The effects of life experiences under Apartheid on shaping leadership styles of South African political leaders

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ABSTRACT

The system of apartheid, caused different life experiences for South Africans, and can be seen as a defining moment in the development of South Africa, its leaders and citizens. This study investigated how these different life experiences under apartheid influenced leadership styles of South African political leaders.

After completion of a literature review, semi structured life history interviews were conducted with a representative sample of members of the South African Parliament, to generate qualitative data for analysis. Content analysis was applied to this data to generate a basis from which valid and reliable conclusions and recommendations were made.

The research found support in both the literature review and qualitative life stories data collected for the following propositions:

- Leadership is a complex construct, which is composed of many different characteristics and influences.
- The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.
- Individual life histories influence leadership development.
- Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in itself have a significantly

homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.

- Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.

The recordal of the life stories of South African political leaders presents an opportunity to learn at a broader interface from the experiences of the past, to shape a collective future for a free and democratic South Africa.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROBLEM

"Everyone is tested by life, but only a few extract strength and wisdom from their most trying experiences. They're the ones we call leaders"   (Bennis & Thomas, 2002: 39)

Over the years there have been an abundance of studies on leadership, and in particular on what distinguishes effective leadership from ineffective or less effective leadership. The focus of what constituted effective leadership has progressively moved from considering individual leader traits and characteristics, leader behaviour, situational influences, power, and occupation of influential positions. Despite the abundance of theories produced there is still no agreement on a definitive universal model on what causes effective leadership. Similarly, much has been written about the life experiences of leaders in general.

Leadership studies have however to a large extent been focussed on Western (and in particular North American) leaders, and deals mostly with white men as leaders. South Africa is a country with many contrasts, including contrasts in respect of race, ethnicity, culture, backgrounds and life experiences. The applicability of traditional Western and North American leadership models must therefore be questioned.

South African authors have recently produced a host of literature in respect of their life experiences during the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. A large majority of this literature emanates from South Africans who were severely disadvantaged, tortured, oppressed and discriminated against under apartheid. Unfortunately there is not a similar literary richness of relations by those who benefited from apartheid. What seems obvious is that the life experiences under the system of apartheid, of those who were oppressed by it, is vastly different from the experiences of those who benefited from it.

1.1   Problem statement

South Africa is often described as a rainbow nation, constituted of citizens of different races, cultures, sexes, backgrounds and social orientations. Probably the most significant defining moment for South Africa as a country and a nation was the struggle against the system of apartheid, the eventual victory of the struggle, and the peaceful transition to a free and democratic South Africa. The system of apartheid had profound influences on all South Africans, whether they were advantaged or disadvantaged under it. The problem is however to determine to what extent the life experiences of different people under apartheid shaped and influenced their leadership styles. This research project specifically investigated how the leadership styles of South African political leaders were shaped and influenced due to their different life experiences under the system of apartheid.

A preliminary literature survey found no significant research has been conducted to date on the influence of life experiences under apartheid on leadership styles of South African political leaders. It seems a logical proposition that apartheid did not influence all South African political leaders in the same or in a similar way. Leaders who were oppressed under the system of apartheid and dedicated their lives to the struggle to overcome it, would conceivably have been influenced in a vastly different way to those who benefited from apartheid. The relation between these different life experiences and the resultant effects on the leadership styles of South African political leaders needed to be studied in order to make meaningful conclusions.

This research also investigated the problem that the same event or phenomenon might have profoundly different influences on the people it affects, depending on their experiences under the phenomenon or event. Although apartheid was a defining characteristic of the South African environment over a certain slice of time, people had vastly different life experiences during this time, which consequently had different influences on their personal development and life-stories.

1.2 Research objectives

The main objective of this research was to determine the ways in which different life experiences under the system of apartheid shaped and / or influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders. In this regard it was important to consider the following critical aspects:

- The different life experiences of South African people (especially current political leaders) during the period of apartheid in South Africa;
- The effects of formalised and non-formalised forms of apartheid on people;
- The ways in which the apartheid system shaped people's identities;
- The different effects of all forms of apartheid on the people whom it oppressed versus those whom it favoured;
- The possibility that some people might have been unaffected or perceivably unaffected by apartheid;
- To link the life experiences of South African political leaders, from both disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds under apartheid, to their respective leadership styles;
- To understand how people responded to the apartheid system; and
- To relate unique life experiences to differing influences on their respective leadership styles.

1.3 Importance / Benefits of the research

A survey of literature in respect of apartheid on the one hand, and (South) African leadership and life experiences on the other, has shown that there has been no conclusive research results in respect of how life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of current South African political leaders. The benefits of such research would highlight how a single, but profoundly significant phenomenon such as apartheid could shape and / or influence leadership styles in different ways, according to the different life experiences of leaders under the phenomenon. Such acquired knowledge enhances the transparency and understanding of political leaders' behaviour, as well as their respective inherent visions and missions. In the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, the need for understanding, trust, co-operation and unity cannot be overstated. It is envisaged that this research could contribute to bridging that gap.

This research presented an opportunity for personal reflection of South Africa's recent history and its shaping effect on the nation's unified future. Reflection in this way is an essential prerequisite for future meaningful action towards unity, peace and understanding. Relating life experiences and its influence on shaping the future creates a situation of understanding without which the future mission towards a free and unified South Africa will not be achievable. Former Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu, in a foreword to Maharaj (2001) states that without memory it would be virtually impossible to learn from experience, because

experience is something remembered. He adds that nations are built through sharing of memories, experiences and life stories.

In the process of building a new nation it is important to tap into all sources of information and to document as much as possible in respect of differing experiences under apartheid, and its effect on shaping our future. Understanding the positive and negative effects a particular event or phenomenon had or has on individuals and groups will contribute significantly in dealing with situations which could potentially limit our ability to grow and go forward (Luhabe, 2002).

1.4 Contribution of the research in relation to existing body of knowledge

This research contributes to leadership theory by examining the ways in which different life experiences may influence leadership styles in different ways. The research also contributes to applied knowledge of how apartheid, as a phenomenon of time, was characterised by many different life experiences, which influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders in different ways according to their unique personal experiences under the system of apartheid.

There is a significant body of knowledge in respect of leadership theory – especially with regard to the question of what causes a leader to be effective. Much of this theory exists in respect of different characteristics and variables that could possibly shape leadership styles. Of particular relevance for this research however is the existing theory with regard to how life experiences shape leadership style. This research applied the latter theory to the question how life experiences under the system of apartheid in South Africa shaped the leadership styles of current South African political leaders in varying ways. This extends the current literature and theory, which exists almost exclusively in respect of American and European perspectives and experiences. House (1999) suggests that almost all prevailing theories of leadership, and about 98% of all available empirical evidence, is distinctly North American in character. He further states that it is more individualistic than collectivistic in character. The application of this research project to South African life experiences and (South) African leadership, which tends to be more collectivistic, contributes significantly to very limited existing theory in this regard.

Although a host of literary sources have recently been published in respect of the life experiences of South Africans under the system of apartheid – most of which are in the form of biographies and autobiographies by key role players in the struggle against apartheid, there is still a general scarcity of research on leadership theory from a life story point of view (Shamir & Eilam; 2005). Unfortunately much less has been written by South Africans who designed, refined and fought to uphold the system of apartheid, or by those who benefited

from it. This presents a potentially one-sided view of the cumulative life experience of South Africans in respect of the time period characterised by apartheid. The existing literature in this regard also does not comprehensively link the respective life experiences of South Africans under apartheid to the influence thereof on their respective leadership styles. The research contributes to this *lacuna,* to establish some link between those life experiences, and its influence on leadership styles. This was done by making conclusions about how the different life experiences influenced and / or shaped the leadership styles of different current South African political leaders, who were at the forefront of the struggle for and against apartheid.

To build a united South African nation calls for a great degree of understanding, trust and reconciliation. An increased knowledge of the reasons why South African political leaders lead in the ways they do (as a result of the many shapers of their leadership styles) contributes to such understanding and trust. In addition to its contribution to increased understanding and trust of South African political leaders, this research also contributes to a wider, global understanding of how a single, yet significant phenomenon may influence different people in different ways according to their unique experiences therein and thereof. The research, through the engagement of political leaders in qualitative interviews, could also encourage those leaders to record their life experiences, thereby building a body of knowledge of South Africa's remarkable twentieth century history. Many South Africans are currently unaware or

ignorant of this colourful and most defining part of their history, the knowledge of which is a *sine qua non* for a truly united future as a nation.

1.5   *Limitations of the research*

Due to the very wide scope of this topic it was essential to limit the scope of the research. These limitations need to be noted at the offset. The fist limitation is that the research does not extend to the question of what influences leadership effectiveness. It merely investigated the different ways in which different life experiences under a single phenomenon influenced leadership styles, without simultaneously investigating its influences on leadership effectiveness.

An equal limitation was that this research only focused on apartheid as a single phenomenon with different life experiences there under, while it is generally agreed that leadership is influenced continuously by many different (almost daily) life experiences and situations. Despite the fact that change is constant, this research only considered the influence of life experiences under a single, yet significant phenomenon. Although the phenomenon of apartheid certainly had international implications for the conditions in which ordinary South Africans had to live, and international factors would consequently also have had an influence on shaping leadership styles, such international factors were not considered fully for purposes of this research

The population and sampling frame used for this research was limited to existing South African Members of Parliament, despite the fact that it is conceivable that political leaders may be from a population which is much wider than only the current Members of Parliament. In this regard one thinks of individuals who can be considered as political leaders, such as Eugene Terre'Blanche, Winnie Mandela and Peter Marais, but who do not have sufficient constituencies to become Members of Parliament. Similarly, Walter Sisulu and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, although they did not hold political office during the struggle against apartheid, can be considered as two of the most significant "political leaders" of our time.

The research was further limited to South Africa and the life experiences of South African political leaders under the system of apartheid. The research results and applicability however have some global significance in respect of theoretical guidance in how a significant event or experience may influence the leadership styles of different leaders. One could consider here the effects that the unfortunate events of 9/11 had on shaping the leadership style of then New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, which might be seen as a crucible in a similar way as the crucibles experienced under apartheid, or the experiences of millions of Jews during the genocide that became a feature of Nazism under Adolph Hitler.

Although every attempt was made to conduct this research and to present its findings as objectively as possible, it was unavoidable for the researcher to have a measure of subjectivity, as the researcher have also had, consciously or

not, certain defining experiences under the system of apartheid. Booysen (1999) suggests that all research results depend on the researcher in ways in which he or she may not even be conscious of. Norum (2000: 319) confirms that "*Researchers are biased. We are biased by our experiences, our education, our knowledge, our own personal dogmas. As researchers, we inevitably commit acts of intervention*".

Caution also needed to be exercised that people were not stereotyped into groups according to especially race. Despite the fact that apartheid was in essence a system of racial separation, white minority rule and oppression of the black majority, people like Beyers Naude and Anton Lubowski should in no way be stereotyped as part of the white oppressors. It was also necessary to consider that the distinction between white or black races do not have any biological basis, but is rather a matter of social construction. Such a social classification lends itself to stereotypical assumptions about race that are potentially far removed from reality.

A further related caution existed in considering the life stories of especially political leaders. Political leaders are traditionally considered to fabricate life stories which they expect would be accepted more reasonably and readily by potential followers, as a socially desirable and acceptable image of the leader. A case in point is the well documented fabricated claims by Jesse Jackson in the USA to gain political support. In South Africa this is potentially especially relevant in respect of white political leaders who are remnants from the previous

apartheid political structures in the country, and who now seek to protect their respective jobs by attaching themselves to the very parties they once considered to be the "enemy". They could conceivably do this by claiming to have played some hidden political activist role in the struggle against apartheid while they in fact were not necessarily active in such a way. Although one has to assume the truthfulness and authenticity of their current life stories, it was important to devise methods to distinguish authentic stories from inauthentic ones. The relevance of this issue became very obvious when three of the members interviewed for the purpose of this research made use of very controversial floor crossing legislation to defect to other parties less than two weeks after the interviews were conducted. In at least two of those cases there were serious doubts concerning the openness and truthfulness of some aspects raised in their interviews.

An important question, which was not investigated in this research, is whether this topic will be directly relevant once "free" South Africans born after 1994 eventually become the political leaders of South Africa. They would obviously not have had similar experiences as those of their forefathers in the then period of open and legitimised apartheid. If one however considers the view that apartheid and the struggle against apartheid might, despite having been formally abandoned and removed from its former legitimised structures and statutes, live in the minds and hearts of many South Africans for a great many years and generations to come, this topic becomes perpetually relevant. It is quite conceivable to imagine that the children of today, who are raised by

parents who have a certain life orientation based on their unique life experiences under apartheid, might have some remnant conscious or unconscious elements of apartheid in their respective make-ups.

1.6   Definitions of key terms

The following key terms, which are used throughout the report, need to be defined:

1.6.1 Apartheid

Apartheid refers to a carefully crafted and applied ideology of white race superiority over blacks in South Africa during almost seventy years of the twentieth century (Harvey, 2003). It was an ideology of racial separation, and reservation of certain privileges for the benefit of only a small minority of the people of South Africa. Apartheid existed in both formal and informal forms. In its formalised capacity it existed in terms of the most oppressive, discriminatory and exclusive legislation, structures and actions against blacks. In its informal capacity it existed in the hearts and minds of the white minority of South Africans who truly associated with the ideology.

1.6.2 Defining moment

A defining moment, which Thomas and Bennis (2002) refer to as a crucible, refers to a defining place, time, event, situation or phenomenon, in which there is a confluence of powerful forces on an individual or group, which leads to a severe test of character, patience of belief, and often involves an experience of severe prejudice. In most cases these defining moments have had significant influences on the individuals it affected, and represent turning points in their thoughts, actions or beliefs.

1.6.3 Leadership

It is often said that there are probably as many definitions of the concept of leadership as there are authors who write about it. For purposes of this research the following definition, suggested by Yukl (2002: 7), which is considered to be the most comprehensive and accurate, was used, namely:

> *"Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives".*

1.6.4 Member of Parliament

For purposes of this research and in following the prescripts of section 42(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, this term refers to members of the South African National Assembly and permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces. This includes all South African Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

1.6.5 Political leader

For purposes of this research the term "political leader" refers to, and was limited to, elected South African Members of Parliament. This includes members of Cabinet, National Assembly and permanent delegates to the National Council of Provinces.

1.6.6 Political leadership

This concept refers to leadership within the institutionalised dictates of a formal structure, while at the same time making the leader accountable to his constituents and the total South African population. In a sense this refers to a structured leadership that is accountable to the followers who elected and appointed the leader as their agent in the South African Parliament. The concept of political leadership therefore embodies:

- A leadership role within a formal political institution;

- Leadership over constituents whom the leader represents in the institution; and

- Accountability to the same constituents who elected the political leader to his position of political leadership.

1.7 Assumptions

This research is a phenomenological study aiming to determine how different life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced and / or shaped leadership styles of current South African political leaders from diverse backgrounds. The research is both explorative and descriptive.

It is explorative in the sense that a literature survey was conducted into the theory of leadership, and in particular into the influences of different variables on the formation of unique leadership styles. Propositions were developed into how different collective and individual life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced South African political leaders in different ways according to their experiences and situations. It is descriptive in the sense that it described the difference between the influences of apartheid on oppressed and disadvantaged leaders, as opposed to those leaders who benefited from apartheid. The research is also predictive in the sense that it exposed directions of how a single, yet significant, event could influence the future leadership

styles of different people who were either advantaged or disadvantaged by an event. This research depended largely on the relations by current political leaders of their individual life experiences in their respective life-stories. It was a necessary assumption of this research that interviewees would be completely honest and open in their responses and that all sources used were completely credible.

The research topic leant itself to a qualitative methodology rather than a quantitative methodology. Bryman (1984) states that qualitative research on leadership tends to describe better the ways in which leadership styles are responsive to particular circumstances or events, and motivates his statement on two levels, namely that qualitative research is more likely to emphasize the significance of the leadership situation on the effectiveness of leadership style, and that qualitative research is more sensitive to the implications of particular circumstances on leadership styles. The same author states that qualitative leadership studies are more suited for senior leaders, such as were investigated in this research, whereas quantitative research is more appropriate for leaders from many different levels.

1.8   Nature and form of results

The goal of this study was to determine to what extent life experiences of different South African political leaders under the system of apartheid shaped or

influenced their leadership styles. The literature survey was intended to expose the theory of how significant life experiences may influence leadership - and lifestyles in general. To apply the theory to the practical influence of life experiences under apartheid on South African political leaders' leadership styles, semi-structured, open-ended personal interviews were conducted with a representative sample of South African Members of Parliament. The information gained from such interviews was thoroughly analysed, and assisted in finally making conclusions and recommendations on certain trends of influences on leadership styles as a result of group unique or individually unique life experiences under the system of apartheid. After the data obtained from the interviews were collected, interpreted and analysed, it was possible to compare it to the existing body of knowledge, as related in the literature survey discussions. The extent of the influence of life experiences under apartheid, which varied vastly with regard to the positive or negative life experiences of individuals and groups, was determined as a result. It was consequently possible to determine the extent to which people had vastly different life experiences under a single phenomenon, such as apartheid, and how those different life experiences influenced them differently with regard to their different life orientations, attitudes and leadership styles.

The analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured personal interviews with members selected to form a representative sample from the total population of all Members of Parliament, was analysed with regard to:

- Early life experiences during the members' development years;

- Different conceptualisations of leadership;

- Factors that influenced leadership development; and

- Awakening of realisations of the impact of apartheid and life experiences under apartheid on these members.

The results of this process of analysis provided the basis from where conclusions and recommendations were made in respect of the influential link between the life experiences of these members, and their respective leadership styles.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Many South Africans (especially politicians) have recently written about their life experiences during the time of apartheid in South Africa. There is a host of literary references by people who suffered much hardship under apartheid and whose life mission it was to fight against the system of apartheid. There is considerably less similar literature by people who upheld, supported and benefited from apartheid. On the other hand there is an abundance of literature on leadership theory and the possible effects that life experiences might have on leadership styles and leadership effectiveness.

This research attempted to bridge the gap between the two existing streams of literature by investigating how diverse life experiences under apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders. The aim of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of:

- How different people's life experiences under apartheid shaped their respective leadership styles;
- The leadership styles of South African political leaders; and
- The mission and vision of South African political leaders, in view of the gained knowledge of the start and journeys of their development as leaders.

2.1   Data sources

Cooper and Schindler (2003) suggest that the first step in an exploratory research should be the search of secondary literature generated by other authors for their own purposes. Such a search includes learning from the relevant methodologies applied by other authors. The secondary data sources provided valuable background and directive information for this research and for the eventual analysis of the data obtained from the personal interviews.

As have already been indicated there is a clear lack of secondary data in respect of the link between apartheid life experiences and leadership styles of South African political leaders. There is however a richness of data in respect of the life experiences of South Africans under apartheid, which data is critical for forming background knowledge in preparation for in depth interviews with a representative sample from the relevant population.

2.2   Literature review

Although the researcher has not completed a literature review of all available literature relevant to this topic, there are some clear tendencies noticeable, both in terms of the scope and content of the literature available on the topic. A framework for the literature review of the existing body of knowledge relevant to

this topic deals with a synopsis of current leadership theory, a discussion of how life experiences can and do shape leadership style, the role of life-stories in leadership contextualisation, and an explanation of the characteristics of the system of apartheid.

This literature review will form the basis from which the reader will have a theoretical basis to compare the results obtained from personal interviews with members from the sample population, in respect of how their life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced their respective leadership styles.

2.2.1 Leadership theory

Although Stogdill (1974) suggests that there are almost as many definitions of the concept of leadership as there are authors who attempt to define it, this research report used the definition of the concept of leadership that has been defined in paragraph 1.6.3 above as:

> "*the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives"* (Yukl, 2002: 7).

Over the years there has been an abundance of published literature about leadership as a concept, and especially with regard to the eternal search for what makes leadership to be effective. In this process the initial focus was on the traits and characteristics of the leader. The basic assumption of this so called traits approach was that leaders had certain traits, characteristics and skills which would make them more effective in leadership positions. These traits, characteristics and skills included physical characteristics (such as size and appearance), personality characteristics (such as emotions and personality types) and skills ability (including technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills). The traits approach however appeared to be inconclusive as an explanation of leadership effectiveness, as some traits appeared to be effective in one situation and not in another. Yukl (2002) concludes that hundreds of traits studies failed to find strong and consistent correlation between leader traits and leadership effectiveness.

Due to the apparent shortcomings of the traits approach to leadership, the next focus was on leadership behaviour. The gist of the behaviour approach postulated that leadership behaviour could either be task oriented (planning, clarifying and monitoring tasks), relations oriented (supporting, developing and recognising followers) or change oriented (adapting, improving, flexibility, innovation). Most of the research in terms of the behaviour approach deal with individual studies instead of investigating patterns of adaptive leadership behaviour. Yukl (2002) refers to Kaplan, who in 1986 stated that descriptive studies have shown that complementary leadership behaviours are

complexively woven together to accomplish an end state where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Effective leaders should therefore be able to select the most appropriate behaviour, irrespective of whether it is task, relations or change oriented, to achieve the desired outcome in the specific circumstances.

Central to the definition of leadership is the concept of the leader's influence over follower(s). The so called social exchange theories of leadership examine how leadership effectiveness is influenced by the leader's power position and influence abilities. Yukl (2002: 170) proposes that "*power is the capacity to influence the attitudes and behaviour of people in the desired direction*", and that this power is a flexible concept. This leadership power can be derived from either a personal base (leader attributes) or a position base (leader's position in the organisation). Most research suggest that effective leaders use a combination of personal and position power to influence followers, but that personal power tends to yield more effective results. The different influence tactics used by leaders are related to their power behaviours, and are similarly used in a complex mix to achieve the desired results.

Contingency theories of leadership involve the effects that certain aspects of the situation may have on leadership effectiveness. The situation that confronts leaders is constantly changing, and effective leaders therefore have to continuously be aware of possible changes in the situation and consequent needs for adaptive responses.

None of these theories have yielded a conclusive model for examining leadership effectiveness. Recent focus has shifted to what can be regarded as an expanded view of the initial traits theory, by examining charismatic, transformational and teamwork leadership. Some of these new currents of leadership paradigms are:

- Servant leadership: Leadership must serve followers by being morally uplifting, nurturing and empowering.

- Spiritual leadership: Leadership lies in the spirituality of the leader.

- Ethical leadership: Leaders assist followers to confront conflict through ethical values and principles.

- Shared leadership: Leadership consists of the collective capacity to perform leadership tasks.

The search for a single answer to the question of what leads to leadership effectiveness will continue for many years to come, but what seems to be clear is that leadership is a complex concept requiring adaptiveness, multiple skills and traits, and interpersonal relations at different levels.

