalism where the emphasis is on how culture shapes our identity. Bruner expresses this when he says we need to focus „upon the meanings in terms of which Self is defined both by the individual and by the culture in which he or she participates“ (1990: 116). This shows the interactional process which occurs between culture, which is not a static, closed off entity, and the individual, who is an active being. It is „culture, not biology, that shapes human life and the human mind that gives meaning to action by situating its underlying intentional states in an interpretive system“ (Bruner, 1990: 34).

The third principle is anti-essentialism. According to Shotter (1989: 3), „Most of us feel that there must be something, some “thing” within us which functions as the causal centre of all our activities, the “I” that wills our actions“. Essentialism means that people have an essence or a substance that makes them a part of a group but this is usually reduced to biology such as having breasts assigns one to the category female, or having a white skin assigns one to the category white. Social constructionism is saying that identity is constructed in interaction with others but it does acknowledge the influence of genetically inherited factors (Owen, 1995: 1).

I selected social constructionism for my research because simply put it says that identities are socially constructed and those identities refer to social categories. I aim to understand Afrikaner carguards as identities which have been socially constructed, and do this by looking at various categories which I do realise overlap: their ethnicity as Afrikaners, their race as white, their socioeconomic position as poor and their informal work as carguards. Each category of identity is infused with discourse. Wodak (1997: 6) says that each discourse is the use of language in speech and writing as a form of social practice. The social practice part is significant because it suggests:

... a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution and social structure that frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them (Wodak, 1997:6).

I moreover view Afrikaner carguards in this research as both individuals and part of a collective; again the collective fits into each of the above categories I have just stated. Social constructionism

is ideal as it allows for this interaction between the personal identity and the collective identity as one informs the other and vice versa in many ways. As Owen says:

Just because we can each say „I“ and have separate bodies does not mean that thoughts and emotions are located solely within individuals. Rather, these exist *between* individuals. Humans are part of shared collective aims, values and experiences (1995: 3).

The categories used in social constructionism are „not determined by how the world is but are convenient ways to represent it (Della Porta, 2008: 42). And we know these are constructed in an agential interactional process. Before I look at the categories and their meaning I need to be clear on what identity is through an understanding of social identity theory. I then examine the three principles underlying social constructionism and then look at discourses as a way of understanding the world in which we live.

3.3 Social identities

Work on social identities has a long history in social psychology, which social scientists have drawn on, with Social Identity Theory (SIT) being developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. This theory is still relevant today as it demonstrates that an individual does not have one personal self but rather several selves. Tajfel (1978: 63) defined social identity as:

That part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.

Social identity theory suggests that the membership of social groups and categories forms an important part of people’s self-concept. Therefore when one person interacts with another person, they are not doing so solely as an individual but also as a representative of a whole group or category of people. Social identity theory is clear that people do not simply belong to a group. They gain positive self-esteem from that group belonging and, furthermore, they support their group, the in-group over the out-group. Now to belong to a group means that people have to develop criteria for the group: they create in-group categorisation. For instance in this research, as seen in Chapter five, there will be particular criteria for being in the group „carguard“. The relevance of this is that „people’s sense of who they are is defined in terms of “we” rather than

“I”¹⁷. This becomes important in my research when I look at my participants who self-identify as caregivers. It is necessary to understand how the groups are defined, in other words, what makes it such and its membership inform the identity of the participants? For instance when it comes to belonging to the group „caregivers“ my participants are clear they are not the same as the group they identify as „beggars“, which they have established as an out-group. To them, as we see in the data analysis, there is a clear distinction between the two groups. We will see that they themselves have established criteria for what it means to belong to the group „caregiver“.

Social identity theory posits that people belong to groups and categories. According to this theory the self is reflexive in that it can name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories: a process named self-categorisation (Stets and Burke, 2000: 224). Through this process an identity is formed. But let me establish what social categories are. A group of people is given a label but how does this make them a category? Fearon and Laitin state the assigned label or labels are distinguished by two main features:

(1) rules of membership that decide who is and is not a member of the category; and (2) content, that is, sets of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments, and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category, or behaviors expected or obliged of members in certain situations (roles) (2000: 848).

Hoggs and Abrams (1988) make it clear that social categories are part of a structured society and exist only in relation to other contrasting categories for example, black vs. white, and man vs. woman (Stets and Burke, 2000: 225). However, I will look at Giddens’ structuration theory further on as we cannot simply view these structures as static entities simply in existence for people to slot into. These categories exist in the world, before the individual, as we are born into a structured society. Nonetheless we impact upon those structures to varying degrees depending on our position in society. Social identities are created when individuals occupy spaces within social structures; identities grounded upon race, social status, gender, religion, or sexual identity are examples of social identities (Buechler, 2008). Each category comes with more or less power and status. One’s social identity shapes one’s degree of agency within social structures – „differing

¹⁷ Social identity theory. Retrieved November 25, 2010, from [HTTP://WWW.UTWENTE.NL/CW/THEORIEENOVERZICHT/THEORY%20CLUSTERS/INTERPERSONAL%20COMMUNICATION%20AND%20RELATIONS/SOCIAL_IDENTITY_THEORY.DOC/](http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/theory%20clusters/interpersonal%20communication%20and%20relations/social_identity_theory.doc/)

opportunities emerge from the statuses granted or withheld to these identities” (Buechler, 2008: 190).

To move on from Social Identity Theory we can look at identity theory in which the core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role (Stets and Burke, 2000: 225). Equally important to occupy this role are the meanings and expectations that come with it as they guide the individual’s behaviour (Stets and Burke, 2000: 225).

Rummens (2001: 3) distinguishes three identities, personal, social and self, which I utilise in my research:

... “personal identity” may be used to refer to the result of an identification of self, by self, with respect to other. ... a self-identification on the part of the individual. ... “social identity” may be used to refer to the outcome of an identification of self by other; it is an identification accorded or assigned an individual by another social actor ... Both concepts are clearly distinct from the notion of “self-identity,” which may be defined as the “individual self as reflexively understood by the individual in terms of his/her life history.”

Agency is important to consider when looking at how we construct our identities. Giddens (1984: 5) argues that active agents have the ability to reflect upon and monitor their and others’ daily actions. However, for a person to indicate agency, he or she must have intent to perform a certain action (Giddens, 1984: 9). This intent to act is due to the individual’s ability to reflect on their own intent and make a specific decision on how and when the action will be executed (Giddens, 1984: 9). If an action is performed accidentally or unintentionally it cannot be regarded as a reflective action by an individual (Giddens, 1984: 9). We accept that people cannot simply be born into a society replete with structures which determines their identities and the way in they will live their lives. Yet there are structures in society which do exist. How do we resolve this? Theoretically, agency can be explained as being opposed to structure in the agency/structure debate:

The agency/structure debate in sociology concerns the extent to which the *structure* of society determines the *consciousness* of individuals or *social actors* and the extent to which human action alters the structure of the social (Billington et al, 1998: 242)

We are very much part of the structures of the society in which we live and through our actions we shape the structures as they in turn shape us. Some structures allow us to act, others stop us but our actions produce and reproduce structures. We can understand agency if we turn to Giddens' notion of structuration. Society is a process of structuration which is the interplay between our actions (which structures allow) and structures and this process produces and reproduces structures. We are not passive beings, but active ones. In his duality of structure argument Giddens (1984) states that although we are born into pre-existing structures which form our social and personal identities, it is through our individual abilities to speak a language that we show agency. It is through language that we have the ability to reflect on our lives and social structures into which we were born. This reflexivity Giddens coined „discursive consciousnesses“ (Billington, et al, 1998: 246).

Discursive consciousness is a term used by Giddens to describe the way in which human beings, „actors“, have the capacity for *reflexivity*: that is, they constantly reflect on and monitor their activities. *Discursive consciousness* is the way in which human „agency“ affects and changes the patterns and regularities of social life... (Billington, et al, 1998: 246).

Having stated what social identities and categories are I want to remind the reader that I am working within social constructionism which has three underlying principles, relativism, anti-naturalism, and anti-essentialism. These three principles with their attendant theories will structure the rest of the chapter.

3.4 Relativism

Relativism states that either experience or reality is a function of a particular conceptual scheme (Fay, 1996: 77). Fay tells us that relativism is a „Good Thing“ (1996: 3). If we all live in our own conceptual schemes, then we only know the world from our own perspective which limits our thinking. However for Fay (1996: 3) relativism is positive because it counteracts ethnocentrism. In a multi-cultural society we need as much emphasis on sameness as we do on difference, and that is the weakness with relativism. Within relativism the historical specificity of individual identities is significant, as is the notion of meaning; therefore I look at identity construction as occurring through discourses, narratives, the sharing of symbols and the notion of reflexivity.

3.5 Discourses: class, race, ethnicity and language

Discourse and the construction of social and personal identity is a „Subtle interweaving of different threads“ (Burr, 1995: 51). The research presented here focuses on ethnicity looking specifically at how Afrikaner ethnicity developed historically to the present. Of course the discourse of ethnicity intersects with class, race, languages, as well as gender but I prioritised ethnicity. I also only touched briefly on gender as it was not the focal point of my research and I did not specify gender in the selection of my sample group. I have been clear that I adopt the position that identities are socially constructed in tandem with the categories already in existence in society and our own capacity to act given that various factors will affect personal and social agency. What follows is a brief explanation of class, race, ethnicity and language.

3.5.1 Class:

Class is determined by one's access to material resources. In this research class is further understood as being symbolically constructed. Working class, according to Giddens (1989: 220), can be defined as those who work in blue-collar, manual labour. However there is also a differentiation within the working class and this is usually due to skill levels (Giddens, 1989: 220). The upper working class consists of skilled labourers with job security, less affected by unemployment; on the other hand, the lower working class is made up of the semi-skilled and unskilled labourers in jobs that need little training (Giddens, 1989: 221). Most of the lower working class jobs are low income and have little or no job security (Giddens, 1989: 221). My research focuses on people who work in the informal sector which provides no job security at all. In 1993 the 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians attempted to revise the definition of the informal sector as so many people engaged in work throughout the world are not recognised as such, leading to skewed statistics and a lack of knowledge about them, further contributing to the lack of rights that workers in the formal sector have. What was established is that workers in this sector are not covered by formal arrangements (Hussmans, 2003). This will be shown in Chapter five when I look at the findings.

3.5.2 Race:

I am adopting the position that racial and ethnic identities are socially constructed (Alcoff, 2006). An individual's race is seen as „being fundamental to the self, and like gender ... functions as an

organizational social category used by people to construct meaning from their social worlds” (Alcoff 2006). „Fundamental” does not suggest essentialism but that race (and gender) „operates as a form of social identity that is “fundamental, rather than peripheral to the self”” (Alcoff, 2006: 6). In fact, race is not something that has a biological basis: it is socially constructed but the issue of race is „real for those who are targets and perpetrators of racism in its many overt and covert forms” (Ramsey, 2004: 70, cited in Trehin, 2010: 8).

Identity is imbued with racialised meanings and material consequences through complex social relations whereby privilege and disadvantage are differentially distributed among groups (Holloway, 2000:198). It is difficult to overturn commonsense views people hold of race, which are based on essentialist thinking. Although the notion of race is socially constructed the trend in South Africa is still to view race as being fixed with behaviour still being stereotyped as part of a race group. According to Back and Solomos (2000: 20) race is mostly presented as normal and culturally defined. The research on race is often looked at from a black perspective, particularly the impact of colonialism on people’s identities and the rise of black consciousness as a form of resistance. Post-colonial theory looks at the effects of colonialism and focuses on giving space to previously silenced voices. Writers such as Fanon, Said, du Bois and Biko wrote from the standpoint of black people. A recent phenomenon which emerged in the last 30 years is the study of whiteness and the effect that the construction of race has had on white identity. Because white has been a privileged identity it was not viewed as a site of study. In my research I consider how the construction of whiteness affects Afrikaners. Frankenberg with her book *White Women Race Matters* (1993) was a pioneer in the field of studying whiteness as a race. As Austin (2001: 1) says of Frankenberg’s work what is so significant was her using an analysis of race as a social construction rather than an inherently meaningful category. Her research led her to:

a critical understanding of whiteness as:1) a location of structural advantage and of race privilege, 2) a standpoint from within which white people look at ourselves, at others, and society, 3) a set of structural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed (Austin, 2001:2).

Race as a social construct has affected all people in South Africa from colonialism, apartheid through to the present as the different race classifications defined and structured the lives, personal and social identities of all people, including white people in South Africa.

Afrikaners are often presented as a homogeneous group of people; however they differ within their socially constructed race and ethnic groups, in that they are stratified into different socioeconomic groups.

3.5.3 Ethnicity:

When considering personal and collective identity formation it is difficult to separate race and ethnicity as they are so interlinked particularly in South Africa where historical processes have foregrounded people's ethnic identities by focusing on differences.

Ethnic identities are defined mainly by:

...descent rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as religion, language, customs, and shared historical myths (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 848).

Giddens (1989: 244) explains the shared characteristics of an ethnic group as being: shared language, history or ancestor (real or imagined) and religion, even a similar way of dressing.

South Africa is a multi-cultural country comprising 11 official languages, ethnicities, and many social identities which the post-1994 government had hoped to unite into a single national South African identity: the rainbow nation. Archbishop Tutu first used the rainbow symbol during a march of church leaders on Parliament in Cape Town in 1989, as a biblical symbol of peace he saw it could be a symbol for unity for South Africans. It was used by him a few times after that and evoked by Mandela when he was sworn in as president in 1994.¹⁸ Although it has been 20 years since the release of Nelson Mandela ethnic groups have responded to the changes in South Africa in a variety of complex ways. For instance, a variety of self-identifications amongst people exist which elide across race, ethnicity and a national identity: some identify themselves first and foremost as Zulu and then South African; or Zulu and then Africans; some as Afrikaners; some as South African and so on.

¹⁸ Helga Dickow and Valerie Møller „South Africa's “Rainbow People”, National Pride and Optimism: A Trend Study” In *Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown*. Retrieved January 3, 2011 from <http://eprints.ru.ac.za/680/1/Rainbow-people.pdf>

3.5.4 Language:

Burr (1995: 32) makes a case that personal and social identities are not only socially constructed, but that the construction processes are rooted in language. Vygotsky's position that language predates us is one which is highly problematic because the suggestion that humans are born into a world in which language already exists does not allow for humans to construct the world in which they live, thus his ideas can be viewed as essentialist. The same goes for Durkheim's notion that we are born into a world in which structures exist as if they are fixed. Both these are essentialist views and deny individuals and collective identities any form of agency. In addition, functionalism (Durkheim's perspective) fails to explain how the meaning of words changes over time and if meaning of words can change, it changes how we create meaning through language (Burr, 1995: 38). When the meanings of words change it is also a process of individuals changing the way they construct meaning. This is important because it points to social identity, which according to functionalism theory creates the „self“ through language, also being open for change: this is human agency. Fay says that language gives an individual agency (1995: 55). Because language gives us the ability to question, demand and judge we are able to accept and reject parts of our cultural heritage which does not affirm our world view (Fay, 1996: 55). Without language we would not have agency and would not be able to make the choices that inform our identities. This is pertinent to Afrikaners in this study as class, race, ethnicity and language inform where they have come from and who they are today. Turning to the next section I wish to point out that language is fundamental to expressing identity past and present as it is vital to the process of self-reflexivity.

3.6 Identity construction through self-reflexivity and narratives:

According to Giddens (1991:53)

Self-identity, then, is not a set of traits or observable characteristics. It is a person's own reflexive understanding of their biography. Self-identity has continuity - that is, it cannot easily be completely changed at will - but that continuity is only a product of the person's reflexive beliefs about their own biography. A stable self-identity is based on an account of a person's life, actions and influences which make sense to themselves, and which can be explained to other people without much difficulty. It 'explains' the past, and is oriented towards an anticipated future.

The reflexivity of the „self“ is a very important process in creating understanding of the „self“, socially and personally (Giddens, 1984: 41). Reflexivity can be defined as a self-defining process that depends upon monitoring of, and reflection upon, psychological and social information about possible trajectories of life (Giddens, 1984: 3). This is important not only in the formation of the participants“ identity but in this research. My participants through the interview process and the focus group tell me their life story/biography, and thereby reflect on who they are, as I did too through the research process.

Individuals also give meaning to experiences they reflect upon by inserting it into a narrative structure (Colombo, 2003, 2). This definitely happens when we tell someone our life story. This is when an individual looks back and situates an event as a beginning, perhaps their birth, or even before that, they describe particular events during their life and they have an ending, in the present, or in their future hopes or goals. This narrative structure is constructed in the telling. In terms of identity, or as Colombo(2003: 2) refers to it, the self, what individuals do through narrative is they construct a continuity of self, of who they are, by bringing together the past, present and the future. Fay issues a caution here, by telling us the „relation between the past, the present and their interpretation is not simple or unidirectional; rather it is dialectical“ (1996: 189). In addition, the researcher cannot but have an impact on the participants“ narration through the manner in which the research is conducted, the place, the researcher“s very presence. Furthermore, as Fay (1996) tells us the „narratives are *in* life and not just *about* it“ (1996: 101). The participants are constructing the very narratives they are also living and have lived. Reflexivity occurs within the process of narrating an event, and by using narrative enquiry within the research of Afrikaner caregivers I will be able to analyse how the participants construct their life stories and also to what extent they are reflecting upon their past, current and the future.

3.7 Anti-naturalism:

This principle is of primary interest in the unique character of individual phenomena and their relation to a set of cultural values. We have to be careful in a discussion of culture not to fall into the trap of seeing culture as essentialist: meaning overturning the notion that we look at a particular society and credit to people traits or behaviours which are fixed and belong only to those people. But culture is useful as a concept if we see it as sustaining social practices across time, which are open to change and particularly so by individuals (Keating, 2008: 127). Culture is

essentially a collective concept, applicable to social groups, consisting of shared meanings and interpretations and enabling us to get beyond explanations of social processes that are the mere aggregate of individuals' actions or, worse, statements about individual psychology. On the other hand, it is a mistake to see culture as something inherent in a collectivity, which then imposes on the individual, with the direction of influence being one way. Such an approach is rightly criticized by those skeptical of cultural explanations as reifying the community, giving it an identity and volition of its own, and making the individual the passive recipient of community influence. Rather than being an objective force bearing down from the outside or a purely subjective phenomenon existing only in the imagination of the individual, culture should be located in the inter-subjective domain, that of social exchange and the construction of shared meanings (Ross 1997). It links the individual and the collective levels of consciousness and action by socializing individuals in common meanings, while individuals in turn help to reshape it. Cultural approaches emphasize symbols and their uses. These may be rituals, flags, names or songs, which signal belonging to a group and defense of its boundaries and implicit meanings (Keating, 2008: 129).

Fay points out that the process of enculturation refers to cultural „penetration“, which occurs mentally, physically, and socially. Mentally because culture penetrates its individual members so that they have a certain mindset; physically „so that they possess certain basic bodily dispositions“; and socially as they share distinctive capacities and characteristics (Fay, 1996: 55). Although we can research an ethnic group as a collective we need to be careful to note that although our identities are formed through enculturation, individuals within a cultural group do not necessarily share the same characteristics. This can be attributed to agency, as agents do not only draw upon the processes which constitute their culture, but culture is formed by their ability to interpret and even resist certain aspects of their culture (Fay, 1996: 57). The ability to interpret, analyse and judge your cultural rules is an individual action, however the ability to enforce these „interpreted“ cultural practices lies with people in „differential positions of power“ (Fay, 1996: 57). Thus the meaning and outcome of a cultural rule will not be the same with the elite as it will be to a member of the group who stands on the periphery (Fay, 1996: 57).

3.8 Construction of identity through symbols:

Mead (1934), who later became known in sociology for his theory of symbolic interactionism, believed that symbols were the foundation of individual identity and their social life. He said that

individuals can obtain identity only through interacting with others because through this interaction they learn the language of their social lives: how to live in a society. Mead based symbolic interactionism on how people identify symbols. Symbols according to him, can be described as a common currency through which individuals create a sense of „Self“ (Elliott, 2001: 25). Mead said that everything to people were symbols: sound, gestures, language and were used to function in society. People allocated meaning to these symbols in a socially constructed manner, that is, the object had to share meaning with someone else. Symbols can be defined by tangible items, which have a meaning for only a certain group, for example an ethnic or national group, or it can be a gesture which also only has meaning to a specific group (Buechler, 2008: 185). Vygotsky, like Mead, viewed the self as a „complex emergent phenomenon continually produced in and by individuals in their interchanges with others and with the culturally transformed material world“ (Holland and Lachicotte, n.d.). Both theorists were similarly interested in the manner in which social interaction, mediated by symbolic forms, provided both critical resources and ongoing constrictions for self-making (Holland and Lachicotte, n.d.). It must be noted that when these two theorists wrote about identity they did not at first talk about „identity“; instead they talked about the „self“.

Afrikaners, like all ethnic groups, have shared symbols; some of these symbols are physical, for example the old South African flag. To interpret symbols we need to understand what feelings these shared symbols evoke in another person (Elliott, 2001: 25). In other words, „the self is the agency through which individuals express themselves in relation to others“ (Elliott, 2001: 26). Fay (1996: 48) explains how the self is essentially social and that „they mutually help to define each other such that without others; selves cannot have the capacity to be selves or the material to be the particular selves they are“. But he is also quite clear that individuals are agents. Billig (1995) talks about the use of the flag, where he makes a distinction between those which are „waved“ and those which are „un-waved“. Most often flags sit on buildings unnoticed but at any time they can be evoked as a symbol replete with meaning to make a statement, to galvanise people to action. For instance, the waving of the old South African flag at the murder trial of the Afrikaner *Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB) leader Terre“Blanche this year expressed a range of feelings of hurt and anger.

3.9 Anti-essentialism:

Burr (1995: 5) argued that social constructionism is anti-essentialist. Essentialism is problematic in that it implies a dualistic approach to identity, which means one is always existing in opposition to the other: such as man vs. woman; black vs. white. Essentialist ways of thinking about identity are based on fixed, limited boundaries which do not allow for change. Basically we cannot reduce identity to biology. With essentialism boundaries are fixed, and ambiguities cannot be tolerated (Woodward, 2002: 143). Identity theory also argues that one's identity construction is not essentialist, but it is constructed through interaction with other people (Buechler, 2008: 24). Lamont's (2006:173) findings on how French and American workers draw symbolic boundaries against racial minorities and immigrants further supports the view that identity is constructed, „as opposed to “primordial”, essential and fixed in time“. Blumer places a very strong emphasis on the interaction of the individuals with other people and argues that social identity construction is only possible when others assign meaning to you and your actions and vice-versa (Buechler, 2008: 187).

3.10 Conclusion:

In this chapter I have explained that I am drawing on social constructionism as a means to understanding the participants in my research. This is because social constructionism is so much more than a theory but epistemologically comprises three principles: relativism, anti-naturalism and anti-essentialism. These principles include the theories I drew on to understand the multiple identities of white Afrikaner carguards in Durban. It allowed me to look at different parts of their identities: their whiteness, ethnicity and class as they worked in the informal sector in a manner which focuses on identities being constructed in interaction with others. This interaction is important as it allows for agency and meaning. In Chapter five, the data analysis chapter, I will draw on these theories when I present my findings.

Chapter Four

Methodology

„I’ve found that if I say what I’m really thinking and feeling, people are more likely to say what they really think and feel. The conversation becomes a real conversation. “

Carol Gilligan¹⁹

4.1 Introduction

Gilligan’s words above highlight my strengths as a researcher. I realised that people are willing to share their world view and experiences with you, if you are willing to share the same of yourself with them. Being raised as an Afrikaner, allowed me to identify with my participants in some areas and speaking Afrikaans allowed me to converse with my participants. This meant that I found it easy to use a „conversation“ approach as the basis for my research methodology.

My broad research objective for this chapter is to take the participants’ narratives of their experiences as white Afrikaner caregivers and demonstrate that these participants who are perceived as a marginalised group’s stories are multiple and diverse. This allows us to gain insight into the diversity of whom and what the Afrikaner caregiver is. This dovetails with the focus of this particular chapter which is on research methodology and in a broader perspective the detail of my role as participant observer which allowed me to gather particularly rich insights into this specific segment of society.

This chapter is broken down into three sections: firstly, a discussion of the broad paradigms in which this research is located; secondly, the methods used; and, thirdly, the research process. The research paradigms I chose were social constructionism and interpretivism, for two reasons which fit in with my theoretical paradigms explained in the previous chapter. Firstly, because both emphasise human perception and interpretation and assume that reality as we know it is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (della Porta and Keating, 2008: 2). These paradigms do not allow me to cut myself off from the research and try to maintain an objective stance as would be the case in positivism. How I know the world as a researcher is central to how I understand the participants in this research and the world they inhabit (della Porta and Keating, 2008: 2). In Chapter three I am clear

¹⁹ American Psychologist, writer and researcher, downloaded from <http://www.great-quotes.com/quote/869284>

social constructionism is about understanding how we construct the world in which we live and give meaning to it. In this chapter both constructionism and interpretivism embrace meaning and are utilised with the aim of understanding events by discovering the meanings human beings attribute to their behaviour and the external world (della Porta and Keating, 2008:26). Both these paradigms draw on Weber's conceptualization of *verstehen* to understand the motivations that lie behind human behaviour (della Porta and Keating, 2008:26).

The methodology for both social constructionism and interpretivism is qualitative which opened up a range of methods I could use: semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and participant observation whilst in the field. I also used narrative inquiry where I analyse the stories told to me by the participants in the interviews, so that they become narratives. This is in line with the position of Frank (2000) who points out that people tell stories, but narratives come from the analysis of stories (Riley and Hawe, 2004:3).

I will explain why I decided on the specific sampling method used for this research. I will discuss the ethical considerations and issues which I encountered during the research. Thereafter, I will look at the actual research process, offering concrete examples from my own research experience. As part of the actual research process, I will be looking at how important it was for me, as a researcher, to be empathic and not to react negatively to the participants' perceptions or worldviews, which often was in opposition of mine, whilst I was in the field or during the interview. Finally, I will be looking at the interview dynamics which brings me back to the above quotation by Gilligan, who speaks about the role that ordinary „conversations“ can play within the research process. Before I proceed I would briefly like to restate the research problem to remind us of the context of this chapter.

4.2 Research problem

After the 1994 democratic elections everyone had to face change. For the majority of South Africans this change was viewed as positive. The research, presented here, aimed to investigate the extent to which one specific group of white Afrikaner caregivers had adapted to this change. Adaptation to what is commonly referred to as the „new“ South Africa required more than just a change of attitude; it required a whole shift in thinking as for all South Africans life as it was would no longer be, and there was much uncertainty as to how it would be in the future. Furthermore, Afrikaners had been viewed by the majority of „other“ South Africans as holding

power and privilege - socially, economically and politically. This political change in 1994 meant a change for white Afrikaners on many levels and the one I am concerned with is the identity construction of a small group of Afrikaners who are regarded as lower class and working as carguards in Durban. The formation of identity is processural and begins with socialisation in the family unit in a particular social context. That social context had changed. Identity as we also know is complex and multiple and in this context I am looking at Afrikaner identity as an ethnicity, their whiteness as a race category, and carguarding their work status, which is informal and which places them in the socio economic category of poor. Now these identities were very different from that of pre-1994 in many ways and that is what is pertinent to this research. It is reasonable given the apartheid ideology of separate development that some adult South Africans raised in the apartheid time period might find it difficult to redefine the „self“ in the context of change. My research concerns identity construction of Afrikaner carguards in South Africa. Freedman and Freedman (1975: 125) argue that we are socialised into our identities from the cradle to the grave, meaning that the construction of our „self“ does not end in childhood, but continues to be shaped throughout life.

The socialisation process of Afrikaners has many dimensions, as the apartheid governmental re-engineering processes played a huge role in the original shaping of these processes. The apartheid governmental structures socialised Afrikaners to be proud of their „own“ by using symbols. These symbols were presented to Afrikaners from a very young age and were incorporated into the formal school curriculum and less formally through religion and the media. These symbols included historical „Afrikaner heroes“ for example Piet Retief, Wolraad Woltemade and Racheltjie de Beer, to name a few. I ensured that the methodology employed allowed me to understand these construction processes.

4.3 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is not a descriptive and explanatory practice that aims at truth claims (Zeeman et al, 2002). Rather, as Durrheim says, the point is „to account for how particular conceptions of the world become fixed and pass as truth“ (1997: 181). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 154-167) offer a three-facet approach to discourse analysis. They argue firstly that the discourse itself is located in texts, which in this case are the interview and focus group transcripts; secondly, the effects of this text need to be looked at, such as what does the text do?; And thirdly, researchers

need to look at the context, in other words at what is the institutional, ideological and historical context of the text.

According to Parker (1992: 6), the researcher should understand when analyzing the text using discourse analysis, „the task of research to be a reflexive and productive not a descriptive practice“. It is not simply enough to describe something; the researcher needs to explain how that thing has meaning; what gives it its particular meaning. Durrheim (1997: 181) explains that discourse analysis is a reflexive process that aims to provide an account of how „objects“ in the world are constructed against a background of socially shared understandings. If individuals together do not share the meaning of an object they cannot have a dialogue about it, they cannot have an interaction. Shared meanings are important to us as we are social beings, part of groups, part of society. We can contest and challenge the meaning but there has to be a shared understanding in order for there to be a challenge. The broader research focused on how the participants constructed themselves through narratives, which indicated how they construct their social identity through shared meaning and interactions. The participants“ social identity construction is informed by discourses of race, ethnicity, class and the historical discourse of apartheid. These discourses are not discrete entities; rather they overlap and function in a myriad of ways together to inform a person“s individual and social identity.

Discourses are interlinked and overlapping. It behoved me to study the Afrikaner identity through the discourse of „race“ as well as to examine how apartheid shaped the participants“ understanding of „race“. It therefore was imperative for me to use the discursive framework to understand the participants“ constructed identities and the social-economic contexts wherein they were born and raised, as well as their current social context (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999: 156). However, discourse analysis being methodological, needs to be further explained. A discourse analysis is concerned with determining the processes which come into play when people interact with each other (Burr, 1995: 178). It was by observing the interactive processes between the Afrikaner carguards, and carguards from different race groups and their clients that I came to be privy to much richer data which I would otherwise not easily have noticed. Yet these interactions are such a vital part of the research process and it was here, in the field as the participant observer, that I came to learn so much about my participants“ identities, evidence that I would not have learned from the interview process alone. These processes include how they talk and negotiate with each other, how they justify their actions and so forth (Burr, 1995: 178).

4.4 Taking an interpretive approach

Weber (1964:88) offers the clearest expression of the interpretive standpoint in his famous definition of sociology:

Sociology ... is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action ... In „action“ is included all human behaviour when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it.

In order to understand the meaning participants and myself, the researcher, attach to caregivers' work I chose the interpretive approach as it allows me to study „meaningful events or moments“ in the lives of the participants (Denzin, 2001: 58). As he further states, the interpretive method rests on the collection, analysis, and performance of stories, accounts, and narratives that speak to turning-point moments in people's lives (Denzin, 2001:59). In order to collect this data the researcher needs to be on site, or conduct the interviews, but more importantly requires good listening skills. Denzin (2001: 66) offers several elements of good listening skills, the most significant I feel is that being a good listener one has to have a reason for listening, i.e. „he or she has to create an identity in the social groups he or she is studying“. Being a caregiver in the field alongside the participants speaks directly to this.

But good listening requires observing what participants also do not say, as well as studying their body language. A good example of this approach is Krog's, reported in 1998 on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa following the 1994 democratic elections (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 1999). The participants in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission used more than just language to convey their experiences during the apartheid era, but also expressed themselves by using emotions, body language and narratives. The full ranges of expressions were interpreted holistically by Krog, a South African poet, academic, writer and reporter. This interpretation included the emotional impact apartheid had on the individual and the social group to which the individual belonged. Examples of the importance of taking body language into account during research were also seen during my research on Afrikaner caregivers. Especially in the initial phase of my research I was not totally trusted by the participants and at first they were reluctant to express their feelings regarding racial issues in fear that it would be used against them in some form or another. This reluctance and discomfort in sharing these views were observable

through body language; when the participants would refuse to make eye contact; would increase body distance; fold their arms; turn their shoulders away from me; or even change the subject. Body language also tended to highlight the participants' deeper emotions, especially when they felt extremely vulnerable or very strongly about a certain topic. A good example of this was when a participant told me that when her father received a full military funeral post-1994 she and her siblings ripped the new South African flag from their father's coffin and replaced it with the old one, since they felt no bond with the new South African symbols; her facial expression and body language showed aggression when the topic was discussed.

As with constructionism, interpretive researchers are urged to look at the context wherein the participants' experiences developed such as the socio-historic and linguistic contexts (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 1999: 124). In other words, understanding is situational and could be better described by the German word *Verstehen*, employed by Weber (Wills, 2007: 293). *Verstehen* is to understand the perspective of other people, and because understanding is situational it is important to scrutinise not only the participants' current, but also their historic situations (Wills, 2007: 293). To understand Afrikaner carguards, it is important to research them within the context of apartheid, because without understanding their identity construction during apartheid, it would be impossible to understand their identity construction post-apartheid.

Furthermore, deploying the interpretative paradigm's methodology allowed not only for interpretation, but also for ethnographical or participant observation research methods, social and historical construction (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

4.5 Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is an important tool in the interpretative paradigm as it highlights not only the experience but also the context of the experience. Thus narrative inquiry is very important in the study of ethnicity (Blaser, 2007: 60). Narratives of these Afrikaners assisted me in understanding how they are negotiating „whiteness“ in post-apartheid South Africa (Blaser, 2007: 16). Blaser (2007) presented Clandinin and Connelly perspective on the narrative and they named two pairs of directions of a narrative: inward and outward, forward and backward:

Inward means looking at feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions. Outward requires the study of the environment, the existential conditions, or to put it in another way, the historical,

political and socio-economic conditions. Backward and forward refers to the temporal dimension, the past, present and future.

To understand this specific Afrikaner segment, we need to look at all these dimensions and how they construct themselves narratively.

According to Wills (2007: 296) Rakin-Brown describes the importance of narrative research as revealing not only the events described by the participant, but also the feelings and the reflexivity involved in the recounting of the particular event. Thus it is important to note that narratives are not just stories being told but, according to Bruner (2004: 692), it is a cognitive process.

A cognitive person is seen as someone who is constructing meaningful relationships by absorbing information, thinking about it and then putting it out by narrating it (Bamberg, 2005: 215). Narratives also serve the purpose of helping the narrator to work through challenging circumstances through the cognitive processes available to her (Bamberg, 2005: 25). These cognitive processes were visible when the participants started describing a specific event in their lives from a certain perspective. Often, after relating the incident to me from one perspective it seemed to shift from its original position. This shift can be perceived as that the participants were contradicting themselves. For instance, it can often be seen when asking a participant a question they respond very quickly, without thinking about their answer. However, the participants sometimes would return to the question and later respond with a different answer to the same question. These different answers often were an indication that the participants had reflected on the question and on our conversation. An example of this shift in perspective could be seen in two different answers given by one of the participants when he explained why he resigned from his job at the railways. At first Sarel, an ex-railways employee contended that he resigned because he did not want to share the ablution facilities with his „black“ co-workers. Upon probing more about his answer he then at a later stage in the research acknowledged that the actual reason for his resignation was because of fear; he was afraid of what his future would hold under the new government. It is difficult to know what to make of the wide disparity in his answers: he moves from racism in the first answer to a less vague one about fear of his future. His second answer could be that he had had time to think about what his first answer sounded like to the researcher, or he simply added more to his answer as he was looking back at that time in his life. Many other participants argued that they were jobless because of the new government, but later on, after reflecting upon this, some acknowledged that their lack of education played a significant role in

determining their current socioeconomic position. This shift in perspective revealed the agency that determined the participants' shift in ethnic identity. It was interesting to see how the narrational reflection on their past, current and future expectations I referred to above, had the ability to reconstruct their identities. Narratives reveal parts of people's lives yes, but we need to take into account how the person remembers the past, and how they construct that particular story they are telling when looking back. When recalling an episode and narrating it the person is doing it from within their present identity, which has changed since the episode occurred; and, secondly, they are telling the story in a particular context of being asked to recall it by a researcher. Stories are continuously constructed even when they are about events we have lived through. In other words, narrating the self is about constructing your social and personal identities through reflection as you „tell your story“.

Narratives have an important place in qualitative research as they not only place an individual in context; they also locate an individual's constructed identity within stories. According to Fay (1996: 197) stories are lived because „human activity is narrational in character and form“. He further argues that by telling stories we „knit the past and future together“ (Fay, 1996: 197). Fay makes an important point that we are telling stories we have lived, looking back on them, constructing them as we tell them because we reflect on them and notice things we couldn't whilst we were living the experience. By using narrative research I was not only able to locate the participants' identities within the larger social context, but also able to see how their past life, current life and future expectations are interlinked.

4.6 Sample

As I used the interpretive research paradigm, I selected my sample group by using convenience or opportunistic sampling, as I had to rely on participants on the basis of their availability (Terre Blanche and Kelly 1999: 38). Qualitative researchers seldom have a larger sample as the focus of a qualitative researcher is the relevance of the research topic rather than the representative sample, which quantitative researchers use (Neuman, 2000: 196). I interviewed 17 participants at four different sites, two of the sites were at shopping centres, one site was in a hospital car park, and the other site was on the beachfront in the inner city.

There were three criteria for selecting the participants in this study. The first criterion was age as I was interested in the perceptions of Afrikaners pre- and post-apartheid. I targeted Afrikaners who were currently 40 years old and older, as they would have been part of the population group that would have been economically active during the apartheid dispensation. These participants having grown up during the apartheid era would have had their social identity largely informed within this context. The majority of the participants resided for the most part of their adult life in Durban, although generally they grew up in the Transvaal. The second criterion was that their mother language had to be Afrikaans; and, finally, that they had to have worked as a carguard.

My participants' working experience ranged from two months to 12 years in this field of work. By interviewing this range I could acquire the perspectives of carguards who recently entered the field and had not yet become settled and desensitised by the public opinion, right up to the more seasoned carguards. Seasoned carguards often describe their experiences as rewarding, as they felt that they were delivering a meaningful service to the public. Carguards who had been working on the same site for a longer period of time, in some cases up to 12 years, reported that they have „regular customers“ who are very supportive and who would seek out parking places close to them. This had the advantage that these carguards not only got to know their „customers“ well, but they also knew which car belonged to whom, which enhanced the customer's security. The newer carguards, who had only been in the field for a few months, described their work as demeaning and difficult. They also were more sensitive toward the „racial“ remarks and „racial“ tensions which often come to the fore in this kind of work. One example which I personally witnessed was when a black motorist who obviously did not approve of being directed to a parking spot by a white carguard shouted, “This is not your country anymore, it belongs to us and you cannot tell me what to do”.

4.7 Methods

4.7.1 Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups:

Participant observation is a time-consuming activity and as there were a number of participants scattered across the sites - rather large parking lots - I had to plan the amount of time I was going to spend with each during the course of the day. I was planning to approach my participants with triangular research methods: one semi-structured interview, follow up interviews, participant observation, and finally a focus group. This triangulation allows a researcher to collect data from

diverse sources and it can help the researcher to „hone“ in on a correct understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 1999: 128).

To establish a connection with the participants I presented myself as an empathetic researcher. One participant told me at the beginning that he did not trust me, because I might tell the government about our conversations and also he did not know who would read my material. However, several months after our initial conversation this participant shared very personal information with me as he ceased to feel threatened by me. As a participant observer I planned to spend long hours with the participants and it was imperative for me to establish a certain level of trust and rapport with them. Participant observation allows the researcher to conduct research from several angles: informal interviews, participation and direct observation which gives access to the participants' life histories as she becomes more intimately familiar with them (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

At the beginning of the fieldwork I used semi-structured interviews. I began by introducing myself and explained my research goals. In addition, I used this opportunity to gather some basic background information on the participants, keeping the interview loosely structured. Bray (2008: 309) argues that interviews complement participant observation because they allow the researcher to compare the interview with the actual observed behaviour in the field. Subsequent interviews with the same participants were conducted for clarification purposes or to gain new material when I realised that there were gaps in my data.

I decided not to take notes during the interviews as this would interrupt the informal setting and inhibit the free flow of the conversation. In the majority of cases, I recorded the interviews allowing me to capture the content and emotional responses of the participants.²⁰ The recorder was worn overtly, not only during the interviews but also whilst doing participant observation. From the recordings I could pick up how a participant often paused or hesitated before answering, indicating an initial uncertainty or reluctance to respond to the subject under discussion or giving an indication of reflexivity. For instance, emotions could be detected when „race“ was discussed,

²⁰ Although the recorder was used in most interviews, there were two participants who would not give permission to be recorded but would accept me taking notes. There were also two incidents where the recorder malfunctioned and I had to take notes and rely on my memory.

and I realised how much information would be lost if most of the participants had refused to allow the interviews to be recorded. Even when I asked the same questions to the same participant, in the case when the recorder malfunctioned, while recording a subsequent interview, the initial unrecorded responses were lost and could not be recaptured.

Once I had conducted the semi-structured interviews and been in the field I held a focus group. Litosseliti (2003: 1) defines focus groups as being structured groups with selected participants led by a monitor. I, in the role of the researcher, was the moderator of the focus group. Morgan (1997) argues that focus groups place the emphasis on the exchanges between the researcher and the participants and stimulation among the group participants themselves (Litosseliti, 2003: 3). The focus group occurred at the end of the time I spent in the field and will be discussed at a later stage in this chapter because of the manner in which it came about.

4.7.2 Ethics:

Ethics are an important consideration when research involves human participants. This is due to the need to protect them from any physical, psychological or emotional harm, to serve their interests, and to examine the research process itself to ensure it adheres to the rules of informed consent and adoption of anonymity to protect participants. The International Sociological Association (ISA) has developed a code of ethics which although not all-inclusive does offer sociologists a guide in that its main goal is to: „protect the welfare of groups and individuals with whom and on whom sociologists work ...“²¹ A distinction is sometimes made between ethics and morals. Robson (2002: 66) says that although both indicate differences between good and bad, or right or wrong, ethics as it is used in research in the social sciences usually refers to the conduct (interaction) of the researcher with the participants. However, it is possible to behave ethically, according to the rules of your organisation, but morally be out of order (Robson, 2002: 66).

In order to illustrate Robson’s distinction I point to an incident that occurred during my research. A participant, having signed a consent form as they all did, shared very personal and sensitive information with me. After careful consideration given the content of the information I decided that although I had a signed consent form it would be immoral to include this however relevant it

²¹ Web 3. (2001) Code of Ethics: International Sociological Association. Retrieved November 22, 2010 from: http://www.isa-sociology.org/about/isa_code_of_ethics.htm

may be to my research. Given the ethical guidelines I could have transcribed and included the information; however I felt it was not moral to do so as despite anonymity there was another issue to consider. I thought that at any time in the future when the participant saw the information in published form it might have a detrimental psychological impact as this information was a secret that the participant was keeping which I then was privy to. Babbie and Mouton (2003: 520) argue that „The scientist has the right to the search for truth but not at the expense of the rights of other individuals in society“. In other words, the researcher holds an important responsibility to the participant and this responsibility should be very carefully guarded (Bray, 2008: 313). This is especially true since intimate experiences; sensitive historical or contemporary events are often articulated by participants during the research process.

Within the field of ethics researchers warn that it is easy to become caught up in your research as one of the participants during your fieldwork, over identifying with them, so that you lose your purpose as a researcher and overlook your goals. I thought about this because although my participants knew that I was there as a researcher, the public and the other caregivers who were not part of my sample group, did not know the purpose of my presence there. To them I was simply another caregiver when actually I was conducting fieldwork. However, my goals remained clear. I was a participant observer, doing fieldwork, with a particular sample group to whom I had disclosed my identity as a researcher.

Babbie and Mouton (2003: 296) raise the question of ethics, whether being a covert researcher is deceptive and whether this deception is ethical. Covert research can be defined as research done on a participant without their informed consent (Patton, 2002: 272). I did not conduct covert research but could not do anything about the caregivers who were not part of the sample group or the public who viewed me as another caregiver doing a job. This however is not covert research but a consequence of being in the field. Regarding my sample group of Afrikaner caregivers I chose overt research as it facilitates the establishment of trust and rapport.

4.8 Doing the research

4.8.1 Gaining Access:

Gaining access to the field was not as challenging as I had initially thought it would be when I conceived of the project. Because the participants are caregivers they are viewed as self-employed

and because they are part of the informal job sector I had very few barriers to cross in gaining access to the field.

Although carguards are not paid a salary and only work for the tips they receive from the public, they nevertheless are part of an organized collective. Legally they are bound to be registered and qualified as security officers. To qualify they are required to attend a security course which they often cannot afford to do. The other problem is that they do not always understand the full legal ramifications of and intricacies involved in such registration. The other option is that one security officer registers legally and that the other carguards then legally „work“ for her. The security officer negotiates a site to work from, and the carguards each pay a site fee which in effect is a franchise fee to the registered security officer who is the „owner“ of the site, for the privilege to work on that site. Thus, although they are legally „employed“, they work as independent franchisees and as such do not receive a salary, but in reality are self-employed. The registered security officer only visits the site on average once a week and then only to collect the week's site fees from the site manager. The site manager is usually elected by the other carguards to collect the site fees and to liaise between them and the security officer. Although each carguard works individually, I still felt that I should approach the site manager for permission before interviewing the carguards on „her“ site as a courtesy gesture and in so doing acknowledge her authority on the site.

4.8.2 Trying to blend in:

Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999: 128) point out the importance of the researcher not disturbing the context unnecessarily and that it is important to blend in with the setting. This I achieved by working alongside the participants as a carguard myself. In my initial approach to them I was careful to win their trust to achieve successful fieldwork. As a participant observer I planned spending long hours with the participants and thus needed to establish a certain level of trust and rapport with them. Prior to starting the field work I noted the carguards' clothing style and to blend in with them I purposefully „dressed down“ to be as unobtrusive as possible. I also acquired an orange vest similar to that worn by carguards within a specific site. These vests are part of the „uniform“ that identifies the carguard as an official occupant of this particular site. My orange vest accidentally got stained with black car oil on the second day of my fieldwork. One of the participants pointed this out to me and reprimanded me, saying that it is very important to arrive at

work clean and tidy. Carguards generally do not have a good reputation and the participant explain to me that it is imperative for them to present a neat and clean front to prevent the public's opinion from becoming negative.

4.8.3 Finding appropriate times and context:

I usually conducted interviews subsequent to the ones on site during their lunch breaks when we were able to sit in a nearby restaurant drinking coffee and eating a light snack. I soon changed this approach when I realised that the participants were more comfortable sitting at their usual places prior to my research. Here they were more open to dialogue. In the restaurant situation they tended to view the interview as formal and only answered my questions briefly and matter-of-factly. Another reason the participants did not seem comfortable in the restaurant setting is that they indicated that they very seldom frequented restaurants. They also felt that because I paid for the coffee and snack they were obliged to answer the questions very carefully so as not to waste my time or money.

Initially I tried to hold a formal focus group where I could invite several participants to sit down at a neutral venue where we could have an undisturbed group discussion, for example away from their workplace, a place where they would feel comfortable. This, however, created several problems, mainly because the participants work a six-day week and all have different days off and they were thus not all free at the same time. This also proved to be true during the day when they took their breaks at different times. However, during the course of their working day, at quiet times, a few of them would often group together for a quick chat and this gave me the opportunity to ask a few questions which would lead to a group discussion. I did however manage to arrange a group discussion after a significant news event broke in the media.