Political leadership, as a component of the broader concept of leadership, refers to leadership within a formal, institutionalised political structure, including parliamentary institutions, constituencies and a political party. Burns (1979) states that although life experiences may generally lead to leadership development and political activism, it does not mean that it necessarily also

leads to political leadership. He states that, in order to attain political leadership, an individual must in addition have a political interest, active participation in politics, and have a political career. While political leaders practise their leadership within these structures, irrespective of whether it is governmental or party political, they remain accountable at the same time to the flock of followers in the population who elected them to the political leadership positions that they hold. In a way the population, as followers of the political leaders, have a significant influence over the actions and directions the political leaders may exercise. Political leaders are therefore equally servants of a political party as well as servants of the people of the country. It is therefore important for political leaders to critically examine their reasons for becoming such. History has shown these reasons to range from a need for personal power (e.g. Hitler) to a need for collective wellbeing (e.g. Gandhi). In South Africa the need for self esteem, in view of past discrimination, might be a very important such reason, so that previously discriminated individuals could be seen to regain some esteem which was deliberately withheld from them in the past. Burns (1979: 126) concludes that political leadership is "*a product of personal drives, political motivations, job skills, and the structure of career possibilities*".

2.2.2 Life experiences as shaper of leadership style

Bennis and Thomas (2002) convincingly argue that the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of human beings, and an essential characteristic of a

growing and effective leader. The same authors dedicate the entire mentioned reference work to the question of how certain leaders extract wisdom from their life experiences, and how this shape their future. Distinctive periods in history, whether harsh or good, have varying influences on leaders. In justifying their model of leadership development Bennis and Thomas (2002) refer to the process of extracting wisdom from a crucible as the main reason why Nelson Mandela was able to emerge as the most powerful moral leader since Ghandi, after 27 years of imprisonment.

Their model, which is reproduced as Annexure D, examines how leaders make meaning out of certain life experiences, which the authors call "crucibles", and how this process shapes them and their respective leadership styles. They conclude that life experiences have a profoundly significant developmental influence on leadership styles of individuals. The unique experiences of certain eras define, shape and influence individuals, but also give them a shared history, culture and background. These eras are defined in terms of defining moments or events, such as apartheid in South Africa. Leaders' unique experiences within these defining events of a certain era may however differ, and consequently lead to differing influences on the individual leaders themselves.

Within these eras leaders undergo one or several intensely transformational experiences. Bennis and Thomas (2002) refer to these as "crucibles". They studied, amongst others, the defining influence that shaped businessman

Sydney Rittenberg, who spent 16 years in a Chinese prison, and emerged with the knowledge that nothing in professional life could break him. This experience is comparable to those of many black political leaders in South Africa, who were either incarcerated or in exile for many years of the development stages of their lives. Bennis and Thomas (2002: 16) summarise the proposition that a crucible has a defining influence on a leader in the following convincing words:

"It is both an opportunity and a test. It is a defining moment that unleashes abilities, forces crucial choices, and sharpens focus. It teaches a person who he or she is. People can be destroyed by such an experience. But those who are not, emerge from it aware of their gifts and goals, ready to seize opportunities and make their future. Whether the crucible was harrowing or not, it is seen by the individual as the turning point that set him or her on the desired, even inevitable, course."

The life stages within which an individual finds himself or herself have unique influences on their further development. Burns (1979) suggests that a child ordinarily moves from near captivity of parental influence to ego-defensiveness and ego-assertion, and that these developmental stages move them from being passive followers to potential leaders. Confusion sets into this process as individuals start seeing people in terms of certain groups, such as according to race, nationality, class, geographical location, occupation and language. A natural progression for these individuals is to associate or differentiate

themselves with or from certain groups. These identifications form the basis for their future meaning systems, which may change as a result of many later life experiences. One of the most significant such life experiences are the educational and social experiences in a formal schooling environment, which has come to be seen as central in shaping political attitudes and behaviour. Burns (1979) further suggests that individuals from a lower socio-economic background were far more deferential to political influence unless they are from environments where there was a rebellious discontent with some or other form of wrong. This exception is particularly relevant in the South African context, where discontent Blacks were forced to live in desperately poor conditions as a result of apartheid, against which system they were actively opposed. As children grow older, and interacting with broader influences than their exclusive family communities, they start developing a sense of purpose that assists in developing a self that will enable them to exercise leadership in later years.

As a leader moves through different stages of his or her life, the leader also moves through several distinct stages in respect of his or her leadership style. Bennis (2004) describes seven such stages with reference to Shakespearean characters, namely:

- <u>The infant executive</u>. A mentor or mentors change the young leader's life and perceptions of a mysterious world.
- <u>The shiny-faced schoolboy</u>. The young leader influences and wins people over.

- <u>The lover</u>. The leader sets out with the difficult task to set boundaries and fine-tunes working relationships simultaneously.

- <u>The bearded soldier</u>. The leader grows comfortable with his or her role, and acts confidently and with conviction.

- <u>The wise general</u>. The leader is at the height of his or her career and not only dictates to followers, but also listens to them, and brings about change.

- <u>The statesman</u>. The leader's power begins to wane and he or she prepares to pass on wisdom to others.

- <u>The sage</u>. The leader rediscovers and learns new things through mentoring of new leaders.

Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993) suggest that leadership development is enhanced if it moves through three processes, namely action, observation and reflection. Figure 2.1 depicts their suggested spiral of experience, in terms of which a leader continuously moves through all three processes, taking in and learning all the time to push the spiral of experience wider and wider. The "action" process focuses on what the leader did in a given situation. The "observation" process focuses on the results of how the leader acted, and its impact on others. The "reflection" process focuses on how the leader sees his actions after the fact, and how the leader feels about it now. Teekman (2000) agrees that the model for reflective thinking is a spiral that represents ever increasing experiential insights for future action. He goes further to distinguish this reflective thinking between reflective thinking for action (a cognitive activity

performed in order to move on) and reflective thinking for evaluation (analysing and clarifying individual experiences, meanings and assumptions in order to evaluate both actions and beliefs).

Figure 2.1: The Spiral of Experience

Experience

OBSERVATION
What happened?
Results
Impact on other

REFLECTION
How do you look at it now?
How do you feel about it now?

Experience

Experience

ACTION
What did you do?
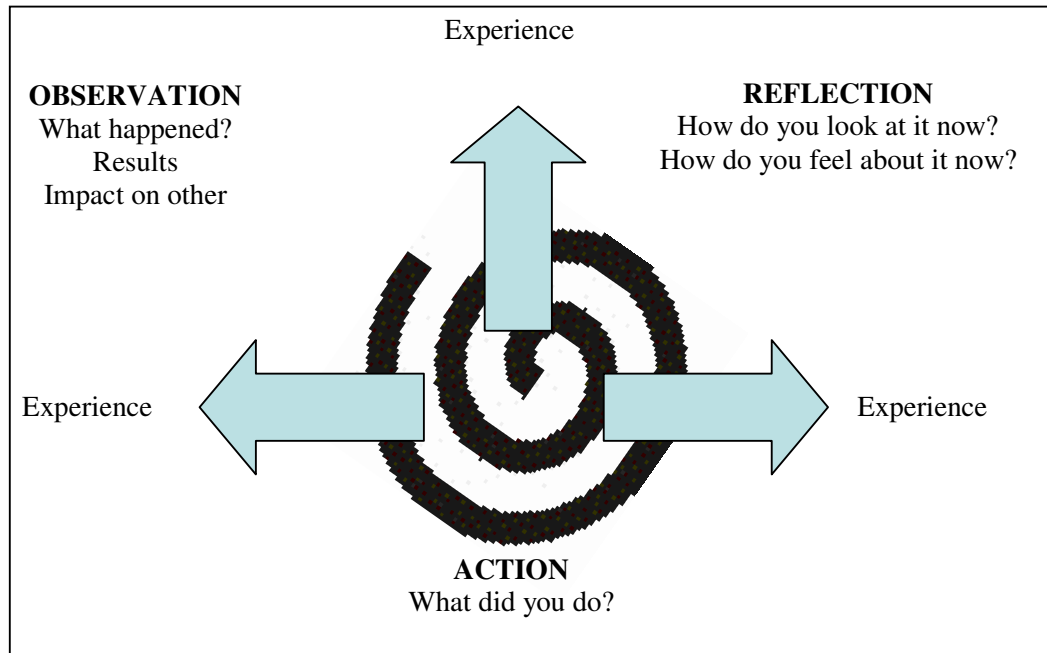
(Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy; 1993: 23)

Experiences are unique to individuals. Not all individuals experience events in the same way. Their experiences not only depend on what happened to them, but also how the individual perceived the event. Denzin (1989) observes that life is not lived linearly, but rather through the subjective eye of the individual. He adds that this subjective eye is like a camera in that it is always reflexive, nonlinear, subjective, and filled with flashbacks. Life experiences are considered subjectively through a changing sequence of lenses or masks, each

replacing the previous one. Perceptions therefore play a very important role in the shaping of leadership styles. It was therefore of utmost importance in the instance of this research to seek for and consider how different individual perceptions of apartheid influenced their respective leadership styles differently.

Reflection is very important to leaders, because it provides a leader with an opportunity to conceptualise problems differently, to understand followers and their reactions better, and to address similar problems more effectively in future. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for leaders to change their leadership styles without first reflecting thereon (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy; 1993). Bennis and Thomas (2002) found that a leader's adaptive capacity, which often follows on reflection, is a key asset in the leader's ability to process new experiences, to find meaning and to integrate those experiences into the leader's life.

The life experiences of a leader in his or her day-to-day life may have profoundly shaping influences on his or her leadership style. The first major such influence is the interaction with people and groups. These people range from parents, family, friends, colleagues, superiors, subordinates and role models. The influences may be positive or negative. It may show the leader how to or how not to lead effectively. Watching and learning from others is a significant shaper of a leader's leadership style in one way or another. This learning is even more significant in a situation of learning from a mentor. At his inauguration as President of the Republic of South Africa, on 16 June 1999, President Mbeki paid tribute to the generation that pulled South Africa out of the

abyss and gave it hope for the future. He hailed their leadership in a trying time as the reason for the existence of all which is noble, humane and beautiful in the thoughts and actions of South African people (Mbeki; 2002). In the same inauguration speech, President Mbeki stated that pioneering leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and others, through their struggle to uphold good over evil, planted a legacy in the South African people, which constantly drives them to a collective wellbeing.

Apart from the influences of other people on the leader's leadership style, the nature of the leader's task may also influence his or her leadership style. Leadership development is especially acute when the task is dynamic and unpredictable, and necessitates searches for innovative solutions that stretch the leader to higher limits.

Opportunities that are taken up to learn further at formal institutions may enhance leadership development directly or indirectly. Formal education and training may help a leader improve his or her skills over time. The most obvious and direct such training is for the leader to be formally trained in leadership skills and development. Training in other disciplines may however also indirectly enhance a leader's leadership development practically. Bennis and Thomas (2002) state that where the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of human beings, the ability to continue learning is an essential skill of leadership.

Wendy Luhabe (2002) dedicates her book "Defining Moments" to the experiences of black executives in South Africa during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, when apartheid was at the height of its regime. In a handwritten foreword she writes:

"*I offer this book to help you appreciate that as we embrace the knowledge economy, what will really give substance to it are the personal and life experiences of each of us.*"

The lost life opportunities of many South Africans during the years of apartheid gave them a sense of purpose to take advantage of new opportunities to achieve remarkable development and prosperity. Ben Okri (1994) inspires this new leadership when he writes:

"A moment unremarked by the universe,

by nature, the seasons, or stars.

Moment we have marked out

in timelessness.

Human moment.

Making a ritual, a drama, a tear

on eternity.

Domesticating the infinite.

Contemplating the quantum questions,

time, death, new beginnings,

regeneration, cycles, the unknown.

…So it is with this moment.

A gigantic death

And an enormous birth.

This mighty moment.

In timelessness."

The post apartheid South African political leaders have learnt from the country's unfortunate history, which made it easier for those leaders to formulate strategy for development. One of these strategies is the application of the African concept of *ubuntu,* by using collective strengths to work for peace, stability, democracy, human rights and development.

2.2.3 A life-stories approach to leadership contextualisation

"With words we govern men." – Benjamin Disraeli

"All leadership takes place through the communication of ideas to the minds of others." – Charles Cooley

Leaders fashion stories, based on their positive and negative life experiences to shape their identities and to influence their followers in very powerful ways.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue that a leader's unique leadership style is derived from the meaning the leader attaches to the life experiences he or she enjoyed, which comprises his or her life story. This life story then forms the interpretive basis, in the form of a meaning system, from which the leader acts, and justifies such actions. Gardner (1996) suggests that political leaders' inspirational stories about their lives and experiences are important to counter the many superficial and unsubstantiated assumptions that exist in respect of political leadership. In this way the life stories of leaders provide valuable information to followers to judge leaders, as well as their actions and behaviours. The construction of life stories and the influence thereof on each individual leader develops authentic leaders (and consequently authentic leadership) in four components, according to Shamir and Eilam (2005), namely:

- Development of an identity as a leader, as a central component of the leader's own persona;
- Developing clarity of values, beliefs and convictions;
- Development of conformant goals to the leader's internal convictions; and
- Developing an increasing consistency between the leader's behaviour and convictions.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) further suggest that the main defining characteristics of an authentic leader are as follows:

- They do not fake leadership, but find leadership to be an expression of their true being;

- They lead from conviction rather than for gains in status, honour or personal rewards;

- They are shaped in terms of their own social environments, experiences and influences, rather than being blind copies of other leaders; and

- Their actions are based on their own consistent values, beliefs and convictions. The authors quote from an interview with Carly Fiorina, former Chairperson and CEO of HP, who said: "*…I think leadership takes what I call a strong internal compass… When the winds are howling, and the storms are raging, and the sky is cloudy so you have nothing to navigate by, a compass tells you where true North is.*"

They also suggest that authentic leaders have the following attributes:

- Their leadership roles are central to their own self concepts. The manner in which they think of themselves is consistent with the concept of leadership, despite the fact that they often use different terminology to describe their "leadership". Former President Nelson Mandela considered himself to be a freedom fighter, which in reality is nothing else than a leader.

- They have a high level of clearly and confidently defined self-beliefs and self-resolution, that is internally consistent.

- They are motivated by those goals that are representative of their own passions, values and beliefs.

- Their behaviour is consistent with their values and identities, rather than calculated at gaining some personal benefits.

The stories that leaders tell about their lives and experiences, and in this case about their life experiences under apartheid, will assist in understanding the leaders better. Witherall and Noddings (1991: 280) state that "*stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems*". Rinehart (2005) suggests that research by means of narrative reporting methods allow a researcher to draw out experiences in both a subjective and objective manner, to understand and interpret the deeper meanings of the experiences better. He suggests therefore that personal narratives exhibit both a research methodology and a reporting aspect. It is therefore important that leaders are able to relate their stories to their followers in such a way as to achieve maximum desired effect from it. Followers must understand why leaders lead and act in certain ways before they can be influenced by a leader. This is especially important for political leaders who seek to influence the ordinary public, who are not necessarily technically disciplined to understand leadership in the academic sense. They need to relate in a more common way by drawing on the everyday life experiences of followers. Mio, Riggio, Levin and Reese (2005), with reference to various prior studies in this regard, commented on the use of verbal imagery and language appropriate for different groups of followers by political leaders, and conclude that the effective use of metaphors could be perceived as more inspiring to followers due to the simultaneous connect with the emotional aspects of the followers, and the conveyance of a desired message to the followers. Repetition of striking metaphors and phrases contribute to driving across a desired message.

"About the time you are writing a line you have written so often that you want to throw up, that is the time that the American people will hear it." – Richard Nixon

Gardner (1996) distinguishes between an ordinary leader, who merely relates a traditional story as effectively as possible, and an innovative leader, who relates new stories or fresh interpretations of existing stories to his or her followers. In addition to this, leaders can relate their stories in an inclusive or exclusive manner. An inclusive story aims to draw people into the leader's group of association, while an exclusive story aims to build group association by excluding certain individuals or groups from the leader's group. This is typical of the phenomenon of apartheid in South Africa, where one group sought to include as many local and international supporters as possible into the struggle against apartheid, and the other group sought to maintain the exclusive apartheid regime. The experiences since the demise of formal apartheid in South Africa, under its new democratically elected government, seem to be based on inclusivity, in terms of which a united and free South Africa is sought for all of its citizens.

The stories that leaders tell are based on their individual and group life experiences, their origins, their missions, their crucibles and their dreams. Often these stories relate over a period of time during which the leader is the main actor, and seek to intrigue the followers to associate with the leader and his or

her identity. If the followers identify with the leader's story, the story becomes effective in influencing the followers towards a desired outcome. There is much to be learnt from leaders' stories dealing with their life experiences and identity, their histories and the events that had significant influences over their lives. Bennis and Thomas (2002) suggest that leaders' stories are important in the sense that it could assist others to find their own leadership strategies. Leaders should therefore be asked to relate their secrets and their stories, to generate valuable data to learn from. These stories should however be seen within their respective historical and temporal contexts.

Political leaders face the dilemma of engaging with many different followers in terms of stories with which these diverse followers can relate, but at the same time to convey the ideologies of their respective political parties. To find a suitable link between these two potentially conflicting objectives is the modern challenge for political leaders. In the struggle against apartheid it would have been easier for the leaders of the struggle against apartheid to align their stories with their party political ideologies, than for those who sought to maintain apartheid as a party political ideology, despite a majority of constituents opposing such an ideology.

Especially important in terms of the objectives of this research is the notion that a single event or phenomenon may be characterised by a number of conflicting stories, based on the different life experiences of individuals during this event or phenomenon. The stories of those who fought to maintain apartheid would

conceivable be vastly different from the stories of those who were oppressed by and fought against apartheid. These conflicting stories seek to gain the attention of a common audience, namely the South African population, but are often also extended to the international community. The success with which a particular conflicting story manages to elicit the acceptance of and association with the story by followers will ultimately cause one of the conflicting stories to prevail, and cause the political leader who conveys the story to gain in terms of his or her constituency and political leadership position. It was important in terms of this research to take note of the different and conflicting stories in respect of life experiences under apartheid, and the consequent different influences they had on shaping the leadership styles of the respective political leaders. It was assumed that all individuals are different in terms of their cultural norms, backgrounds, focus, and the way they take up challenges. It was further assumed that followers are similarly different, and that leaders manipulate these differences to find support for their missions. This is done most effectively by relating stories to these followers with which they can identify in terms of their individual or group identities.

Although the life history stories of leaders are influenced from their very first childhood experiences, and the influence of their parents and significant others, it is rooted to a very large extent in their relations in certain groups. Minister Essop Pahad stated in an informal conversation to which the researcher was a participant, that current and former South African political leaders could not have been such if it was not for the existence of and their membership to

significant political parties. This is however not only true for South Africa, but is indeed an international phenomenon. A leader's membership of and relation to a group (political party in respect of a political leader) is a significant basis for power and support, to practice leadership from.

Gardner (1996) identifies two modern factors that have contributed to the complexity of the communication of stories by leaders to their followers, namely:

- The proliferation of technological media (as opposed to storytelling near an open fire); and

- The construction and manipulation of a leader's image by advisers, image handlers and spokespersons.

Especially with regard to the second factor above it is contended that followers can never be certain whether the audible communication is from the leader himself, or from a collective creation much wider than the individual leader. It is widely known that President Mbeki prefers to compose his own speeches and stories, and personally writes weekly newsletters on the official ANC website. This reduces the uncertainty of his followers in respect to his leadership, and probably leads to points gained in terms of his political credibility. The relation of life history stories by the leader personally not only establishes rapport with and understanding by followers, but also presents the leader (and followers) with opportunities for reflection and possible re-alignment with the ever changing environment.

Gardner (1996) identifies six constants of leadership as follows:

- A central, sustainable and inclusive story based on individual and group identity;

- Membership to a group as basis for support;

- The embodiment of the leader's story through personal experiences;

- Direct and indirect leadership influences over followers;

- Expertise and sophisticated knowledge in their respective fields; and

- Existence of a willing follower base who can relate to the leader.

He then suggests that, having regard to these six constants of leadership, three issues are important to ensure successful leadership practice, namely:

- An appreciation of the six constants of leadership despite the fact that leaders differ from one another in many respects;

- An awareness of and ability to cope with new trends that affect leadership across time, place and situation; and

- An appreciation and recognition of the principal issues that surround effective leadership, including the problems, paradoxes and possibilities of leadership.

The researcher has also surveyed a number of autobiographies, articles and other literary sources giving graphic exposes of the life experiences of South Africans under the system of apartheid. The largest majority of these are by black persons who suffered unbelievable crucibles under apartheid, but who emerged as strong leaders after the demise of formal apartheid. Although there

are not as many sources in respect of the life experiences of white persons, who were advantaged by the system of apartheid, sufficient information exists in this regard to make a meaningful comparison. After completion thereof it is possible to compare how these different life experiences under the same defining era shaped their respective leadership styles.

In the end the leader and his or her respective leadership style is the result of many different characteristics, factors and life experiences. Bennis (1989) mentions that, after years of observation, four competencies can be defined that are present in all leaders to some extent, and which four competencies contribute majorly to shape the leader's leadership style. These competencies are:

- Management of attention. The ability to draw others to the leader through a clear vision, articulate communication thereof, and a commitment to achieve it.

- Management of meaning. Giving real meaning to the leader's vision, and align followers' efforts to achieve the vision effectively.

- Management of trust. The creation of consistency, reliability and trust is central to effective leadership.

- Management of self. Knowing the leader's skills and developing them effectively.

2.2.4 The role of life experiences in leadership development

Leaders' identities are the products of the relationship between their respective life-experiences and their interpretation thereof in the form of their life stories (Shamir & Eilam; 2005). Each individual has a unique life story which represents the individual's past, present and possible future being. Shamir & Eilam (2005) summises that leaders construct their life stories to confer structure and meaning to their unique experiences in such a way that it conveys their qualities, strengths, weaknesses, values, conviction, and vision, and justifies their actions. By considering leaders' life stories, followers can gage the correlation between a leader's values and actions, which has a direct and consequent relation to the followers' trust of the leader. These stories therefore contribute significantly to the understanding of the development of these individuals, both for own personal development and for clearer understanding of them by others. Each person's unique life experiences, which find expression in their life stories, forms the basis for their self development, and provides a meaning system to shape their future actions. Apart from individual life stories, some stories may be collective in nature in that it deals with collective group identification and purposes. The stories of political leaders in the struggle for the retention or abolishment of apartheid in South Africa are good examples of collective stories that are reflective of group unique experiences in the two distinct groups.

Leaders' life stories do not merely relate their experiences in narrative form, but explain their present make ups, and could possibly predict their future development. Gergen & Gergen (1993: 193) state the following:

"…the narrative is the central means by which people endow their lives with meaning across time. Thus, as people are exposed to the popular narratives within the culture, they learn how to regard themselves, how to make themselves intelligible to each other, and how to fashion their conduct."

In a recent study of leadership development through the consideration of leaders' life stories, the following five major leadership development themes were identified by Shamir, Dayan-Horesh and Adler (2005):

- Leadership development as a natural process of a born leader or a late developer;

- Leadership development out of struggle and hardship to overcome some crucible;

- Leadership development as finding a cause through identification with a movement, ideology or outlook;

- Leadership development through both positive and negative learning and training experiences; and

- Performance of leadership functions by non-leaders who occupy leadership positions to which they were pushed or dragged into.

Although the life stories of leaders are unique in terms of each individual leader, it is still shaped in accordance with the historic and geographic events of the time. These events are however interpreted differently by individual leaders, according to their individual life experiences and make ups, despite the fact that the events might have been the same at a macro level. It is therefore conceivable that apartheid in South Africa, as an event, could have led to a multitude of different life experiences, interpretations and life stories, according to the unique individual experiences and interpretations of those who lived under those circumstances.

The different interpretations of similar life events, and the selective inclusion of some life experiences in the life stories of leaders, reflect their individual conceptualisations of their own personae and leadership styles. It is from these experiences that leaders extract meaning to shape their future actions and thoughts. One of the most effective ways for a leader to spend time on the construction of his or her life story is to take time off for reflection. This kind of reflection refers to the recounting of life experiences after the fact, to clarify its meaning and to learn lessons from it. McAdams (1990) refers to this process as a life review, which process includes reflecting upon, elaborating, editing and extending the leader's own life story. Many of the current South African political leaders have had the opportunity to reflect in such a way while they were exiled or incarcerated during the apartheid regime in the country (Mandela; 1996).

In addition to their own life stories, leaders also study the life stories of other influential leaders, role models and mentors, and extract those elements from the different stories that they associate with on a personal level. One of these significantly influential leaders was Steve Biko, who was regarded as a major threat to the apartheid government, and was eventually brutally killed in prison at the young age of 31. At the heart of his ideology was the argument that apartheid and colonialisation had destroyed the humanity of Blacks in South Africa, and that the emancipation of Blacks would only be possible through a culture of restoring Black pride and dignity (Stainbank; 2005). These external associations contribute in the same way as their own individual life experiences to their own composite and continuously developing inner make-ups, and leadership styles. The construction of a self-centred life story, without appropriate consideration of followers' values, visions and identities, would however be inefficient. Leaders, and especially political leaders, need to pay close attention to followers' identities, needs and associations when constructing their life stories and their interpretations of their own life experiences for the purpose of such construction. The stated definition of leadership as a construct implies that, without a positive and effective correlation between a leader and followers there is no effective leadership, and the leader is merely on a lonely walk in the park.

2.2.5 The system of Apartheid

Harvey (2003) describes the system of apartheid as one of the most evil systems of institutionalised racism in the twentieth century. It was a system in which the white minority in South Africa institutionalised preferential treatment for themselves while discriminating against black South Africans to the extreme. Blacks were disenfranchised, excluded from certain skilled job markets, limited in their proprietary and movement rights, forbidden certain social rights, oppressed, victimised, incarcerated, humiliated and marginalised. Mac Maharaj (2001), who was imprisoned with many other ANC stalwarts on Robben Island as a result of their opposition to the apartheid government, states that the apartheid regime had unleashed a reign of terror and thought control against individuals who were active in the struggle against apartheid, thereby silencing almost all opposition voices in South Africa. He refers to detention without trial, torture, deaths in detention, imprisonment, political executions, banishment to remote and poor living areas, house arrest and constant fear as common experiences by Blacks under apartheid.

President Thabo Mbeki, in his State of the Nation address in the National Assembly, on 09 February 2001, describes the apartheid past of South Africa as a racially divided country characterised by masters and servants, racially inspired conflict, mistrust, denial of freedom to the majority, gross violation of human rights and repression, entrenched sexism, crime, violence and corruption (Mbeki; 2002). It is from this painful past that South Africa had to

move away, through a leadership that was committed to peaceful change and collective wellbeing for all South Africans. The President, in the same address, articulated his view of such leadership, namely that these leaders would not be daunted by the difficulties that confront them, that they would not become discouraged or overwhelmed by negatives, that they would not seek benefits for themselves, but rather for a collective nation, and that they would seek to build unity and collective wellbeing. The President followed up on this theme, in an address in Singapore on 21 April 2005, on the occasion of the 26th Singapore lecture, by quoting historian Basil Davidson from his book, *African Civilisation Revisited*, when he said:

> *"When our grandchildren reflect on the middle and later years of the twentieth century, above all on the years lying between about 1950 and 1980, and think about us writers of African history, of the history of the black peoples, I think that they will see us as emerging from a time of ignorance and misunderstanding. For these were the liberating years when accounts began at last to be squared with the malice and mystification of racism. And by racism I do not mean, of course, that phalanx of old superstitions, fears and fantasies associated with ancient white ideas about blackness, or not less ancient black ideas about whiteness, the ideas of an old world in which distance always induced distortion. By racism I mean the conscious and systematic weapon of domination, of*

exploitation, which first saw its demonic rise with the onset of

the trans-Atlantic trade in African captives sold into slavery,

and which, later, led on to the imperialist colonialism of

yesterdays.

This racism was not a 'mistake', a 'misunderstanding' or a

'grievous deviation from proper norms of behaviour'. It was not

an accident or human error. It was not an unthinking reversion

to barbarism. On the contrary, this racism was conceived as

the moral justification – the necessary justification, as it was

seen by those in the white man's world who were neither

thieves nor moral monsters – for doing to black people what

church and state no longer thought it permissible to do to

white people: the justification for enslaving black people, that

is, when it was no longer permissible to enslave white people."

President Mbeki emphasized the similarities of the histories of countries who suffered under colonialism, apartheid, racism and ethnic clashes, and the opportunities to learn from the experiences of each other.

Karenga (1999) suggests that racism is a practise of turning racial prejudice, hatred and hostility into public policy, and expresses itself in three basic ways, namely:

- <u>As imposition</u>:   positive acts of violence and force;

- <u>As ideology</u>:   justification of domination of one group over another on the basis of religious, biological or cultural characteristics; and

- <u>As an institutionalised arrangement</u>:   establishment of structures and mechanisms to ensure domination.

A clear distinction must therefore also be made between formalised and non-formalised forms of apartheid. Apartheid was formalised through the proclamation of many racially discriminatory legislative Acts in South Africa, mostly after 1948. It was also formalised through the establishment of social structures which excluded blacks from enjoying the same freedoms and opportunities as their white compatriots. Non-formalised apartheid, on the other hand, existed in the hearts and minds of those South Africans, mostly from the white minority, who truly associated with the separation ideology of apartheid. Most of these were from the so called right wing, but even the most moderate of the enlightened whites enjoyed the benefits they experienced under apartheid. There were however a number of whites, who in the end proved to be the majority of whites, who realised the inhumanity of apartheid, and accepted the inevitable demise thereof and the remarkable change that needed to take place.

Although much has been written about apartheid in South Africa, the majority of literary sources deal with aspects of the struggle against apartheid, which in itself presented valuable secondary data for this research. It is unfortunate that there is not a corresponding literary richness in respect to the fight to justify, implement and uphold apartheid. Both perspectives are necessary to present a

balanced view of the different experiences of individual leaders from both sides of the spectrum. The shortage of such literature is however understandable if one considers the apparent shame and regret by the white minority for their role in upholding or supporting an inhumane system of apartheid. In this regard one considers the terms of the unconditional apologies F.W. de Klerk made on behalf of all whites to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission during his testimony, an apology which he repeated at the University of Pretoria in March 2005. This is however to be contrasted to P.W. Botha's reply to a subpoena served on him to testify before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when he said: "*I will never ask for amnesty. Not now, not tomorrow, not after tomorrow." (*BBC, 2005: 224).

In his previously mentioned address of 21 April 2005, President Mbeki explained that South Africa was experiencing a season of hope, away from the problems of the past, and towards the possibility of a better and more prosperous future. He attributes this to the collective efforts of South African people of all stations of life, including political leaders, businesspeople, the intelligentsia, workers, women, youth, as well as rural and urban people. These people realised in time that they have to change things for the better, by themselves, to bring an end to the chaos and instability that defined conditions under the apartheid regime in South Africa. Their attempts were made possible through mass support by the majority of South Africans, a new political culture of openness and a collective willingness to confront very difficult issues. This culminated in the emergence of a new generation of democratically elected

leaders, democratic idealism, entrenched human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

The post apartheid South African leaders faced a problem of continuing to take pride in their African roots, but to combine such with establishing modern world political, economic and social systems to the benefit of all South Africans. One such example is the African Peer Review Mechanism, initiated through NEPAD, to identify deficiencies in the South African political, economic and social systems, and proposing improvement mechanisms to eliminate those inefficiencies.

One of the cornerstones of the struggle against apartheid and building a new and democratic South Africa was the determination of South Africa's political leadership to take pride in our history, culture and traditions. Practically though an impasse exists between Eurocentricists, assigning liberal political rights to society, and Africanists, who strive for protection of culture and tradition in politics.

Ahmed Kathrada, who contributed immensely to the body of knowledge in respect of the life experiences of imprisoned black leaders on Robben Island through his many preserved letters, wrote that apartheid and the apartheid laws had brought disadvantaged people closer together and developed lasting friendships and networks (Vassen, 2002). In a letter to Farieda Omar, the wife of the late former Minister Dullah Omar, dated 01 September 1985, Kathrada

wrote, *"For many South Africans, fighting for an end to apartheid, indefinite detentions, and continual harassment had become a way of life"* (Vassen, 2002: 196). Kathrada's letters paint a picture of how imprisoned black leaders stood together and inspired each other in prison, how they studied further, and how the ANC still recognised and honoured their imprisoned leaders. Their time in prison was regarded as a time for personal reflection and preparation, through study, for the inevitable collapse of apartheid, and their roles in the post-apartheid South Africa.

Although the struggle against apartheid in South Africa can be seen as a conflict between black and white, as Harvey (2003) points out, there were exclusions. One significant such exclusion was Beyers Naude, who was a white male Dutch Reformed church minister and member of the Broederbond, a strict Afrikaner organisation. After he realised the injustices of apartheid and took up the struggle against it, he inspired many black leaders and gave them hope that not all whites were evil oppressors and supporters of apartheid, and that negotiations towards a free South Africa would be possible.

The emergence of a new, free and democratic South Africa from the nightmarish practices of apartheid could be compared to Ben Okri's "gigantic death and an enormous birth", referred to earlier. The fall of apartheid brought an end to discriminating practises that oppressed development and prosperity for all South Africans. The rapid, peaceful and successful change in South Africa from being an apartheid state to a democracy can be seen as nothing

short of a miracle. It would not have been possible had it not been for collective and inspirational leadership, a compelling future vision, positive and peaceful negotiations, and significant commitment from ordinary South Africans.

2.2.6 African and South African leadership

As mentioned before, the largest majority of leadership theory exists in terms of North American or European contexts. Traditional African leadership however differs in many respects from these existing theories. This necessitates the question of the relevance of existing leadership theories in an African and South African context. African leadership is traditionally built on participation, collectivity, responsibility and spiritual authority, and requires the elements of transparency, accountability and legitimacy (Lessem and Nussbaum; 1996). The empowerment of followers by flexible and adaptable leaders is central to African leadership. The concept of *ubuntu* is central to all African values. It describes a collective persona and morality for African people. An inverted African tree, as depicted in Figure 2.2 hereunder, forms the root values out of which a collective persona and a collective morality can flow.

Figure 2.2: The Inverted African Tree

Collectivism and solidarity

Continuous integrated development

Value sharing

Leadership legitimacy

Interconnectedness

Communal enterprise

Respect and dignity

Ubuntu

Ubuntu

Interconnectedness

Leadership legitimacy

Continuous integrated development

Communal enterprise

Value sharing

Respect and dignity

Collectivism and solidarity
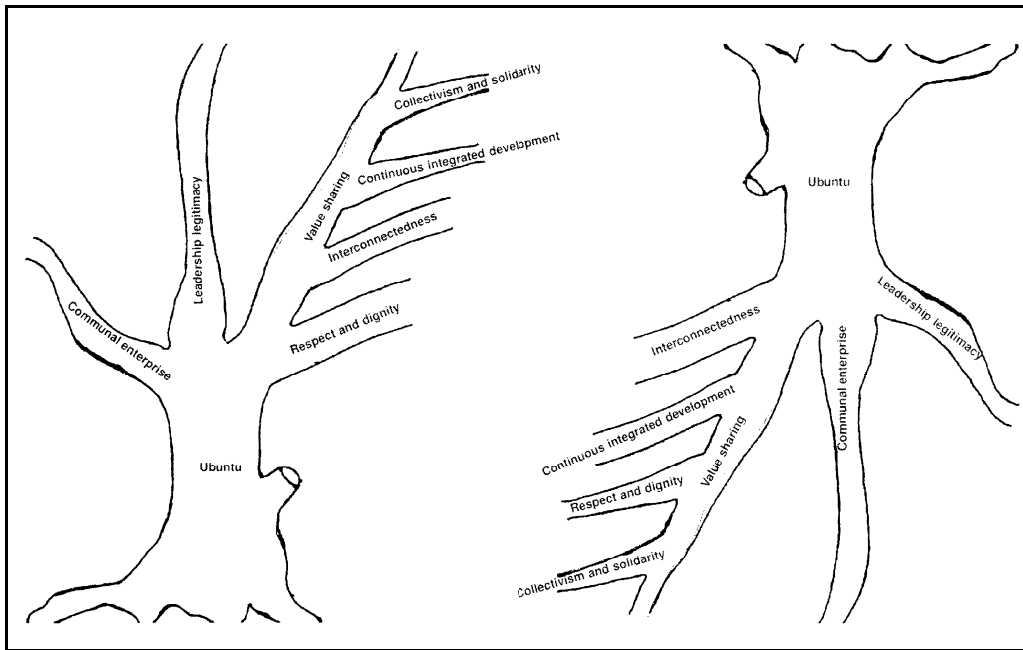
(Van der Colff; 2003: 259)

In a foreword to a published collection of speeches and interviews of President Thabo Mbeki, titled "*AFRICA: Define yourself*" (Mbeki: 2002)*,* Pahad and Esterhuyse describe the President's leadership style as collaborative and in the spirit of a collective, accepting that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. They attribute this to his lengthy exposure to the ways and thinking of the African National Congress (ANC) leadership and its allies. They comment further that he has drawn meticulously from the minds of leading figures in the ANC. In addition to this, the President draws from a distinguished background of experience and scholarship. These characteristics are all indicative of the concept of African leadership, as opposed to Western leadership. Gumede

(2005) analyses the leadership and presidency of Thabo Mbeki in the context of ANC party politics. He ascribes the President's spectacular political ascendance as a combination of birth, luck, political pedigree and networks, intelligence and ruthlessness. He describes Mbeki as an intellectual and an eternal strategist and a brilliant diplomat. His leadership is perceived to be hands-on and building power blocks of trusted companions (Gumede (2005). Gumede goes further to describe Mbeki as a quintessential behind-the-scenes-man who prefers to lead from behind rather than in a visible, public and bold way, and ascribes President Mbeki's leadership style to his experiences during the twenty eight years he spent exiled outside of South Africa, and his difficult fight for power after his return from exile. Unlike many of his comrades who had popular images constructed while they were imprisoned during apartheid, he had to build up a profile and sell it to the South African people. Gumede also draws a very interesting comparison between the leadership styles of President Thabo Mbeki and former President Nelson Mandela. He ascribes the vast differences to their respective personalities, effects of a generation gap, and their specific experiences in the ANC. Most significantly Mbeki was acutely involved in the exile activities of the ANC, and learnt the value of establishing key relationships to gain power and ascendancy in the organisation. Nelson Mandela on the other hand spent twenty seven years in prison, where consultation and co-operation was the lifeblood of their political culture. Terblanche (2005) echoes these characteristics in the persona of the former Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, when she describes him as a warm, sympathetic and inclusive leader. She however goes further to contrast his leadership style from that of the President,

which she describes as being perceived to be cold and intellectual. Both of these styles however display a spirit of collectiveness and collaboration.

Fabricius (2005) quotes the following staggering results from a global opinion survey conducted by the Gallup polling organisation on behalf of the World Economic Forum, in respect of African leadership:

- 82% of ordinary Africans think that their political leaders are dishonest (43% in respect of South Africans);

- Africans generally have more faith in their business leaders than in their political leaders;

- 54% of Africans felt that their political leaders were incapable and incompetent (31% in respect of business leaders); and

- 70% of Africans believed that their political leaders have too much power and responsibility.

Although the above statistics are significantly worse than the global averages, the survey however shows that there is a global trend towards distrust of political leaders. Globally 63% of citizens surveyed felt that their political leaders were dishonest. Nigerian political leaders fared worst with 92% of their citizens feeling that their political leaders were dishonest, followed by Kenya with 87%. This survey was conducted globally and included over 60 000 people surveyed across the world. The African results were drawn from 11 500 interviews conducted in South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Although the above survey generally only regarded opinions in respect of current political leaders at the time, one needs to consider the influence of an iconic leader such as Nelson Mandela, who is globally considered as an ethical and trustworthy leader. The lasting influence of the legacy of the presidency of Nelson Mandela in South Africa would undoubtedly have contributed to the fact that South Africans displayed a more positive impression of their political leaders in the above survey. The association in South Africa with political leaders who were part of the liberation struggle against apartheid further contributed to the positive trust ratio shown by South Africans of their political leaders. This is clearly displayed in the fact that the average percentage in respect of South Africans' trust in their political leaders is significantly better than the global average, as indicated above.

The fundamental differences between traditional Western versus traditional African leadership need to be understood to make meaningful comparisons between existing literature and data obtained from the interviews, and conclusions in that regard. The most basic difference between traditional Western leadership and traditional African leadership can be described as that of individualism versus collectivism. The following table sets out the different perspectives from Afrocentric and Eurocentric points of view in order to explain the differences in the respective conceptualisations of leadership.

Table 2.1: Differences between Afrocentric and Eurocentric Beliefs

Afrocentric beliefs	Eurocentric beliefs
• *The value of life lies in interpersonal relationships between humans.* • *People gain knowledge through symbolic imagery and rhythm.* • *People should live in harmony with nature.* • *There is a oneness between humans and nature.* • *The survival of the group is of utmost importance.* • *Humans should utilize the materials around them appropriately.* • *One's self is complementary to others.* • *Change occurs in a natural, evolutionary cycle.* • *Spirituality and inner divinities is most significant.* • *There are a plethora of deities to worship.* • *Cooperation, collective responsibility, and interdependence are the key values to which all should strive to achieve.* • *All humans are considered to be equal, share a common bond, and be a part of the group.* • *Afrocentricism comprises a circular view, in which all events are interrelated with one another.*	• *The value of life lies in an object, or in the acquisition of an object.* • *People gain knowledge through counting and measuring.* • *People should control and dominate nature.* • *There is a dichotomy between nature and humans.* • *The survival of the fittest is of utmost importance.* • *Humans should have an unlimited right to exploitation of available materials.* • *One's self is distinct from others.* • *Change occurs arbitrarily to meet the immediate objectives.* • *A distant and impersonal god is most significant.* • *There is only one supreme god to worship.* • *Competition, independence, separateness, and individual rights are the key values to which all should strive to achieve.* • *All humans are considered to be individualistic, unique, and different.* • *Eurocentricism comprises a linear view, in which all events are separate and not necessarily related.*

(Adapted from http://www.swagga.com/wviews.htm)

In the South African context there exists a perceived similar difference between white and black leaders. Booysen (1999) studied some differences and similarities with regard to the respective cultures and leadership values between white and black South African managers, and revealed the following:

- White South Africans exhibited a high level of performance orientation, above average levels of uncertainty avoidance, a high future orientation, significant power distance, strong assertiveness, below average collectivism, below average human orientation, and poor gender equality. This profile is comparable to a Eurocentric profile of leadership.

- Black South Africans exhibited high levels of collectivism and human orientation, above average performance orientation, uncertainty avoidance and power distance, below average assertiveness and future orientation, and poor gender equality. This profile is comparable to an Afrocentric profile of leadership.

Traditional African leadership is centred on family authority, village elders and tribal chiefs. The leadership structures were highly structured, but widely dispersed. The transformation away from an apartheid regime to a true democracy brought potentially conflicting leadership styles of traditional Eurocentricists and traditional Afrocentricists into contact, which fortunately developed into a new political orientation rather than conflict.

The issue of white versus non-white, or black, racial separation is an interesting one, and is relevant in view of the perceived differences between white and

black leaders. Kolchin (2002) suggests that a recently prominent body of knowledge commonly known as the "whiteness studies" has resulted in a widely shared premise that race is an ideological and social construct rather than a biological fact, aimed to differentiate between so called "whites" and "blacks" to secure privileges and power for whites. The central issue in these studies deal with the question of what it means to be white. Although Moon and Flores (2000) remark that the last few years have seen an ascendance of these "whiteness studies", there is still a widespread disagreement of its goals, strategies and scope. What is clear is that it represents an important foundation for much further study in this regard. Kolchin (2002) concludes that, as a result of historical development, race was recognized as an ideological and political deployment rather than as a neutral and biologically determined element of nature. The social construction of the construct of "race" by people over time and spatial differences, has led to many different categorizations and interpretations of the construct, depending on unique social circumstances. The result is that "race" is a subjective social construct that has no biological, scientific or cultural foundation. Chubbuck (2004), in confirming this social rather than biological construction of whiteness as a race, states that this construct is distinct from other categorizations in that it is the one category that affords relatively exclusive privileges to "whites", and a consistently shifting boundary separating whites who are entitled to privileges, from those who are exploited, vulnerable and suffer from violence because of the belief that they are not white. Kincheloe (1999: 164) shares this opinion when he states that *"no one knows exactly what constitutes whiteness".* In addition thereto, it is

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suggested that the underlying assumption of whiteness studies, namely that racial categories were fixed and permanent, is out of touch with the reality of the adaptiveness and uncertainty of the inclusive and exclusive boundaries of the constructs of race and whiteness.

Kolchin (2002) further suggests that an obvious solution to this problem is to challenge the desirability of any racial identification by abolishing the construct of race altogether, because any such categorization implies an exclusion of one or another group. Karenga (1999) states that racial prejudice in such an instance is nothing more or less than an attitude of hostility and hatred of one group over another based on assumptions about biological characteristics and its effect on social and cultural aspects of an individual or a group. He goes further to state that "racism" is the turning of such an attitude into public policy. The existence of formalized apartheid as a public policy of racism in South Africa has led to the fact that most white South Africans, including white political leaders, have grown up in an environment of privileged whiteness from birth, and could possibly take the rest of their lives to overcome this kind of social influence. The same however applies to black South Africans in respect of their social influences as oppressed and underprivileged compared to whites. Some of the remnants of apartheid, in particular the disparities of wealth, employment and general living conditions, will however have significant influences on the speed and effectiveness of this transformation process in South Africa.