The murder in 2010 of AWB leader and hero, Eugene Terre'Blanche, not only became a highly sensitive political matter that stirred emotions and threatened race relations over a wide spectrum, but especially enraged the far right wing (Van Wyk and Scholtz, 2010). After this incident the carguards at a particular site asked to meet with me. The national and international media portrayed Afrikaners as being an endangered species and that the murder of this far right wing leader stirred fears that this was going to be the beginning of Afrikaner genocide and would eventually lead to civil war (Waldner, 2010). These media reports stirred up old emotions of fear and uncertainty amongst my participants to the extent that they wanted to talk to me as a group on

this subject. One particular carguard did not want us to conduct the focus group on their worksite, as he mistrusted his black co-workers and the public, whom he feared would overhear us talking about politics and compromise future relations with them or instigate conflict. I had already planned a get together to thank them and decided to combine the two in this single event. The request felt like a compliment to me: that they had formed a close enough bond to be able to talk to me about something so close to their heart. The focus group discussion became heated after a very drunk black man decided to join us at the table and refused to move after we explained to him that we were busy with a meeting. This led to a restrained confrontation on the part of the male participants before the management of the facility eventually removed the man. The man left under loud protest shouting profanities at the „white people who think South Africa still belongs to them“.

4.9 Reflecting on myself and the interviews

4.9.1 Self-reflexivity:

Recordings allowed for my own reflexivity on the material I had gathered and assisted in my preparation for the next session. After each interview I spent some time summarising the interview or „conversation“ on the recorder adding my own thoughts on the matters discussed and also on the participants“ reactions in general. Recording my own thoughts served as my field notes as well as preventing important aspects discussed from slipping my mind which would have happened had I waited for a suitable time later to write them down.

During the fieldwork phase I kept the recorder close to me at all times so that even when reflecting on interviews while I was busy with something else, I could pause for a moment and record my thoughts and continue with my task at hand without losing a particular train of thought because it was not a convenient time to stop what I was doing to write it down. My initial intention was to research carguards in their normal work setting, however I quickly realised the importance of observing not only the participants“ behaviours but also personally experiencing the public“s reactions when interacting with them as a carguard and in so doing was able to observe the dynamics of the interaction in which the carguards“ identities came to the fore. Blumer places a very strong emphasis on the interaction of the other and argues that social identity construction is only possible when others assign meaning to you and your actions and vice-versa (Buechler, 2008: 187,188).

4.9.2 Debating impartiality:

As a participant observer I realised the importance of remaining impartial to remarks made by the participants when they clashed with my world-view. By remaining impartial and allowing the participants to express their own opinions without criticism from me, made the interviews participant-centred, rather than researcher-centred. Bray (2008: 314) says it is important for the researcher to stay impartial, allowing the participant to be an expert on their own life, and to make him realise that his opinion does count, and that the research is there to give him a platform to express himself. Babbie and Mouton (2003: 297) also talk about the importance of temporarily adopting your participants' point of view, to gain „insider understanding“. They also say that it might be hard to tolerate certain viewpoints the participants might express, but also said the researcher must guard against making the participants' viewpoint your own (Babbie and Mouton, 2003: 297).

Bellah (1970) uses a term of „symbolic realism“, which requires the researcher to treat the beliefs he and her is studying as worthy of respect without ridiculing them but without making them his own viewpoint (Babbie and Mouton, 2003: 298). Thus, as a researcher, you have to guard against abandoning your objectivity in favour of adopting the viewpoint of your participants and in the process losing the ability to view and understand the phenomenon you are studying within your research framework (Babbie and Mouton, 2003: 298). Being impartial to remarks can sometimes be difficult as I often had to remind myself that I was there to observe this particular behaviour and not to interfere. The discussions often centred on the topic of „us“ versus „them“ and as some of the participants expressed their viewpoints very emotionally and explicitly I had to ensure that I remained impartial in the discussion, thus allowing them a platform to express their frustrations, fears and in my view often misguided „racial“ perceptions, without trying to change their viewpoints through my knowledge base or convictions.

The public would often be rude to the participants or the participants might respond by throwing a racial remark behind the public's back when the interaction was cross-racial and I had to learn to restrain my reactions to this. Most of the time the public's behaviour was unjustified and racially motivated at the time, and as an outsider (not sharing their socioeconomic reality) I had empathy with them (the caregivers) and had to suppress a protective urge to come to their defence because I felt that I had a greater ability to respond to these unjustified attacks, but had to keep on reminding

myself of the purpose of my presence there. A personal example was when a man tried to solicit me, thus implying that if I can be a carguard I would be willing to be available for prostitution. This gave me an opportunity to observe this man's interaction with me as a carguard and the reaction of the male carguard who was with me at the time.

4.9.3 Focusing on interview dynamics:

Conversational interviews were conducted on the site where the participants worked. Some researchers call this type of interview discursive as it is defined as „reflective, whereby participants are free to reason or argue their point of view“ (Billington et al, 1998: 16). I am simply working with the concept „conversational“ as my interviews were designed to be very informal and participants were encouraged to give their points of view, to argue as it may be. The interviews were semi-structured so that I was able to manage the conversation to ensure that the information was in line with the research objectives I had set. But I did not stop free flow conversation at any time. Our conversations became give-and-take, i.e. we spoke and as the research progressed we became very comfortable with one another to the extent that the participants often allowed me insight into their feelings and thoughts involving the socioeconomic situation in which they currently found themselves.

The questions I asked remained open-ended and allowed the participants to respond in their own time. Often they would respond only at our next session, indicating reflexivity in that they spent time thinking about the questions before responding. According to Bray (2008: 310) open-ended questioning is a major technique in observational participation methodology. She continued by arguing that open-ended questions allow the participants to feel that what they say is relevant and important to them at that given time, without predefining categories for them (Bray, 2008: 310).

My questioning techniques were very similar to Bray's suggestions: I acted on the information given to me by the participant and directed the comments into a direction which I wanted to further explore.

4.5 Conclusion:

Finally, to enable researchers to understand their participants' experiences from their point of view, it is necessary to use qualitative research methodology. Depending on what the focus of the

researcher is and what type of data is required, the researcher needs to decide on the appropriate qualitative research method(s). Participant observation is not a method used by many researchers in sociology as it is not only very time consuming, takes you away from your other commitments, but also requires certain skills from the researcher. As discussed above these skills include: observation skills without being involved; winning the trust of the participants to the extent that they will share personal experiences with you; the need to blend in with the setting, just to mention a few.

The advantage of participant observation was that they saw me as an equal: as a fellow worker. I worked with them day after day for the entire shift as a carguard which enabled us to share the same experiences to a large extent. Of course they knew, as I did, that I would leave. But for the time that I worked alongside them I could build up a working relationship, a friendship and they knew I was conducting research. I not only gained their trust, but also their respect for working with them. Being an Afrikaner further helped as we shared many parts of Afrikaner ethnicity, though not all. But the one thing we did share was language. Working with them and being able to talk to them in Afrikaans I believe allowed me to collect rich data, more so than I would have obtained from only using interviewing techniques. They also made me feel part of their in-group of carguards on each site and the friendly atmosphere encouraged me to be relaxed which helped me be a better researcher. The rapport built up between the participants and myself is demonstrated in the fact that they continued to seek me out to share with me, even though I had completed my fieldwork almost ten months prior to writing this chapter. This continued flow of information not only enriched my research on a continual basis, but it also highlighted the need for further research in this field.

Chapter Five

Data analysis

„It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.“

W. E. B. Du Bois²²

5.1 Introduction

In today’s life there are many talented people who can stand up and state their arguments in front of an audience, who can take note of the speakers’ perspectives on the matter and debate the issues concerned. However, many voices are not heard, not considered and often even silenced by their socio-economic position in society. By sitting down and actively listening to these marginalised groups of people you not only learn who they are, but where they come from. But simply listening is not enough to know their story. How we gain knowledge about people is a complex process. This chapter concerns how I analysed the data drawing on, firstly, the information I collected doing participant observation in the field; secondly, my field notes I gathered during this process; thirdly, the narratives from the semi-structured interviews using the theoretical and methodological paradigms established in Chapters three and four. This chapter is divided into four main themes: carguards’ socioeconomic background in the context of apartheid; the impact that the new South Africa had on the lives of Afrikaner carguards; carguards’ change of status after apartheid; and, carguards as active agents in the construction of their own identity. These four themes – their socioeconomic background, changes in government after 1994, change in status after 1994, and agency – all inform(ed) the participants’ identities, social and individual. For ease of reading I have divided these four themes into several sub themes with appropriate headings. Firstly I will look at the participants’ experiences during apartheid.

Before starting the analysing process it is important to note that through the process of data analysis I came to realise a problematic situation arising in that carguards themselves generalised their feelings to encompass all Afrikaners. This became problematic in that although they generalised their feelings as if they are answering for the collective Afrikaner.

²² http://thinkexist.com/quotes/w._e._b._du_bois/

5.2 Theme one: Carguards' socioeconomic background in the context of apartheid

5.2.1 Social mobility and level of education amongst Afrikaners carguards:

During my research with the carguards I inquired about their family backgrounds, and of the 17 participants the parents of 11 had been employed either on the railways, as factory workers, farmhands, or cashiers - all low-skilled jobs. Of the 17 participants, 11 closely followed in their parents' footsteps and worked either for the postal service which, during apartheid, included telecommunications (which later became a separate parastatal Telkom) or for the railways.

Francoise, one of my interviewees, explained that he only had a standard seven (Grade nine) education and because he found a job on the railways straight after leaving school in 1954 he never felt the urge or the need to further his education: „because I already had a job, I did not need to study any further“. Cody on the other hand said that his parents wanted him to finish school, but he wanted to work and the government paid white people a good salary and it was for this reason that he was such a rebellious young man and left home because he was eager to become independent and start earning his own money.

Jack also left school at the age of 16 and found work at OK Bazaars (a large food, clothing and furniture retail business) and although his siblings continued and completed school to Grade 11, he had no interest in or reason for doing so because he did not need a university degree to do the kind of work that he did.

Circumstances often dictated the level of education that the participants could reach, not least being the economic situation of the family. Lorraine argued that she was desperate for work and left school after Grade 10. She, too, argued that she was not even asked for her level of education when she applied for a job as a shop assistant where she worked as a cashier for nine years. Jo-Ann was orphaned at the age of six after both her parents died, one alcohol-related, the other a suicide. She was raised in an orphanage with her siblings and attended a school for children with learning disabilities, leaving with a Grade 10 qualification. She then trained as a hairdresser. Other participants such as Daniel and James argued that although they had matriculated, that qualification without a trade education means nothing and in the new South Africa you are deemed unemployable.

Jansen (2009: 78, 101) speaks about identity and education and throughout his book he discusses how education informed the Afrikaner identity as schools can be seen as cultural entities, carriers of culture, and how difficult it is to change once the culture has been embedded. Although Jansen's (2009) research context was mostly within post-apartheid South Africa, he often points back to pre-1994 to explain certain of the origins of discourse within education. It is within this apartheid context that not only culture but also a certain way of thinking was embedded within the minds of the Afrikaners and their identity was forged. I specifically want to focus on the „way of thinking“, which I was a recipient of: I was told that you can leave school at the age of 16 or Grade 10 and it was the „clever“ children who were encouraged to complete their schooling. In the event that you decide to leave school early you will be able to find a good job with the government, the others would study further to become doctors, lawyers and so forth. The educational system did not frown if you decided to leave school before Grade 12. In other words, you do not need an education to get a good job, own a car, a house and so forth. Afrikaners did not seem to be encouraged to become meritocratic, but were taught through the educational system that being white will automatically give you status and certain privileges. This way of thinking was strongly evident amongst the white caregiver participants.

5.2.2 How symbols were utilised to promote apartheid ideology and the effect it had on Afrikaner caregiver participants:

Afrikanerness was promoted through symbols during the apartheid era. A symbol is an object that has shared meaning amongst a group of people or within a culture. D.F. Malan employed several methods to instil patriotism in Afrikaners, this could be seen, for example, in his public speaking when addressed the nation about how to stand up for themselves as can be seen in “*Glo In U Volk*” by Malan, a collection of his speeches until 1954 (Malan, 1964). Indoctrination started at school level where they were instilled with a sense of awe for South African heroes, which included several children's heroes, such as Racheltjie de Beer, a little girl who saved her brother from the bitter cold when they were lost in the veldt. According to this folk tale she dressed her brother with almost all her clothes and put him in a hollowed-out anthill where she shielded him against the cold with her little body until rescuers found her brother with her lifeless body covering the entrance to the anthill. It is interesting to note that in Orania, the „independent“

Afrikaner state, they have now issued their own currency, commemorating Racheltjie de Beer's²³ heroic act. Wolraad Woltemade is another hero, for being the one man who rode his horse into the sea during a storm to save several drowning sailors from a sinking ship and lost his own life in the process.

Interviewees Sarel and Daniel often made reference to these and other Afrikaner heroes such as Piet Retief, a *Voortrekker* leader, and to Anglo-Boer War heroes, and spoke of the historical implications such figures had and still have in their lives. Sarel often looked back at Afrikaner history to point out how Afrikaners suffered at the hands of the British, thus indicating that a hatred of British colonialism is still actively kept alive by some Afrikaners, although they are two or more generations removed from the British colonial era.²⁴

During apartheid school children were taught from a young age the importance of respecting the national symbols; for instance, the flag was never to be disrespected; it had to be carefully and respectfully handled and it would, for example, be unthinkable to wear the national flag printed on your clothes or painted on your body. During flag-raising the flag was carefully handled and not allowed to touch the ground. When singing the national anthem we were taught to stand to attention with our hands lightly clenched in fists next to our body - not doing so was tantamount to showing disrespect to the ultimate symbol of the country. Tanya, one of the participants, recalled how *Volkspele* (folk dancing) was made compulsory in their school as an extra-curricular activity. She also recalls with nostalgia the *boere musiek* (Boere music) and the traditional *Voortrekker* clothes they wore for these dances..

As discussed in Chapter two, it was D.F. Malan's goal to build up Afrikaner unity and one of the methods was to create a pride in Afrikaner symbols, for example Malan orchestrated the re-enactment of the *Groot Trek* (Great Trek) in 1938 (Giliomee, 1979b: 113). The sole purpose to this commemoration was to imprint into the new generation the suffering and survival of the Afrikaner during the 1800s (Byrnes, 1996). This symbolism was again used with the building and opening of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria on the 16th December 1938, which was the

²³ *Rachelitjie De Beer en Ander Afrikaanse Helde Verhale* by P.W. Grobbelaar (n/d) an example of an apartheid school book. But due to the date of publication and lack of availability of the actual material I was only able to find the Author's name but not the publisher of the book.

²⁴ Refer to Appendix 1, a letter from Mr. D'Alton who took a great interest in my research and contributed by sourcing books for me. He sent me the letter which I felt is very applicable to my research and should be included.

same day 100 years earlier that the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River (Byrnes, 1996; Uys, 1989: 224). Similarly, *Volkspeler* (folk dancing) was used to create solidarity and uplift Afrikaners cultural heritage. According to the principle of anti-naturalism in the Social Constructionist approach, it is culture that shapes our identity and these Afrikaner cultural activities played a huge role in constructing Afrikaner identity. Bruner (1990: 16) argues that the „... Self is defined by both the individual and by the culture in which he or she participates“.

5.2.3 Shared memories:

The participants shared some socialising experiences, which seemed to be common to all of them - the manner in which we were socialised in school; our childhood experiences; their first work experiences, etc.

Flint related how all the boys played rugby at the Afrikaans schools he attended, this was seen as an accepted norm for all Afrikaans boys and not presented as a supplementary sport:

When at school, especially high school, you played rugby...

In the focus group we discussed an old Afrikaner radio station *Jakaranda*:

*Vroeër jare het hulle Jakaranda gehad vroeg in die oggend dan het jy geluister dan speel hulle eerste daai boereliedjie so sesuur se kant.*²⁵

In the early years [apartheid] they played ethnic Afrikaans music early in the mornings, around six o'clock in the mornings (Cody).²⁶

The focus group even discussed how some of them joined the *Voortrekkers*, in reminiscences of an organisation for young people equivalent to the boys and girls Scouts:²⁷

They taught you how to survive in the wilderness and what you should or should not eat in the wilderness; how to make a fire and a shelter... (Kathy)

²⁵ All interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, and were translated as accurately as possible by myself I will insert from time to time the interview in Afrikaans also, for the Afrikaans readers, as the impact of what is said is sometimes lost in translation

²⁶ I will insert from time to time the interview in Afrikaans also, for the Afrikaans readers, as the impact of what is said is sometimes lost in translation

²⁷ The Voortrekker Youth Movement was officially launched in 1931 and the goal was to draw "white boys into a single, youth organisation with a South African ethos" (Giliomee, 2003: 400).

Some of these institutions the participants reminisced about stayed unchanged from apartheid times. Jansen (2001: 95) recalled how he witnessed the unchanged ceremony of the *Voortrekker* youth gathering and from this we can see how the young people who are members of this organisation were (and are) still being socialised into Afrikaner ethos:

... everybody stands and an oath is taken with the leaders' hands placed on a huge Bible. Young people are admonished to stay true to Afrikaans and the ideals of the struggle of Afrikaners over the centuries. They are reminded of the *Groot Trek* and the values of their ancestors...

The participants even spoke about the shared memories of corporal punishment in schools during apartheid, when norms and values were taught to Afrikaners through strict disciplinary methods and all said that they benefitted from these disciplinary methods:

Corporal punishment helped... because nobody wanted to fail a test, especially if the teacher knew how to swing a cane... I presume you know what I am talking about (laughing). I have been caned many times... the boys got it on their behinds the girls on their hands, but I had a teacher that told the girls to hold their dress and bend for the cane. (Dennis)

The comfort that they derived from having been taught the same basic norms and values went a long way to bond them into a single ethnic identity. The same can be said of the manner in which the notion of race was presented to them through socialisation. According to Adam (1979: 63) once the notion of racial difference has been socialised into individuals within an ethnic group, racial beliefs are not easily discarded. Collective memories, create collective identities; I would like to repeat Owens' (1995: 3) quote, as first noted in Chapter three, where he argues that the personal and collective identities inform each other in many ways;

Just because we can each say „I“ and have separate bodies does not mean that thoughts and emotions are located solely within individuals. Rather these exist between individuals. Humans are part of shared collective aims, values and experiences.

Owens' (1995) quote above, for me explains not only how our individual identities are informed by similar experiences but also how the social identities are formed and vice versa.

5.2.4 Ethnic Afrikaners were intended to be classless:

Through ethnic mobilisation and socialisation into Afrikaners values and ideology the goal of the government was to create a single ethnic solidarity that was unified around shared values. But this unity could not hope to overcome class barriers as people are positioned in society according to their access to resources regardless of their shared ethnicity. It also became apparent that there were members of the group who refused? to take advantage of and benefit from the social engineering programmes and they became stigmatised (Rex, 1986; Giliomee, 1979a: 158). Afrikaners, like any other ethnic group, were stratified along distinct upper, middle, and the marginalised lower class members (Rex, 1986). Of course those who were marginalised, who did not make it, who did not benefit from the governmental policies of upliftment were labelled by other Afrikaners as failures. However, Giliomee states that as far as ethnic mobilisers were concerned these Afrikaner failures who were semi-skilled or unskilled workers still had their race privilege during apartheid as they were white (1979a: 155).

Uncle, the oldest participant at 72 years, said that as a child his family was from a lower white class, before apartheid:

There was no money those days. Remember I grew up very poor ... my mother was a widow with three children to raise ... during those years (1940s) she worked as a cleaner by [in] a hotel ... since I have been working for the railways I was able to buy my own house... my car is not in the best condition, but I do have my own car... and currently I have no debt.

It might also be argued that the nouveau-bourgeoisie, elevated by these efforts, became particularly aware of their new found status and their striving for upward mobility tended to create a disdain for their humbler origins and widen the gap between them and their less ambitious compatriots in the lower classes during apartheid.

Sarel spoke about class structure:

I always maintained a middleclass standard of living, I was never poor... I say poor... I never knew what it was to be poor before now... I never noticed how other people were living, because I lived my own life and strived forward. I suppose that there were poor [white] people during apartheid...but they were never seen on the streets... on the street corners... there was never poverty to that extent... like today...

During apartheid there were very few poor whites, and if you found them, it was due to their own fault, if you do not want to be helped, it is your own fault if you were poor...

5.2.5 Carguards' denial that apartheid existed:

There still is some sense of denial among the participants in my study that the black people in South Africa were oppressed. Flint pointed out that during apartheid the economy was strong, much stronger than currently. With the classic paternalistic attitude promoted by the National Party government he also pointed out that although black people during apartheid did not have a vote or freedom of movement, they were looked after by the white people, and housed and fed. He even went further to say that if black people were oppressed, how was it possible for some black people to have gained their degrees:

How did people like Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki get their degrees, there was Fort Hare... it was a very good university... and there where those [black] people who studied part time through Rhodes university in Grahamstown. It is typical of black people; they want everything handed to them on a platter... there were some of them who became lawyers.

To Flint this is not a sign or evidence of oppression: if black people were able to study it is an indication that that they were not oppressed; rather that they were developing not only separately, but also in parallel to the white people. Along the same lines Dennis and Cody argued that during apartheid everyone had work, both white and black, and now people of all races are suffering because of unemployment;

Ja, daar was werk vir almal ... daar was werk ... ek meen ... daar was vir die swartes, kleurlinge, koelies en die witmense ... ons almal kon werk gekry het ...

Yes, there was work for everyone ... there was work ... there was [work] for blacks, coloured, coolies (Indians) and white people ... we could all find work

Daniel also argued that oppression did not exist as the bars were already open to all races as early as the 1980s and that he had worked as a barman during the holidays and was obliged to serve a black man if he entered the bar. On investigating this statement I found that when Dawid Jacobus de Villiers became the Minister of Trade and Industry, the liquor act was passed which

desegregated South African bars, but that this was at the owners' discretion.²⁸ Daniel, however, went on to note that black people never frequented white owned bars. He also was puzzled at how it could be said that whites today have a better life than black people. To back up this sentiment he compared a white military serviceman during apartheid to a black military serviceman currently serving in the military and pointed out that when he was in the army as a trooper it would have been unthinkable to ask a bank to finance a car or a house, because it would have been denied, whereas today the average black trooper drives his own vehicle. Several participants argued that during apartheid black people were given their own schools but that they did not appreciate them and burnt them down.

Daniel responding to the question I asked whether black people were disadvantaged and oppressed during apartheid:

*Ons het nie, hulle het nie ... Hulle het hulle eie skole gehad ... wat
het hulle met hulle skole gedoen? Afgebrand! ... wit skole ...
hoeveel wit skole is afgebrand? ... Nie een nie ... en nou?*

We did not, they did not ... they had their own schools ... what did
they do to their schools? ... burnt them down! ... white schools ...
how many white schools are burnt down ... not one ... and now?

This denial that apartheid was an oppressive force on the „other“ races in South Africa can be explained through Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory (SIT), and as defined in the theoretical chapter, Chapter three. According to SIT an individual will support the in-group over the out-group. The participants' denial of apartheid can also be viewed as their attempt to protect the in-group's ideology from the outsiders.

5.2.6 NP government's subtle enforcement of power:

Jansen (2009) discusses in his book *Knowledge in the Blood*, the generation of Afrikaner children of parents who lived during apartheid. He uses examples to show how parents justify apartheid to

²⁸ Speech by De Villiers on the intended amendments of both the liquor and the Act 17 of the groups areas act, whereby other races were allowed to be served liquor and food in 'white establishments' <http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/dieburger/1986/05/20/3/6.html> and <http://sahistory.org.za/pages/people/bios/devilliers-dj.htm>

their children by explaining to them that apartheid was instituted to „protect“ Afrikaners, that black people were suppressed for „their own good“ (Jansen, 2009: 68). This justification of apartheid were internalised by my participants as shown in the following example of Cody’s reminiscences about apartheid and the sense of denial that apartheid was harmful to most South Africans. Cody continued to speak about his childhood and how he played with black children on his father’s farm and even though they had a communication barrier and even though they were very afraid of this father and uncle, that they had great respect for him, even the *Maduma* (black foreman) respected him as a young child. Flint had similar childhood experience as he grew up in a staunch Afrikaner farmer family:

... ek het baie nou saam met hulle groot geword, saam met hulle gespeel toe jy klein was, groot geword saam met hulle

I grew up with them [black people], I played with them as a young child ...