The conflict between their backgrounds and the current transition, away from an environment of separation and towards unity, may lead to confusion and distrust in their collective minds and their positions generally. Whites may especially be confronted by inner feelings of guilt for their association with an oppressive group under apartheid. Their reaction thereto may however differ significantly. To address this, Kincheloe (1999) suggests that one key element of whiteness studies should be the development of a theoretical and emotional support system to help people through the process of transformation, and that this support system should rather be appealing, affirmative, humorous, sensitive and dynamic, than punitive. A significant challenge of this transformation process however is to come up with a compelling new identity of a unified South African nationality or culture. A compelling such identity would include positive, proud, attractive and anti-racist elements, and would allow all people to move freely between different cultural circles, and in multicultural circles. Some good examples of events contributing to such a unified identity are the winning of the 1995 rugby world cup by South Africa, the awarding of the 2010 soccer world cup bid to South Africa, and the space mission of Mark Shuttleworth, dubbed the "first African in space".

This would imply that, in the process of moving towards a new identity, it would be essential for both whites and blacks to develop a willingness to engage with and listen to each other with the intent to accept each others cultures and to adapt to a compromise position in which all groups feel comfortable. Kincheloe (1999) suggests that whites will find this process especially difficult in view of

their historical tendency not to adapt in this way, and in view of the fact that whites had traditionally regarded black cultures as inferior to theirs. This adaptive process could make a significant contribution towards learning how to address social, political and economic issues collectively, and will lead to the progressive disintegration of those structures of perpetuated racism.

In this sense there is much merit in Kolchin's proposal to abolish the construct of race altogether to be able to move forward. Kincheloe (1999) seems to think that this would be completely possible in view of the fact that race is a social construction that can be invented, lived, analysed or modified as easily as it could be discarded. Even if whites abandon whiteness as a race, their current positions will however still be based on past privileges of power and benefits, which will remain in effect. The challenge is to build a unified nationality while simultaneously addressing the imbalances brought about due to privileges attained by whites under apartheid. This new identity not only requires theoretical rhetoric and appreciation regarding its scope and form, but also involves accepting unity in diversity, and finding new methods of relating to one another. It is important to distinguish between the concept of whiteness as a race, and white people. Kincheloe (1999) warns that the reality of a diversity among white people make generalizations about them, on the basis of their whiteness, dangerous.

It is therefore clear that leadership in South Africa is unique in that it encompasses elements of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership, which should theoretically clash. The objective of a successful transformation of South Africa from an apartheid state, wherein the Eurocentric leadership model was paramount, to a united, non-racial and non-sexist democracy, where one would expect the Afrocentric model of leadership supported by the majority of black South African leaders, is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa, as well as in the Freedom Charter. In the process of transformation South African leaders combined the characteristics of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership models into a shared model which could best address the different situations that materialise in the environment. In the process of change and transformation, Tichy and Devanna (1996) identify the following characteristics of transformational leaders:

- They identify themselves as change agents;

- They are courageous individuals;

- They believe in people;

- They are value driven;

- They are lifelong learners;

- They have the ability to deal with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty;

- They are visionaries;

- They set direction;

- They mobilise individual commitment;

- They engender organisational capability; and

- They demonstrate personal character.

Kotter (1996) identifies an eight stage approach to creating change. These stages are:

- To establish a sense of urgency of the need for change.

- To create a guiding coalition to lead the change.

- To develop a vision and strategy that motivates people to buy into the change.

- To communicate the change vision.

- To empower broad-based action.

- To secure short term wins to make the effort worthwhile.

- To consolidate gains and to produce more change.

- To establish the changes into a new culture.

The recent history of South Africa has shown that there are many transformational leaders around, who display many or all of the above characteristics. It is therefore entirely possible, as has been done in the globally perceived miracle of South Africa's peaceful transformation to a free and unified country, to look forward to successful change towards the vision of a unified, non-racial and non-sexist South African nationality or race. This is an exciting prospect and presents an opportunity for political leaders to display their leadership skills. The success of such change and transformation will however depend on leaders' openness and willingness to engage with each other, listen to each other, consider different perspectives, and negotiate a common understanding and process for future actions.

2.3   Conclusion

An important part of the search for the answer to what causes leadership effectiveness involves considering how different life experiences influence leadership styles. An important factor to consider is the concept of African leadership, which is very different to the much publicised literature dealing with Western and North American leadership styles. There is overwhelming support from authors that life experiences indeed have a significant influence on the development of leadership styles. It is however not only the unique life experiences of a leader that has such an influence on his or her individual leadership style, but also his or her interpretation of such an experience. The experience itself and the leader's interpretation thereof collectively form the leader's life-story, which forms the basis of the system from which the leader makes meaning of his or her life.

The understanding of the twofold nature of life-stories and life history, as the unique experiences itself as well as the subjective interpretation thereof by the individual, is significant for the study of leadership, and the influence of life experiences on leadership development. Leadership development is a result of a unique combination of influences and characteristics on the individual leader, which include traits, skills, attributes, position, relationships, behaviour patterns, situational influences and the like. The main focus of a life history methodology is the leader's life-story, which is generally based on large life events that are usually epiphanal in nature (Rinehart; 2005). The same author avers that life experiences narratives are constantly shaped and reshaped throughout life,

according to different contexts, audiences, and emphases that the narrator and the listener negotiate. Life history methodology is therefore appropriate for the study of leadership in that it reveals, through life stories, how a leader views and interprets his or her life course, by the incorporation of historical events, socio-cultural contexts, internal changes and psychological factors (Bell & Nkomo; 2001). Leaders make sense of and attach meaning to their life experiences through the construction of their life stories, which in turn forms a basis for further development and direction in their lives. Ceglowski (1997: 193) concludes that, in relaying life experiences and life stories, "*we all tell stories because they situate interpretations into an accessible and easily understood format*".

The system of apartheid caused many different life experiences for those people who lived under the system, and many more interpretations of those experiences. Although it is possible to categorise those experiences in broad categories according to whether the individual was either advantaged or disadvantaged under the system, it is necessary to consider that there are even differences within each of those categories that are significant influences on different leadership styles within a single group. Although the time line characterised by apartheid in South Africa feature prominently in the life stories of most, if not all, South Africans who lived at the time thereof, there are vastly different life experiences within the phenomenon of apartheid, and even more vastly different interpretations of those experiences. As the life stories of leaders have a profound influence on the shaping of their personae and respective

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make-ups, the different life experiences and different subjective interpretations thereof have varying effects on the shaping of their respective leadership styles.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

The following five research propositions have been developed from the literature review:

3.1   First Proposition

Leadership is a complex construct, which is composed of many different characteristics and influences.

The literature review revealed that leadership research has focussed on a number of different paradigms to understand the construct. The initial focus was on physical and other attributes, but this leadership paradigm developed, mainly as a result of the inconclusiveness of the focus of the existing theory at a particular point in time, into several different areas of focus over time. Some of these further leadership paradigms include:

- A focus on leadership behaviour in relation to task-, relations-, or change orientation;

- Leadership power and influence;

- Situational influences on leadership; and

- Expanded characteristic views of servant, spiritual, ethical, shared and transformational leadership.

Existing research has shown that not one of the above paradigms can on its own provide a totally comprehensive model for leadership, but that leadership should rather be seen as a complex and adaptive combination of the most effective elements from all of the above paradigms. The search for a comprehensive model will continue for many years to come, and will extend existing theory as new leadership theory transcends into new paradigms. This research added practically to this body of leadership theory by analysing some of these influences on the leadership development of the members interviewed

3.2   Second Proposition

The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.

Life, as the saying goes, is a journey, made up of many unique experiences. Although these life experiences can be related to certain eras and phenomena that have a wide influence over many individuals and groups, the most defining characteristic of life experiences is the uniqueness thereof to each and every individual. Even similar *de facto* experiences by different individuals may be perceived differently, and may have varying influences on the individuals in accordance with their respective appreciations thereof.

In addition to these different experiences and influences, individuals interpret their experiences subjectively to make meaning from it. It is these interpretations that shape their identities and make up their life stories.

The combination of unique life experiences and the subjective and personal interpretation thereof, form the interpretive basis and meaning system from which the leader acts and justifies his or her actions.

3.3   Third Proposition

Individual life histories influence leadership development.

As the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of human beings, so the ability to learn from past experiences is highly relevant for a person's future development. Leaders extract wisdom from past experiences to shape their respective beings and futures.

Although life experiences are overwhelmingly individualistic in nature, certain defining eras provide similar life experiences for certain groups, thereby giving them a shared history, culture and background. It is however the intensely transformational individual life experiences within those eras that have the most profound influence on the development of individuals.

Research has shown that leadership development is enhanced if it moves through three processes, namely action, observation and reflection (Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy; 1993). This implies a critical consideration of the leader's actions in a particular situation, the observed results and impact thereof, and the leader's *ex post facto* feeling about the effectiveness thereof.

This proposition therefore holds that leadership development is not only influenced by the leader's actions and life experiences, but also by the subjective observation and critical reflection thereof for future reference.

3.4   Fourth Proposition

Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in itself have a significantly homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.

This proposition represents a culmination of the first three propositions into one single proposition, but also adds two additional elements, namely:

- That it is not apartheid per se that caused major influences on the leadership styles of South African political leaders, but rather the different life experiences individuals had within the system of apartheid; and

- That a leader's attitude towards and conceptualisation of apartheid adds a dimension to his or her life experiences, to aggregately, as a unique life-story, cause an influence on his or her leadership style.

Thomas and Bennis (2002: 3) state that "*experience is not so much what happens to you as what you make of what happens to you*". They refer to these experiences as crucibles for learning. Most leaders agree that their leadership styles are influenced by some major events which cause them to exercise introspection, and which affords them deep insight. This correlates to the spiral of experience of Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993), which was replicated in Figure 2.1 above, in that leaders constantly observe the impact and results of their actions, and then reflect on their *ex post facto* feelings about it for future learning.

In addition to the different life experiences of the different political leaders, their individual understandings and interpretations of their life experiences, and their conceptualisations thereof, was considered through the relations of their life stories, as being fundamentally influential on the development of their respective leadership styles.

This proposition introduces a distinction between those life experiences of South Africans who were advantaged versus those who were disadvantaged under the system of apartheid. The research sought to add meaning to this proposition by grouping the relations of life experiences by the members constituting the research sample into meaningful groups, depending on whether the members belonged to either the advantaged or disadvantaged groups under the system of apartheid.

This proposition is especially relevant in view of the directly contradicting life experiences of black South African political leaders, most of whom were either incarcerated or exiled, against those of white political leaders who clung onto oppressive minority power. Although there were major differences in the life experiences of those black political leaders who remained in South Africa (most of whom were eventually incarcerated for different, and sometimes very long periods of time) and those who spent many years in exile outside of South Africa, there is a common denominator in those experiences in terms of the uprootment of their lives, and their inability to live freely and have equal opportunities in the land of their births.

Blacks were generally excluded from political and business leadership positions, while whites monopolised all such formal leadership positions, thereby gaining practical experience in all spheres of leadership in South Africa, to the prejudice of black leaders.

3.5   Fifth Proposition

Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.

In order to examine this proposition it was necessary to first understand the extent and contextualisation of apartheid in South Africa, where after members could be interviewed with regard to their individual life experiences during the period characterised by apartheid. Interviewees were questioned with regard to their individual leadership styles and their thoughts on what influenced them to lead according to those particular styles. This enabled the research to draw conclusions with regard to the link between individual life experiences and a particular leadership style.

From the completed research survey of the different life experiences of South Africans under the system of apartheid it seems beyond any doubt that all South Africans (including South African political leaders) were affected in some way by the system of apartheid. These experiences vary from people being incarcerated, oppressed and discriminated against on the one end of the spectrum, to other people being oppressors and campaign fighters for the retention of the system of apartheid on the other. These two broad categories of life experiences were however characterised by a multitude of different life

experiences within each category, with each having different influences on leadership styles, and to different extents.

Once it was established that different people had different life experiences under the system of apartheid, it was necessary to consider how, if at all, and to what extent these life experiences influenced leaders' leadership styles. This proposition not only postulates that life experiences indeed had an influence on the development of leadership styles, as Bennis and Thomas (2002) conclude, but that it in fact had different influences on the development of leadership styles of different leaders, depending mainly on the subjective interpretation of the experience placed on it by the leader (Shamir & Eilam; 2005).

This proposition finds support in leadership theory that postulates that unique life experiences influence leadership uniquely. Bennis and Thomas (2002) dedicated an entire reference work, the well known and often quoted "Geeks and Geezers…" to a study of how eras and other defining life experiences shape the lives of different groups of people and individuals. Their model for leadership development in terms of the different life experiences of the leaders is reproduced as Annexure D.

In order to prove this proposition it was necessary to search for a link between these different life experiences and the development of different leadership styles. It was therefore necessary to determine the leadership styles of the members from the selected sample of South African political leaders, and to

determine the causes of those styles. This enabled the researcher to make certain conclusions with regard to the overlap between the leaders' life experiences and the causes of their respective leadership styles.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research was designed to establish qualitatively how different life experiences under the system of apartheid may have had different influences on the leadership styles of current South African political leaders. The research methodology used in this research combines a study of existing theory, as embodied in relevant literature, with various relations of practical life experiences of South African political leaders under the system of apartheid, as are related in autobiographies, articles and from personal interviews with a sample of such leaders. Such an approach assists in building a general body of knowledge from individual examples and life-stories. Although all personal experiences are unique to the particular individuals in some way, it is possible to group them in broadly homogeneous groups

4.1   Research methodology and design

The research design process sets out the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation. This design process includes defining the population and sampling frame for the research. Once the sampling frame has been established the methods of engaging the subjects was determined, where after

the most appropriate way of analysing and interpreting the collected data was determined.

In this research the relevant population was composed of all political leaders in the South African environment, whether they are Members of Parliament or not. From this population a sampling frame was drawn in terms of all South African Members of Parliament. Annexure A sets out the composition of the South African Parliament and Cabinet in respect of race, sex and party political affiliation. It was unfortunately not achievable in respect of time, resource and other constraints to engage all South African Members of Parliament for purposes of this research. It was therefore necessary to draw a representative sample of the Members of Parliament from the sampling frame to determine those South African Members of Parliament with who in depth personal interviews would be conducted. Annexure B sets out the composition of the selected sample, to reflect its representivity, if compared to the total sampling frame constituting all Members of the South African Parliament, as reflected in Annexure A. The selected sample consists of 18 Members of Parliament. The selection of the 18 members interviewed was firstly done on the basis of party political representation in the South African Parliament, which is composed in turn on the basis of popular support in the last general election. A good argument is therefore to be made out for the representivity of the sample of the entire population. The sample was further selected to include both male and female members, as well as, as far as possible, members from all races represented in the South African Parliament. A proper analysis of Annexure B

shows the composition of the sample in relation to the total composition of the South African Parliament, and reflects its representivity thereof. The selection of the sample in this way contributes to the validity of the data obtained from the interviewees.

The selection of specific Members of Parliament for interviews was also determined by the following practical factors:

- Representivity of the total composition of the sampling frame, namely South African Members of Parliament;

- Availability of members to grant interviews;

- Accessibility of members for purpose of conducting interviews; and

- Cost and time implications.

To start off with, this research studied a number of published biographies, auto biographies and literature regarding South African political leadership and the life experiences of political leaders under the system of apartheid. This was related initially to general principles of leadership, and subsequently to specific issues in the life-stories of these leaders. The latter data was supplemented from personal interviews with current political leaders where, amongst others, questions were asked to elicit data in respect of their childhood environments and experiences, the influences of supportive individuals or groups on their lives, significant turning points in their lives, and their conceptualisations of their own leadership styles.

Although additional data collection by means of direct observation of the leadership in action of those political leaders selected for personal interviews would have been a valuable ancillary technique to confirm the conclusions drawn from the interview data, it was not possible in terms of the time and financial constraints of this research to substantiate the data collected by means of interviews, with direct observations. Although direct observation offers data obtained from covering events in real time and within the context of the event, it is time consuming, selective, costly and open to reflexivity as a result of participants being aware of the observation.

The most appropriate research methodology for this study is a life history methodology that focuses on how people account for their experiences over time. The focus is not necessarily on the factual accuracy of the story, but rather on the defining meaning it has for the individual who relates it subjectively (Dhunpath; 2000). Musson (1998) states that the cornerstone for life history methodology is to be found in the subjective interpretations of people's past and present situations. In terms of this process of life history methodology, the interpretation and explanation of the individual's actions is used as a tool to determine the ways in which the individual's experiences influenced him or her in terms of a specific context. Goodson (1992:6) refers to this as "*a story of action, within the theory of context".* Due to the subjectivity of life history methodology and content analysis, there is always a possibility of researcher bias in all phases of this kind of research, including data collection, analysis and interpretation. This may therefore impact on the reliability and / or validity of the

data collected and the conclusions, and had to be continually and positively guarded against in the completion of this research.

Dhunpath (2000) suggested boldly that a life history methodology was probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the close relationship between institutional and individual experiences. Weiland however cautions that it is "*rare to find an account of biography and life history methodology that does not display a defensive tone*".

As this research was based on a life history methodology, which approach researchers often apply when a group or a phenomenon is under investigated (Bell & Nkomo; 2001), the interview schedule (Annexure C) was specifically designed in such a way as to draw data on defining life experiences fro each of the interviewees. Denzin (1989a) defines life history methodology as a method for collecting life stories to capture the subjective meaning of a person's life experiences in a way that cannot be achieved through quantitative methods. This therefore implies that a life history methodology not only covers the factual experiences of individuals, but more so their subjective interpretations thereof, to give a deeper and more complete sense of how these subjective life stories impacted on the individuals. Although life history methodology provides rich data in respect of the life stories of interviewees, it is limited to those incidents that the interviewees can recall, and are willing to disclose in a generally defensive manner. Despite, and possibly as a result of, this limitation the data generated through this approach discloses much of the identities of the

interviewees, which was highly relevant for purposes of this research. Bell & Nkomo (2001: 22) refer to this aspect as learning "*how individuals make sense of their lives"*. The challenge of this methodology is to extract deeper meaning and significance from the collected life stories.

Harwood and Garry (2003) suggest that reliability takes one of three forms in content analysis, namely:

- Stability: the extent to which the data is immutable;
- Reproducibility: the use of the same coding system under different circumstances;
- Accuracy: the process to conform to a known standard.

Due to the fact that the researcher conducted all of the interviews personally, interpreted the collected data personally, and did the analysis thereof personally, the risk of loss of reliability was significantly minimised. Reliability is commonly, as is the case in this research, addressed in the data collection stage of the research.

Harwood and Garry (2003) similarly suggest that validity, in terms of the extent to which the research may be generalised to the entire population, takes one of two forms in content analysis, namely:

- Internal validity: the ability of a research instrument to measure what it is purported to measure

- **External validity:** the extent to which the research data can be generalised and is consistent with previous and future research, including:
    - o Construct validity: the theoretical rationale of the data collected;
    - o Hypothesis validity: consistency of data with expected relationships and theory;
    - o Predictive validity: verification of inferences through actual observation;
    - o Semantic validity: agreement on meanings and connotations of language.

It was sought to ensure the validity of this research and its results, through mechanisms in the research design (external validity), data collection (construct validity) and data analysis (internal validity) stages of the research, by planning and design of an instrument, and by methods to ensure that the research measures what it is supposed to in terms of its objectives. Annexure F identifies the benefits and limitations of content analysis as a research method, and served as a constant guide to plan and execute the research process in such a way as to ensure its validity.

4.2   Data collection and preparation methods

Data collection was multi faceted in the sense that it would use both secondary data sources, such as existing literature, and primary data obtained by means of personal interviews. The research data collection process started with the collection and study of secondary data from existing literature sources. This yielded valuable background information and direction before primary data was collected by means of in depth interviews with the individuals comprising a representative sample from South African Members of Parliament. Obtaining in depth qualitative data from the persons interviewed, through life history methodology, where the interviewees explain their life experiences, decisions and turning points, added significant substance to existing secondary data.

The technique of the interviews followed typical life history methodology, which collects data from people talking about the life experiences by which they are constituted, and which shapes the environment within which they find themselves. The most common method for collecting life history data is by means of semi-structured or unstructured interviews (Musson; 1998). It is essential for the interviewer to be as flexible and fluid as the interview situation allows, but to direct the interview in the desired direction to obtain optimal data. This implies that the lead should be taken by the interviewee, but within the parameters determined broadly by the interviewer. Care was taken not to impose a rigid and predetermined framework on the interview situation. Life history data collection entails probing for and listening to people's life stories.

Musson (1998) suggests that researchers should draw from people's stories the principles on which their stories are based to make sense out of the information preserved in these stories. Life history methodology recognises that leaders have certain assumptions, norms, values and experiences that shape their leadership styles, beliefs and values, and that it emanates from early life experiences, influences from significant others, and influences from temporal circumstances. It can illuminate the manner in which leaders come to hold their particular beliefs and versions of reality, and how they go about influencing others (Musson; 1998). Most leaders have some kind of vision that they describe with a particular metaphor. The interviewees were asked for a metaphor to describe their respective leadership styles. Bennis (1989) compares this vision with a dream. An effective leader is able to translate this dream into a reality that is compelling to followers. In this sense, this ability of the leader can be seen as his or her most defining achievement. It is however essential to substantiate the information gathered from these life stories, by means of documentary evidence about the individual, the time slice in history and the prevailing social environment. It is fortunate that many aspects of social circumstances in South Africa during the apartheid years have been recorded in autobiographies, biographies and other literature, which was studied in this research as both background and confirmatory study.

A large volume of data was collected by means of the interviews with members from the interview sample, which was analysed by the researcher. This required arranging the data in terms of common themes, trends and groups that makes

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most sense, and analysing the context of the interview data in a scientific way. Content analysis is a technique which can be used to structure "open-ended" data for meaningful analysis (Harwood and Garry; 2003). It makes it possible for the researcher to reduce certain phenomena or events into categories which would make it easier for the researcher to analyse and interpret the data, by systematically evaluating the symbolic content of all forms of communication at different levels (Kolbe & Burnett; 1991). In this regard, content analysis quantifies the data communicated between the interviewee and interviewer, within the meaningful context of the interview. Harwood and Garry (2003) identify the following levels of classification of interviews in terms of which the meanings of words are inferred from the context within which they were communicated:

- Pragmatical content analysis: analysing likely cause and effect;

- Semantical content analysis: analysing meanings;

- Designation analysis: analysing frequency of references to objects;

- Attribution analysis: analysing frequency of characterisations;

- Assertions analysis: analysing frequency of characterisations to certain objects; and

- Sign-vehicle analysis: analysing the frequency of an actual utterance.

Kolbe & Burnett (1991) identify the following potential benefits of content analysis in a qualitative study:

- It allows for an unobtrusive appraisal of communications;

- It can easily assess the effects of environmental variables;

- It provides an empirical starting point for generating new data about the nature and effects of specific communications; and

- It can be used together with other analysis methods in a multimethod study.

The Interviews

The researcher conducted 18 individual such interviews, in terms of the interview schedule, which is attached as Annexure D. Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours. Selected interviewees were expected to sign a release form, in the format as is attached as Annexure E. The interviews were recorded, but each interviewee was given the option to have the tape recording terminated for whatever reason and at any point during the interview. The interviews were conducted with the necessary sensitivity in mind, and in following of the ethical guidelines of the Academy of Management. The composition of the 18 members selected for purpose of the interviews is set out in Annexure B, and justified in paragraph 4.1 above. In addition to the said justification, it was intended to interview Members of Parliament who have had vastly different backgrounds – especially in relation to their experiences during

the apartheid years in South Africa. In this regard all possible attempts were made to arrange interviews with members who fought against the system of apartheid, from jail, from abroad or from within the boundaries of South Africa, as well as those members who sought to uphold the system of apartheid or who benefited from it. The researcher was very fortunate to be able to arrange for such diverse interviewees very successfully, thereby gaining data from a multitude of different perspectives.

The purpose of these in depth interviews was to investigate how political leadership is viewed and practised, and how the different life experiences under the system of apartheid impacted on the respective leadership styles of current South African political leaders. Rubin and Rubin (2003) suggest that qualitative interviews should follow many of the same rules of ordinary conversation despite the fact that such interviews are usually more focussed, deeper and more detailed than normal discussions. The most notable differences from normal conversation are that the interviews were recorded, and that the interviewer was in a position to take contemporaneous notes of what was said in each interview. Both of these actions were performed to ensure that accurate records were kept of exactly what interviewees said in their interviews. The researcher also kept a field notebook to make contemporaneous notes in respect of observations, non-verbal behaviour and the interview environment in which each of the interviews were conducted, to assist with the interpretation and analysis. All possible attempts were made to ensure anonymity of

interviewees without derogating from the impact particular responses might have on answering the research questions.

In following the rules for ordinary conversation, the interviews were structured in such a way as to initiate with general and comfortable talk designed to put the interviewees at ease and to establish rapport between interviewer and interviewee swiftly. It was essential to ensure interviewees of their competence to participate in the interview, their role in the research and the interviewer's interest in what they say. This assisted in encouraging the interviewees to be frank, open and willing to provide in depth answers to the interview questions. Interviews were approached from the premise that topics should at first be covered in general terms, where after the focus would shift to more direct and specific issues. Some of these specific issues were acknowledged to be sensitive or reminiscent of unpleasant past experiences. To avoid interviewees from feeling hurt, violated or embarrassed it was important to continuously reassure and to put interviewees at ease, and to make them feel protected (Rubin and Rubin; 2003).

It was equally important to end interviews in a way that would leave the opportunity for a follow-up interview, should it have become necessary after the fact. The likelihood of a possible follow-up interview would generally be greatly enhanced if the interviewer made the interviewee feel that he or she has contributed in a meaningful way, and that the data provided was considered valuable. The interviewees were consequently thanked for their time and effort,

and again assured that the data obtained would only be used in a completely ethical manner. This assisted in ensuring their willingness to contribute further at a future point in time if the need arose.

After collection data were arranged, analysed, interpreted, and finally presented in meaningful groups of homogeneous influences on respective leadership styles. The process of sorting, coding and interpreting the data collected by means of personal interviews initiated with a thorough reading and consideration of all the collected data to identify themes and patterns. The data were then sorted into homogeneous clusters to which certain metaphors could be attributed to describe the different clusters. These clusters were then critically compared and contrasted to find a deeper meaning for the differences in their composition, while at the same time looking for relationships and links amongst the different clusters. All data collected were analysed in terms of its validity and reliability, to test whether it measures what it was supposed to (validity) and its consistency (reliability). The nature of this research leant itself to a pragmatical content analysis method because of the fact that cause and effect relationships were central to the research. Life experiences were seen as a cause which had certain effects or influences on leadership development.

4.3   Justification for using these methods

Schurink (2003) avers that qualitative research means different things to different people, and ascribes his opinion to the fact that qualitative research is used in almost all recognised social science disciplines and study areas, as a result of which these research methods have to be adapted to fit the particular varying requirements. Qualitative research covers an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, encode and translate a particular phenomenon in a manner that is flexible and sensitive to social context. This method seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon which is relatively unexplored. Despite the adaptive nature of qualitative research, it is trite that in depth and unstructured interviews form important methods of qualitative research across different study areas. Bryman (2004) states that there is little doubt that qualitative interviews form a very large part of qualitative studies of leadership. The advantage of using personal interviews for data collection is that it focuses directly on the topic and provides an in depth focus, as well as causal inferences. There are however some possible disadvantages (that can be eliminated through proper planning), in that a response bias could result from poorly constructed questions, or poor interviewee recall of the event, or reflexivity of the interviewee's responses to questions.

According to Krefting (1991), qualitative research emphasizes better than any other research method the uniqueness of the human situation. Bryman (2004) suggests that existing qualitative research on leadership is predominantly

concerned with how leaders and their leadership styles promote change on the one hand, and on the other hand how their leadership styles themselves change in response to particular circumstances. This research therefore falls comfortably within the nature of qualitative research on leadership to date. Bryman (2004) further states that there are certain recurring themes in qualitative studies of leadership, which is completely relevant for South Africa, where political leaders are charged with leading a significant change process away from the previous apartheid structures to a free and democratic South Africa. He identifies these themes as:

- Securing commitment to the change process;

- Addressing multiple external and internal constituencies;

- Conveying a sense that change is needed;

- Creating a vision for implementation of change; and

- Creating a vision of the future state of the organisation.

This has the benefit that qualitative research seeks for variation in experience, rather than identical repetition. Variability is in fact almost always expected in qualitative research.

Qualitative research on leadership tends to focus more on senior leaders while quantitative such research tends to focus on different levels of leadership. A qualitative study of the leadership styles of South African political leaders will therefore be consistent with existing studies of leadership styles. Bryman (2004)

identifies two significant reasons why qualitative research is more appropriate in leadership studies, namely:

- It tends to relate better to the leadership style required to respond optimally to particular circumstances; and

- It is more sensitive to the implications of particular circumstances on leadership styles.

Existing qualitative research on leadership has, according to Bryman (2004), contributed better than quantitative research has been able to do, towards an understanding of how leaders engage with change, how they manipulate means to achieve desired outcomes, how context is relevant for leader behaviour, and the importance of communication for leadership. Despite these advantages of qualitative research on leadership, it is suggested that ways should be sought to integrate complementary quantitative research with qualitative research on leadership to produce comprehensive data on the subject. Due to constraints of time and resources, this research unfortunately does not extend so far as to integrate quantitative research to the intended qualitative approach.

Life history methodology provides the best understanding of the complex processes people use to make sense of their situational realities (Musson; 1998). This method of data collection provides volumes of data for research purposes, but presents the researcher with the time consuming task of collecting and analysing the data. Dhunpath (2000) suggests that life history methodology therefore necessitates small samples or individual subjects for

extensive interviewing, and further that such an approach would generate a richness of depth. Despite the risk of researcher bias in the analysis of this data, content analysis has the benefit of being unobtrusive, unstructured, context sensitive and able to cope with large volumes of data (Harwood and Garry; 2003). The benefits and limitations of performing content analysis are set out in Annexure F hereto.

In the premise of this study, where it was expected that the different life experiences of current South African political leaders would have varied dramatically according to whether their such experiences under the system of apartheid was either positive or negative, qualitative research by means of personal in depth interviews was believed to more appropriate for the generation of far more valid and reliable data for purposes of analysis and conclusions. This data could be checked against existing documentary sources that were exact, stable, unobtrusive, and presented a broad coverage of relevant events.

Life history methodology makes it possible for researchers to determine a sense of reality that people have about their own lives, and provides a significant source of knowledge of how people experience their environments and their own being (Musson; 1998). Life histories represent a complex composite of factors that make up an individual's life experiences, including the historical networks of human relationships, the influence of time and time periods, fads and fashions, as well as social structures, traditions and cultures. The

understanding generated through life history research therefore deals with a much wider context of organisations, cultures and societies, than merely an individualistic context.

Musson (1998) identifies five important criteria for executing life history research methodology effectively and validly, namely:

- The interviewee must be seen as a member of a particular cultural milieu instead of merely an individual in isolation;

- Significant others, such as family, peers and leaders, play a central influencing role on the socialising process of the interviewee;

- The research should specify clearly the assumptions, rules and codes for analysing the data;

- Individual experience should be described in such a way as to illustrate how reality changes over time; and

- The interviewee's actions should be stated within a social context.

4.4   Proposed preliminary research instrument

An interview schedule was designed for the purpose of conducting personal, semi-structured interviews with the selected sample from Members of Parliament. Annexure C sets out the interview schedule which was used. Although questions were structured to a large extent in the interview schedule,

most of those questions were formulated as semi-structured questions, which left ample opportunity for the interviewer to probe the answers given by the members interviewed.

The interview schedule contained administrative, classification and target questions. The administrative questions were designed to identify the member to be interviewed and situation. The classification questions were designed to classify participants into meaningful groups in relation to their respective life experiences under the system of apartheid. Target questions were designed to specifically address the research questions. These questions were mainly unstructured and open-ended in nature, to allow participants and the interviewer some freedom in their responses and probing, while at the same time drawing a clear frame of reference and border for the interviews. The specific questions asked during the interviews, as well as the framework applicable to the interviews appear from the interview schedule, attached as Annexure C.

4.5   Method for testing propositions

The purpose for testing the stated propositions was to determine the accuracy thereof in view of the fact that only a sample of the total population was used instead of every element of the population. Nominal data was collected. The ways in which life experiences influenced leadership styles were grouped into groups that were mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. The nature of

this research was mainly exploratory to determine certain relationships instead of calculating exact measurements. Although there is generally not a satisfactory all-purpose measure for categorical data, nominal measures can be used to assess the strength of relationships in cross-classification tables, which is often used with chi square tests (Cooper and Schindler, 2003).

The data collected by means of both the literature review and personal interviews were subjected to content analysis to determine whether the information supported the propositions, or failed to support it. The process followed much the same process as that which is applied in an accusatory justice system, in which evidence is considered *in toto,* to establish the guilt of an accused. In the same way in which it is not expected of an accused to prove his of her innocence, it is not expected to prove a proposition to be incorrect. Propositions are therefore either proven or failed to be proven.

When having regard to the data in this way, and analysing it to make conclusions in respect of the stated propositions, care was taken to look for safeguards to guarantee the validity of the inferences made from it. Two cardinal rules of logic apply when seeking to make inferences from the data, namely:

- That the inference should be supported by the information; and
- That every other possible inference should be excluded as being possible, save the one sought to be made.

Applying these tests to the content analysis of the data collected in this research ensured that the conclusions are not only valid and reliable, but also tested the stated propositions in the best possible manner.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The data generated and considered for purposes of this research consisted mainly of information obtained from the literature survey and from the 18 personal interviews conducted with members of the sample population. The information obtained from the literature review not only provided a sound basis from where the subject matter could be understood before embarking upon the exercise of conducting personal interviews, but also provided a basis for comparison of the information obtained through the personal interviews. This enhanced comparison and analysis of relevant information.

It is also important to comment, at the offset, on the composition and diversity of the sample of members selected for interview purposes. The composition of the sample is broadly set out in Annexure B, with regard to members' sexes, races and party political affiliations. The diversity of the sample however went much further than that. The members selected as the representative sample also displayed the following differences with regard to high level life experiences, ideologies and orientation, age, and education levels, during the period of apartheid in South Africa:

- Some members were exiled outside the borders of South Africa, and others were incarcerated for different periods of time under security laws, others were living and moving freely in South Africa, and one member was not a South African at the time (although he was married to an exiled South African).

- The age spread of sample members range between 32 and 75 years old. This provided perspectives from people who were at different stages of their personal development during the period of apartheid, while it also provided valuable information in respect of three significant periods, namely pre-apartheid, apartheid, and post-apartheid periods.

- Members displayed different levels of their highest educational qualifications, ranging from only secondary schooling, to postgraduate and even doctoral university qualifications. This aspect is significant in view of the influence of broader exposure to different perspectives, and in terms of the different levels of engagement with others.

- Members came from different family backgrounds, where some grew up without direct contact with their parents, others with both parents, some from singular (classified at the time as "white" or "non-white") households while others are from so called mixed households.

- A meaningful distinction amongst members was the level of political openness and discussion at home during their development years. The members interviewed ranged across the spectrum from completely political households, to active practice and discussion of politics in their

households, through parents who held different political positions at the time.

In analysing the data in a meaningful way it was necessary to consider what different life experiences members had during their development years, how they were awakened to broader perspectives, and how this changed their attitudes and future perspectives. It was also necessary to analyse their conceptualisations of leadership, and their development as leaders from the time when they first thought of themselves as leaders. Finally it was necessary to consider and analyse the different life experiences members had during the period of apartheid, how these experiences were related to the unique situations within which members found themselves at the time, and how these life experiences impacted on them and their respective developments and growth. In the end the relations of these members of their respective life-stories encompassed all of these different life experiences of the members as they were interpreted by the members in accordance with their unique beliefs, values, principles and general make-up.

5.2 Different life experiences

5.2.1 Introduction

It is generally accepted that a child's developmental years is the most significant period of his or her life in terms of shaping values, beliefs, principles and a general frame of reference (Bennis & Thomas; 2002). It was therefore important to consider the range of different life experiences these members have had during their development years, and how these different life experiences shaped them in this fundamental stage of their lives with regard to their current or future principles, beliefs, values and ideologies. For purposes of this research, the development years of an individual was considered to be the early years of his or her life, until such time as the individual left primary school to attend high or secondary school.

5.2.2 Development years experiences

As stated above, the life experiences during members' developmental years refer to those experiences that occurred up to the time when the members started high or secondary school years. This period is generally regarded as the most significant in respect of shaping a person's values, attitudes, beliefs and actions.

Political ignorance despite physical experiences

The most striking observation throughout the interviews was the agreement that parents or primary caregivers raised the interviewees during their development years in such a way that they were meant to believe the effects of the apartheid system as something that was just normal, and the way things were supposed to be. At this crucial development time in their lives the interviewees were ignorant to a large extent of the practical implications of political issues, such as apartheid or the struggle against apartheid. There was a remarkable concurrence amongst interviewees, whether they were Black, White, Coloured or Indian, that they were generally ignorant of political issues during this period of their lives. This ignorance however was limited to only positive consideration of political issues at the time.

On a practical level, it was found that there were significant differences in the life experiences of the interviewees during their development years. The most significant such differences appeared to be between:

- The privileges available to different racial groups;

- The living conditions of different racial groups;

- Urban and rural communities;

- The levels of interaction with members from different racial groups; and

- The level of political activity of parents of these members during their development years.

On at least subconscious and experiential levels there were clear differences between especially whites who enjoyed almost exclusive privileges, such as comfortable housing, transport, domestic and garden workers, access to shops and restaurants, and the like, and so-called non-whites (which at the time included Blacks, Coloureds and Indians) who did not enjoy such privileges. There is an abundance of information in respect of the disadvantaged Blacks, Coloureds and Indians who not only lived under extreme poverty, but were forcibly removed from their homes and areas, and had to physically experience differences in the ways that were commonly referred to as "petty apartheid", and included such aspects as "whites only" amenities (parks, beaches, restaurants etc.), carrying of passbooks, curfews, access to certain means, and proprietary limitations. Table 5.1 hereunder sets out some of the broad differences in the life experiences of different groups during apartheid. More particularly, the following are some responses obtained from interviewees in respect of their different experiences and awareness of the impact of apartheid on their lives:

- Walking to school barefoot in any bad weather while chased by dogs;

- Seeing bulldozers destroying their family homes in District 6;

- Not understanding why only white children could play at ferry grounds;

- Forced to enter adult working life at early age, to make a living;

- Humiliation and torture at the hands of the police; and

- Being barred from eating in "whites only" Parliamentary restaurant.

The following table expands on these examples, and reflects especially the differences amongst different races during their development years.

Table 5.1: Examples of Different Life Experiences during Development Years

Blacks	Whites	Coloureds	Indians
Big differences between experiences in rural and urban areas.	Racial classification as mixed race had negative implications for exercise of rights.	Removed from living areas in terms of Group Areas Act.	Depended on welfare grants to survive financially.
Parents were often migrant labourers in cities, and removed from home situation.	Even where games were played between white and non-white children, there was always competition based on racially composed groups.	Started working life at young age due to financial position of extreme poverty.	Conservative belief that whites were superior and blacks inferior.
Children involved in hard subsistence labour on farms.	Even liberal families were not politically active or revolutionary.	Emphasis was on making a living in condition of poverty.	Did not understand why they could not have access to same facilities as other children.
Walked to school for long distances and in different weather conditions.	Early exposure to politics and ideologies due to parents' role in politics.	Early involvement in politics as a result of parent's role in politics.	Availability of liberal newspapers led to earlier awareness of political situation.
Existing benefits were taken away at the time of Dr Verwoerd, which was not explained.	Comfortable educational environment at schools.	Constant harassment by SAPS led to constant fear and uncertainty.	
Parents were very conservative and obedient to law.	Severe conflicts between English and Afrikaans speaking whites, or between SAP and NAT political affiliation.	Walked to school while others drove past them.	

Blacks (contd)	Whites (contd)	Coloureds (contd)	Indians (contd)
Parents' insistence on children furthering their education under difficult conditions.	Access to newspapers provided broader perspectives.	Did not understand why there should be different treatment from other children if they did not notice any differences between them.	
Fear of talking politics at home.	Free movement to pursue economic opportunities.		
Inability of parents to assist children with school work due to illiteracy.	Accepted the apartheid situation as something that was just supposed to be like that, without asking questions.		
Removal from traditional living areas.			
Removal of children from family and parents for long periods.			

It is now generally accepted that one of the most fundamental cornerstones of apartheid was to establish a general belief amongst all people living in South Africa that whites were superior, blacks inferior, and that privileges were meant for the Whites only. The most obviously visible aspects of apartheid are those that materialized in terms of so-called petty apartheid. Whites were allowed access and enjoyment to beaches, parks, shops, entertainment areas, restaurants and the like. In stark contrast, non-whites did not enjoy the same

privileges. One interviewee remembers that they were allowed to walk in a "whites only" park, but were chased, without explanation, out of the park as soon as they wanted to ride on the swings. For most, the only explanation for these differences used to be at the time, that this was just how things were meant to be, and that no questions should be asked about it. This attitude was generally held and accepted during the development years of the members interviewed, and it is suggested that this was probably the most unfortunate aspect of apartheid, in that the forced ignorance of the youth was designed to sustain apartheid into the future. Children were not allowed to question certain practices, and were in fact brainwashed to think restrictively. This currently proves to be a significant obstacle in the process of reconciliation and building trust.

Some of the interviewees commented on the effect of separation of races, namely that they are not in a position today where they have lasting friendships with members of other racial groups, emanating from their youths. This deprived them of the opportunity to interact from an early age and to be exposed to different cultures, having a negative impact on increased understanding and tolerance. One interviewee in particular reported that his first real interaction with white people of similar age was after his twenty fourth birthday, after he had already studied abroad for a number of years. It similarly deprived children of the opportunity to talk informally about different life experiences, ideological inclinations, and even political thoughts, which the children could then raise with their parents for clarification and discussion.

Parental political activism and political awareness

One of the most notable observations from the interviews was the fact that children who had parents who were active in politics at the time, or who discussed politics openly at home, had a far earlier awakening to the political situation in South Africa. They not only had a more acute awareness of what was happening in South Africa, but also had more relevant information to base their decisions on. An interesting comparison is between the experiences in this regard between two interviewees, whose parents were on different sides of the political spectrum during apartheid. There were significant differences in their life experiences during their development years, where one family lived the normal life as traveling politicians did at the time, between Pretoria and Cape Town, while the other had to endure forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act. These experiences had significantly different influences on their respective developments. Where the White interviewee, who benefited from his father's political position, was oriented to justify the decisions taken by the then NP government, the other member became committed to fight for an end to apartheid and its detrimental effects on non-whites. The obvious effect thereof is clearly to be seen in their conflicting leadership styles of defensiveness and justification on the one side, versus activism and change orientation on the other. There were however also remarkable similarities in their respective experiences, such as the continuous absence of their fathers from their households, and their resultant lack of fatherly support in their upbringing. This in turn had the effect of pushing them into positions earlier in their lives where

they had to take responsibility, and often required an earlier maturity compared to their friends. In a way they became youthful leaders to whom their friends turned for information and advice.

Inequities in living standards of different races

The most significant factor however, that distinguished the life experiences of the haves and have-nots during apartheid, related to the financial and social situations within which the members had to grow up, and their respective access to economic opportunities. Generally whites (and especially Afrikaans speaking whites) enjoyed far better economic and social conditions than those of especially blacks. Whites generally had access to free running tap water, electricity, shops and schools in close proximity to their homes, and reserved jobs for their parents. In stark contrast, Blacks had no enjoyment of basic amenities such as electricity and running water, had no access to schools in close proximity of their homes, they were limited in their access to shops, transport, property and movement, and were constantly harassed by police to produce pass books to authorize their free movement in certain areas. This separation and differences in the enjoyment of amenities were felt very clearly by all of the interviewees from the disadvantaged groups, and had a profound influence on their later development. Although this influence was mostly at a subconscious level during their developmental years, it lay the foundation for the critical questioning of the ideologies and rationale behind these inequities in years to come, and ultimately led to their commitment to the struggle against an

unjust apartheid system that placed them in disadvantaged conditions compared to their advantaged white compatriots.

5.2.3 Awakenings to the effects of apartheid

Whereas the life experiences of most South Africans during their development years were to the extent that they were raised to accept the abnormalities and injustices of apartheid as normalities, there came a time for each of them where they would question the effects of apartheid, and seek answers to very difficult questions. It is important to consider at what times of their lives these different individual awoke to the reality of apartheid, and what caused these awakenings.

Although an overwhelming majority of the members interviewed indicated that their respective awakenings to the broader meaning and implications of apartheid occurred at the time when they left their parents' homes to attend high school, university or a working life after school, there were vastly different experiences that led to these awakenings at earlier or later stages within this broad period. Some of these differences communicated by the interviewees included:

- Activist teachers told pupils that apartheid was a menace to society;
- Secluded life in traditional villages made one indifferent to apartheid;
- Personal impact of mixed family classification caused early awareness;
- Non white kids were allowed to play with White kids until teenage years.