The policy of separate development during apartheid led to limited social interaction between children of different races (Beinart, 2001: 59). Giliomee (2001: 50) looked at the scenario, whereby the white children played with black slave children as friends (1800s); this friendship however was terminated as they grew up when the master-slave hierarchy was enforced. Although Giliomee’s example is in a much earlier context than my research, I would like to draw a comparison with that of apartheid South Africa. Even though farm children of different races played together as „friends“, this friendship was seldom carried through to adulthood; the friendship could not continue under government policies which encouraged and enforced race separation. Jack spoke about a similar childhood experience:

Our neighbours were Indians, and we played together, got spankings together, although we could not go to school together. Our domestic worker was also welcome in our house, but she was not allowed to sit on our living room couches, she had her own place in the kitchen where she ate. We lived in Wentworth and there was no apartheid ... we lived then together ... not?

Propaganda serving separate development policies was fed to the men doing military service during the 1980s; for example, it is interesting to note that even men who served in the Defence Force did not know the real reasons for the Soweto uprisings, and how much less did the public know of what was going on under their noses. According to Nathan (1998: 69) the NP government

proclaimed during the 1985 State of Emergency that the ANC's and UDF's goal was to make South Africa ungovernable, which it was. But at no stage were the hardships and inequalities of the apartheid system exposed by the NP government. The NP government utilised this claim in justifying increasing the powers of the South African Police Force (SAP) and South African Defence Force (SADF) to control this uprising (Nathan, 1989: 69).

Daniel spoke in detail about his time in the military service and how he had to serve time during the Soweto uprisings where they had to suppress civil uprisings, which resulted in him being charged with two murders, of which he was cleared. He explained that he was defending himself in the execution of his duties.

I was charged with two murder accounts that was in Soweto during the riots... they told us [soldiers] that if they [black people] approach you with a lit petrol bomb, then you shoot him... that it was our orders. Or if they have a rock in their hand larger than the palm of their hand, then you shoot him.

Afrikaners became socialised into the idea that for the *Volk* to survive, men must be willing to fight and women must be willing to support their loved ones in the fight for survival.

5.2.7 The price Afrikaners had to pay to survive as an ethnic group:

Ethnic mobilisation continued to be prominent during apartheid whereby Afrikaners were indoctrinated with the NP government's ideology that Afrikaners needed to survive at all cost (Adam, 1979c: 135):

The soldiers were trained to become hostile to communism, terrorism, the ANC, and opposition movements ... Many learnt a language of male bravado and violence ... as heroes fighting dehumanized targets (Beinart, 2001: 245).

Cody describes some of his harrowing experiences on the border:

Yes, I was wounded more than once, but the moment they (the enemy) started firing at us, I just lost it and ran at them shooting. I lost my best friend, he had a big hole shot in his head and they eventually had to keep me away from border duty because as soon as there was fighting, I was the first to run at them and shoot back.

The psychological effects on the men who fought on the border and in the townships were significant, according to Sandler (1989: 79). Psychological trauma has been documented as early as the Anglo-Boer war in South Africa and named „combat fatigue“ (Sandler, 1989: 79), and in later years, during the II World War, the psychology of men in the armed forces were taken seriously. But it was only after the American Vietnam War that psychological stress under war conditions became formally recognised as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a medical category (Sandler, 1989: 80). Sandler looks at the psychological impact on South African soldiers during the border wars and the township unrests and highlights some of the psychological effects on the men in uniform as being:

...incredible anger which emerges in uncontrollable violence; the need to generalise the idea of the „enemy“ to cope with brutalising and killing them; the existence of a state of „moral inversion“; and a sense of loss, meaninglessness, and pessimism about the future (Sandler, 1989: 89).

James recalled one of his border experiences:

There were seven men inside of the ratel²⁹ ... who burnt to death ... and their screaming ... I still sometimes hear the screaming in my dreams ... it is very disturbing, very disturbing. It makes the other soldiers very angry ... they will go hundreds of kilometers after the enemy for revenge ... that is how it was ...

Cody argues that it is because of the border war that he is still very observant, but he also says when security issues have to be dealt with during his working hours as a carguard, he reacts without thinking and with a lot of aggression, which he argues are remnants of this stint in the armed forces. He recounts:

... they started to shoot at us ... All that I remember is that I went crazy in my head, I can recall everything in detail up to today ... If someone shoots [near me] ... I want to go in, even if I am not armed ... but I want that man ... I do not worry about my own life ... ; And, ... when they killed my best friend ... I went crazy, I started to throw handgrenates like pineapples, ... I did not worry where they fell ... but if I found them [the enemy] when they were wounded, I shot them dead on the spot.

²⁹ A military combat vehicle

Daniel blamed his military service for the fact that he became a racist especially when he claimed he saw what „black“ people did to their own:

... I can tell you a lot of stories from the border ... As a person a three month old baby swing by his feet and kill him by throwing him against a wall ... that is what the enemy did to their own people to intimidate the parents to fight with them.

Flint also expressed sentiments along the same lines. He contended that he became racist after doing military service defending the borders of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, arguing that after experiencing the consequences of war that it was inevitable that this would happen. However, Flint also acknowledged that many „good“ black soldiers died alongside white soldiers; they were perceived as „good“ as they fought for the same cause as the SADF.

The women participants reminisced about the past and how women and school children were encouraged to send „love parcels“ and write to „our heroes on the border“. The technique of involving the whole *Volk* in the internal and external war was a means of survival, involving everyone in the struggle and thereby stressing the importance for Afrikaners, and all white people, having to fight for their country, for the right to life (Adam, 1979c). According to Giliomee (2003: 595) it was not long after compulsory military service and the onset of the „Border War“ in the 1970s that Afrikaner young people started talking about „their“ government and „their“ army. The young men (reported in attitude surveys) also began to acknowledge that they were generally very willing to defend the apartheid system (Giliomee, 2003: 595). This also, of course, was the putting into practice of the deeply ingrained sentiment expressed in the national anthem: „*Ons sal lewe; Ons sal sterwe; Ons vir jou Suid-Afrika*“ (We will live; We will die; We for you South Africa). There were, however, also a growing group of young people who objected to the compulsory military system and the apartheid system.

These objectors were divided into two groups, those who were objectors to any violence (such as on religious grounds), and those who were ideological objectors, and they were treated differently by the authorities. There were instances where exemptions were made for religious objectors who refused to participate in the war or carry a weapon; these religious objectors were to appear in front of a judge who would decide if the person would serve in a non-combat capacity or do community service (Satchwell, 1989: 43). On the other hand, if persons refused to do service in the SADF they were liable to be sentenced to a period in military detention. Satchwell cites an

example of a man who refused to report for duty and was sentenced to six years imprisonment, as it went against his morals to discriminate against and oppress black people (Satchwell, 1989: 45; also see Connors, 2007). When asked if he would have still gone to SADF if he had a choice, Daniel replied:

You did not have a choice ... No I would have preferred not to go to the army ... It took two years from your life ... you struggle to return to your normal life afterwards ... the army changed the way you think ... it changed your personality.

5.2.8 Religious background of the participants:

Religion, with the full support from the *Broederbond*, which included several DRC ministers, was utilised, not only spearheading ethnic mobilisation, but also to make poor Afrikaners aware of their class and „race“ privileges (Giliomee, 1979a: 156). Most of my participants grew up, were christened, and got married in the DRC, but currently not one of them is attending services in this denomination. They have either moved their loyalties to other denominations or do not attend church anywhere. For example, Uncle did not elaborate at all on religion when I asked him questions about it. His answer was very brief and he quickly moved on to another topic, as if he felt that I was invading a very personal space:

I do not belong to a church; I believe in God [but am] not a church goer. I grew up within the Dutch Reform Church.

Prior to 1994 the church and the state were indistinguishable in that they were intricately intertwined (Jansen, 2009: 73). Giliomee (2003: 459) extensively researched the influences that the Dutch Reformed Church had on the development of apartheid ideology and there is no question the extent that it informed the social identity of Afrikaners. The DRC's ideological tentacles not only embraced those who were active in the church but also extended to playing a role in the construction of identities on those who did not attend its services. Cody was never a dedicated church-goer and had this to say about the DRC:

The DRC had a huge influence over Afrikaners, in that it promoted them to „hate“ black people, ... this is in contradiction to what the Bible actually says... we have to treat everyone as equals.

Jacob reflected upon the DRC and commented on how race was highlighted in school and church:

Children today grow up with mixed racial friends, Black, Indian and Coloured mixed in one school. When we grew up, if an unfortunate black child tried to go to the same school... he would have been beaten to death. It was taboo. A white child and a black child would never have sat together in a church.

Furthermore, James remarked how all Afrikaners were forced to go to church and Sunday school:

Jy weet mos hoe is ons almal gedonder om Sondag in die kerk te sit en Sondagskool.

You know that how we were forced with a threat of punishment to go to church and Sunday school.

When I asked James about the relationship between politics and the NP government he remarked:

Ja, wel die kerk was polities gemanipuleer deur die regering. Jy weet die kerk het maar gesê wat die regering doen en jy het maar daarby ingeval. Ek sê mos altyd ons was gebrainwash vandat ons klein was jy weet swartes was verkeerd en die was verkeerd en daai was verkeerd.

The Church was politically manipulated by the [NP] government. The church only did what the government said it must do, and you as a church member had to obey without resistance. I always argued that we were brainwashed as young kids in believing that blacks amongst other things were wrong

Jansen (2009: 70) explains how an Afrikaner child is a product of cultural transmission and how interactions with people from the same background form the child's identity. By reading the participants' perceptions on the church's influence, this transmission is identifiable within their narratives.

Although I attempted to steer the conversation towards their perceptions on religion, there was very little focus on religion in general. I decided to keep this topic low profile as it was not a topic which the participants brought up spontaneously without extensive probing from my side, as noted in the introduction under the research limitations. Exceptions were Lorraine and Bianca, who placed strong emphasis on how religion currently informs their identity, but not formerly during the apartheid era. I can only theorise and use previous literature to refer to how Afrikaner identity became informed by religion. However, both my parents came from nominal Christian, but essentially non-religious families. On both sides my grandparents did not focus on religion at all,

thus religion only came to play a role in my parents' life with their conversion to Christianity later in life. Thus I do not want to make an assumption that all Afrikaners were religious and were influenced by the DRC during apartheid. However Christianity and Afrikaner ideology were subtly interwoven within Afrikaner identity and are even evident within *Die Stem*, the Afrikaner and national anthem – now partially integrated into the post-1994 anthem.

It is of interest to note that *Die Stem* originally only had three verses, but that the author was asked to add a fourth with religious overtones in 1957. The English translation of this added verse reads as follows:

On your almighty steadfast entrusted
Did our fathers build of old;
Strengthen then, O Lord, their children
To defend, to love, to hold-
That the heritage they gave us
For our children yet may be;
Bondsmen only to the Highest
And before the whole world free.
Teach us, Lord to trust Thee still;
Guard our land and guide our people
In Thy way to do Thy will.
(Nuttall, 1996: 148)

The discussions with the participants presented above are a clear indication as to how the Dutch Reformed Church was utilised to create Afrikaners' identities or an ethnic social identity. Buechler (2008) argues that examples of social identities are: identities grounded upon race, social status, gender, religion. Identities are also formed through the historical past and which is carried through from one generation to another, in other words through cross-generational memories identities are formed.

5.2.9 How cross-generational memories affect the participants:

The question we might want to ask is how it is possible that a century after the demise of colonialism and imperialism, with the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and which became a fait accompli with the formation of the Republic in 1961, memories thereof could still have such a material effect on my participants; and how is it possible for them so vividly to recall and sometimes even relive events that took place three or more generations ago, mostly before their own births. The answer might be in how we transmit stories from one generation to another. Jansen (2009: 52) refers to Hoffman's book *After Such Knowledge* (2004) where

Hoffman looks at second generation Holocaust survivors; and how the memories of the atrocities of the Holocaust was passed from one generation to another in such a manner that the second generation, who had not lived through the events, made these memories their own, although the experiences belonged to their parents and not to them. Jansen compares Hoffman's research findings to young people in South Africa who did not live through apartheid but have the bitterness of loss of privilege of their parents and grandparents. In addition, Connerton (1989: 21) speaks about how social memory, as per example above, develops and argues that:

The narrative of one's life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives; it is embedded in the story of those groups from which the individuals derive their identity.

If I can apply Connerton's quote to my research participants' narratives the historical past that is remembered by Afrikaners is part of their identity construction. According to Ross (1997) culture is about the construction of shared memories; I would like to add that it is this shared memories which plays a role in identity construction, as it can be said that memory is also a cultural carrier. Culture within the Social Construction theory is described in detail within the theoretical framework chapter.

Moreover, Jansen (2009: 53) contends that the recollection of pre-apartheid Afrikaner „memories, for example the Anglo-Boer War concentration camps, can be due to: firstly, that you do not personally need to have experienced the trauma or pathology, but if you have the knowledge of these events it can still have an effect on the individual (Jansen, 2009: 53). Secondly, Jansen (2009) speaks about the recollection of Afrikaner memory and says that it is about how knowledge is indirectly passed on, from one generation to the next. For this to take place, this knowledge should be deemed important enough to be handed down indirectly to the next generation (Jansen, 2009: 53). But, ancestors pass this knowledge on as if it is first-hand knowledge and not second or third generation knowledge (Jansen, 2009: 53). Third, Jansen (2009: 53) discusses transmission, suggesting that knowledge never smoothly flows from one generation to another, but that it is interrupted and flows in a crooked line connecting generations who were not there in a different way in different ways? Fourthly, it is about influence:

How does this received or inherited knowledge affect children, the second generation recipients of knowledge of something they were not part of? (Jansen, 2009: 53).

In other words how does knowledge influence the generations that come after the fact? Fifthly, Jansen (2009: 53) argues that it is relational, in other words that there is a parent who influences the knowledge of the child, and that this relationship is intense and emotionally loaded, and often destructive (Jansen, 2009: 54). Sixth, is what he calls mediated knowledge:

... none of the knowledge is received without passing through any number of mediations that lie between historical events as they happened then, and as they are received now by the second generation (Jansen, 2009: 54).

Lastly, such historical knowledge is paradoxical knowledge: the question is asked how you can know something that you did not personally witness? (Jansen, 2009: 54). In other words, how is it possible for the participants to recall events which happened during colonial times and the formation of apartheid when they were not there to witness them? He further states that this knowledge is that which carries the emotion and the memories of our historic past. An example from my own research is how one of my participants, Sarel, emotionally described the suffering of the women in the concentration camps at the hands of the English;

Yes, my great grandmother was [in the concentration camp] ... I was very angry because of this ... the white women ... the Englishmen did it ... the children are not taught about it at school anymore ... they teach them about that Zulu ... Shaka Zulu ...; See the British came [to South Africa], they took the gold and the diamonds; the Englishman robbed the Afrikaners ... but the *Volk* united and became strong ...

Or Daniel, who described how Afrikaner heroes like Piet Retief died at the hands of the Zulus after he legitimately, had a signed document that gave them property rights to land in the Zulu kingdom:

We did not [rob black people's land from them] ... Piet Retief ... he and his people were murdered, after they signed a document to obtain land from the Zulus ... they were then led into a trap and murdered ... did we steal their land from them? ... no we did not, we bought it from them ... fairly.

A personal example from my childhood is how my grandmother, who was born after the Anglo-Boer war, told her children about how the babies were murdered by British in the concentration camps when the British put ground glass pieces in the bottles of baby food which they [the British] supplied for the babies. Stanley (2006:29) wrote about Afrikaner memories in her book

Mourning becomes...Post/Memories, Commemoration and the Concentration Camps of the South African War. She recalled a woman telling her that she knows for a fact that ground glass was placed in people's food. Stanley (2009: 27) questions memories, such as the previous example, and asks if it is a „fact“ or a „myth“:

Myths are stories which are not necessarily true, but have symbolic power. They are constantly repeated, often re-enacted... it is a collective memory, as well as individual „real“ memories...

Stanley (2009: 27) further explains that „myths sustain and reinforce values which define self and others and hence the enemy“. The enemy for Afrikaners in the Anglo-Boer war were the English. The repetition of these narratives of Afrikaner suffering is a commemoration of who the Afrikaner is, and by retelling these stories it helps Afrikaner descendants remember „their roots“. I concur with Stanley (2006: 28) where she said that „Myth plays a role in the maintenance of memory“. The memory of my participants can be partly confirmed through historical „facts“; however, much can be placed under the umbrella of myth. Another example of a possible myth which I would like to refer to is when Sarel argued that during the time of concentration camps, not only were the women and children placed in such camps, but that the women were raped by black people, and he hates that it was allowed to happen. I could find no documented evidence of any such events:

Ja, my ouma grootjie was [in die konsentrasie kamp], ek is baie kwaad daaroor dat die swartes die blankes ge-rape het daai jare, die blanke vrouens ...

In the literature I consulted I could only find brief references made towards Sarel's claim: according to Pretorius (n.d) there was some indication that there was increasing black hostility towards the women who roamed to prevent being captured and sent to concentration camps,³⁰ and Giliomee (2003: 253) reported that although there were women, during the Anglo-Boer War, who protested that they were „molested“, by the British, the claims of actual rape by anyone were seldom made.

³⁰ Pretorius (n.d.) Boer civilians and the scorched earth policy of Lords Roberts and Kitchener in the South African War of 1899-1902, <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/ptb/www/War2/Pretorius%20paper.pdf> [thesis, paper]

5.2.10 Conclusion:

The first theme discussed above broadly examined the carguards socioeconomic background given that they had lived during apartheid. Beginning with their level of education, which was generally low, and impacted on their inability to move upwards, through the experiences and memories they had of living in apartheid and a sense that it did not oppress black people, I looked at the narratives they provided and how the participants' identities have been informed during the NP government. The next section will take the data analysis to post-apartheid, now in the context of the ANC government era - from 1994 till the time the research was conducted in 2008.

5.3 Theme two: The impact that the new South Africa has on the lives of Afrikaner carguards

In this theme I will not only look at how the participants' socioeconomic situation was affected, but also how the changes in the new dispensation affected their world view, and what expectations they have for their future. These changes had a direct impact on their class structure; theoretically, according to Giddens (1989: 220) the working class is differentiated according to their skill level, and this in turn has an effect on their access to material resources. The sub-themes each highlight the participant's viewpoint on how the new South Africa impacted on their lives; directly or indirectly affecting their socioeconomic status which in turn seemed to attack not only their social identity as Afrikaners but also their personal identities. I would like to refer back to the discussion of social constructionism in Chapter three where it was discussed that identity construction is culturally and historically located. Because Afrikaner identities have its roots in apartheid and with the dismantling of apartheid, the changes would have had an impact on their identities and the also how they reconstruct these identities.

5.3.1 Reconstruction of Afrikaner carguard identities in the new South Africa:

During my interviews with my participants it was noticeable that such reconstruction of their social identity was and is still a very difficult process, requiring not only a readjustment of mentality, but needing a deeper understanding of how their identities were shaped through apartheid ideology. The participants need to undergo a process of reflecting on this ideology and the extent to which they have internalised notions of innate differences when it comes to race and ethnicity if they wish to live in South Africa feeling more at ease with the democratic process.

During one of the interviews Daniel said that it is now, post-1994, „Apartheid in attitude, not apartheid in law“, indicating that even though the apartheid era is history, it is still carried forward in people’s attitudes today. Robertson (2004) says that since the 1994 elections a feeling of abandonment seems to have descended on the white population in general. This sentiment clearly came to the fore in my interviews with the participants. Cody, Daniel, Sarel and Uncle all argued that the loss of „their“ country was a direct consequence of F.W. de Klerk selling them out to the ANC.

Ja ... jy weet ons is so veraai ... ons blankes vandag, nê ... Daai tyd toe De Klerk die land oorgegee het aan die ANC ... hy het nie ,n geweer teen sy kop gehad wat gesê het dat jy moet die land oorgee nie ... hier sit ons blankes vandag ... Die volk het opgestaan en sterk geword, en met De Klerk se stories het dit weer verval. Hy is eintlik ,n verraai, in die ou dae het hulle hom dood gemaak.

... We have been betrayed... our white people... when De Klerk handed our country over to the ANC... they did not hold a gun to his head and forced him to hand the country over... The Afrikaner Nation stood up and became strong [referring to Afrikaner roots], and because of De Klerk the Afrikaner nation fell again. He is actually a traitor, in the old days he would have been shot. (Sarel)

Luister my meisiekind!!!! ... F.W. De Klerk het vir hulle die land gegee,!!!!

Listen to me my girl!!! F.W. De Klerk gave them [ANC] this country!!!! (Uncle)

The feeling that the government abandoned them and of political betrayal runs right through the interviews albeit expressed in different ways. James said that they do not have the privilege to own their own homes because the government has taken that away from them too, highlighting the fact that houses and land are perceived to be freely given to blacks people but that they (the participants), as underprivileged, but white people too, do not have the same rights to ask for or expect to get a share of this handout. James also asked:

Why can’t the government also not give the white people a small piece of land, so that they can build a small house on that?

Jansen (2009: 30) argued that while the previously oppressed celebrated their victory, the pain and plight of previously marginalised white people were ignored during the transition. As I mentioned

in Chapter two, Jacob Zuma and his cabinet were forced to acknowledge the existence of the „poor“ white community while visiting a settlement in Bethlehem in the Free State (Kruger, 2010). Denise told me about a newspaper article she read:

In the newspaper the other day, a man said that he did not know that there were so many poor whites. He was visiting a small town and saw many white people squatting.³¹ You never used to find this situation [during apartheid]....³²

Williams (2008) reported on how the poor whites, who were marginalised during apartheid, are now even further relegated to the outer precincts of society. Jansen (2009: 32) equates the loss Afrikaners felt to what their forefathers must have felt after the Anglo-Boer War: „It was an experience of trauma and loss, the feeling of inferiority, and the dread of economic insecurity“. This insecurity was further ignited by the fact that Afrikaners were stereotyped as „rotten“ and „racist“ (Jansen, 2009: 30). Sarel expressed his emotions after the elections as that of extreme fear and dread of the future. He was very upset because it had never occurred to him that South Africa might have a black government; to him it was surreal, like viewing a movie. In the same vein Jo-Ann said, „After we lost the elections, I knew that we [Afrikaners] were in trouble“. For these caregivers this „trouble“ came in many forms, not the least being affirmative action which directly affected everyone from the lowest semi-skilled to the highly skilled white person, especially males. Jansen (2009: 47) describes how this loss was expressed in the local newspapers and pointed out that the media, especially the media serving Afrikaner community, trumpeted that the ANC governmental policies are designed to attack Afrikaner identity. The participants above described how the new South Africa impacted on their lives, but the descriptions are also not about the loss of government, status or even the feeling of abandonment; it is about the loss of ethnic identity as Afrikaners and also about the loss of individual identity, as white people.

5.3.2 The impact of affirmative action on the participants:

Affirmative action in post-apartheid South Africa is directly aimed to address issues of the labour market and was focused on redressing the imbalances of the past (Giliomee, 2003: 644). This

³¹ Defined as a person who settles on land or occupies property without title, right, or payment of rent. Retrieved from Dictionary.com November, 20, 2011: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/squatter>

³² Her remark was important to me, indicating that she is reading the newspaper and is informed about the social circumstances in South Africa and by mentioning it to me was also an indication of reflection.

redress was necessary due to the fact that at 1994, 44 percent „of all posts in the civil service“ were held by white people; which are a misrepresentation of the total South African population (Giliomee, 2003: 657). This overrepresentation was very noticeable within jobs at management level, but it is also spirals down into all job stratifications, to the lowest paid level (Giliomee, 2003: 657).

Dennis told me:

*Ek kry nie werk nie, as gevolg van my vel kleur ... party plekke sê
dit vir jou reguit - jou velkleur is verkeerd, ander sê net vir jou,
sorry dit is net affirmative action ...*

I just cannot find work; because of my skin colour... some places tell you outright that you have the wrong skin colour, other say that it [the job] is an affirmative action position...

It is argued that affirmative action is one of the major reasons as to why there is a large number of Afrikaners leaving South Africa for other *groener weivelde* (greener pastures) (Giliomee, 2003: 658). But according to Jansen (2009: 32) emigration was not an option for all people both due to lack of finances, and the necessary skills required by prospective receiving countries to qualify for work permits. For example, amongst my interviewees out of 17 only four completed their secondary education, and only two have some tertiary education.