University attendance, wider interactions, and broader perspectives

One of the most significant differences exposed with regard to the exact time at which members became aware of the impact of apartheid on their respective lives, related to whether they attended university after school or not. Most of the members who attended university in either South Africa or at a foreign institution state that, although the initial awakening to the fact that apartheid was an unfair and discriminatory system occurred while they attended high school, it was at university where they were exposed to different perspectives, which caused them to acutely consider the reality of apartheid and its impact on South Africans. The exposure to different perspectives at university caused members to question the reasons for their experiences during their development years and to reflect upon what they had regarded as normal before. This adds practical substance to the spiral of experience of Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993), which was replicated in Figure 2.1 above. At university these members found themselves in a position where they had to make important life decisions for themselves for the first time. This was a confusing experience given the fact that they were no longer convinced that society was normal. They had to rely on information that conflicted what their parents taught them as children. This led to them spending much more time on reflection and conceptualisation of current issues of the time. Experiences at foreign universities further presented members with opportunities to look at what was happening in South Africa from a distance, and to engage with students from other countries, whose perspectives of apartheid were more objective than those of South Africans.

Early entry into the labour market

In stark contrast to the university awakenings of many of the members interviewed, some members were forced into the reality of the apartheid labour market due to severe poverty at home. Here they experienced the discrimination, humiliation and harshness of apartheid first hand at a very young age. This contributed to some of these members becoming actively involved in political activism in the struggle against apartheid, in an attempt to overthrow the system to thereby secure better living conditions for those who were disadvantaged under apartheid. For some of these members this period represented the most difficult time in their lives, where some had to deal with different racial classifications amongst members of their immediate families. Not only was there a separation amongst different races in South Africa, but also in certain families a separation within the family itself. Silly unscientific tests, such as the so-called pencil test, fingernail test and teeth test, were performed to separate people from one another in some mysteriously, non-biological way.

Geography and apartheid experiences

Another significant difference in the life experiences during this life cycle period of the interviewees was their geographical location during this period. An interesting phenomenon here was the different perspectives present in people who lived in rural areas and on farms, as opposed to those who lived in cities, and other urban areas, irrespective of their respective races. White, Black and

Coloured members who grew up in rural area and on farms had almost normal relations with members of other racial groups on and individual level. They did not feel the brunt of apartheid to the same extent as those Blacks who lived in cities where they were exploited for their cheap labour. It was suggested that even the liberations from apartheid had not yet reached those who still live in rural villages today. In the cities, where a higher level of availability of amenities was expected, it was easy to mobilize groups to fight against apartheid.

One of the most prominent life experiences that awoke people to the effects of apartheid in this period of their lives, was the fact that Blacks had to carry and produce so called pass books to justify their presence in certain areas. Most of the Black interviewees (and even Coloured interviewees) were locked up by the police on various occasions for not being able to produce pass books. This requirement was universally experienced as humiliating to the extreme and spurred members on to become more dedicated and committed to their struggle against apartheid.

The awakening of people disadvantaged under apartheid led in some instances to those members either ending up in prison as a result of their political activist activities against the system, or leaving South Africa to live in exile for many years. These two extreme experiences also impacted very differently on the development of these individuals. Those who were imprisoned reported feelings of hatred against Whites, much time for reflection on their principles and values, a greater commitment to fighting these injustices, and learning opportunities

from experienced leaders such as Nelson Mandela. On the other hand, those who lived in exile became involved in an indirect manner to promote the struggle against South Africa, while hoping to return to South Africa after the system had been overthrown.

Temporal differences in political and economic climate

It is also important to note the different time period within which the interviewees found themselves in this stage of their respective life cycles. At the one end there were members who lived through this stage even before apartheid was formally enshrined in the South African statute books, while at the other end there are members who found themselves in this stage at a time when the apartheid regime was breathing its last life before the unbanning of previously banned political parties, and eventual transition to a free and democratic South Africa. The analysis of the respective ages of the members interviewed, summarized in Annexure G, bears evidence of the span of eras within which the members found themselves in comparable stages of their lives. These differences in time periods, and the prevailing global political and economic situations of the time, had profoundly different influences on their perceptions of this environment. The political climate in South Africa at the time when one of the interviewees was at high school in the early 1940's was for example very different to that of the mid 1990's, when the youngest interviewee was at high school. These differences in prevailing political climates at comparable life stages had significantly different influences on their development.

The following table summarises some of the most common life experiences of the awakening periods of interviewees' lives, and the different influences these experiences had on shaping the individuals.

Table 5.3: Awakening Life Experiences and its Influences

Life experience	Influences
Early entry to labour market	Became independent; felt harshness of petty apartheid and job reservation; contact with activists; increased commitment to overturn apartheid
University training	Greater interaction and exposure to different perspectives; had to make own decisions; intellectual basis for considering apartheid
Rural versus urban life	Isolated from apartheid in rural areas, but felt brunt of it in cities; easier to mobilize activist groups in cities; hatred in cities; rural life made you strong
Overseas experience	Considered South Africa's position from a distance without feeling the direct effect of apartheid; broader interactions and perspectives; irrelevance of skin colour
Political activism	Attractive means to fight living conditions; perceived as a war; became most important aspect of the life of a disadvantaged person
Global time period	Trends and global environment at the time differed from pre- to high- to post apartheid; different economic perspectives; basis for frame of reference
Imprisonment versus freedom	More opportunity for reflection and planning in prison; ignorance by those who enjoyed privileges and freedom
Exile versus freedom	Effects of situations in other countries; struggle extended beyond South African borders

In summary, a clear distinction can be made between the following life experiences that led to an awakening of the real impact of apartheid on the lives of South Africans:

- Members from the privileged group were largely ignorant of the abnormalities of apartheid until they experienced broader interactions with people who had different perspectives;

- Disadvantaged members in rural areas were ignorant of the real impact of apartheid on their living conditions until they came into contact with more politically aware people in cities; and

- Disadvantaged members in cities felt the brunt of apartheid and were at the forefront of the struggle against its unjust impact on their lives.

These different experiences led to significantly different ideologies, actions and perspectives, but shared the common appreciation that apartheid was a system that would not be sustainable in South Africa. Ideologies were shaped over a wide spectrum that ranged from justification of the need for separation of races (based on non-biological colour differentiates) on the one end, to an ideology of unity, freedom and non-discrimination on the other. The interviewees all agreed that their ideologies were shaped more as a result of interaction with significant others than in any other way. It was shown that a broader interaction with people from different backgrounds, and broader life experiences, made members more aware of and receptive to other perspectives and ideologies. This assisted their continuous learning and development, and increased the basis for determination of their actions.

5.2.4 Developing changed attitudes and perceptions into actions

The fact that South Africans awoke to the realities of apartheid and its abnormal impact on their lives, albeit at different times in their respective lives, inevitably led to changes in their attitudes towards people of different colours, and of perspectives of the political systems of the time.

A very clear contrast was identified between the realisations by members who enjoyed privileges under the apartheid system, namely that the system could not be sustained and needed to change sooner rather than later, as opposed to anger, unhappiness and determination of those who suffered under apartheid to bring an end to it. There was a measure of confusion and fear amongst especially the privileged Whites with regard to how the inevitable change was to take place. The political situation in South Africa was unstable and could develop into either civil war or a negotiated peaceful transition to a free democracy. They felt that they needed to prepare for both outcomes. On the other hand there was some urgency amongst those who were not privileged, to speed up the transformation process which they believed would afford them the privileges they were denied during apartheid.

One of the most unfortunate consequences of apartheid was the development of fear and hatred amongst different races. This hatred was more acute amongst Blacks who were severely oppressed by Whites, to the extent that

interviewees commented that they took deliberate decisions not to work for Whites, not to greet Whites, and to fight the White oppressors at any possible opportunity. Hatred and bitterness made so called non-whites more determined to overthrow the system of apartheid to the extent that they were prepared to give up their freedom and even their lives for this cause.

There was a general consensus amongst White interviewees that they realised that apartheid would not continue as a policy in South Africa, and that change was inevitable. There was however comment that it was necessary to communicate the real reasons for the deliberate attempt to oppress Blacks and reserve exclusive privilege for Whites. In terms of this view petty apartheid was just a set of practical mechanisms to develop different races into autonomous groups within their own exclusive territories. This view however does not represent the majority of views of White interviewees, and is positively linked to parental influence by parents who were actively involved in National Party apartheid politics.

Two broad categories of general attitudinal changes can be identified, namely:
- A realisation that change away from apartheid was needed, but only in an organised and negotiated form, to guarantee some measure of protection of Whites against retaliation; and
- A burning determination to abolish apartheid to secure equal privileges and opportunities for previously disadvantaged people.

The two categories identified above constitute a defensive strategy and an offensive strategy, which had very different influences on the leadership styles practiced within those strategies. The focus of the defensive leaders was to negotiate a settlement to the narrowest of terms to protect their future interests, while the focus of the offensive leaders was to bring about necessary changes as fast as possible to gain privileges for their followers and groups. The members interviewed share the understanding of the reasons why it was important for the opposing political groups at the time to have these two different attitudes, given the nature of political change that was taking place, and which had serious implications for both groups. The interviewees however agree that the peaceful transition to a free South Africa has had a phenomenal impact on the shaping of their current attitudes towards leading change. During the time of the struggle against apartheid opposing parties did not trust each other to bring about change that would be fair and equitable. The peaceful negotiations that led to the first free and fair elections in South Africa in 1994 however became a profoundly defining moment in the development of attitudes and dispositions in South Africa generally. This is conceivably even more so in respect of the attitudes and styles of South African political leaders, who were actively involved at a personal level in negotiating this change. Despite these different styles there was a realisation amongst all leaders that open communication would enhance understanding and trust amongst members of the different groups, which was essential to secure a peaceful transition away from the injustices of apartheid.

In this regard there were some very fortunate events in the life experiences of all South Africans, which contributed in an enormous way towards peaceful transition, and building a united South African identity – often referred to as the rainbow nation. Some of these events include:

- Peaceful transition negotiations at CODESA;

- Formulation of a new Constitution for South Africa;

- Peaceful first free and fair democratic elections in 1994;

- The inspirational and reconciliatory leadership of Nelson Mandela;

- The role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and

- The unification influence of South Africa winning the 1995 rugby world cup.

There was a growing realisation that all people in South Africa, irrespective of their races, backgrounds or beliefs, were similar, and had the same aspirations. The process of this realisation is however acknowledged to be a continuing process which is enhanced by constant communication and interaction across lines of colour, religion, social class and backgrounds that previously separated one group from another. Interviewees agreed that constructive talking and interaction is the basis for peaceful future development and trust.

5.2.5 How life experiences changed future outlooks

Having identified the different life experiences of interviewees during their development years and their respective experiences in awakening to the realization of the impact of apartheid on their lives, and how this influences their individual attitudes and perceptions, it became necessary to consider how these experiences influenced the future outlook of these members.

A post 1994 united vision for a better future for all South Africans

All of the interviewees agreed that their individual life experiences during the apartheid years had profound influences on their development over the time and that, although those influences were quite different, that they all had a future perspective rather than a historic perspective. There was general agreement that the most significant influence these individual experiences had, was to unite people in their attempts to secure a better future for South Africans of this generation, and especially those generations to come.

The unified future view of all members interviewed is however only a feature of their respective outlooks which emanated after the CODESA negotiations and peaceful transition to a free democracy in 1994. These two experiences, and the remarkable transformation process in South Africa since 1994, under the inspirational leadership of Nelson Mandela, have filled all interviewees with hope for the future, and a conviction that the injustices of the past will not be

repeated. There is and optimism about the prospects of the future South African generations to live together in disregard of racial or colour differences, but rather to build on a unique South African culture, in which the rich diversities of the country could find comfortable space and association.

Conflicting outlooks before 1994

The different life experiences of the interviewees however had very different influences on their respective outlooks before 1994, and especially within the period during which apartheid was still in existence as a formal policy of the government of the country. During this period three broad categories of future outlooks could be identified, namely:

- A deliberate ignorance of the realisation of the injustices of the system of apartheid, to continue enjoyment of exclusive privileges;

- A realisation of the need for change, and a conservative attempt to negotiate change while retaining privileges; and

- A deliberate fight to abolish apartheid, which fight could be divided into:

   o fighting from within the existing structures, such as the tri-cameral parliament and party political structures;

   o political activism in a subversive and violent manner through riots, protests and anarchy; and

   o support for political activists without becoming physically involved in such activities.

In the end, despite the above different experiences during apartheid, those members came together in one single Parliament where they discuss on an ongoing basis the reasons for their past actions. This assisted in a major way to increased understanding, tolerance and trust, which is essential for their current positive and optimistic outlooks of hope for the future generations of South Africans.

5.3   Leadership

5.3.1 Introduction

It was mentioned above that there are probably as many definitions of the concept of leadership as there are authors who attempt to define it. This statement could probably be extended, after consideration of the interviewees' answers to a direct question as to what they understand under the concept of leadership, to say that there are probably as many conceptualisations or understandings of the concept of leadership as there are people around thinking or talking about it.

Leadership was defined for purposes of this study as *"… the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and*

how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives".

It was important to consider the different conceptualisations of the concept of leadership amongst the members interviewed, to determine whether there are any commonalities as a result of certain similar experiences. It was equally important to consider what led the interviewees to think of themselves as leaders for the first time, and how their conceptualisation of leadership and their practice as leaders developed over time.

5.3.2 Conceptualisations of leadership

In order to understand leaders' conceptualisations of leadership it was important to consider their stated conceptualisations of the concept in comparison with the practicalities of how they go about leading others. The interviewees were asked two very direct questions (and some practical examples) in this regard, namely:

- "What do you understand under the terms 'leadership' and 'political leadership'; and

- How do you go about leading others?"

Annexure C sets out the interview questions in terms of an interview schedule.

Although the interviewees individually highlighted only certain aspects of the stated definition of the concept of leadership, there are some common elements

raised by all of them. Some of these commonalities include the development of a vision by the leader, existence of followers, influences over the followers, initiative by the leader, and decision making by the leader. It is interesting to note the difference in opinion with regard to the way in which decisions are to be taken, and ranges from consultative and collective decision making on one end, to autocratic decision making followed by convincing followers of the correctness of this decision on the other end.

It is also important to note the unique nature of political leadership, which comprises of two essential elements, namely:

- a leadership function within an institution; and
- a representative function of followers to whom the leader is accountable.

It was observed throughout the interviews that the second above element is often not valued highly by political leaders, who prefer to formulate their own or their party's vision, and to sell this to as many followers as they can manage to convince that their vision is more compelling than that of an opposition party. This aspect was further highlighted at the time of conducting these interviews, in that some leaders were willing to ignore the collective voices of their followers who elected them to be their representatives in Parliament, by crossing the floor to opposition parties who do not necessarily share the same ideologies as the voters who sent these leaders to Parliament as their representatives. It is interesting to observe that three of the interviewees made use of controversial floor crossing legislation less than two weeks after conducting the interviews for

purpose of this report, thereby abandoning the leadership positions they had in relation to their existing followers, in favour of potential other followers.

The following table compares the individual conceptualisations of leadership with the practical ways in which interviewees seek to lead their followers:

Table 5.3: Comparison of Leadership Conceptualisation and Implementation

Interviewee	Conceptualisation	Implementation
1.	Take initiative; make decisions	Discipline; Christian and family values
2.	Consultative decisions to advance followers' needs	Consultation; openness; respect; integrity
3.	Courage to take new steps and convince followers	Create greater value for people; caring; leave a legacy
4.	Initiative; give direction; vision; make decisions	Christian values; reliability; respect
5.	Follow the party's ideology; make decisions	Openness; call a spade a spade
6.	Understand and tolerate different perspectives; vision; optimism	Inspiration; compassion; integrity
7.	Give direction; motivate followers; lead by example	No delegation; representation of followers
8.	Vision; align own vision with followers' needs	Address the issue and not the individual

Interviewee (contd)	Conceptualisation (contd)	Implementation (contd)
9.	Serve people	Openness; negotiation; self-belief
10.	Give direction towards a goal; initiative	Sell your ideas to the people; party ideologies
11.	Convince people to follow your vision	Understand people and their perspectives
12.	Convince people to follow your vision; accountability	Consultation with followers
13.	Sell your vision to followers; achieve commitment	Do something worthy of respect; gentle; persuasive
14.	Collective decisions; monitor implementation	Responsibility; dedication
15.	Vision; principled; listen to advice	Integrity; honesty
16.	Direct people to your vision; collective goals	Don't compromise on principles; accommodation of other ideas
17.	Communicate vision	Only make promises you can keep
18.	Strong; acceptable to followers; adaptable	Creative; practical; responsible

From the above table it is clear how the individual conceptualisations of leadership have unique bearings on how the leaders practice their leadership

skills. Their unique understandings of leadership, based to a large degree on their observations and experiences of their diverse pasts, have equally unique practical implementation consequences on their respective leadership styles. It is important to understand the life stories of these leaders to fully understand how they lead followers, and this is only possible through a process of continued and universal communication with followers.

5.3.3 The realisation of being a leader

The literature survey exposed five major leadership development themes, as identified by Shamir, Dayan-Horesh and Adler (2005), namely:

- Leadership development as a natural process of a born leader or a late developer;

- Leadership development out of struggle and hardship to overcome some crucible;

- Leadership development as finding a cause through identification with a movement, ideology or outlook;

- Leadership development through both positive and negative learning and training experiences; and

- Performance of leadership functions by non-leaders who occupy leadership positions to which they were pushed or dragged into.

It was therefore important to consider the views of the leaders interviewed for purposes of this research as to what they saw as the realisation of their positions as leaders, and the starting points of their development in this regard. Although most interviewees tried to be very modest in suggesting that they never actively sought leadership positions but were rather chosen by the people to be their leaders, this was not always practically the case. There is nevertheless support for the notion that people observe leadership qualities in an individual, and their actions to promote such an individual to leadership positions have a profound influence on the development of the leader. This should however not be equated to such a person necessarily becoming a leader due to pressures from others.

What seems to be most significant in the early development of individuals to perceived leadership positions in their early and development years, were their physical traits and skills. In this regard it was reported that children who were opinionated, courageous, organised, and talked a lot at school, chairpersons of debating society, sports team stars and the like were more readily regarded as leaders by their peers. In addition thereto, people considered favourably those persons who were passionate about issues that affected them personally, and who could articulate attractive strategies to deal with it. Two interviewees, whose fathers were active politicians during the time of apartheid, reported that their opinions were always sought by their peers due to the fact that they had more direct knowledge of current

affairs in the country as a result of their discussions thereof with their fathers.

It is also important to note how some interviewees found themselves in positions where they had to perform some leadership responsibilities due to their situations at home. In some cases the leaders of their families were removed from their homes as a result of many different factors, such as exile, imprisonment, migrant labour in the cities, political duties away from home, or death. In those instances the members were thrust into positions where they had to make independent decisions that not only affected their direct environment, but also those of close relatives.

What is important though, is to recognize that their leadership started at a point before it was recognized by others, and that those other people were often instrumental in making leaders aware of their leadership skills and potential. This would be the observable starting point of a continuously growing leadership style which is adaptive to the changing environment within which the leader has to practice his or her leadership.

5.3.4 Leadership development over time

It was already stated above that leadership is not a static concept, but that it changes dynamically over time depending on the needs of the situation and the

orientations of both leaders and followers. In order to determine how different life experiences during the periods of apartheid in South Africa, and the eventual abolishment of this system, influenced leadership development, it was necessary to consider the experiences of the interviewees, and to compare those to individual developments in their respective leadership styles.

There was a general consensus amongst the interviewees that leaders are energetic, passionate, unmovable, arrogant, strong willed and autocratic to an extent when they are young, but that they become far more calm, calculated, consultative and caring as a result of their experiences over time. One of the interviewees explained this point quite clearly in terms of the following saying:

> *"If you are not revolutionary when you are twenty you have no*
>
> *heart, but if you are still revolutionary when you are fifty you*
>
> *have no head."*

Although one interviewee stated that he did not know whether it was some sort of biological or chemical reaction that caused this change in attitude, there was general consensus that the change should be attributed to collective wisdom gained over years of different experiences and interactions with influential individuals, groups, or organisations.

The following aspects were identified to have had major influences on the development of leadership styles of the interviewees during and after the period of apartheid in South Africa:

- Political activism and the struggle against apartheid: Young leaders in the struggle against apartheid were still in a stage of their lives where they were prepared to die for what they believed in. They were dedicated and committed towards bringing about change in whatever ways they thought possible. This included acts that were criminal acts at the time, which were considered to be terrorism and treason against the country.

- Ignorance of the consequences of apartheid for ordinary South Africans: Some members, from especially the White privileged group, chose consciously or subconsciously to ignore the unjust effects of apartheid while they were enjoying exclusive benefits under the system. They considered apartheid society as the norm, and the struggle against it as something too far removed from them to pay attention to it.

- Realisation of unavoidability of changes in the political system: Those members who realised that apartheid was not a sustainable political system found themselves in a difficult position that they saw the injustices of the system, but was afraid of potential anarchy if it was to be merely abolished without safeguards for all groups thereafter. They set out to negotiate peaceful transition from an apartheid state to a

democracy in which all citizens would enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

- Peaceful transition to a democracy: The success of negotiations at CODESA and the free and fair elections of 1994 opened the door to free interaction amongst members of different groups, greater communication which built increased understanding and trust of one another, and a common optimism and hope for the future of South Africa.

- International and national recognition: The recognition of the success of South Africa's transformation from a racist apartheid state to a free democracy, encouraged all people to contribute to unified nation building, and made them feel that all their past efforts to bring about this change was worthwhile.

- Changes in the political climate in the country: During the time of apartheid there was a political climate of severe conflict in South Africa between the privileged Whites and the disadvantaged so called non-whites. The respective leadership functions performed within these conflicting groups were either to protect and uphold the privileges of apartheid on the one hand, to a deliberate fight against the regime on the other. The political climate has however since changed to the extent that there is no longer such a conflict, and that all efforts can now be directed towards healing the wounds of the past and to build a better future for all

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South Africans. The focus of leadership has shifted significantly due to the change in the political climate.

- <u>Economic, social and cultural changes:</u> South Africa was targeted by the international community with economic sanctions and exclusion from certain bodies and privileges. The leaders of the struggle against apartheid supported these measures as it was perceived to be positively related to speeding up the process of change in South Africa. This attitude has however changed completely in the new South Africa, where international contact is actively sought by these same leaders to build a prosperous South Africa in terms of growth and development.

The unfortunate experiences under apartheid and the realisation of its consequences have caused leaders to be more open minded, consultative and tolerant, because of their acceptance of the fact that South Africa is a richly diverse country in terms of different cultures, values and beliefs. This development was the result of greater interaction amongst members of different races, cultures and backgrounds, coupled with the willingness to learn about and from one another. Political leaders realize that political principles should be tempered with tolerance in the same way as justice should be tempered with mercy. Leaders have realized that they need to be more adaptive to the new opportunities and realities of a free South Africa to achieve optimal benefits from the situation.

Some of the interviewees raised the point that there is however a very important role to be played in South Africa by tolerant, calm and accommodating leaders, as much as intolerant and activist youth leaders. It is accepted that fresh ideas and new perspectives are regularly born out of the widely perceived intolerance of the youth. The success of leadership development in South Africa during its period of transformation is largely a result of the interaction of these two different groups or styles, and their collective willingness to learn from one another.