Uncle (72 years old) said that he could not understand how affirmative action can be used against children who were still sitting on the school benches during 1994. Bianca matriculated and her son is a qualified engineer, but both she and her son are forced to work as carguards, an occupation they feel that is demeaning and usually reserved for the unskilled and uneducated.

Flint has a sense of acquiescence about affirmative action:

In the beginning it was ... to say it straight, I was very angry over this affirmative action ... but eventually you have to live with it ... it does not help to sulk over it ... you must go on ... Life goes on ... there is nothing you can do about it.

Jack argued that affirmative action is the same as apartheid policies:

I think that affirmative action was the biggest mistake the ANC government could make, because it is just apartheid turned inside-

out. The blacks will be black and whites will be whites and the blacks will get the first opportunity for the jobs and the whites, they can wait. It is because of this mentality that the South African economy is broken down.

Jack also told me about a conversation he had with a black client of his in the car park, he told him all of the other jobs he held before becoming a carguard:

He said to me, „But now you are a carguard“, I responded „Yes, I am a carguard because people like you are making us carguards.“ He asked „How do you mean?“ I said, „By affirmative action ... that was the English word for apartheid – you made me a carguard, I didn’t make it myself. Thanks to all your blood brothers, not all but most, for making me a carguard.“ ... Like I said they [blacks] want to control the country...

Cody feels that the new South Africa so badly impacted on his life that not only was he forced to sleep on the streets for a while, but that he could not find a job in the new South Africa - firstly because he was a white male and, secondly, because he did not have matric. His children could not finish school because of the circumstances he found himself in and compelled him to place his children in an orphanage. Two of his sons dropped out of school, but his one daughter who is in foster care is being encouraged to finish her schooling.

Jo-Ann agrees that apartheid did not do the whites a favour in the long run because it is Afrikaners’ children who are suffering today because of apartheid. Jansen (2009: 49), at present (2010) Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State and at the time of writing his book Dean of Education at the University of Pretoria, states that it is in this environment of loss and change that white students enter school and university. These young people have the knowledge of the past as they were taught about the evils of apartheid at school, but they also carry with them the emotions of defeat which they inherited from their parents (Jansen, 2009: 49). Thus, apartheid not only affected the older generation Afrikaners, but continues to affect the younger generations as well.

For these participants, affirmative action not only influences their social identities as discussed in the previous section, but it also affects their class structure and therefore also their personal identities. Class, as discussed in Chapter three, is determined by one’s access to material resources. These resources can only be claimed if one can earn a decent living wage. The participants feel that affirmative action blocked their means to earn a living wage, thus it lowered

their class status, and this in turn is an attack on their personal identities which is linked to their ability to work.

5.3.3 The participants have no vote of confidence in post-apartheid government:

The participants all communicated a sense of mistrust in the current government. They sense that they have no reason to expect any assistance from the ANC government because they are white and Afrikaans speaking and are perceived as being connected to the apartheid legacy. Jansen (2009: 61) confirmed this perception in his study that Afrikaners feel that because of their apartheid past they, as an ethnic group, have become scapegoats for everything bad that happened in the past (Jansen, 2009: 61).

Daniel expressed his total lack of faith in the government with an unequivocal vote of no confidence in „them“: „You can’t expect anything from the government, because you won’t get anything“. He also constructs the government as „incompetent“ and also as belonging to „them“ not „us“. Similarly Jack expressed his lack of confidence in the government by stating that the „government is only there to “poke” you not protect you“. He has no pride in the new South Africa and no feeling of nationalism. Sarel has developed an extreme mistrust of everyone, even of me as a fellow Afrikaner. When asked why he felt uncomfortable speaking to me about race he answered:

I do not trust any white man anymore, even you, because you can write things which might come to the attention ANC officials.

And,

...they even want us to register our cell phone numbers, it is only because they want to know where we are all the time and want to listen to our conversations.

Sarel is a strong AWB supporter and has a strong sense of belonging to the Afrikaner ethnic group; he presents a forceful militaristic attitude towards his life experiences. Giliomee (2001: 646) describes the AWB as „an ill-disciplined para-military organisation under the leadership of Eugene Terre“Blanche“. This para-military organisation membership was founded on Afrikaans, Afrikanerness, members’ perceptions of Christian values (Kemp, 2008: 15, 20). The AWB fought strongly for the upholding of Afrikaner culture, to the extent that their actions bordered on

violence.³³ Sarel, being a member of the AWB during and after apartheid had no trust in the ANC government and views them as the enemy of Afrikaners. In contrast, Denise said that she trusts the government to a certain extent, but that they exploit the poor people in that they [black people] are becoming richer and the poor people poorer. Cody feels that Afrikaner men have become embittered because they cannot give their children a future and the new government is not giving any assistance to the poor white people in South Africa. Kathy, a focus group participant, argued that:

We are perceived to be oxygen thieves. We only sit here and use their [black people"s] oxygen up, because we do not have a future in this country.

James said that as a white man he cannot put up a stall to sell goods or vegetables in West or Smith Streets in downtown Durban because of his skin colour, which he used as evidence that he is being discriminated against because he is a white man.

Steyn (2001: 153) sums up such sentiments by observing narratives that she draws on, which she dubbed as „this shouldn't be happening to a white“, saying that these people are experiencing a reversal of apartheid and feel victimised as the new order is „out to get them“. Afrikaners feel displaced within their own country (Steyn, 2001: 155). This marginalised group of Afrikaner caregivers feel that they, who had total trust in „their“ government pre-1994, are now in a situation where they cannot trust the new government at all.

The participants expressed their feelings that they have been economically disempowered in the new South Africa. Cody argued that during apartheid there was work for all - blacks, coloureds, Indians, and whites most of all - but since 1994 everybody is suffering, the white people the most.

Along similar lines James said:

Even though things were wrong during apartheid, there always was work for everyone. Even black people can stake a claim to a site for a stall in West Street, whereas whites cannot do that. Now a white person must call a black „sir“ just to make money.

³³ An example of their aggressive behaviour started in 1976 when Prof. Van Jaarsveld became the first AWB victim when AWB members tarred and feathered the Professor for criticising Afrikaners' norms and values (Kemp, 2008: 11), also see Harber and Ludman (eds) (1994)

Dennis explained that since apartheid his quality of life has deteriorated to such an extent that he feels uncomfortable economically; where previously he was part of Afrikaner middle class, he has now slipped down the socioeconomic ladder. Similarly Ballantine (2004: 105) investigated the effect that democracy had on South Africans, and points out that the post-apartheid government's new policy to rectify the racial dominance of the past had severe social repercussions. This severe social repercussion resulted in the deterioration of the socioeconomic of the participants.

Uncle recalls the time he left the railways after 41 years:

Affirmative action, ... I did not actually lose my job there ... but I left on my own ... Because there was no future for the white man there; but the railway service got poorer and poorer, as they had less qualified people servicing them. We had 30 to 40 trains leaving the Bayhead station now there is only four a week, my brother-in-law who also work for the railways is on short time, he only works four times a week, because of the lack of maintenance there are less trains running.

Many railway workers left or took their *pakkies* (redundancy pay) in anticipation that they would lose their jobs regardless, because of their whiteness; they knew that the ANC government, being black, would figuratively wash their hands of them. Research has indicated that white households that were struggling financially in the apartheid era have become poorer after the elections (Erasmus, 2005: 13). She also argues that since the end of apartheid whites in the lower economic strata not only lost their race privileges, they lost the economic power which their secured jobs provided them during apartheid Erasmus (2005: 13). Said Daniel:

I cannot find work because of my skin colour ... some places tell you directly that you are from the wrong race group, others just say, „sorry it is affirmative action“.

5.3.4 The participants as victims of circumstances:

Daniel, quoted immediately above, constructs himself as a victim of circumstances and this is only one individual from an estimated 430 000 Afrikaans and English speaking whites who are said to be „too poor to live in traditional white areas“, in addition to the estimated 90 000 who are

struggling for survival since 1994 (Robinson, 2004). According to Robinson (2004) these figures increased by 15% per year since 1994.³⁴

Fredric lived and worked in Zimbabwe for a number of years, but strongly denies his Zimbabwean identity, laying a strong claim to being an Afrikaner born in Stellenbosch. But when he returned from a country, which openly rejects „whiteness“, in 2007 he expected to be accepted back as a participant in the economy as a white Afrikaner. However, he not only found himself being unable to find work, but also being rejected as a white Afrikaner.

I expected at least to find a job, so that I could still be useful ... I'm 62 years old, but I'm not stupid, and I'm ... as you can see, I'm still physically able ... I know my trade; I know my trade very well.

Some of the male participants felt that the new government used them to empower black people in the workplace, and in the process they became economically disempowered.

I had to train others [black men] to do my job [as a clerk], I had been in that position for five years, and he wants to learn it in four months. As soon as I trained him he not only received a higher salary than I, with my years of training, did, but I was made redundant. (Francois)

We as Afrikaners are oppressed ... the government said that they would create 50 000 new jobs, but they did not create new jobs; they took the jobs away from the white people and gave them to the blacks. (Francois)

Kruger, a reporter for the Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport*, reported on the plight of poor white Afrikaners in Bethlehem in the Free State province, and said that they are embittered and that young and old poor whites alike have the perception that they lost their jobs because they were being given to other races (Kruger, 2010).

5.3.5 The participants disillusioned with bureaucratic institutions:

The effect the new dispensation had on the participants in my study was that they became disillusioned with the bureaucratic inefficiency of the governmental institutions in their

³⁴ I also referred to Statistics South Africa, Census 2001: Primary tables South Africa, Census 1996 and 2001 compared <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/populationstats.asp> (Report No. 03-02-04 (2001))

constituency. As carguards the participants feel that they are being overlooked - firstly as citizens in the lower economic strata; and, secondly, as Afrikaners in need of some form of protection from the government. For example, the FIFA Soccer World Cup which was then (at the time of the interviews in 2010) to be hosted in South Africa, six months after my interviews were done. This 2010 South African-hosted World Cup was being mooted as a great boost to the economy. These claims meant nothing to them as it was felt that it will deprive carguards working in the city centre of their sole means of income for the duration of the event. They tried to negotiate with the municipality for their rights to work there during this time, but to no avail:

They want to close us down, FIFA told us that we are not allowed to work here, they want to deploy security guards registered with FIFA, even though we are registered security officers, we will be without income for that period of time. They do not take into account that we have regular customers whom we provide a service to. (Denise)

But the other concern that they have for themselves as carguards is that they have to „pay to work“. According to the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) all carguards and security site providers must register with them prior to being allowed to work in security related business. Municipalities are required to ensure that all carguards and/or security site providers meet the requirements (PSIRA, 2007).³⁵ However, this registration requirement policy resulted in carguards being even further exploited as most of them do not know how the system works regarding the registration. Because they are not educated in this regard, they are being exploited by people who do understand the requirements of the system. According to PSIRA, a small fee is required for the registration and an exam needs to be taken for them to be registered (PSIRA, 2007). However, if you are unregistered you can work for a service provider who is registered; service provider requirements are more stringent and higher registration fees are required, and for this service the provider charges the carguards a daily site fee. The one shopping centre site brings in on a monthly basis an average of R20 000 from site fees only for the service provider. Of the four sites on which I conducted research only three saw their service provider once a week when he came to collect the fees. The fourth site forcefully removed their service provider and

³⁵ Report by the Employment Conditions Commission regarding the investigation of Sectorial Determination 6: Private Security Sector, 2009. www.labour.gov.za/.../2009%20private%20security%20ECC%20report%20july.doc; Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority. <http://www.psira.co.za/>

continued to register themselves as individuals. They told me that a policeman brought this person to their site and said that according to the law they have to work for a service provider, even though they only saw this person once a week when it was money collection time. The fourth site, since kicking off the service provider, internally organised themselves with an elected coordinator who makes sure that shifts get filled, and as a collective they vote people on or off the site; furthermore, except for a small R5 daily fee towards administration and cell phone calls, all tips belongs to the individual carguard. However, this fourth site is an exception to the rule, and it is the other three site occupants who argue that they are exploited and receive no protection from the ANC government.

At one of the three „exploited“ sites visited, all of the Afrikaner carguards complained about the site fees, as in poor months they sometimes pay more out on the site fees than what they take home. The site is managed for the service provider by one carguard, who keeps records, collects the fees and organises shifts. For this work on one of the sites the site fee was forfeited, on the other two the site managers received no compensation for the service. Cody, a site manager had no idea that it is possible for him to register with PSIRA and said:

This thing that we have to pay site fees, I think that is it very wrong... R25 per day is what we have to pay. I collect the monies and keep a record; I know how much he makes every month.

Bianca, a 62 year old, female site manager, said that if she could she would quit. Because she is running around and doing all the work, without benefits, she is hardly working on her site and is in effect losing money. Daniel said that the carguards do not have any rights, if you are sick you do not earn money, if you get injured on duty you cannot claim compensation;³⁶ they have no legal protection.

Jack argues very strongly against the payment of ramp fees.³⁷

These ramp fees that we have to pay every day make me very angry... very angry, because there are families... a man with a wife and three, four children and that R25 you pay for ramp fees, the

³⁶ One of the carguards on this specific site was shot when apprehending an armed robber, who robbed one of the shops; he had to receive treatment in the government hospital with very little support from the shopping centre or the shop owners.

³⁷ 'Ramp' is the area located to the carguard within the parking lot where he/she works.

father could have used to buy something for his child to eat... or to buy something to wear. For that R20 he stands in the wind, rain and sun. The first R20 which I make every day does not belong to me... it is so unreasonable... it hurts just to think about it.

Fredric on the other hand argued that although he does not expect anything from the government, the complexes and individual shops should pay them basic salaries:

Owners of these complexes should pay us a certain amount of money, for doing the job, they should not ask us to pay ramp fees, and it is like a waitress. A waitress gets a salary and she also earns tips from her customers. That should be the way it should be done. I do not expect anything from the government, but I expect it from the owners of these shops, as we are looking after their clients. We are taking care of their clients; we are making it safer for their clients. Therefore it should not be from government, it should be from the shopping centres.

Being disillusioned with bureaucratic institutions stretches towards the healthcare system in South Africa. During apartheid poor white Afrikaners were accustomed to good medical care in government hospitals. However, the quality of care and the ease of access they were accustomed to have diminished significantly since 1994 and their feelings of disillusionment with the bureaucratic governmental institutions also include the public medical facilities. When I asked James what he did for medical treatment: „I go to the “butchery”“, his term for the government hospital where it is perceived that you receive poorer quality health care; „... you get there, sit down, they go through your chart to check if you got your chronic medication ... they do not even examine you“. Cody expressed the same concern:

I do not like this ... I am embittered towards the government hospital ... I know I am not a qualified person, but after they put my wife on the machines, I could see that something was very wrong ... her heart beat was as if she was running all the time ... they did not know what they were doing.

His wife died at the age of 41 in 2008 before they could diagnose her medical problem.

Some participants felt that the new government has even let them down with the basic health services. According to Denise, they are not only treated „like rubbish on the street“, but also in the health services where they are perceived as not being worthy of health care.

Fredric, on the other hand, has returned to South Africa after some years in Zimbabwe and compared the medical treatment they received there to that which his wife, who had a stroke, is currently receiving:

The one good thing about South Africa is that the medical treatment that we get here is all free ... I take her to Wentworth Hospital [a government hospital] she is getting fantastic medical treatment here, and I'm very, very happy with that.

James also compared different government hospitals and acknowledged that there are hospitals that are „cleaner“ than others. What James realised is that he is often the only white person in the hospital wards, and because of his socioeconomic position he has to accept that he has to share healthcare with racialised „others“ who are in a similar position.

5.3.6 Participants have to learn to unlearn the past:

Jansen (2009) uses some of the narratives he has collected over the years to explain and understand Afrikaners in his book *Knowledge in the Blood*. He explains how difficult it was, and still is, for these people to unlearn their past, the past that they were born and raised in and the past that taught them to hate the „other“ (Jansen, 2009: 242). Jansen (2009), who often had to face Afrikaners in this transition from the past into the future, asked himself:

What lies behind the aggression of the fathers, this tendency among white men toward spontaneous combustion when challenged or when facing a new and awkward situation? Was it simply a learned racism, the expression of white supremacy, the white male defence ego at work? I have no doubt that somewhere in this complexity lies also a troubled soul ... (Jansen, 2009: 242).

He also was confronted by Afrikaner students“ parents who directly told him that „I am a rural Afrikaner, and you know, we grew up raw and conservative with very firm views of black people ...“ (2009: 243). As discussed in Chapter three, academically race is not viewed as being biologically defined. However, the trend in South Africa is still to view race as being fixed with behaviour still being stereotyped as part of a race group. According to Back and Solomos (200: 20) race is mostly presented as normal and culturally defined. Smith and Feagin (1995: 4, cited in Holloway, 2000: 198) points out that identity is imbued with racialised meanings. Afrikaner identities are forged in the NP government“s ideology of race and this is not easy to change.

When my own participants expressed their viewpoint of the „other“ this sentiment is revealed in their narratives. Afrikaners who are trying to reject their upbringing and embrace the current situation is still hindered by apartheid socialisation. Sarel is a good example of someone who is so deeply socialised by the apartheid ideology’s racial perspectives and as a staunch AWB supporter he finds it very hard to accept that his son is in a multiracial relationship:

When I found out I wanted to commit suicide ... I do not accept him anymore as my son ... because it is written in the Bible that the child born from a mixed relationship will not go to heaven ...

Here it is obvious what role religion played during apartheid, whereby Afrikaner nationalism was „alchemise(d) ... into a civil religion“ (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 23). D.F. Malan, the first NP prime minister, after the party’s landmark election victory in 1948, must be seen as one of the early architects of apartheid and being a former DRC *dominee* (clergyman) introduced the slogan „Believe in your God, Believe in your Country, Believe in yourself“ (Van der Westhuizen, 2007: 23). This and many others similar slogans were imprinted into Afrikaners’ minds and the result can still be seen in some of my participants’ reactions to changes that impacted on their lives, especially post-apartheid. Jo-Ann learnt to accept the changes in South Africa, as she argues that there is nothing she can do to influence these changes positively, she said:

Ja laat Gods water oor Gods akkers loop. Ek vat elke dag soos dit kom en traai om elke dag iets goeds te doen in iemand anders se lewe

Let things take their course; I try and do a good deed everyday... I try and help people.

5.3.7 Participants wear Afrikaans language as a badge of social identity and conflict:

Burr (1995: 32) argues that personal and social identities are not only socially constructed, but the construction processes are rooted in language. Afrikaans is seen as a language of conflict and oppression in South Africa and this view remains even 16 years after the democratic elections. The fight to keep Afrikaans as a language of instruction at schools and tertiary educational institutions is continually highlighted in the media. When two prominent Afrikaans writers, Breytenbach and Coetzee, on a radio chat show debated whether they would see the death of Afrikaans as a language in their lifetime, it caused many people to react heavily against this view (Retief, 2010). However, when a consequent interviewer asked Ampie Coetzee about his remark,

that Afrikaans is a dying language, he explained that due to the fact that Afrikaans is under pressure as an educational language it will die out at this level. Afrikaans will still be spoken on the level of the working class and poor Afrikaners (Retief, 2010). In other words, Coetzee predicts that Afrikaans will return to its former colonial status as a „kitchen language“. „Kitchen language“ was a term used to describe the context wherein Afrikaans first was used; Afrikaans emerged as a pidgin language and was originally used amongst the slaves and servants in the western Cape, and was a mixture of Dutch and other locally used languages (Bekker and Leilde, 2002: 229). Dennis shared this perception:

How did Afrikaans develop? ...out of Dutch...it is a mixed language. The languages just developed into a smoother language...easier to speak.

Because Afrikaans is only seen as the language of the oppressor by some, both in the past and present, it is then also seen as a tool being used by the Afrikaners to exclude other races from the institutions where Afrikaans is still taught or used as medium of instruction (Retief, 2010). Jo-Ann noted this fight for survival in the educational system at a primary/secondary Afrikaans school where she sometimes carguards;

What I noticed from this Afrikaans school is that nothing changed there since apartheid. The black people still do all the work and they [the white people] are still the *baas* [the boss]. I sometimes wonder how it is possible for them to keep their status the same... I think there are less than five black children in their school.

Crystal, a Cambridge Honorary Professor of Linguistics, wrote in *Language Death*, that a language can be saved if a community continues to fight for its survival (Retief, 2010). Such a fight seems to be in process. *Die Burger*, an Afrikaans daily paper, recently (26 April 2010) ran a headline stating that there were moves afoot to raise R10 million for the founding of a new Afrikaans university.

Sarel stated that he felt, „Our language and culture was torn away from us“. The general sentiment amongst the participants is that there is a need for Afrikaners to see that their language and culture is acknowledged in the new South Africa. By protecting a language you are also protecting and acknowledging an ethnic identity. Jacob wants Afrikaans to protected, but acknowledges that it could be problematic;

I get very angry if an Afrikaner refuses to speak Afrikaans even though my home language is at the moment English, because my wife does not speak Afrikaans. But I speak Afrikaans to my son [from a previous marriage]. I do business in English. Afrikaners are becoming more and more English orientated, and I am just as guilty. For example, I only buy English newspapers, except during the rugby season, then I buy an Afrikaans newspaper now and again.

Cody on the other hand argues that Afrikaans is rejected on all levels:

They do not want anything to do with Afrikaans, everything has to be in English... they [black people] do not understand Afrikaans, and they do not want to learn it, but our children have to learn Zulu...

Jo-Ann looks at Afrikaans and being an Afrikaner from different angles – she argues that Afrikaans is in the process of dying out because Afrikaner people do not stand together as a nation; they do not stand up for their rights, such as the right to be white and the right to speak their own language. Jo-Anne is married to an *Engelsman* (English man) and when I asked how she identifies herself, as an Afrikaner or English, she said,

I am still an Afrikaner... I like speaking Afrikaans... I only speak English to my youngest child.

Sarel stated that Afrikaans speaking people are different from English speaking people because „They think differently“.

Appiah (1994) argues that the continued struggle to keep language and culture in the foreground is about recognition of one's culture or against the loss thereof. His argument can be applied to the on-going struggle of recognition for Afrikaners; that people have a need to have their culture and social identity recognised publicly (Appiah, 1994: 149). Afrikaans as a language is seen part of the historical construction of Afrikaners' personal and social identity (Giliomee, 2003: 365). Giliomee (2003: 364) uses the term „Afrikaans as badge of social identity“, indicating that language plays a very important historical role. If language is suppressed and not given a public platform from whence it can be expressed, it will have an impact on the culture concerned. It will also, as mentioned by Coetzee above, die as an academic language and lose all the ground it has gained since the early 1900s, when Afrikaans was promoted from being a „kitchen“ language to an academic language, a long and costly process whereby literature became available in print in

Afrikaans, and it eventually became an official language in 1925 (Giliomee, 2003: 376). Malan (1964: 175) said that when that happened for the first time „Afrikaners felt that they were fully recognised and fully free and at home in their own country“.

Participants in the study stressed that „their“ language is important to them, even if they live in an English dominated environment. Sarel stated:

I love my language, even if I mix it with a little English, it is because I went to an English school.

Some of the participants realised the importance that languages play in the new South Africa, and how important it is to acknowledge others“ languages, even though the importance of their own language is being ignored.

Cody related to me:

I speak Fanagalo³⁸ ... If I speak it, they do understand ... I have black clients and they support me because I speak a black language.

Cody above realised that by acknowledging another race“s language is to show that you not only respect the individual but also the ethnic group, and he felt that he have the right to demand similar respect for him and his language.

5.3.8 The effect that language and the media have on the participants' identity formation:

The participants also noticed how the new South Africa influenced not only their language but also their music. During our focus group discussion it was noted that the Afrikaans radio channel *Radio Sonder Grense* (RSG- radio without borders) now also favours „coloured“ music which they labelled as „kitchen Afrikaans music“ and that they were neglecting „our“ music as, although coloured people speak and sing in Afrikaans, that it is not „our“ Afrikaans.

³⁸Fanagalo was established as a *lingua franca* between speakers of various languages found in South Africa and was mainly used in mines throughout the country. It can be viewed as a pidgin and is basically simplified version of Zulu (and Xhosa) and related languages with adaptations of modern terms from English, and Afrikaans. About 70% of the lexicon is from Zulu and it serves as a basis from which the person of authority can give instruction to black workers' <http://www.cyberserv.co.za/users/~jako/lang/fanagalo/index.htm>

During a focus group, Kathy stated:

They do not want our music to exist anymore, because they do not want to listen to it. Eventually you will not hear Afrikaans music anymore, and we will become accustomed to hear other music... If we cannot listen to our music on the radio, it will disadvantage Afrikaners. You will eventually stop hearing our music and become accustomed to their music, and then you will start doing things their way...

And,

Nothing is allowed to be just white, nothing is allowed to be only in a white language [Afrikaans]...

Ballantine (2004: 21) argues that some music artists search for other and different identities in their music lyrics. Eventually in these genres „us“ and „them“ come to merge, identities are represented as unsettled and changing. However, these „us“ and „them“ notions clearly emerged in my focus group discussion, when the participants spoke about Afrikaans music;

I will tell you that there are many new Afrikaans compact disks (CDs) released... more than ever before. (Sarel)

It is because our Afrikaner people are fighting for our right to sing. I mean we have many talented singers and they have come a long way to be recognised. (Kathy)

The last three months three new Afrikaans CDs were released. (Cody)

Bezuidenhout (2007) discusses in detail the impact that Bok van Blerk's song *De la Rey*, has on some Afrikaners. Du Plessis, editor of the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper *Rapport* (cited in Bezuidenhout, 2007), debated the importance of this song, and why it drew large crowds of Afrikaners, young and old, together; he argued that this is evidence that a new Afrikaner identity started to emerge. Du Plessis further argued that the ANC government created the conditions of uncertainty for this level of Afrikaner unity to develop (Bezuidenhout, 2007). Bezuidenhout (2007) continues by saying that some Afrikaners are tired of being victimised for being a white Afrikaner, they [all?] are tired of being blamed for apartheid, and many of the young people were too young to be part of apartheid. The focus group participants in my research discussed the song *De la Rey*:

They say that De la Rey will be our next anthem...(Sarel)

...but we are South Africa!! (Cody)

But they are still going to fight over that song. Afrikaners do not like the three languages in our current anthem, they [Afrikaners] want a song which only belongs to them, one which they can stand attention to...(Kathy)

Something happens inside of you when you hear that song...(Daniel)

It is our song, it is our people, and you just want to stand up and sing with, when you hear that song. If they play De la Rey... everybody joins in the singing... everyone. (Jacob)

It was important for the participants to point out to me that even though Afrikaans as a language is attacked from all fronts there are new Afrikaans music compact disks produced on a regular basis, indicating that grass root Afrikaners are willing to fight and support Afrikaans language initiatives.

5.3.9 Conclusion:

Theme two examined the impact that the new South Africa had on the lives of Afrikaner caregivers; I looked at their ability to adapt to a changing society, not only one with a new government but one where they were no longer privileged through government policies of job protection. It was clear that they had not adapted well, as they were poor, unskilled and not equipped for political and social change. They also felt betrayed by the government they had been loyal to. They were clear that affirmative action policies affected them but could not see that during apartheid they too had benefited from a similar policy. They demonstrated agency in the fact that they worked, albeit in the informal sector as caregivers. But it gave them a sense of identity which work does confer and they had a lot to say about their work environment.

5.4 Theme three: Change in status of caregivers after apartheid

The participants narrated to me to what extent their status changed and how it affected them both as individuals and as a collective of Afrikaner caregivers. They also conveyed to me their expectations of the future and how they expected their socioeconomic situation to be affected in the future. This change in status is not limited to class but also to what Taylor (1994) terms „the

politics of recognition". He argues for the importance of group belonging, which in this research project are Afrikaner carguards, as being recognised as members of an ethnic group. Without such recognition the group will suffer a feeling of inflicted harm and a sense that, compared to others, their status is inferior (Taylor, 1994: 25). Taylor furthermore argues that this process of recognition is a mirroring process; in other words, identity is not only constructed by our own perceptions but also as to how we perceive others' perceptions of us (Taylor, 1994: 25). Incorporated within the above mentioned theme I discuss Afrikaner symbols. During the apartheid era symbols of identity were used to stress the importance for the *Volk* to unify and so ensure that Afrikaners become and remain a strong ethnic group. Symbols such as flag, anthem, sport (particularly rugby), religion in the DRC, and the Afrikaans language were upheld as markers of pride. These old South African symbols still play a role in the social identity of the participant Afrikaner carguard, as was seen in recent events following the murder of Eugene Terre'Blanche, the AWB leader, on his farm in April 2010. The country watched as a few hundred Afrikaners, who previously were not actively involved in the Afrikaner cause, apparently associated themselves with this right wing organisation. There was a sudden, but short-lived, upsurge in the demonstration of compatriotism as apartheid symbols – the display of flags and the singing of the anthems *Kent Gij Dat Volk* (Do You Know the People) of the old South African Republic (Transvaal) and *Die Stem* - were paraded for the entire world to see (Smith, 2010). Not only did they serve as reminders of the past, but they gave some Afrikaners the opportunity to show the world that they still are a very present, if small, reality demanding recognition. Buechler (2008) argued that symbols can be defined by tangible items, which only have meaning to a specific group. However, in a sense apartheid symbols have meaning to everyone in South Africa: however, to some they are symbols of oppression; to others symbols of positive identity and pride; to some merely nostalgia. In the same breath and in the same context the importance of the symbolism of certain songs will also be discussed in this section.

The symbolism of the song *Dubula ama Bhunu* (kill the Boer) has been widely discussed and, mostly, condemned in the media. The ANC youth leader Julius Malema and, more ambiguously, the ANC as an organisation, are fighting for the right to sing it (on May 19, 2010 the E-news channel reported that the ANC has applied for leave to appeal, in the Supreme Court, a court decision banning its singing). Tsedu (2010) a reporter for an Afrikaans Sunday newspaper stated that many whites, especially white Afrikaners and white farmers, are horrified by the lyrics of this song, claiming that the death of the AWB's Eugene Terre'Blanche and many other farm murders

was incited by and can be directly linked to the singing of such songs . This is not only seen as the result of the use of such songs, but also of other symbols such as the raised fist. The questions many concerned people ask revolve around the right of any group to use ethnic or national symbols which may be perceived to be divisive at the risk of inciting violence and stirring negative emotions against others. At the same time I will look at how the participants in the study reported on here narrate their attachment to „their“ symbols and how they perceive the new national symbols. Allegiance to pre-1994 symbols could indicate to what extent one’s social identity is located within being Afrikaner, rather than Afrikaans-speaking, South Africans. Evidence that this allegiance still exists 16 years since the abolition of apartheid can be seen when attempts are made by some Afrikaner organisations to motivate and re-kindle the „old“ Afrikaner norms and values. This was evident when Anton Ferreira (2010) reported in the Sunday newspaper, *Sunday Times*, on a poorly attended gathering of Afrikaners on 17th October 2010. The focus of this gathering was to bring likeminded Afrikaners together, to remind them that Afrikaner ideology is based on the Bible and that they should expect God to return the land to Afrikaner white people (Ferreira, 2010: 5).

5.4.1 Class and status accorded to the Afrikaner carguards:

Flint argued that carguards did reasonably well before the world recession also hit South Africa. The recession, according to Flint, is the reason why the lower classes, which include carguards, can hardly survive:

The income of the carguards shrank since the recession. I used to make R200 to R250 per day [six days week, before site fee deduction], now carguards take home between R100 and R120 per day [before site fee deduction].

Like any ethnic group Afrikaners are stratified according to class and status. Flint gave a very good example of how unemployment is related to status:

What I realised is that if a man asks for work [as a carguard] it does not matter what his qualification is. Once he lost his job and he has been on the street for a month or two – sometimes staying in a shelter, then a man loses their self-respect. Once he lost his self-respect he is useless; useless to his country, useless to his family, useless to his children. Everyone ignored him and nobody wants to help him.

The focus of this research is on the lower class Afrikaner carguard community, having less access to economic markets than the middle and upper class Afrikaners. Of the 17 participants interviewed, five lived in outbuildings, two in a shelter and four with family. The rest had additional spousal incomes that allowed for property rentals. Francoise explained how he landed up in his current living arrangements:

I worked on steam trains from 1975 till 1988, until they phased out steam engines, thereafter I sold our house and moved to Durban, still working on the railways, and was allocated a railway house. After being retrenched I moved to Johannesburg looking for better opportunities; however we landed at a mission because of lack of work and we had no accommodation. Once again we all moved to Durban hoping that better opportunities will knock on our door. Now my wife and I live in a one room servant quarters behind someone's house.

James also lived in servants' quarters, until he failed to pay his rent. As a result he, his wife, young son and daughter all live out of his car, parked at the beachfront. He described his life:

At night I lie and think about all the things [I] need to get for my son, and for the family... you worry... you stress... you wonder how will you do the next day financially... are you going to receive enough tips for the day, you will not find one carguard who owns his own house... we are poor... we are poor people.

Uncle, the oldest of the participants, was an exception as the only one who owned a home which he purchased with his retrenchment money, paying cash for his house and a car. He does not, however, have other disposable income available to him.

5.4.2 Can Afrikaner carguards be labelled as perpetual minors?

Whiteness bestowed on Afrikaners' the power to define both self and others, regardless of the socio-economic class they belonged to (Steyn, 2001: 8). Since 1994, however, my participants had to face the harsh reality that they no longer were to be recipients of automatic protection from governmental institutions and I found that the majority of the participants dropped from living in lower middle class residential areas, earning a reasonable living wage, to having to compete for a place to live and work with similarly underprivileged South Africans in Durban.

In a report by De Villiers, who wrote an article in a Sunday newspaper, *Rapport* (4 October 2009), on the book launch of *Die Afrikaner-Broederbond*, written by dissident DRC Dominee Nico Smith, he notes that according to Smith, apartheid did not encourage Afrikaners to think for him- or herself; apartheid kept Afrikaners from coming of age. Smith, in other words, suggested that Apartheid diminished Afrikaners' agency. This is where I would like to draw from the agency/structure debate, whereby the structure of society is said to determine the consciousness of individuals in opposition to where agency or human action alters the structure of the social (Billington et al, 1998: 242). We can debate whether Smith's statement, that Afrikaner identities were determined by the Apartheid structures, thus they never „learnt to think for themselves“, is valid. In other words, according to Smith, Afrikaners were never taught how to make their own decisions or when left alone they seemed at a loss. In debating Smith's statement I looked if it is possible to justify using his comment the smaller context, such as analysing my participants' data.

Amongst my participants it seemed that they had difficulty in making correct economic choices, once their lifelong career with one or two government employers ended. Two participants explained to me that they decided to resign because it was now required of them to share their personal space with people of other races:

When I realised that I had to share the ablution facilities with black people, I decided to leave... (Sarel)

Sarel initially said he realised he panicked and overreacted by leaving but later realised that he still could have had a job if he had stayed on the railways or, at worst, he would have received a retrenchment severance packet. This elaboration to his answer will be discussed further in the chapter. Jack, a committed bachelor, said that after working for 15 years for an Indian boss, the owner sold his business to a black man. Yet only after working for a week for him he decided to resign because he felt that he was being treated badly. Since then he has not had a stable job. Cody also said:

I have made bad decisions in my life, and as result I had to place all three my children in a children's home, and my wife and I slept on a fishing pier and in graveyards - grave yards are safe as you do not get attacked there.

The above excerpts reveal that apartheid ideology (structuration) was still at play at the time they made their decisions; It was only later that they acknowledged that these might have been bad choices, as they did not think or reflect on the possible consequences their actions might have. Their decisions often affected their employment and in the long term their socio-economic situation.

5.4.3 The effects of unemployment on Afrikaner carguards and their displaced identities:

Unemployment had an effect on the participants in that their social identities which are rooted in apartheid seemed to have been displaced when they became unemployed; Dennis, a former postal worker said, according to him, carguarding cannot be regarded as a job, and in the interview it became clear he constructs himself and others according their place in society:

For me carguarding is just glorified begging. Ok, you do not approach people directly and ask for money, but you stand next to the car and when they come out you hope that they will give you something. For me it is the same as going to people and asking them for the money.

Jack explained how he felt when he started to work as a carguard, this feeling was the result as how people treated him, and they [the public] often speak about him as if he was not present:

*Ek het net gevoel dit is nie ek nie ... ek het gevoel ek is „n bedelaar
... ek het gevoel soos 'n hobo*

It just felt that it was not me. I felt like a beggar... I felt like a hobo.

The above excerpts reveal the loss of status these participants feel working in the informal sector, in what is considered not real work, or work with low status. Their status as workers had changed to something people have constructed as undesirable. This labelling has an impact on how they see themselves through what they do: their job is on the same level as begging and that they are worth less than other people who work in the formal sector, with a socially acceptable job description.

Work is an essential part of our culture and it becomes a defining factor of „self“ (Fryers, 2006). Without a clearly defined job one stands in danger of losing one’s identity as a large part of who we are is about what work we do. When we lose our job we do not have a central point from where we can position ourselves and those around us. In Chapter two, in the literature review, I referred to Mercer’s (1991) idea of displacement and the identity crisis which it will cause (Du

Gay 1996: 1). This displacement of a central aspect of poor white Afrikaners' social identity in the work place has occurred post-apartheid.

Jack also related to me how demeaning it was to be referred to as a „Hobo“, as that is not how he constructed himself, but how other people perceived him. Jo-Ann, found that when she started carguarding she felt uncomfortable doing the work as other Afrikaners treated her with contempt. This emphasises the fact that not only does class classification play a role in the carguards' lives but also status. For Sarel, an ex-railway worker, becoming a carguard was a huge drop in status: although he has been living on the streets for periods of time he never thought that he would be reduced to a situation where he would have to do menial labour and be in the same socio-economic position as black people;

Ja, dit is baie vernederend vir ons ... vir blankes ... om te staan en te bedel of karwag te wees.

Yes, it is very humiliating for us... for white people to beg or to do carguarding.

But some of the carguards, once they overcame their initial reluctance to work in this position, discovered the job had some advantages.

It does not matter which social class you are from, if you are unemployed your status is much lower than those who are employed - even as a carguard. James, Jack, Uncle, Fredric and Jacob all said the same thing: that they would rather do carguarding than be unemployed at home.

I'll do whatever I can because one thing that I cannot do is sitting at home doing nothing. I'm not built that way ... I have never been and I will never be. I am a person who has to do something, what does not really matter to me, as long as I can do something, I'm not really worried if I'm a carguard or if I'm a general manager of a company ... (Fredric)

To allow society to determine whether you can or cannot work because of your race or age was not an option for them. Employment agencies considered many of them too old to be employable, yet they were too young to qualify for social grants from the government pension fund.³⁹

³⁹ Out of the 17 participants eight were over the age of 60; seven participants were between the ages of 43 and 54. Old age government pension is only applicable for people 60 years and older.

I do not plan to work here for long... I see it as something temporary, I am not old enough to be on pension, but I am struggling to find work because of my age and the fact that I do not have a trade, or my driver's licence... (Sarel)⁴⁰

Uncle described that after his retrenchment from the railways he felt very lonely, and started to drink heavily. His subsequent physical and mental deterioration mobilised his friends to find him this position as a carguard. He claims that it was this job that saved his life and prevented him from becoming a total alcoholic. In the literature review, Chapter two, I refer to Fryer (2006) who talks about the importance of work in our lives at different levels. Uncle's other reasons for being a carguard was,

...om my besig te hou!!! Hier ontmoet ek vreeslike interessante mens, jy weet toe ek klaar gemaak het op die spoorweg, toe het ek heeldag ... ek staan op dan loop ek om die huis ... dan kyk ek waar ,n bossie sy kop uitgesteek het ... haal hom uit, in die huis, dan is dit net bier en sigarette en DSTV. Toe het dr Wagner vir my gese "Oom kom uit die huis uit of jy gaan vrek" Oh well ... toe het ek hier ... ek is al 12 jaar hier. En ek is happy ek is dood happy.

To keep myself busy!!! Here I meet very interesting people. When I left the railways I did not know how to keep myself busy... I will work a little in the garden, and then sit inside of the house smoking and drinking and watching DSTV. My doctor told me if I do not get out of the house and do something constructive that I will die. I have been carguarding for 12 years now, and I am very happy.

Fredric argued that he could not stay at home for long periods and needed to work, he needed to communicate with people, and he was always a very sociable person.

Even if there is an emotional need to work, society and yourself construct your identity according to the type of work you are doing which, in turn, has an effect on self-perception, and this could be clearly be seen throughout the interview process.

5.4.4 Professionalism of carguarding and the public's perceptions of carguards:

Contrary to the public's stereotypical perception of carguards Flint, an ex-carguard site manager, argued that carguarding has become professional in the last few years and that carguards can no

⁴⁰At present Sarel is still working as a carguard, even though he indicated early on in the interview that he is not planning to work as a carguard for a long time.

longer be seen as beggars and drunkards, although there are still a handful of such people around who drag the carguards' name through the mud because of their bad conduct. Flint says:

Initially the public treated carguards badly, until carguarding became more organised and professional... I believe that I am one of the people who succeeded in changing the status of the carguard to professional, and people started to see us in a different light... Carguards are not only there to collect monies – they are not beggars or bums...

The change of attitude towards the carguards is very important as they not only feel that their status has changed, but they also feel accepted and feel that people are starting to value their contribution to society. Jacob worked professionally in tourism prior to becoming a carguard and he is the site manager of a group of carguards working in Durban central on the beachfront. He contended that on their site they work very professionally and those members of the public respect and trusts them to the extent that they will leave their personal belongings, including car keys, with them while spending time on the beach. When I asked him if the public still think of carguards as beggars, Jacob responded:

You still get people who think we are beggars; specially people who come from other provinces such as Johannesburg, East London and Port Elizabeth; the places where carguards have a bad reputation. But once they see how we do things then they change their opinions about carguards. We have been in overseas surfing magazines, because people cannot believe that you it is possible to leave your car keys and other belongings with us while you go surfing... Capetonians said that they will never leave their keys with anyone in Cape Town.

He also stressed that it was a difficult road to win the trust of their clients; however they are well known for their „organisation“, even with the international surfers who visit the Durban beaches. But Denise, who works with Flint on the beachfront, says that there still are days when people call the white carguards „white kaffirs“. I approached some of the public and asked them their opinion about the carguards. One black „client“ pointed to Cody and said:

That guy over there is very good, to me, he (Cody) does not see colour, black or white, he treats us all the same.

A manager of one of the largest tenants in one of the shopping centres where I conducted interviews spoke to me about the carguards:

Some of them are good, depends on the ones who have been longer in the area, some of them only do it to ... it is another way of ... bumming money, not really doing something ... there are some of them that see it really as a job and they take pride in it ... depends and who you are and what you are.

The same manager responded about the public's general attitude towards carguards:

The racial thing is still around. I would see white people would be a little bit harder on less fortunate white people, because they class them in a different bracket, and then there is some white people, like the Afrikaans white people, they will give him a good tip, because he is Afrikaans.

When I asked a group of young people, between the ages of 18 and 23 years old, on their perceptions of white carguards some responded:

I do not really differentiate between the races of carguards. I tip whoever guards my car! I admire anyone who does jobs like this because they are making an effort to earn money instead of begging. (female, 20 years old)

I am always surprised when I see white carguards. It does not seem normal. I'm ashamed to say that I do often tip them more than I would tip any other carguard. (female, 23 years old)

It is very unusual to me because most jobs of that kind are usually done by unskilled black labour. It is surprising to see that there are some white people who have to do such jobs, so that they can have some to eat at night. At the same time it makes me feel sorry for them. (male, 21 years old)

The most I have seen were dirty therefore they looked like they wanted to be pitied upon or they were trying too hard to be like black carguards. I don't tip them because I do not think that they expect blacks to tip them. And they are so full of themselves. (female, 19 years old)

...I do not tip white carguards, white people are the rich people, they are powerful and they have access to many things... it is unnatural. (male, 20 years old)

In times the public's perceptions of carguards are revealed in unexpected interactions as I experienced while working with the carguards as a participant observer. I was approached by a black business man who wanted to get to know me better:

Man: Do you work here? ..., I have never seen you here before, are you new? ... Do you stay around here? ... I hope to see you sometimes around ... can I have your phone number ... I would like to contact you again ... we can have lunch tomorrow ...

Not only was I taken by surprise, but I realised that the man's construction of me was, „if she can be a carguard she will be available sexually“. In other situations he might not feel he could approach me and ask me outright for my number, but on site as a carguard I appeared available.

Blumer's point about social identity construction only being possible when others assign meaning to you and your actions and vice versa is demonstrated in the interactions between the carguards and the public above (Buechler, 2008: 187).

5.4.5 The participants' perceptions of begging and how they view their own social status:

My participants are very clear that they have a higher status than the beggars on the street corners, and although a few acknowledged that at some time or another they were forced to beg, they do not want to return to that situation. Cody admitted that at one time he was forced to beg and that he was really downtrodden at that stage and that it was a huge leap for a white person, from being employed and living a decent „white“ life, to live on the streets. Speaking to Sarel and James about begging:

No, I cannot stand at the robot begging ... it takes something away from you if you stand there ... it does something to you to stand there ... I do not know how to describe it ... (James)

It robs you of your dignity ... It is degrading for us whites to stand and beg. (Sarel)

However, Cody now admits that it is not necessary to beg:

To be honest, I realised that it was not necessary to beg, I eventually started to fish and sell the catch to black and Indian people, then we always made enough to pay the R20 for the homeless shelter and a little bit of food.

Lorraine, said that carguards are hardworking people, with a strong emphasis on „hardworking“. Although her unmarried pregnant daughter is not happy with her being a carguard, Lorraine just said that she has to overcome her embarrassment and accept it.

I would much rather watch other people's cars before I will stand in the street, I am very proud of my work, even if I am the only white woman on these premises.

Denise stressed that carguards are not beggars, but that they deliver a service to the community, and are not happy that they are often constructed as poor. She said:

Have you ever noted how many beggars there are in Durban? At first you would only see one or two. Our white people are only getting poorer and poorer and we are not getting any further because we cannot find jobs. But to beg on the street is unacceptable ... they do not want to work as carguards.

Dennis equates carguarding with begging, however when I asked him if he perceives his status as the same as the white man begging on the corner, he quickly changed his argument:

No that is different, that is real begging... for example one of our carguards [Flint] only has 48 % heart function left... he cannot work so often anymore because of his health, but if he can work as a carguard then nobody has an excuse to beg.

Although the carguards perception on begging is intertwined with their perception of status, it was a topic which came up on a daily basis during the interviewing processes. It was as if the participants need to emphasise that there are a difference between what they do and what a beggar does. And this whole section could relate back to the public's perception of carguards, their perceived status and how they define the „self“ in relation their work.

5.4.6 Inter- and intra-generational mobility amongst Afrikaner carguards:

The narratives I collected demonstrate what Giddens (1989:231) refers to as inter-generational and intra-generational mobility: whereby inter-generational means changes in social status across generations, that is, from parents to children and intra-generational means changes in social status within a single generation. Intra-generational mobility - within the same generational cohort - is often linked to psychological anxieties when individuals are unable to maintain their life-styles; this is usually common when people become unemployed and/or unemployable due to structural circumstances (Giddens, 1989: 231).

Here I will look at the participants' inter-generational mobility, to determine if their class position improved, stayed the same or lowered compared to their parents' class position. In other words, if their parents are the product of the NP government's social engineering programmes the offspring from that generation should have reaped the economic benefits the NP government bestowed upon them. If they did not then the question is, was the apartheid's ideology unsuccessful or were there other structural impediments? Likewise, we can compare the intra-generational mobility, to see what the social effects were if the participants moved down the class scale. This is rapid change as it is occurring in one generation.

In regard to intra-generational mobility, Ben's situation is an indication that his social mobility is directly due to his disability. He was brain damaged as a child in a hit-and-run accident. His late father worked for the state owned Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) till his death 20 years ago; his late mother was a house wife, all four his siblings completed their secondary schooling and one sister studied for a degree. Ben on the other hand went to a school which caters for children with disabilities, and even though his siblings are concerned about him and attempted to keep him at home, he is a very independent man, and wishes to live his own life, even though it means living on the street.