It is only to be admired that interaction and communication was able to change leadership styles from militant, hatred filled and crude responses to the conditions of the time (such a refusal to greet, associate with or work with members of other colours) to a style characterized by collectivity, consultation and accommodation. This inspires followers and gives them hope for future South African generation, and is a fantastic legacy any leader could leave behind.

The following table illustrates how vastly different role models inspired the interviewees' conceptualisations and development of leadership, and reflects how one can be unified despite many diverse influences.

Table 5.4: Role Models who were instrumental in Interviewees' Leadership Development

Interviewee	Role models
1	Marthinus van Schalkwyk, FW de Klerk, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Mahatma Gandhi, OR Tambo
2	Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Che Guevara, Zapiro, Walter Sisulu
3	Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Cyril Ramaphosa
4	John Maxwell, Dr Miles Munro, Jesus Christ
5	PW Botha, Dr Dawie de Villiers, FW de Klerk
6	Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Steve Biko
7	Dikgang Moseneke, Johnson Mlambo, Mao Tse Tung
8	Alan Hendrickse, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela
9	Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki
10	Moseou Lekota
11	Connie Mulder, Paul Kruger
12	Harry Magakulu
13	Bertrand Russel
14	Sally Mahunge, OR Tambo, Gertrude Shope
15	Danie Craven, Ronald Reagan, Van Zyl Slabbert
16	Mangosuthu Buthelezi
17	Helen Suzman, Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, Jenna Clifford
18	Andries Pretorius, Cecil John Rhodes, DF Malan, Dr Verwoerd, Tony Leon

5.4   *Apartheid*

5.4.1 Introduction

Although the system of apartheid is generally considered to have been a narrowly defined system of racial separation and oppression in order to secure resources for the benefit of a select group of minorities, it was important to test such a generalised opinion in terms of the conceptualisations and views of apartheid in the eyes of the interviewees. In addition thereto it was necessary to consider how different individual life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced the different conceptualisations of the concept of apartheid, and how those conceptualisations impacted on the individual actions and styles.

The propositions stated above all propose that different life experiences under apartheid had varying influences on the respective leadership styles of political leaders, depending, amongst others, on whether they were oppressed or benefited under the system of apartheid, and their individual attitudes towards the apartheid practices of the time. It was therefore of paramount importance to consider and analyse not only the nature of those different life experiences, but also how those different life experiences impacted in different ways and to different degrees on the attitudes and styles of different leaders.

5.4.2 Conceptualisations of apartheid

In much the same way as the different interviewees had different conceptualisations of leadership, there were found to be as many different conceptualisations of apartheid. This depended largely on how directly and to what extent the individuals were affected by the policies of apartheid. It was important to consider first the different understandings of the concept of apartheid before one could truly gage the impact thereof on the development and the styles of these leaders. There was a unanimous feeling amongst interviewees that the system of apartheid was an unjust, unfair and cruel system of separation according to race, to secure exclusive privileges for members of one race over those of other races. There is strong support by even those who were oppressed under the system that apartheid was not fundamentally a system designed along racial lines, but rather a system designed to distribute scarce resources and privileges amongst those with whom the leaders of the time could associate with. There is similar support for the notion that separation in the way envisaged by apartheid was not a uniquely South African phenomenon, but that it was present in one form or another across the world. The only difference in South Africa was that it was a carefully and meticulously planned system that was codified into law, and strictly (even inhumanely) enforced.

Apartheid was described as the fundamental and complete separation of people based on a notion that they are culturally different from one another and would

come into conflict if they were to have contact with each other. It went further however to formulate a hierarchy of perceived superiority with Whites at the top, followed by Indians, Coloureds and Blacks. This presented the ruling Whites to exploit Black labour at a very cheap labour cost. The worst and most inhumane aspect of apartheid however was seen to be its aim to deliberately manipulate peoples' minds to think that they were in fact inferior human beings, and therefore not entitled to the same privileges as the superior Whites who ruled the country.

In order to attain separation in the way that apartheid intended to do, it was thought at the time by such leaders as Verwoerd, Vorster and PW Botha, that petty apartheid would be the most direct and visible measures to achieve this separation. Statutes were therefore enacted and enforced to deny non-whites access to certain areas or facilities, such as shops, beaches, public toilets etc. There was also a requirement that Blacks had to be in constant possession of a pass book authorising their presence in certain designated "white areas". This was one of the most abused measures to harass and incarcerate Blacks in an attempt to remove them from "white societies" and raise their beliefs of inferiority. The system was however strangely contradictory in that Whites wanted Blacks to be their willing "slaves" as house maids and gardeners. This left the feeling that Whites wanted to destroy the humanity of blacks by keeping them alive as inferior slaves, which led to widespread anger and hatred.

The separation of apartheid caused groups to be ignorant about one another, and led to hatred of one another. It is interesting in this regard that one of the interviewees described apartheid as exactly APART and HATE. That is how it sounds when you say it, and that is what it was. Many South Africans were denied the opportunity to develop to their full potential due to the restrictions imposed on them during the years of apartheid. It is therefore thought that, although formal apartheid was removed from South African structures and policies, that the legacy still continues in the unfortunate experiences of its people, and the major imbalances that still exist in general living conditions in the country.

5.4.3 Different life experiences

Much has already been suggested in respect of the different life experiences of South Africans under the system of apartheid. It was however necessary to consider exactly what those different life experiences were, and why they were so different, before its impact on the development of the leaders' leadership styles could be measured. Three broad categories were identified in the interviews within which members had relatively similar experiences, namely: the life experiences of those who were advantaged under apartheid, those who were disadvantaged by apartheid, and those who were not directly affected by apartheid.

5.4.3.1.   <u>Life experiences of members who were advantaged under apartheid</u>

An overwhelming majority of the members interviewed who belong to this so called previously advantaged group raised the fact that they were largely unaware or ignorant of the effects and impact of apartheid during their development years. They were influenced to this attitude by their parents who led them to believe that apartheid was normal and that it was completely natural to have separation and different treatment according to racial aspects. Although they observed the practicalities of petty apartheid, in that people of other colours were not allowed to eat form the same plates as Whites, had to buy through shop windows without being able to enter shops, had to walk to school or sit on the back of a bakkie, and similar experiences, they did not spend much time thinking deeply about these issues,. They merely accepted, as they were taught, that these abnormalities were in fact normalities. A significant exception to this general position was where politics was discussed openly at home and especially where the father was an active National Party politician at the time. Children in such a household could not claim to be naïve in respect of apartheid because of his or her access to information at a very direct level, albeit from a one-sided view of upholding a system that discriminated against the majority of South Africans.

The fact that young Whites were brainwashed at the time to believe that they were superior to Blacks had the unfortunate effect that many of them became

racist. This led to hatred between Whites and Blacks, and would eventually lead to violence and the loss of many lives.

During the time of apartheid Whites generally had exclusive opportunities and rights of enjoyment of all privileges that life in South Africa could offer. They had access to good public schools, transport, shops, job reservation, and leisure activities such as 'whites only" beaches, resorts, restaurants and public toilets. They took these privileges for granted. The observable aspects of apartheid, which is often referred to as "petty apartheid", was, as far as most whites were concerned, the normalities of the apartheid system which confirmed their superior status to other racial groups.

At the time when these members started realising the injustices of apartheid, whether at high school, university or work, they concluded that the system was not sustainable and had to change eventually. They however foresaw the possibility that this change would not be peaceful, and had to carefully plan and negotiate a peaceful transition. This took much longer than the already angry disadvantaged groups were prepared to accept. The political situation was balanced on an edge and could fall either way, namely to the start of a full scale civil war, or peaceful change.

5.4.3.2   Life experiences of members who were disadvantaged under apartheid

The life experiences of members from this category were in stark contrast to those of the previous group. This group consisted of a cosmopolitan majority of South Africans, including: Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and other people not classified as white by the South African government. In essence their life experiences were of acute marginalisation, oppression, constant harassment, denial of rights, benefits and opportunities, and of artificial inferiority to Whites.

Whereas whites were largely ignorant of the effects of apartheid during their development years, non-whites were painfully aware of its impact on their lives. Not only did they have to live in poverty and in undeveloped land, but had to struggle to travel to shops, schools, and entertainment areas by foot. Many of them had no electricity, running water, public transport or jobs. Children were forced into the migrant labour market at very young ages, where they had to endure the humiliation of petty apartheid. These experiences led to the development of strong feelings of resistance against the white government and its racist policies of apartheid. There were common experiences of humiliation such as the requirement for Blacks to possess pass books to authorise their presence in certain areas, pencil-, hair- and teeth tests to mysteriously determine race, separate facilities and constant harassment by the police.

The rural village life of most Blacks taught them the need to be strong and independent. One of the interviewees reported his disgust when he saw how Whites were ordering his father around at his workplace in the city, and how this experience made him think that his father was a lesser man. There were further suggestions of this to be found in some opinions that Black teachers were used to brainwash Black children into believing that they were inferior, and not worthy of the same privileges as Whites.

This not only infuriated Blacks, but made them determined to bring an end to this system that was so cruel to their parents. Many of the Black members interviewed identified with Steve Biko in that they knew no system other than apartheid, but nevertheless tried at every opportunity to define themselves as free persons who are equal to the privileged Whites who were running the country. This was one of the messages of Steve Biko that was treasured by all disadvantaged Blacks under apartheid, and even inspires current political leaders in their mission to entrench freedom and equality in South Africa. Blacks everywhere lived in fear of brutal police torture for no apparent reason. Many report that they were picked up by police in the middle of the night, assaulted and dropped off very far distances from their homes. They had to walk back in the cold and dark, often only dressed in underpants. They had to endure offensive and derogatory remarks uttered towards them by Whites. Words such as "kaffir" and "hotnot" were at the order of the day whenever Whites referred to non-whites.

These experiences led to a number of Blacks taking up armed resistance against the oppressive government from both within the country and outside its borders. Many of these activists were imprisoned for very long periods of time. Others spent many shorter periods of time in various prisons where the conditions were absolutely disgusting. Others left South Africa in search of normality in countries where they would always be strangers. Many of these exiled South Africans supported underground political organizations such as the ANC, which was banned in South Africa. Most of the interviewees from this group agreed that collegial support from other Black leaders who were in a similar situation, as well as from supportive political organizations, assisted them in making sense from their situation. The collegiality and direct communication with others who shared their experiences provided them with a stock of practical knowledge resulting from recorded life experiences, which they could access to evaluate and reflect on their individual positions. Even more others decided to fight against South Africa from within the country's borders until such time as the inevitable collapse of the apartheid system could be secured. For many they paid the ultimate price in their struggle, but with the conviction that the fight was always going to be worthwhile.

One group of South Africans had a particularly different kind of disadvantage under the apartheid system's racial classifications, namely those whose family members were classified in different racial groups or in so called mixed racial group. They perceived their circumstances to be utterly confusing. They were not allowed to greet or visit some family members, could not visit shops or

restaurants with their own family members, and were on the receiving end of constant derogatory remarks and treatment. One particular interviewee had a mother and brother classified as "mixed race" while she was classified as white. She found it particularly difficult to understand why she was allowed certain privileges that her mother and brother could not enjoy. These were not isolated incidents and were relatively common amongst certain White and especially Coloured families, and sharpened their senses of how wrong the system of apartheid was. Even though some of these members were classified as White, they associated with the suffering of Blacks, Coloureds and Indians in South Africa as a result of the very direct and personal effects of apartheid on their lives.

5.4.3.3 <u>Life experiences of members who were not directly affected by apartheid</u>

One of the interviews conducted was with an African male who was not a South African, nor living in South Africa, at the time of apartheid, but who was married to a Black South African lady at the time. According to him there was an African continental feeling that apartheid had brought a shame to the continent, which led to solidarity with those who fought against the system. It was interesting to learn from this interview that racist separation such as apartheid was very common in the rest of Africa and across the world at that time, but that the codification thereof in South Africa distinguished it from the rest of the world.

The interviewee expressed his shock at the relatively good living conditions of Blacks in South Africa when he was eventually allowed entry into South Africa in 1994. Their conditions were generally of a standard that most Blacks in other African countries could only dream of. This awareness however does not take cognisance of the remarkable transformations between 1990 and 1994, the suffering of Blacks under apartheid legislation, and the new willingness of Whites to eradicate the remains of apartheid.

Although some black South Africans commented that they were not directly affected in the rural areas, this is to be questioned. They did not have the freedom to move out of rural areas to cities freely to take up economic opportunities as equals, nor did they have rights to freedom of movement and property ownership. In addition thereto they were marginalised and reduced to positions of extreme poverty and material deprivation. In the end it can be stated with conviction that apartheid affected every single person living in South Africa, albeit to different degrees and in different ways.

5.4.4 The impact of apartheid experiences on South Africans

It must already be quite clear that South Africans had vastly different life experiences during the period of apartheid. It should be equally conceivable that those different experiences would have different impacts and influences on

those individuals. The links between the experiences and its impact however need to be considered closely.

Although apartheid can be seen as the single most defining moment or era of its time in South Africa, the separatist nature of it presented different opportunities, challenges and experiences to all South Africans. It is these experiences and uniquely personal interpretations thereof that make up one of the most defining chapters of the life stories of each and every South African who lived under this system. All of the interviewees agree that their individual experiences under apartheid have had a major impact on their respective beings, attitudes, styles and perspectives.

Two important consequences of the demise of apartheid in South Africa are remorse and forgiveness. One would logically expect Whites to show real remorse for the hardship, oppression, hate and humiliation that apartheid caused to so many South Africans. To a large extent this has happened, and was enhanced through mechanisms such as Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. Unfortunately remorse was not universal, and there are still South Africans who practice apartheid principles, whether consciously or subconsciously. On the other hand there is the issue of forgiveness, which is expected to reside in the members of the groups who were disadvantaged under that system of apartheid. Although the peaceful transition to a free democracy in South Africa would not have been possible without significant forgiveness for the injustices of the past, there is also not complete and

universal forgiveness in South Africa. It was suggested that it would take decades, and possibly even generations, to wipe out the subjective legacy of apartheid. It was said in some interviews that where there is a subjective legacy of apartheid in the mind of a parent, a measure of it will find its way to the mind of the child, and live on.

There was also agreement amongst the interviewees that a crucible such as apartheid, whether the individual was advantaged of disadvantaged under it, presented very important experiences to reflect on in later life when the leaders have reached a more mature level of leadership. This reflection, together with increased communication and understanding, goes a long way towards building tolerance, accommodation and trust, which in turn brings hope, unity and stability to the country. The political leaders interviewed agreed that this sad episode has made it possible for them to become committed to the goal of never allowing similar inhumanities in the country.

There also appears to be a new realisation that people are inherently the same despite their different skin colours, cultures and backgrounds. Their different experiences, and the communication thereof to each other, have resulted in appreciation and respect for all people, and a commitment to treat all people equally despite their differences. Although some attitudes and perspectives that were established during the time of apartheid will be very difficult to eradicate, it was suggested that schools and other educational institutions could play a determining role in changing these attitudes. The political leaders in South

Africa state openly that they consider it part of their duties to do whatever is in their power to communicate to all people their vision towards a unified and free country in which the injustices of the past would not be repeated. In this regard there is agreement that they had learnt valuable lessons from past mistakes, or crucibles, which could guide their future direction and actions.

The challenge for the political leaders of South Africa was to bring together the different life experiences of all South Africans under apartheid to serve as a collective body of knowledge to learn from, and to grow from in a united and strong way.

Just as there were many different life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid, there were, are and will still be many different experiences under the phenomenon that can be described as South Africa's new democracy. There is however a most significant difference in the fact that all South Africans are supposed to have equal rights and opportunities under its new democracy. This will have the effect that life experiences under the new democracy will not be as acutely diverse as was the case under apartheid. It also accounts for the fact that many of the interviewees stated the following values as the lessons they have learnt from the impact that apartheid has had on their lives, and consequently on their leadership styles:

- <u>Respect and equal treatment for all people</u>: The acquired insight of the negative impact that apartheid had on the lives of the majority of South Africans has contributed acutely to a new respect of those South

Africans who were previously believed (in terms of apartheid ideology) to be inferior. The willingness of White South Africans to engage in peaceful dialogue with their former "enemies" however also contributed to a new respect of them by their political opponents. The interviewees agreed that, despite the contrasting experiences of the two opposing groups under apartheid, different life experiences eventually drew South Africans to a common point where they could understand the unsustainability and harshness of apartheid, and the desperate need to abandon and abolish the system. Ironically, the diverse life experiences under apartheid lead both the oppressors and the oppressed to see the foolishness of unequal treatment and disrespect of one another, and now forms the basis for consultation, negotiation, collectivity and mutual respect.

- A spirit of forgiveness for past injustices and optimism for the future: Although there were still much evidence of hurt and resentment amongst especially the Black interviewees, they understood and accepted that it was an essential prerequisite for a future prosperity in South Africa that they should have a genuine forgiveness for past injustices. They however acknowledge that they would never forget the tragic experiences of apartheid, and that it was necessary to share these experiences with later generations to avoid a repeat thereof. The notion of learning from past mistakes is central to current attitudes of South African political leaders. The public hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission opened many wounds in the process, but

political leaders agree that it was necessary to build transparency and trust in such a way. They further agree that without such transparency and trust there would simply not be any prospects for a completely free and fair South Africa.

- A greater focus on shared interests than colour differences: The fights to uphold apartheid on the one side, and to overcome it on the other, have steered the two opposing groups in a collision course over many years. The different routes in which the life experiences of individuals carried them were destined to meet at a common point in time. There was an appreciation that this point would either be one of full scale armed conflict, or some form of negotiated outcome. History will show that South African political leaders of the time opted for the latter option, and took the lead for all South Africans to follow in hope of a peaceful conclusion to the struggle. Political leaders shared the insight that conflict would not yield the desired results, which led to a sharp focus to negotiate a peaceful transition in South Africa. There is general agreement amongst the interviewees that a peaceful transition would not have been possible if the political leaders of the time did not have a shared focus on each others' interests. This was given effect to through protracted consultations and the sharing of stories to facilitate a better understanding of each other, and increased trust.

- An understanding of hardships and burning issues people are confronted with: The system of apartheid caused much hurt, hate and regret in South Africa, and influenced political leaders to work hard towards not having to endure the same fate again. It was essential for the two opposing groups to communicate effectively with each other in order to create a deep understanding of the life stories of people from different apartheid backgrounds. The leaders agree that it would have been very difficult to move towards a unified democracy if the leaders did not have a clear understanding of exactly what the effects of South Africa's past policies of apartheid had on all of its citizens. This not only included an understanding of the incredible hardships and suffering by Blacks under the system, but also the reserved negotiations by Whites to protect their interests in a future democracy based on equality and freedom.

- A preparedness to adapt, tolerate, accommodate and communicate: Political leaders disclosed in the interviews that the negotiations to move out of an apartheid state and into a new democracy would not have been possible if the political leaders of the time did not take a conscious and determined decision to be tolerant and accommodating in their approach. For many interviewees this was a very difficult personal hiatus that they had to overcome, in view of the hardships they had suffered under apartheid, at the hands of the very political leaders they had to then communicate and negotiate with peacefully. The change of environment from a hostile one where the parties regarded each other as the enemy,

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to one where they had to regard each other as important team mates in the process of building a democratic nation, was a very traumatic and difficult experience. This reminds of the intensely transformational experiences Bennis and Thomas (2002) refer to as crucibles that had profound influences on shaping leaders.

- Development of friendships across racial lines: One of the most significant disclosures of the interviews was the suggestion by a number of interviewees that they were not in a position where they had built up lasting relationships with people from other race groups for long periods of their respective lives, as was the case with their lifelong friendships with members of the same race. The result of this is that individuals have not had the opportunities to interact with other races to build a continuous understanding of their life stories. One of the interviewees did not have casual contact with whites of his age group for the first 24 years of his life, only to realize after his first such contact how many points of common interests and experiences they shared, despite being from different racial groups. Most of the interviewees share the opinion now that the increased interaction with each other and the exchange of their life stories, have contributed to greater understanding, trust and friendships across racial lines. For most of the interviewees the individual likes and interests of other individuals are now more important than the colour of their skins to develop friendships. This would not have been

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possible had their conflicting apartheid experiences not met at a common point where they could interact directly with each other in open spirits.

- A pride in the new South Africa and all of its people: There were very strong feelings amongst many political leaders during the period of apartheid that they were not proud of South Africa and its political regime. This is completely understandable if one considers the basis of apartheid as an ideology to be one of separation of races, and exclusion of members of certain races from privileges that are supposed to be for the benefit of all of the citizens of a democratic country. These feelings of animosity however contributed in a strange way to a determination of political leaders to ensure that South Africans never have to return to the hardships of the former undemocratic state. It was mainly the influence of the reconciliatory negotiations during the transition from apartheid, and the open spirit in which this was accomplished, that contributed most to the pride in the new South Africa, and the constitutional principles upon which the democracy was built.

- More collective and consultative decision making: During the time of apartheid individuals tended to make decisions in line with the political ideologies of the group or groups with whom they associated. In respect of Whites this tended to follow National Party policies, which considered the ANC as the "enemy". Liberal Whites were marginalized for their efforts to enter into dialogue with the ANC, and were harassed for so

called unnatural contact with non-whites. Blacks on the other hand generally tended to base their decisions on their commitment to the struggle against apartheid. The commonality was that both groups made their decisions with exclusion of the other group, and without necessarily considering the interests of members from different racial groups. Interviewees however reflect on the fact that they gained insight over time that such exclusive decision making would not be in the long term best interest of all South Africans. This contributed to a very large extent to their new commitment to collective and consultative decision making processes that consider the interests of all South Africans.

- <u>Willingness to learn of other cultures despite initial culture shocks</u>: Political leaders from the pre 1994 South African Parliament related their initial shock at the new culture that met them at the start of the first democratic South African Parliament in 1994. New Members of Parliament were reported to attend Parliament in very informal clothing, and even tracksuits, which would have been unheard of in the previous National Party led Parliament. The most insightful relation in this regard was of a White Chief Whip of a certain political party who had to assign seats in the Assembly Hall to new Members of Parliament in 1994. He did so on the basis of the length of time that the respective members had been Members of Parliament, with the longer serving members allocated to prominent front seats in the House. This apparently caused an uproar in that it did not consider the traditional and royal status of some of the

new Black members, who were allocated inferior seats to their traditional subordinates. The continued interaction between members of different races, religions, cultures and backgrounds provided ample opportunity for leaders to learn of each other. Leaders attribute the success of South Africa's peaceful transformation to a large extent to the general willingness of leaders to engage with each other in an attempt to continuously learn from each other.