Cody's narrative reveals inter-generational mobility. When he spoke about living on the farm with his father, his parents' separation and his mother's subsequent drinking problem we see that this is inter-generational because of how his life changed so quickly. Although his father tried to keep Cody in school, he only completed Grade 10 and left to work in the post-office, wanting to be independent rather than to stay at home another few years studying. He regrets his hot-headed decisions as a young man, as it had a huge influence on his class and status throughout his life. The inter-generational mobility is further shown through Cody's children who have dropped more in mobility. Cody said that he often reprimands his sons, who did not complete their schooling, because he did not want them to repeat his mistakes:

I am very proud of my daughter [who is in foster care]... she is now in Grade eight and is learning very hard... I know she will succeed. But I have tried to explain to my other sons [both under 25 years of age] ... please study, complete your schooling... I only have a Grade 10, you have to study to become successful in life... do a trade... finish your schooling... but they would not listen to me.

Cody's lack of social mobility has had a huge impact on his children, and he admits that if his daughter was not in foster care her chances of being successful would have been slim, as her foster parents are pushing her into a social class denied to him.

Dennis maintained his parents' class position for most of his life. However, this started to change when his drinking (by his own acknowledgment) got out of hand; and because of the lack of certification of his experience as a boilermaker and welder. When I asked why he is carguarding he responded:

I cannot find work, because I do not have the right skin colour... some places tell that to you directly... sorry sir, you cannot apply because it is an affirmative action position...⁴¹

In line with social mobilisation I asked all my participants if they had the opportunity to leave South Africa, would they take it. Some of their responses:

No ... I was born here ... I would rather fight them [ANC government] than to leave. (Cody)

And

We are born here ... and here we will die ... why go to find greener pastures? It is not so much better in other countries, I know of people who went across but returned again a few years later ... if you cannot find work you must create your own opportunities. (Jo-Ann)⁴²

Since the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has seen an exodus of many professional people (Chaudhry, 2008). Because of the point requirements in applying for immigration into countries such as Australia,⁴³ very few low- or unskilled individuals are able to qualify for immigration. Therefore, lower class Afrikaners, the participants in this study, are the very least likely to qualify for immigration as they lack qualifications even if they do have skills. But if these options were available to them, most of them declared that regardless of their current socio-economic status, they would be reluctant to consider emigrating. The question „whether we as

⁴¹ Dennis found work, four months after our interview, at a local business that is known to show preference to white Afrikaans speaking applications.

⁴² Jo-Ann has found many different ways to generate an income, from painting houses to sewing clothes for other people. One of her jobs was working at a hairdresser as a cleaner.

⁴³ <http://www.visabureau.com/australia/immigration-points-test.aspx#Skill>

Afrikaners have a future in South Africa“ was often answered in a manner which indicated inner conflict. They felt they have become strangers in their own country, and that South Africa has nothing to offer the younger generation, yet on a more personal level they felt a strong sense of belonging to South Africa, wanting to be buried in its soil. Even though their status changed they felt they are still children of South Africa. Jacob“s argument is:

If all the parents leave with their children, what is going to happen
to our country?

Downward social mobility of the participants after 1994 was generally due to their lack of education and skills, in that their NP governmental job protection barrier fell away and that they were all facing competition from higher skilled people of different races who entered the job market. Their downward social mobility and the lack of skills also prevented them from qualifying to leave South African for the global job markets although several participants indicated that even if they could they feel a special bond with their motherland despite all the political problems and would be most unlikely to leave even if they were in the position to do so.

5.4.7 How pre-apartheid symbols still affect the participants’ social identities:

After apartheid whites lost not only their economic power, but Afrikaners lost many of the symbols which informed their social and personal identities: symbols which during apartheid had become part of their ethnicity as Afrikaners and national pride as South Africans.

The participants related to me how the symbols „speak“ to them as a way of conveying the depth of meaning certain symbols held for them. Some participants also tried to hold on to the older, more familiar symbols which signified Afrikaner unity and identity. The participants revealed that the importance of certain symbols had not diminished although some did remain dormant due to the change in government. But symbols could quickly be revived to demonstrate solidarity as was noted earlier with the death of Eugene Terre“Blanche.

Since the news broke of the AWB leader“s murder the old South African flag and the AWB flag resurfaced and were displayed out of defiance by AWB members and some Afrikaner supporters. Van der Kolk (1996: 15) argued that emotional attachment is probably the primary protection against feelings of helplessness and meaninglessness. Freud similarly argued that the more terrifying the external threat, the stronger the group allegiances become (Van der Kolk, 1996: 25).

After the murder of Terre“Blanche it seemed that Afrikaners with far right tendencies drew together into a laager out of fear for what they construed as a renewed external threat. My participants also displayed this renewed group allegiance with being Afrikaner in general and with the AWB in particular. In the focus group they discussed the woman who was seen driving her car up and down the area, where they work, with the old South African flag and the AWB flag fluttering from the window in defiance. The participants agreed that she was taking a huge personal risk in doing so, but they admired her for taking so strong a stance against the ANC and not being afraid to acknowledge her allegiance to Afrikaner cause and to the AWB.

When I asked about the symbolic value of the AWB flag two participants argued that the AWB flag represents:

Dit is ,n simbool vir dit waarvoor jy staan.

It is a symbol for your principles. (Cody)

Honderd persent opregte boere dit is waarvoor dit staan.

It represents the Boer [Afrikaner]. (Kathy)

Prior to this the old South African flag was in the news after people protested against the fact that it continued to show up in public places and gatherings every now and again.

Carstens (2009) reported the incident where a spectator was spotted with the *Vierkleur*, a term employed to describe the South African flag used during apartheid, during a Super 14 rugby match, in June 2009 at Loftus Versfeld, situated in Pretoria, Gauteng. This flag was spotted amongst the sea of blue flags representing the Bulls, the home rugby team’s colours. The debate that followed after this flag incident reflected two sides of a story: one argued that the old flag represents oppression, hate and racism; the other, represented by some Afrikaners, argued that trying to ban the flag was tantamount to banning „freedom of speech“ (Carstens, 2009).

Expressing his dislike for the new flag, Sarel said:

Nee, ek hou niks van die nuwe vlag nie, dit is einlik ,nonderbroek, as jy mooi daarna kyk. Nee, ek hou van die ou vlag, die ou waardes. Kyk, die swartes op sy plek – ek het my plek, ... ek sal saam met hom werk ... maar, ek weet wat is hy.

I do not like the new flag, it actually looks like underpants. I like the old flag, the old norms and values. I like black people in their space - I have my space... I will work with him ... but I know what he is.

As mention before, Sarel, being an AWB supporter, finds the changes in a democratic South Africa very hard to swallow, although he says he is making an effort to adapt, he still finds it difficult. By referring to the new flag as underpants is in itself significant as it shows that he indicated that he had no respect for it. Since 1994 the old South African flag made way for a new one, signifying a new beginning and was also intended to bring a new unity amongst South Africans. However, my participants indicated to me that they struggle to accept the new South African symbols as these signified a loss to them, rather than a new beginning. Cody, a 61 year-old male participant, feels that he cannot identify with the new flag or anthem. The new flag has no meaning for him and he is not interested in learning the new anthem:

I do not sing that thing ... I refuse ... because I cannot understand what they are doing to Afrikaners. All that I know is that I refuse to accept it ... all I know is that we fought the ANC on the border and that I lost a lot of my friends there.

Dennis also indicated that he cannot understand why they had to change the flag and the anthem, not understanding the negativity which surrounded the old South African symbols for non-Afrikaners. Bianca said that when her dad, an old soldier, who served as an officer during the NP government, was buried by the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (M.O.T.H) post-apartheid they draped a new South African flag over his coffin, which was removed by her siblings and replaced by the old flag, as it was the flag under which he served. Dennis said that he still has an old South African flag displayed on the wall behind his bed. But he realises the conflict surrounding the flag, and cannot even hang it out to dry outside after he washed it, as he feared his neighbours' reaction to it.

In contrast James stated that he was happy with the new anthem and flag. The anthem, he said, contained a bit of Afrikaans, English and Zulu, not exclusively Zulu, thus acknowledging Afrikaners. He did not like the flag at first, but he said it is like two roads that meet, and we must accept that change had to come to South Africa; that it could not always stay the same. The suppressed feeling of guilt for not accepting the flag, or not knowing, or wanting to learn the new anthem often prevented the participants from speaking their minds on this subject. But these

feelings came to a breaking point after the murder of Terre“Blanche, when the old Afrikaner symbols were redisplayed in public, which resulted in my participants starting to reflect on the events surrounding the murder and also the „old“ South Africa.

To Sarel the AWB flag also has a religious connotation as the flag has three number sevens printed on it:

As jy mooi kyk dan sal jy sien dit is drie sewes.,n Christelike vlag.

If you look carefully [at the flag] then you will see there are three sevens on it. A Christian flag.

The founding of the AWB was mythologized as it is said that it was founded on the seventh day, in the seventh month by seven founding members. The number seven in the Bible is considered a holy figure as in opposition to the number 666 which is described as the anti-Christ (Kemp, 2008: 5).

One of my fellow students said, after I related to him some of my participants“ remarks after the murder of Terre“Blanche, that it seemed that my participants like to complain, and use their whiteness as an excuse for the lack of achievements. This conversation reminded me of a media report during the same time period of the murder of the AWB leader. This media report was a heated exchange between two well-known Afrikaner writers who engaged in an angry debate about „whiteness“. Antjie Krog, an Afrikaner and a writer and Rian Malan, an Afrikaner writer and singer (Malan and De Vries, 2010). Malan reportedly said in this debate about white identity that:

Whites have a right to complain. Whites feel irrelevant, impotent. We can complain but nobody listens. If we complain we are called racists, or we have to hear „how dare you! You are white!“ (Malan and De Vries, 2010)

But it was argued that if Afrikaners complain it is their own fault because they do not want to accept the new dispensation. According to Malan and De Vries (2010) reporters for the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper edition, *Rapport*, this is the sentiment that is expressed by Afrikaners and non-Afrikaners that have no understanding of the negative effects that the new dispensation could have had on Afrikaners who were heavily invested in apartheid ideology. When an Afrikaner complains about the loss of symbols it is argued that it is their own fault, not considering that Afrikaners who are struggling, such as my carguard participants, are not only struggling because of the changes

but also because their personal and social identities are not being recognised, according to Taylor's (1994) use of the term. In fact most of the Afrikaner caregivers who participated in the research feel their personal and social identities are under threat of being eradicated as they witnessed the removal of their flag, the change in the national anthem, the change in status of their language to being one of 11 and so forth.

My participants recognised that they are rejected and misunderstood by society, the symbols and their historical background are being ousted by society, forcing them to become invisible. The participants also showed a concern about their national sport, rugby, and how political changes affected what they regarded as their sport and also how it affected them personally.

5.4.8 Afrikaners' re-construction of identity in post-apartheid sport:

My participants discussed rugby and I reflected upon the sport and how it affects them post-apartheid and how they feel that sport affected Afrikaner status and identity. Rugby was seen as an Afrikaner national sport and was destined to change after 1994. To understand rugby's influence on Afrikaner identity I will briefly highlight some aspects.

Even though rugby stems from the colonial British enemies, Afrikaners „took to the sport like a crocodile to water“, and „Afrikaner nationalists hijacked the symbol of rugby in the 1930s“ (McNeil, 1996). The feeling of solidarity can be found in sport, which encompasses people from all classes, allowing the lower class to meet the middle class on the common ground of sport (Fryers, 2006). According to Nauright (1996: 238) rugby was more than just a sport as it could be seen as a display of white group identity; it also has to do about the „forceful control of the ball“ and during apartheid could be perceived as being „public displays of defiant white South African power in the face of perceived hostile internal and external enemies“.

Sport was part of the South African school curriculum and rugby was played in all white schools. In fact it was compulsory when my participants were attending primary and secondary schools. When I asked Flint what happened if a boy did not want to play rugby at school level, he just laughed and said that that you did not much have a choice; if you did not play rugby then you had to go and play netball with the girls. Sport not only became the symbol of „whiteness“ but of masculinity as well. All of the male participants had played rugby and other sports at school, and a

few beyond that when they played club rugby. The male participants spoke about how rugby has changed over the years, the focus being that rugby players are professional players now:

I like sport, I like rugby, but currently it is only about money, the rugby players, in the old days [apartheid], played without compensation, they played for their country; now they are paid thousands of rands... THOUSANDS OF RANDS..., millions of rands to play (Sarel).

Dennis agrees that there are black men, who can play rugby, but he insinuates that they play only for the money, and not for the country; in other words their loyalty lies with money and not national pride:

That [Black] rugby player, Beast... now he can play, but there are two [black] rugby players who played for one of the Transvaal teams, one of them only played for one season, when he injured his knee. He never returned to rugby, he became a TV presenter. You cannot tell me that he cannot play rugby again after one year of recuperation! You cannot say that he is too old or not strong enough...he received enough money for the one year of play.

However, my participants expressed mixed feelings when what they considered to be their (Afrikaner) sport became part of the new South Africa. Several of the male participants reminisced about the government's attempts to bring in more black rugby players. Most acknowledged that we have a few good players of colour. However, the ANC governments attempts are often viewed as an attempt to „fulfil quotas“, in the same way as affirmative action. They argued that the government does not care how well the players do on the field, as long as they have a majority of black players on the field:

They [Rugby administrators] have to fill their quotas. Just look at the soccer team [Bafana Bafana]! Why are there no white people in the soccer team? And if they have a soccer match, is it safe for white people to go there? (Sarel)

Jack argued that if a black man can play rugby he must be allowed to play it, but his concern is that they will put a black man in only to balance out the racial quota rather than on merit. He also

agrees that the current black rugby players, like Brian Habana⁴⁴ are good players and deserve their place on the team. These male participants drew a comparison with other South African sports, for example soccer, swimming and tennis to compare how different races perform in different sporting events. Soccer was often part of the discussions due to the fact that South Africa had been preparing for the 2010 FIFA World Cup for a few years and the preparation was entering the final stages at the time that I conducted the fieldwork.

Daniel argued that soccer was not originally a black man's sport:

Almal dink ... kyk ... gee krediet ... ,n swarte het ball sense ... met sy voet ... hy het ... maar... daardie fancy tricks gaan jou nie help op die sokker veld nie. Daar sê hulle ... ons ouens het die fancy tricks op die sokker veld, maar hulle het nie krag in hulle bo-lyf nie ... hulle het fyn ball sense ... hulle kan tricks uithaal ... op enige bal ... tennis bal, ja ... maar jy kan dit nie op die sokker veld doen nie ... wat help dit jou? ... dit is dieselfde as met krieket ... jy kan fancy tricks uithaal met ,n ... tennis bal, krieket bal en met ,n krieket bat, maar dit gaan jou nie help op die sports veld nie

A black man has ball sense... with his feet... but that fancy tricks will not help you on the soccer field. The men have fancy tricks but no upper body ... they can do fancy tricks with any ball, even a tennis ball... but you cannot use it on the soccer field..... You can even do fancy tricks with a ball and a cricket bat, but it will not help you win a game.

Alternatively, Jack presents a different argument:

This soccer team [Bafana Bafana] is a real circus, and I do not believe that they will win one game, because there is not one white player on the team... I am not interested in soccer... Rugby is good. If he [spectator] is not happy with the ref then he will tackle the ref and burn the stadium. I won't even go close to a soccer stadium, my life is more important than to watch a soccer game.

This participant argues that soccer spectators are violent and cannot behave themselves and that you feel much safer as a rugby spectator than a soccer spectator. Rugby as a sport is constructed in contrast to soccer which is simplistically constructed as a black sport with unruly spectators:

⁴⁴ Bryan Habana is a South African rugby player who plays as a (Wing/Centre): Stormers, Springbok Rugby Team. His Springboks International Debut: vs. England, 20/11/2004. <http://www.whoswhosa.co.za/user/5384>, accessed 14/10/2010

Ek sal jou sê, rugby ... ek was al „n klomp keer by ABSA [stadion] gewees, jy voel veilig en jy kom uit en jy is veilig, maar by „n sokker wedstryd, jammer.

I can tell you, rugby... I have been to the ABSA [stadium]⁴⁵ plenty of times, you feel safe there en when you leave you are safe, but at a soccer match... sorry. (James)

Although I concentrated on rugby during our discussions about sport, other sports in relation to race came up. Daniel looks at race in other sporting activities and argued that there are certain sports at which black people do not excel:

How many black tennis players do you get? The most famous are the Venus ... [the Williams sisters in tennis], since then you have not heard of any black tennis player in the big leagues. The same with swimmers, you have not heard of black swimmers making it big. Because blacks cannot swim, they have to be taught how to swim.

This perception that black people only have limited capabilities seems to be socialised into these participants' minds. These perceptions of innate abilities and inabilities are referred to as „scientific racism“. According to Dubow (1995: 2) notions of race inferiority was presented as truth to most Afrikaners by influential academics and politicians early during apartheid. These scientific truths influenced the ideology which informed separate development during apartheid. I often heard, and still hear the following in conversations with other Afrikaners: „but it is scientifically proven that black people do not have the ability to ...“.⁴⁶ Sport is only one of many instances where the participants quoted scientific racism as truth during the interviews when they referred to the lack of sporting abilities. In 1955 the Tomlinson Commission⁴⁷ used physical

⁴⁵ ABSA Sport Stadium where majority of the rugby games are played in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. It is also called the home of the Sharks, a provincial rugby team. However, several soccer matches have been played in this stadium. <http://www.durban-tourism.com/ABSA-Stadium.html>, accessed 20 October 2010

⁴⁶ This argument was heard on the internet networking forum Facebook (2010), whereby a debate about scientific racism started between three Afrikaners, two 22 year olds and myself. One, a male participant, tried to tell us that it is a 'scientific fact' that 'black people cannot become deep sea divers'. Although I knew the young man's staunch Afrikaner upbringing it still came as a surprise to me, as he was the only white tertiary student in the Swaziland Academy of Theology.

⁴⁷ In 1948 the NP appointed the Tomlinson Commission to 'promote the social and economic regeneration of the reserves, but this time with reference to the ethnic composition of the African population.' (Bennet, 1986: 87). The report appeared in 1955 and was most comprehensive: it calculated the income necessary to support a family living on the land with the amount being too low forcing black people to work in industry and mines.

characteristics to describe the „South African Bantu“; these „scientifically“ „proven“ biological differentiations played a huge role in the justification for apartheid (Dubow, 1995: 279).

5.4.9 Conclusion:

In the third theme I looked at the carguards“ change in status after apartheid. The participants had suffered a loss of both class and status, they were poor, battling to survive financially and some were concerned their children should be educated in order to improve their circumstances and not end up being a carguard. They also experienced ill treatment from the public due to their lack of status and the public perceptions of carguards in general. Their loss of status and the way they feel about it only really comes out when they talk about the loss of symbols they claim to be their own, such as the old South African flag.

5.5 Theme four: Carguards as active agents in the construction of their own identities.

As pointed out in the theory chapter, Chapter three, it is through the narrative of the participants“ lives that I could analyse agency and determine how many of their actions can be ascribed to circumstances and how many relate to intent. While the carguards may most often speak as though they are victims of forces beyond their control, there are also signs that agency is involved as to why they are in their current socio-economic circumstances.

There are certain pre-recognitions that are necessary to determine the extent to which an individual has agency, being cognisant or the fact that all humans to a certain extent have some agency in their lives. Giddens (1984) debates agency vis-à-vis structuration theory wherein he argues that although societal structures have an impact on the determination of humans“ social and personal identities, there is another variable at play here – that of agency. In his duality of structure argument Giddens (1984) states that although we are born into pre-existing structures which form our social and personal identities, it is through our individual abilities to speak a language that we show agency. It is through language that we have the ability to reflect on our lives and social structures into which we were born. For this reflexivity, Giddens coined the term „discursive consciousness“ (Billington et al, 1998: 246).

Discursive consciousness is a term used by Giddens to describe the way in which human beings, „actors“, have the capacity for *reflexivity*: that is, they constantly reflect on and monitor their activities. (Billington et al, 1998: 246).

As a participant James revealed the ability to look back on his life and reflect on it, but he seemed unable to take responsibility for any of the events in his life. James, who worked, with his wife, as a carguard on one of the research sites, lived with his wife and two children, one still in primary education, in an outbuilding at the back of a residential property. He was one of the first participants I interviewed and he spent a great deal of time reflecting on his current situation and at one stage explained to me his vision of starting his own small business as a carpenter:

I save every month a little bit of money ... I am good at carpentry ... I do not want to work for the rest of my life as a carguard ... I also do not like the fact that my wife is working as a carguard ... It is not work for a woman, but if she did not work, we would have never been able to survive.

James told me that he was in a position whereby he was forced to beg, but spoke about how degrading it was to become a beggar and that carguarding was definitely a better option:

I did not have a job, and I am not ashamed to say that there were times that I had to stand by a traffic lights to beg ... I had no choice, there was no work ... we lived on the beach ... I definitely made more money begging than with carguarding. But I will not return to begging ... it is difficult to explain... you lose some dignity when you beg. I also do not want my son to be teased at school because his father is a beggar.

Even though James attempted to elevate himself out of his current circumstances, he failed and returned to living on the beach out of a car with his family, and begging on the street corner. Several people have reached out and helped James to give him a boost in life, by offering him low rental for an outside room for him and his family; and he was also given a very old car by another well-wisher. One of the conditions for the lower rent was that he works in the garden for part rent; however he failed to meet these conditions, and also failed to pay the required rent for several months and was evicted. Another Christian family, who heard about James' family who are staying on the beach out of their car, offered them accommodation on their property with certain conditions, which he failed to honour. Due to the lack of housing and bathroom facilities, he and his wife were unable to comply with the site's carguarding policies which required carguards to be presentable and clean. This resulted in him being fired from his job. Recently I spotted him and his young son standing on a street corner begging. I also understand that he and his whole family are again living at one of the beaches in his car. Although this participant was quick to blame

others for the fact that he lost his various accommodations, and blamed his co-workers, whom he felt could have prevented him from being fired, it was not obvious to him that he kept choosing his own direction which resulted in the worsening of his current socio-economic position. Right from our initial meeting James viewed himself and told his story from the victim's position.

I still feel like a black sheep in my family ... for example, my mother also treat my children differently ... they always get the dregs when it comes to handing out presents ...

James might demonstrate reflexivity but he is not as he is unable to see himself as an agent whose actions have consequences. He prefers the narrative of victim of circumstances; victim of apartheid; and goes as far as claiming to be the outsider in the family.

5.5.1 Participants' rejection of society's attempts to label them:

Ben is an example of a participant who actively constructed his personal identity by rejecting the labels governmental and societal structures assign to him as „disabled“. He showed a strong sense of agency and independence, even though he suffered brain damage after a hit-and-run accident when he was seven years old. I only became aware of his disability when I started the interview process. Ben explained to me that he preferred not to stay with his brother, whom he describes as over-protective. Although he acknowledged his limitations he also was not happy to be constructed as „disabled“. At the time of the interview he was waiting for monies from his late father's estate to be paid out to him, and he decided to use the money to rent a place to live, as he is currently staying in a homeless shelter, which he prefers to staying with whom he describes as, his over-protective brother. Ben revealed a strong sense of self-respect in that he is not willing to beg for money on street corners; even though it has been suggested by the participants themselves that begging brings in more money than carguarding. Ben has limits as to what he is willing to do.

Ek is nie so een nie [bedelaar], om te bedel vir geld, om te loop van man tot man, vrou tot vrou, winkel tot winkel, nee UHUH

I'm not the type of person who will walk from man to man, woman to woman, from shop to shop to beg.

Jo-Ann is another example of a person who has a strong sense of agency, in that she not only rejects the labelling imposed by government, but also takes her future into her own hands. Jo-Ann was orphaned at the age of six after the death of one of her parents due to alcoholism, and the

subsequent suicide of the other. She was placed in a strict DRC run institution with two of her siblings. However, due to learning disabilities, she was placed in a „special“ school till Grade 10 and then went on to become a hairdresser's apprentice. She has one severely disabled son and a daughter who did not finish her schooling, but she is encouraging her youngest son to complete his schooling. Through all her hardships she has refused to give up and is willing to do any work to support her children:

I tried to find other work. I drove imported cars off from the cargo ships in the harbour, I did needlework, made clothes for other people ... I painted houses for other people ... I worked in many different jobs.

Currently she does hairdressing part-time as well as carguarding. She is independent and kind as she also reaches out to others in need.

Many of the older generation Afrikaners were and taught, that it was degrading for an Afrikaner family to receive support from the government or other institutions; they would rather work their „fingers to the bone“ than to receive charity. Yet this homely philosophy did not clash with the government's policies of job reservation during apartheid. People felt entitled to those jobs and worked hard in them. Another old Afrikaner saying is; used that it is not a disgrace to be poor, but it is a disgrace to be unkempt, dirty, lazy, no backbone, and so forth.

It is assumed that all carguards work out of necessity. Yet a few participants made an active choice to work as carguards.

5.5.2 Some participants work as carguards by choice, others out of necessity:

Several participants argued that carguarding as a job was their choice and that they were not forced by circumstances to take the job:

I am not a person who can sit still ... I have to be busy. (Dennis)
I have two sisters here in Durban and they are fighting with me almost every day for me to come and stay with them, but I do not want to. (Jack)

Three of the participants (two male, one female) are determined not to sit still and wait for circumstances to decide their lives for them; they make their own decisions on how they will

handle their situations, they construct themselves as people who do not sit back and feel sorry for themselves:

It is a job, and I'll do whatever I can because one thing that I cannot do is sit at home and do nothing. I'm not built that way ... I never have been and I will never be. I am a person, who has to do something, what it is does not really matter to me, as long as I can do something. Because I get a small pension I technically do not really need to work ... I probably could live on what I get ... but it is sitting at home, and looking at four walls. No, it is just not me ... I cannot do that. (Fredric)

Fredric stays with his sister-in-law, close to the site, and as we spoke it became obvious that there are family tensions at home and for him to work is an excuse not to be at home. When I asked him if he would go as far as to beg on the street corners, he said:

I will never beg ... It is just not my style. I would rather work for my money than actually beg for it ... Carguards are not glorified beggars, they do a job, they get paid for it ...

Working as a carguard does not make him feel like a beggar, it is something worth doing, a short term-job while waiting for better opportunities. As Uncle had said before, he worked to keep busy. But I had not realised the first time he spoke of it that this was an actual choice he made. He would rather be a carguard than sit at home and watch DSTV.

Flint was a bookkeeper, but he could never sit still - „I never walked if I could run ...“ - and carguarding kept him on the go. At the age of 60 he is now confined to the house due to health problems. He was forced to resign from his job as a carguard, two months prior to our interview, as his co-workers feared that he would have a heart attack on the site. I spoke to Flint who told me why he chose to become a carguard:

In the beginning ... 2001, 2002... it was financially viable to work as a carguard... so viable that I became a full time carguard. We had a great team and I worked with this team for at least seven years...

These two participants made me realise that we cannot always assume why people choose to work in the informal sector. They did not have to work but needed to for reasons other than money; they wanted to be busy and to interact with people, much the same as people in the formal sector.

Although there are some participants who decided to carguard out of the need to „be kept busy“ there are other participants who had to work as a carguard because they had no other options left. Flint claimed that he was one of the first white carguards, having started in 1996 in Durban and stated that Afrikaners often land themselves in financial predicament because of lack of foresight:

Afrikaner carguards... there are many people who received retrenchment packages but spent it all in a very short time... now they are forced to work as carguards... There are people who were in production industries who lost their work... Most of the white carguards, with the exception of the two who were alcoholics, are from good Afrikaner Boer stock. (Flint)

Flint also pointed out that many of the Afrikaners, currently poor, stayed in the same job for up to 30 years without even attempting to improve themselves educationally or economically. They were content with the status quo demonstrating lack of foresight that change could occur:

Afrikaners... I still know a man working at the post office as security, he been there for at least 25 years, and he is still a security guard. He just does not have any motivation or ambition... I think that it is a disease amongst Afrikaners. I think it started when Afrikaners worked in sheltered employment at the railways [during apartheid] a man did not have to work himself to death to receive a pay check at the end of the month...you really have to do something major wrong to be fired. (Flint)

Flint suggested that the government looked after them for so long, and hence they were like lost sheep when they lost their jobs. He describes Afrikaners as having very little agency in that they were taught to follow their political and their spiritual leaders without questioning them, and that it was a tantamount to sacrilege to have questioned them:

Die blankes is net ... ons was te veel jare lui gewees; te veel jare beskerm gewees. Kyk, ons Afrikaners is „n ongedissiplineerde nasie meeste tye... die weermag opleiding [was] vir my „n goeie ding dis jammer dat hulle dit weggevat het want dit is waar meeste van die mense dissipline geleer het

Us white people were... we were lazy for many years; we were protected for many years. Us Afrikaners is an undisciplined nation for most of the time... compulsory army training was a good thing, and it is a pity that they removed it, because it helped to discipline people.

Flint further argued that he personally receives some help from the church he attends but even the churches find it hard to keep up with the growing need for benevolence towards its church members.

5.5.4 The participants' agency in relation to their religion in post-apartheid South Africa:

Religion, as a socialising institution, played a role in the construction of most Afrikaners' individual and social identities. However, it is, and always was, assumed that all Afrikaners' roots are embedded in religion and that one of the pillars of apartheid was religion, specifically through the DRC.

During my fieldwork religion only came to the fore with two specific participants, who had very strong religious convictions; the other participants either declined to acknowledge their religious views or only mentioned the fact that they are Christians in a matter of fact manner. Although most participants confirmed that they grew up in the DRC, they rarely attended any religious services for most of their adult life. The influence of the DRC was always there in the background as part of the traditional Afrikaners' way of life.

Although I started my research with some preconceived ideas of what I will find, one being that Afrikaner caregivers all attended and are still attending the DRC, information gained indicated something different. Even when probed my participants did not linger on the influence religion had on their lives prior to 1994. The exception was two of the female participants who emphasised the importance that religion currently has on their lives. Bianca attributes her current life to a relationship with God. She does, however, acknowledge that she has had and still is going through very difficult times, but attributes this to „God's will“ and not to any other avoidable circumstance. For example, two months prior to the interview her rental flat burnt down and trapped her disabled daughter inside, who was, however, rescued by her ex-husband who was taking care of the child at the time of the incident. She suspects that her lodger set light to her apartment in revenge for being asked to leave. Having lost all her belongings she found herself only able to cope due to her faith in God. When I asked her if she could describe herself to me she answered, „first and foremost I am God's child ...“

It is argued that religion helps people cope with matters over which they have no control (Pargament, 1997: 3). It also helps people cope with such matters as „limitation of material goods,

personal desires and individual lives” (Pargament, 1997: 8). Pargament (1997: 8) further argues that religion speaks a language of „forbearance, faith, finitude, surrender, suffering, hope and transformation“. The participants who shared their current religious perspectives with me often discussed their connection to God and attributed their life choices to him, something they did not do prior to 1994.

Lorraine is very open about her current religious beliefs. She acknowledged that prior to 1994 religion did not play a major role in her life:

I did not know the Lord during the time when I worked at the shop [before working as a carguard]... I only heard that you have to praise and acknowledge God regardless of your circumstances. After I resigned from the shop many of my friends started to pray for me, that is when I decided that I have nothing to lose... and became a Christian. We all work together, we all pray together and if someone needs prayers, then we will pray for them.

Lorraine is a second generation carguard, her mother being involved in this prior to her death a few years ago. According to her, in the past five years she lost her sister, her mother and her life partner, and recovered from a potentially deadly disease herself, which left her reaching out for religion to help her understand her life. As an outspoken Christian site manager she attracts other likeminded carguards to work on her site. Each morning Lorraine opens her site with prayer and blesses the parking areas. As with every other carguard in Durban she and her fellow workers experience low income days but she just smiles and says:

Every cent I receive comes from the Lord, even if it is a rand or two, I say thank you Lord for THIS rand, eventually every two rand adds up and at the end of the day I can take a bread home.

During the interview process of the two who discussed religion it was obvious that because they attributed all their problems and blessings to God, they were less reflective on the reasons as to why some of the problems in life arise or even why certain social issues arise:

One of the carguards passed away recently ... I believe that the Lord had a purpose with his death. We trust and believe in God, God is good. When I am on a ramp, God will provide ... God will provide for everyone ... every individual ... (Lorraine)

To some questions about Lorraine's feelings of the changes in South Africa, she answered that it never bothers her, as long as she has religion to rely on she is happy. This diminished personal agency was also seen in the other participant who displayed stronger religious views, namely Bianca. In the same breath it could also be said that these were the same two participants who were very apolitical and showed no interest in current political events. Lorraine often responded to my questions about apartheid with:

You know, I take life day-by-day, and what people say, and which people are at the government's helm does not concern me, I just live day-by-day. During apartheid you had people who were racists ... it did not bother me ... I do not believe in it. We should all work together ... it is all in God's hand.

In contrast, Jo-Ann, does not hesitate to call herself a Christian. But, unlike Lorraine, she does not attribute all life's ills to „God's will“ but acknowledges that she has made certain mistakes due to wrong choices. Due to the fact that she was schooled in a special school, which accommodated children with lower academic abilities, she could be described as having a lower I.Q. However, of all the participants she stands out not only as having a strong reflective side, but also as a person who follows politics and knows how the country's economy fares. Jo-Ann responded when I asked about the problems in South Africa:

Many people draw all the monies from the bank when they see how the rand fluctuates against the exchange rates. The exchange rate is an indication of how South Africa is doing [economically]. When Jacob Zuma won the presidency... then I thought, oh well ... many white people were against him becoming president, we will just have to wait and see what happens. But I personally think that he will stand up for Afrikaners.

Jo-Ann's religious convictions were mentioned matter-of-factly and did not dominate our interview or any subsequent conversations.

Cody, Ben, Jack, Sarel, Uncle, Dennis, just to point out a few, also mentioned their religious convictions quietly to me, merely informing me that they were Christians. Again, in comparison with those participants who allowed their religious beliefs to dominate their lives, they seemed to have diminished agency but acknowledged their own role in their current socio-economic situation. Cody said:

I've made many mistakes, but I pray for my children, I pray that my daughter [in foster care] completes her schooling. I pray that I live long enough to see my daughter complete her schooling.

Kenneth Pargament (1997: 11) sums up the role of religion: „Belief in God is said to be, at the root a source of comfort and a defence against anxiety“. Bianca and Lorraine seemed to use religion as a defence mechanism; defence against the sudden changes since 1994 which resulted in them being in their current socio-economic situation. Using religion as a defence mechanism might very well be the case for the participants but unless comparative research is conducted against other groups this might be the role of religion for many people facing socioeconomic hardship.

In theme four I examine caregivers as active agents in constructing their own identity. One participant clearly could not take any responsibility for his actions. This is not to say he did not have agency but he made choices that worsened his situation. But many of the participants had a strong sense of agency in that they work, are independent and some work by choice.

5.5.5 Conclusion:

In my capacity as tutor and lecturer of Sociology, many black and white undergraduate students complain to me that they are tired of hearing about apartheid. They feel that apartheid is dead and they feel that it is of no relevance to them. I explain to them that you cannot understand who you are if you do not know where you come from. And this is also true when you are starting to ask questions about a group of people. I have been asking myself many questions about Afrikaner caregivers; I befriended a few of them before selecting my research topic. The participants and their children's identities are deeply intertwined with apartheid, and although the newer Afrikaans speaking generation would like to deny that apartheid had any influence in their lives it was evident that the influence continues to spread from one generation to another. It was interesting to note that there was an age difference up to 20 years between some of the participants. These age differences gave me an opportunity to see the influence apartheid had on the participants within the stretch of two generations.

With the gathering of the data, I not only got an indication of who they are, but also who they want to be; how they construct themselves in relation to other more affluent Afrikaners; how they construct themselves in relation to other races; and how other people construct the participants in relation to themselves. And this ties in with the quote at the beginning of this chapter from W.E.B.

Du Bois that we look at ourselves through the eyes of others.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

„We were making the future, he said, and hardly any of us troubled to think what future we were making. And here it is!“

H. G. Wells⁴⁸

6.1 Introduction

The making or construction of one's future is complex and involves many different processes. These processes often cannot be detached from each other and cannot be studied in isolation as the one process influences the other. The aim of this research was to explore identity construction and the focal point was Afrikaner carguards. In my introduction I explained, firstly, the complexity of identifying „Afrikaners“ I could not just assume that all Afrikaans speaking carguards classify themselves as Afrikaners. In the case of Flint he insisted that I must include him in the research as he is an Afrikaner, although he worked and lived in Zimbabwe for many years. I had to do some self-reflection on how I viewed Afrikaners, my perception of who an Afrikaner is and should be and I also had to return to my participants and re-evaluate how I would decide who to interview or exclude from the interviewing process. However, all my participants either directly said that they were Afrikaners, or made this claim through associating themselves with Afrikaner ethnicity

6.2 Can Afrikaners reconstruct their identity?

Vygotsky (1978) wrote in *Mind in Society* how culture is carried forward through the (m)other;⁴⁹ how culture is transmitted from generation to generation through this process. To me Vygotsky explains how we as researchers cannot ignore the importance that the past has on our identity constructions. And it is because of this link, which Vygotsky spoke about, that I returned to the roots of Afrikaners to see how this thread ties the present to the past.

⁴⁸ http://thinkexist.com/quotation/we_were_making_the_future-he_said-and_hardly_any/15367.html

⁴⁹ This is my interpretation: Vygotsky speaks about how an individual is born into pre-existing structures, pre-existing cultures; and how, initially, the mother is responsible for passing on this unwritten cultural knowledge to the children. Once the child is older this responsibility is shared by other significant institutions such as religion, education, government, and so forth. Thus I combined the mother and other – (m) other.

The participants told me stories about their lives during apartheid; they told me stories about their experiences since 1994; and they told me how they saw the future. I would now like to briefly summarise these findings:

6.3 The participants as victims of apartheid:

Apartheid gave the participants a false sense of security in that they were made to feel that regardless of what was going on in the country, *die swart gevaar*, and the threat of communism at the borders, the government was capable of protecting them. This protection also came with the promise of job security and the participants knew that if they were loyal and worked for government institutions, such as the defence force, police force, railways, and the post office, that it was very unlikely that they would lose their job. The fact that they felt that they had job security meant that for many they did not see the necessity of studying further. Plus many received in-house training and work experience which seemed sufficient. The government institutions were not meritocratic and as a white Afrikaans-speaking person you were almost guaranteed a job. This work gave a sufficient income for a person to sustain a middleclass living standard.

Apartheid was imprinted on the Afrikaner mind from birth through socialisation in the family which continued in the school system, the church and where we were taught how we struggled to become a nation; we were taught how important it was to hold the Afrikaner banner up high; and how the outside world was „out to get us“: there was the British peril, the black peril, and the red peril. Afrikaners became insular and generally lacked significant interaction with the racialised other inhabitants of this country. In the theoretical framework, strong emphasis is placed on how identity construction takes place through the interaction with the other. My argument is that because the participants grew up without significant interaction with other races their identity growth was limited as was their understanding of themselves and others. This lack of interaction left the participants without the necessary knowledge or social skills needed to integrate in a multicultural society. Afrikaner caregivers have suffered from apartheid policies of social engineering and from their own lack of agency.

6.4 Participants as easy targets

The participants described to me how they often had to take abuse from the black public, because they are white Afrikaners. Through my observations, I witnessed a few incidents where these

Afrikaner carguards were on the receiving end of racist remarks. At first it was puzzling to me why they were targeted until I realised that it is because the Afrikaner carguards were accessible to the public. A black man shouted a rude remark to one of the participants for trying to stop him from driving up a one way lane as I mentioned in Chapter five. The remark might at the outset seem only racist but it is also due to the position carguards hold: they work in the informal sector and they have no rights which means any form of retaliation would deprive them of an income.

6.5 Carguards: politics, religion and agency

The interest in politics varied from one participant to another. Firstly, it was surprising to see that there were participants who followed politics, as my assumption was that the lower the level of education, the lower the level of understanding of politics. Jo-Ann was the first person to make me realise that I still carry a level of preconceived ideas towards carguards. As mentioned before, Jo-Ann not only was brought up in an orphanage, but completed her Grade 10 in a special school. Jo-Ann was very aware of the current news, which included politics. In a similar manner Cody, Flint, Dennis, Denise and Jacob all followed politics on television and by reading newspapers. I divided the participants into two groups based on the way they responded to my inquiries about politics and religion as their responses indicated that there was a link between the two in that those who were apolitical had very strong religious viewpoints. And those who followed the current political affairs did not deny that they were religious but they seemed to regard their religion as private and did not want me to question them about that part of their lives. The same link seemed to exist between those who have strong religious viewpoints in opposition to those who were less vocal about their religious viewpoints and agency.

Through the interviewing process it became clear that those who expressed their very strong religious views seemed to have diminished agency. These participants avoided reflection, or showed very little interest in reflecting on their own past; on their country's past; and on the current ANC government's actions which have a direct influence on their lives. They shrug their shoulders and attribute all life's events to „God's will“ thus failing to take some measure of responsibility for their own actions and the consequent outcomes. In other words, they attribute their socioeconomic situation to „God's will“ and will not look at the possibility that their lack of education or some other factor might have a role to play in this. The religiously less outspoken participants who, although they acknowledged being Christians, reflected on their lives and

indicated that they are aware of the role that their decisions played in creating their current situation. This reflective action indicated that the participants were social agents.

The claim of those participants who showed or did not show a strong sense of agency can also be linked to apartheid, as I will now argue that this could be an indication that when religion, of whatever persuasion, is used in combination with ideology it could diminish agency in supporters. This observation, however, leads to more questions, which could not satisfactorily be answered within the scope of this study. However weak or strong the participant's sense of agency was, they all felt some sense of loss after the democratic elections.

6.6 Participants and national symbols: past and present

One of the research objectives was to look at how symbols were used to build the Afrikaner nation and to investigate the impact of having these symbols replaced with others and assess what influence it had on the participants. The replacement of these symbols was seen as a loss by a majority of the participants and the refusal to accept the new symbols can be seen as a form of resistance not only against change, but resistance against new norms and values. The emotive phrase, *„Ons land, ons vlag, ons volkslied, is van ons weg geskeur, ...”* [„our country, our flag, our anthem were torn from us...“], I have heard resounding through the conversations with the participants and with the large social group I am part of as mentioned in the introduction. I have been reprimanded for using the words „torn“, by my cohorts, which I often substituted with „ripped away“. This phrase has an impact on me as it made me realise the tremendous emotional power that a symbol such as a flag can exert over people and if it is lost or removed there can be severe consequences.

Although the participants were unhappy about these changes they realised that they cannot return to the past and acknowledge that they are forced to adapt to the new South Africa.

6.7 Participants: education and children

Through my contact with Afrikaners of lower socio-economic status, I realised that the level of education is low not only amongst the participants, but also amongst their children. The question as to why the participants themselves lacked education could be attributed to the apartheid context. Education during apartheid was not seen as necessary to maintain a good standard of

living. The majority of the participants acknowledged that the lack of education along with affirmative action prevented them from maintaining a higher income and a higher living standard post-apartheid. They also acknowledged that they had to compete against other races, who often have higher qualifications than they do, in the job market. However, I could not find a satisfactory answer as to why the participants' children left school without completing matric. I found that the participants' children are still living in their parents' past, and repeating their parents' mistakes in that they are not completing their schooling which is the minimum requirement for work opportunities in South Africa today. If the new generation want to adapt to living in South Africa today they need to educate themselves as a first priority. The excuse of expensive school fees and uniforms were often raised but I found this difficult to believe as a valid excuse because reduction of school fees or the waiving of school fees are available at all schools which receive government subsidies.

As described in the data analysis, the participants spoke about education, and the effect the lack of education had on their lives, but the question as to why their children who are growing up within a meritocratic society lack the education necessary to compete in the job market, is not clear. After my initial fieldwork I sat down and had a brief chat with Cody and James about the progress of my thesis and I again posed the question as to why their children did not finish their schooling. James gave me a plausible answer.

They do not see a need for education, because if you have a Grade 10, Grade 12 or, like you, a university degree, they will not find work because they are white, so they do not bother...

This remark made me realise that here lay an area requiring further research.

6.8 Other research possibilities and recommendations

It is necessary to examine gender as a category when looking at race, ethnicity and class and I believe further research is needed which encompasses this. Not only do we live in a patriarchal society but I would like to understand how the construction of gender impacts on Afrikaners in terms of ethnicity and also the creation of symbols. This would also align with further work on religion as the DRC is a highly patriarchal church. In terms of the construction of Afrikaner ethnicity it would be interesting to study the men as soldiers, heroes, and fathers and the women as mothers and also heroines who stood by their men in times of hardship. This is very obvious when

one looks at the *Voortrekker* monument. It would also be of interest to study Afrikaner gender relations in terms of their interactions with other race groups during and after apartheid given the loss of white privilege.

A research possibility is one that examines the carguards' position in the informal job sector with specific focus on their lack of rights. Carguards are exploited as they receive no protection from the government: there are no laws to protect them. They cannot, for example, claim workmen's compensation when they are injured and if they are injured on duty no-one is responsible. They receive no benefits and do not even qualify to be part of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). Yet they are coerced into paying a site fee and to paying for their uniform by someone who has taken it upon themselves to be a site manager. They work in atrocious conditions and are often discriminated against by the general public, against whom they have no recourse.

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Appendix 1

A letter from Mr. D'Alton who took a great interest in my research and contributed by sourcing books for me. He sent me the letter, through electronic mail, which I felt was very applicable to my research and should be included:

Although I do not fall within the socio-economic group you are researching, I am a second generation post-Boer War Afrikaner and such feel that I can and would like to make a meaningful contribution to your research by contributing an insight into the effects of, call it "history-indoctrination" for the want of a better term, if you will. I grew up on what can perhaps best be described as the upper fringe of the poor white society. Because of financial restraints I was obliged to leave school after Grade nine and seek employment to help support the family. Had my mother not instilled a sense of pride in us, focusing our aspirations on higher values, I might well have become a canguard and have been a subject of your research. But as a result of her example and influence I eventually went on to earn a bachelor's degree in the USA.

I am not, and never have been a radical Afrikaner and in fact have always moved on the outer fringes of Afrikaner culture. But no „other“ can truly relate to the trauma the Afrikaner suffered as a result of the Boer War (1899-1902). The scars this war left on the Afrikaner psyche are very deep and have never been resolved. Considering the size of the Afrikaner nation, the deaths of thousands of women and children in British concentration camps was of near-holocaust proportions and would have been such had it not been for the intervention of Emily Hobhouse who at the chagrin of the British field commanders brought the plight of these people to the attention of the British public. Whenever I visit the Vroue Monument (Women's Monument) in Bloemfontein and walk between the rows of memorial plaques, each giving the location of the individual camps and the number of women and children who died there, I cannot but be moved by the enormity of the brutal injustice inflicted on my people and I cannot but feel a spiritual affinity, a belonging, to them. I must add that this affinity goes deeper than the events recorded in history books or political propaganda but comes from firsthand testimony. My maternal grandmother was forcibly removed from her home by black auxiliary militia under the command of a British officer and their house with just about all their possessions burnt to the ground and she and her children were taken away on an open ox wagon to be interred in one of these camps where she lost two of her sons because of the deprivations they suffered.

Once, on the spur of the moment (I mention this because it was not a pilgrimage), on driving past the turn-off I decided to visit uMgundlovu, the site where Piet Retief and his party were massacred by Dingane. Here I had one of the most eerie "goose-bump" experiences of my life – it almost was as though I could feel the presence of the spirits of these men who are such an important and integral part of the Afrikaner legacy. I believe that this historical event, perhaps more than any other, sowed the seeds of Afrikaner/black distrust that would later develop into full-blown racism. It must be added that this massacre was followed up by the massacre of the Voortrekker laagers at Weenen and Bloukrantz where the defences were lowered in expectation of the successful signing of the treaty with the Zulus.

The point of all this in terms of your research is that the heroes of the past are a very real symbol of culture, but a symbol that cannot be understood or dissected in mere academic terms, especially not by „others“ who do not „have it in their blood“. It is almost as though their blood and the blood of the concentration camp victims were sacrifices on the altar of nationhood.

Jerrard D'Alton