The influences stated above are however common and continuous in nature, and developed to its current form mostly after apartheid was formally abolished in South Africa, and was preceded by influences on leaders which could be comfortably categorized in terms of the following three homogeneous groups:

- A determination and commitment to fight against the injustices of apartheid, even if it cost the leader his or her life or freedom;

- A willingness to negotiate a peaceful abolishment of apartheid in such a way as to avoid reverse apartheid, but rather to secure equal rights and opportunities for all South Africans; and

- A fundamental belief in the separatist principles of apartheid and opposition to the political and social changes that characterize development in South Africa since 1990.

A striking metaphor was uncovered during the interviews, and which found universal support from the interviewees, is that the impact of apartheid on the

three main generations living in South Africa at present could be summarized as follows:

- Grandparents, who were already grown up at the time when apartheid was introduced in South Africa, still have strong memories and influences of apartheid on their minds;

- Parents, who were the ignorant children of apartheid and awoke to its effects later in their lives, constitute the transforming generation who had to deal with the problems of abolishing apartheid and building a democracy; and

- Children, who now grow up in a free and democratic South Africa where they could build lifelong friendships with members of different races, religions and cultures.

This aspect fills South African political leaders with hope and optimism for the future of South Africans, with a unified identity.

5.5 Leadership styles of South African political leaders

The term leadership style was interpreted in this research to refer to particular leader behaviour in different situations. To make deductions and conclusions regarding the leadership styles of South African political leaders, the

interviewees were asked direct, but open ended, questions, which appear in Annexure C, such as:

- How do you go about leading others? Can you give me some examples?

- What metaphor would best describe your leadership style? Why do you say so? To what do you attribute your leadership style?

- How has your leadership style changed over the years, if at all? What caused these changes?

- What are the principles or values by which you lead?

- What inspires you?

- When you are confronted by a crisis, what do you do?

Yukl (2002) refers to research conducted by the Ohio State University during the 1950's, which categorised leadership behaviour into two broad categories, namely consideration and initiating structure, which were found to be relatively independent behaviour categories. In the same reference work, Yukl also refers to research conducted by the University of Michigan at approximately the same time as the aforesaid research. The Michigan research found three broad categories of leader behaviour, namely task oriented behaviour, relations oriented behaviour, and participative leadership. It was necessary to consider the leadership styles of South African political leaders with reference to the above categorisations, but also to determine in what ways their life experiences during apartheid contributed to such behaviour.

The interviewees referred to many critical incidents in their life stories as it relates to the period of apartheid, and its influence on their respective leadership styles. These critical incidents were found to be very helpful in this exploratory research to examine a specific phenomenon. Yukl (2002) concludes that most existing studies on leadership identified the following types of leader behaviour:

- Planning, co-ordinating and organising operations;

- Supervising subordinates;

- Establishing and maintaining good relations; and

- Assuming responsibility for organisational policies, objectives, duties and decisions.

Although it is necessary for leaders to change the general pattern of their behaviour in accordance with environmental and situational changes, leaders are generally prone to implement a combination of task-, relations-, and change oriented behaviours to adapt to the requirements of the particular situations.

Reference was made above to the seven stages of leadership style development over time, described by Bennis (2004) in Shakespearean terms. There was evidence to be found in the data obtained from the research interviews that different current political leaders find their leadership styles in an array of those categories. The different stages where they find themselves could be attributed to various life history experiences, including their ages, sexes, backgrounds, physical experiences and exposure to learning opportunities. The current South African Parliament and the country's new

democracy is often referred to as an infant democracy, due to the fact that South Africa's freedom from the shackles of apartheid was only realised in 1994 – a mere eleven years ago.

It seemed clear from the interviews that most of the Members of Parliament is still at a point where they have not formed a clear and comprehensive conceptualisation of leadership – and especially political leadership. The comparison between the interviewees' conceptualisation and implementation of leadership, as set out in Table 5.3 above, shows the often acute misalignment of the two aspects. This reflects on a general inability (at this stage of their respective leadership development stages) to match an ideal leadership style with the influences of reality.

Although all of the interviewees realised the necessity of an existing follower base for their leadership, there were vast differences in the roles they foresaw that followers played in this relationship. At least two of the interviewees admitted directly that they led with a measure of autocracy, and that their leadership dictated solutions to their followers. Many of the other interviewees sought to describe their respective leadership styles as consultative, collective and participative, while at the same time admitting that they generate policies, which they then strive to convince their followers to accept. This confirms the low level of conceptualisation and understanding of leadership as a construct. These young leaders are however at an initiating point of their political leadership curves, and will certainly develop their leadership styles over time as

they have more experiences, reflections thereon, and changes to their current leadership styles.

The interviewees were also interviewed directly on how their leadership styles changed over time, and what they perceived to be the reasons for any changes in their styles. There was found to be overwhelming support for the notion that leaders are more energetic, autocratic, self-centred and revolutionary when they are young, and that experiences over the years cause them to become more calm, collected and calculated. An interesting remark though was that the collective political leadership of a country needed a healthy blend of young revolutionary leaders and older experienced leaders, in order to take innovative actions while maintaining a firm course along the mandate given to the political leaders by their constituents.

Most significantly for purpose of this research is the data obtained in respect of the leadership styles of political leaders during the period of apartheid, the influences of life experiences thereon, and their current leadership styles and reasons for it. Two broadly opposing groups of individuals were identified in terms of the nature of their relative positions under apartheid, namely the advantaged Whites, and the disadvantaged non-whites. There was a similar division to be noted in the leadership styles of the individuals who made up those two groups, namely an exclusive and defensive style that characterised the ruling Whites in South Africa, and a revolutionary and collectivist leadership style of non-white leaders who sought to overcome the negative effects

apartheid had on their fellow non-whites. These conflicting leadership styles were also distinguishable in terms of it's Eurocentric versus Afrocentric natures. Whites tended to be more Eurocentric, displaying high levels of performance orientation, assertiveness and uncertainty avoidance. Black leaders on the contrary displayed more Afrocentric leadership characteristics, such as collectivism and human orientation. A comparison of the main differences between Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership styles are set out in Table 2.1 above.

Despite the opposing leadership style backgrounds of the members interviewed, in relation to their life experiences that constitute their respective life-stories, they seemed to have reached a point in time where there is an increasing movement towards Afrocentric leadership characteristics and styles amongst all interviewees. This could be directly attributed to the unifying experiences after 1994 in South Africa, and the universally experienced successes of the peaceful transformation of South Africa into a democracy. The interviewees however expressed the collective opinion that transformation would not have been as successful as it turned out to be if it was not for the openness and willingness of all political leaders to share their experiences, reflections thereof, and the shaping influences thereof on their current meaning systems and styles.

5.6 Conclusion

It is clear from the above analysis that leaders have had different defining life experiences during different times of their lives. Although there was a general ignorance of the effects of apartheid on their lives during the development years of South African political leaders, each individual had an awakening to the real impact of apartheid on his or her own life, as well as on the lives of all South Africans. It is especially these awakenings that caused individuals to be more perceptive of their environments, the nature of their respective life experiences within this environment, and their subjective reflections on their life experiences, which shaped their values, principles, beliefs and leadership styles. It is to be noted that the subjectivity of the different life experiences investigated and the interpretation thereof, lends itself to an unruly content. As a result these subjective experiences rather display an interpretive character than a causal one. The understanding of these lived experiences is a result of both rigorous systematic observation, and imaginatively formulated and expressive insight.

There are many different conceptualisations of both concepts of leadership and of apartheid. This has unique consequences for the interpretations by individuals of their life experiences, and contributes to the multitude of different life-stories that resulted from different life experiences and the different subjective interpretations thereof. Times change, and the environment changes continuously. These factors cause leaders to also change their respective

leadership styles to adapt thereto. The fusion of these different life-stories into a collective learning experience from past experiences is however what presents the best opportunity to craft an optimistic vision.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Leadership lends itself to a qualitative research approach in that it provides a better understanding of how leaders engage with change, how they manipulate means to achieve desired outcomes, how context is important for leader behaviour, and the importance of communication in leadership. In addition thereto a life history methodology provides the best understanding of the complex processes leaders use to make meaning from their experiences in a subjective way. Although a life history methodology often generates volumes of data, as it did in this research, an appropriate content analysis method thereof adds the benefits of being unobtrusive, unstructured, context sensitive, and having an ability to cope effectively with large volumes of data. As suggested by Shamir and Eilam (2005), the interviews confirmed that a leader's leadership style is derived from the subjective meaning the leader attaches to his or her life experiences. The combination of the experiences itself and the interpretations thereof by the leader found expression in the life stories of the political leaders interviewed, and formed the interpretive basis from which the leaders act and justify their respective actions. A life history methodology succeeded best in extracting data in respect of both the leaders' unique life experiences as well as their individual and subjective interpretations of those experiences.

At the offset of this research five propositions were developed and formulated, which were subsequently tested by the information collected during the research process. It was necessary after completion of the research to interpret the data to find a deep meaning from it, and to make conclusions with regard to the propositions.

6.1.1. First proposition:   *Leadership is a complex construct, which*

is composed of many different characteristics and influences.

The research has not only shown that not one of the above paradigms can on its own provide a totally comprehensive model for or definition of leadership, but also that there are probably as many conceptualisations of leadership as a construct as there are people around thinking about leadership. The research suggested that leadership should be seen as a complex and adaptive combination of the most effective elements from all of the above paradigms.

The interviewees each had their own conceptualisations of leadership, and opinions about their own leadership styles that they apply to lead others. It became very clear during the interviews that there were vastly different interpretations of practical leadership amongst the interviewees, despite the fact that they all had a broadly similar understanding of the theoretical basis of political leadership. The practical application of their respective leadership skills and styles were shown in many instances to deviate substantially from their

theoretical conceptualisation of leadership, and the ways in which they believe a leader should lead.

6.1.2 <u>Second proposition:</u> *The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.*

The research has shown that individual life experiences can generally be related to certain eras and phenomena that have a wide influence over many individuals and groups. It however also showed that the most defining characteristic of individual life experiences is the uniqueness thereof to each and every person. Even similar *de facto* experiences by different individuals were subjectively perceived to be different, and consequently had varying influences on the individuals in accordance with their respective appreciations thereof. Individuals interpreted their life experiences subjectively to make meaning from it, and to shape their identities in the form of their life stories.

Despite the fact that the South African population could easily be divided into two opposing groups in relation to their respective positions as either advantaged or disadvantaged under the system of apartheid, the research has uncovered data relating to vastly different experiences by members within one specific such group. Relevant examples in this regard as appeared from the research include, amongst others:

- the different life experiences of Blacks who lived in rural areas compared to those who lived in cities;

- the very different experiences of those who were either incarcerated, exiled or free;

- the different experiences of political activists versus those who were passive or ignorant of political realities in South Africa; and

- the different socio economic environments and conditions within which people from similar groups lived.

The research has therefore confirmed that a combination of unique life experiences and the subjective and personal interpretation thereof, form the interpretive basis and meaning system from which the leader acts and justifies his or her actions, and therefore supports the proposition.

6.1.3 <u>Third proposition:</u> *Individual life histories influence leadership development.*

Leaders reported that they continuously extract wisdom from past experiences to shape their respective beings and futures, in a process of reflection and adaptation. They learn from their past mistakes and successes, and take to heart the lessons learnt in the evolution of their lives.

Although it became clear that life experiences were overwhelmingly individualistic in nature, certain defining eras provided similar life experiences for certain groups, thereby giving them a shared history, culture and background. It was however the intensely transformational individual life experiences within those eras that had the most profound influence on the development of individuals.

The data obtained from the interviews supported the existing research in respect of the proposition that leadership development is generally enhanced if it moves through the three processes of action, observation and reflection, as proposed by Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993).

6.1.4 Fourth proposition: *Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in itself have a significantly homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.*

This proposition represents a culmination of the first three propositions into one single proposition, but also adds two additional elements, namely:

- That it is not apartheid per se that caused major influences on the leadership styles of South African political leaders, but rather the different life experiences individuals had within the system of apartheid; and

- That a leader's attitude towards and conceptualisation of apartheid adds a dimension to his or her life experiences, to aggregately, as a unique life-story, cause an influence on his or her leadership style.

The research has shown that individuals have unique experiences even under a single phenomenon. These different experiences are diversified as a result of their different de facto life experiences, as well as their different subjective interpretations and perceptions thereof. One of the most fundamental characteristics of apartheid was the separation of different races in terms of geographical locations, access to the bare necessities of life, opportunities and rights of enjoyment. The mere separatist nature of apartheid implied that members of different race groups would have vastly different life experiences.

The interviews highlighted how the life experiences of those who benefited under apartheid were generally homogenous in the sense that they enjoyed almost exclusive privileges to basic amenities, schooling, transport, jobs and entertainment. There were however some circumstantial and incidental factors of the environment, as was to be expected. The life experiences of the individuals or groups, who were disadvantaged under apartheid, were however in sharp contrast. They were oppressed, denied equal opportunities, lived in poverty, did not have access to basic amenities or decent schooling, and were

often harshly denied their freedom to exploit the country in the same way as whites were allowed to do.

Much was revealed about the many different life experiences of members on different sides of the proverbial separation fence of apartheid during the interviews. What was revealed was however only a small portion of the millions of different experiences of the time. What it nevertheless established were the broadly different categories of life experiences, from which a reasonable conclusion could be made that the life experiences of South Africans were vastly different in terms of comparison of the experiences of members of the advantaged group with those of the disadvantaged group.

Although apartheid can be seen as the single most defining phenomenon in the recent history of South Africa between 1948 and 1994, the interviewees have shown through the relation of their life stories that it was not the phenomenon of apartheid per se that influenced leadership styles of the political leaders interviewed, but rather their unique and individual life experiences within the system of apartheid.

It is however not only the leaders' individual experiences within the broader system of apartheid that influenced the development of their respective leadership styles, but also, and possibly more so, their personal interpretations of these different life experiences, which were highly subjective. These two elements, namely the life experiences themselves and the subjective

interpretations thereof, as embodied in a combined way in the life-stories of the leaders, were the most crucial and most significant influences on their leadership styles, values, beliefs and principles.

The data therefore supports the interpretation set forth in this proposition.

6.1.5 <u>Fifth proposition:</u> *Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.*

The literature survey conducted in this research exposed how leaders make meaning out of their life experiences. A leadership development model, developed by Bennis and Thomas (2002) depicts how life experiences from both the era and individual factors are organised to give meaning to leaders' life stories, which in turn influence their leadership competencies. The literature survey strongly supports the proposition that individual life experiences have a profoundly significant developmental influence on the leaders' leadership styles.

It became abundantly clear from all of the interviews conducted in the research that the system of apartheid in South Africa was such an omnipotent phenomenon of the time, that the individual life experiences under the system had profound influences on the lives, development and leadership styles of all

South Africans at the time. Apartheid was everywhere and affected everyone in South Africa. Although interviewees from especially the advantaged group were of the opinion that they were largely ignorant of the effects of apartheid on their fellow citizens' lives for the most of their development years, the system of apartheid nevertheless influenced the living conditions of different racial groups in South Africa according to whether they were classified as White or non-white. These influences might appear to be subtle and naively unobservable, but were real, and had significant influences on social and economic conditions affecting different groups in South Africa.

This research has shown that a leader's leadership style is to a large extent the product of the relationship between the leader's unique life experiences and his or her interpretation thereof in the form of an individual and unique life-story, according to the literature survey conducted for purposes of this research, with special reference to the spiral of experience developed by Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993).

The interviews produced very direct information with regard to how the different life experiences of South Africans changed their attitudes and perceptions, and impacted on their respective developments of leadership styles over time. It was found that there was a direct relationship, during the time of apartheid, between the different life experiences of the haves and the have-nots and their respective leadership styles. On the side of those who benefited from apartheid there was a general style of enforcement of their superiority and exclusive rights

to privileges, while those who were disadvantaged under apartheid made conscious decisions to fight against the system with conviction and determination. They wanted to obstruct and break the system down.

These attitudes and styles are to be clearly distinguished from the more similar experiences, influences and styles that have become characteristic of the period after the demise of apartheid in South Africa, where people from all races now stand united to a large degree towards building a new nation. The conflicting focuses and its resultant conflicting leadership styles have disappeared.

The data collected during this research therefore also supports the fifth proposition.

5.2   Implications

The fact that all five stated propositions were comprehensively supported by both the literature reviewed and the data obtained by means of interviews with a representative sample of members from the total population, implies that the vastly different life experiences, and subjective interpretations thereof, of members within the system of apartheid, had very different influences on their respective leadership styles. The question is what relevance this information has and what contribution it could make to not only the body of knowledge on

the subject, but also towards the process of building a new nation and a new South African identity characterized by tolerance, accommodation, understanding and trust.

The contribution of the research results are obvious in view of the direct relationships found between unique life experiences of individuals and their interpretations thereof in the form of their life-stories, and the ways in which this influenced the development of certain leadership styles. The recording of past experiences, the influence thereof on individuals and groups, and the implications for leadership development forms a rich source of information for future learning.

Although the researcher attempted to be as objective as possible, at least at a conscious level, the research also enriched his knowledge and understanding of the reality of a very sad (but extremely significant) period in the history of the South African nation. The research allowed the researcher to put personal perspectives in order, in view of especially the ignorant environment within which he grew up. The broad interaction with and sharing of life stories with South Africans who come from vastly different backgrounds, and who had severely different life experiences than that of the researcher, has made it possible for the researcher to reflect subjectively, but from a position of being much wider informed, on his own life experiences. This would enhance the opportunity for the researcher to make necessary changes to his own life

meaning system and style, which makes this research significantly meaningful on at least a personal level.

In addition thereto this research has highlighted the importance of open and honest communication by individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and races, to cultivate understanding of each other, which is a necessary prerequisite to build a unified and prosperous future South African common identity and nation. Without a deep knowledge of the different backgrounds and experiences of all South Africans, and how those impacted on their current make-ups, complete trust of one another will not be possible. This is especially the case in South Africa where people were suspicious on one another, ignorant of cultural differences, and filled with hatred towards one another, because of the effects of the inhumane political ideology based on separation, superiority and exclusivity. Consultation and dialogue will lead to greater understanding, trust and tolerance, but will also provide a sound basis for the determination of common objectives and vision for the future generations of South Africans, who will hopefully never have to share the unfortunate experiences of millions of South Africans during the last half of the twentieth century.

What has happened in South Africa since 1994 in respect of transformation, freedom, equality and a spirit of collectiveness have filled the interviewees with optimism and hope for the future. This in itself should stem ordinary South Africans positively to share this optimism and hope of its political leaders, who

are dedicated and committed to build a prosperous future for all South Africans based on the enshrined values and principles set out in the South African Constitution. The very different life experiences of current South African political leaders have come together collectively to form the basis of an optimistic vision for the country and its people, which is a compelling vision for followers to willingly follow. It is indeed a classic case of the sum of all the individual parts making a stronger collective whole than what each of the individual parts would ever be able to make on its own.

CHAPTER 7: ARTICLE

THE EFFECTS OF LIFE EXPERIENCES UNDER APARTHEID ON SHAPING LEADERSHIP STYLES OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERS

ABSTRACT

The system of apartheid, caused different life experiences for South Africans, and can be seen as a defining moment in the development of South Africa, its leaders and citizens. This study investigated how these different life experiences under apartheid influenced leadership styles of South African political leaders.

After completion of a literature review, semi structured life history interviews were conducted with a representative sample of members of the South African Parliament, to generate qualitative data for analysis. Content analysis was applied to this data to generate a basis from which valid and reliable conclusions and recommendations were made.

The research found support in both the literature review and qualitative life stories data collected for the following propositions:

- Leadership is a complex construct, which is composed of many different characteristics and influences.

- The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.

- Individual life histories influence leadership development.

- Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in itself have a significantly homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.

- Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.

The recordal of the life stories of South African political leaders presents an opportunity to learn at a broader interface from the experiences of the past, to shape a collective future for a free and democratic South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

"Everyone is tested by life, but only a few extract strength and wisdom from their most trying experiences. They're the ones we call leaders"   (Bennis & Thomas, 2002: 39)

Over the years there have been an abundance of studies on leadership, and in particular on what distinguishes effective leadership from ineffective or less effective leadership. Similarly, much has been written about the life experiences of leaders in general. Leadership studies have however to a large extent been focussed on Western (and in particular North American) leaders, and deals mostly with white men as leaders. The applicability of traditional Western and North American leadership models must therefore be questioned, in view of the fact that South Africa is a country with many contrasts, including contrasts in respect of race, ethnicity, culture, backgrounds and life experiences.

Although it seems an obvious proposition that life experiences under a significant temporal characteristic such as apartheid had to have an influence on most, if not all, people living in South Africa at the time, this proposition has to be tested. This research aims not only to establish that there was indeed such an influence, but also that ordinary South Africans had different life experiences under the system of apartheid, that their different life experiences had different influences on the development of their leadership styles, and that these individual experiences were far more significant than the system of

apartheid itself on the shaping of the leadership styles of current South African political leaders.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

South Africa is often described as a rainbow nation, constituted of citizens of different races, cultures, sexes, backgrounds and social orientations. The system of apartheid, which was probably one of the most defining crucibles in the history of the country, had profound influences on all South Africans, whether they were advantaged or disadvantaged under it. The problem is however to determine to what extent the life experiences of different people under apartheid shaped and influenced their leadership styles. This research project specifically investigated how the leadership styles of current South African political leaders were shaped and influenced due to their different life experiences under the system of apartheid.

The main objective of this research was to determine the ways in which different life experiences under the system of apartheid shaped or influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders, by considering the following aspects:

- The different life experiences of South African people during the period of apartheid in South Africa;
- The effects of formalised and non-formalised forms of apartheid;

- The ways in which the apartheid system shaped people's identities;

- The different effects of all forms of apartheid on the people whom it oppressed versus those whom it favoured;

- The possibility that some people might have been unaffected or perceivably unaffected by apartheid;

- To link the life experiences of South African political leaders, from both disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds under apartheid, to their respective leadership styles;

- To understand how people responded to the apartheid system; and

- To relate unique life experiences to differing influences on their respective leadership styles.

There has to date been no conclusive research results in respect of how life experiences under the system of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders. The benefits of such research would highlight how a single, but profoundly significant phenomenon such as apartheid could shape and / or influence leadership styles in different ways, according to the different life experiences of leaders under the phenomenon. This research contributes to leadership theory by examining the ways in which different life experiences may influence leadership styles in different ways. The research also contributes to applied knowledge of how apartheid, as a phenomenon of time, was characterised by many different life experiences, which influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders in different ways according to their unique personal experiences under the system of apartheid.

Due to the very wide scope of this topic it was essential to limit the scope of the research, and to be cautious, in the following ways:

- The research does not extend to the question of what influences leadership effectiveness;

- This research only focuses on apartheid as a single phenomenon with different life experiences within it, while it is generally agreed that leadership is influenced continuously by many different (almost daily) life experiences and situations;

- The population and sampling frame used for this research was limited to existing South African Members of Parliament, despite the fact that it is conceivable that political leaders may come from a population which is much wider than only the current Members of Parliament;

- Although it was unavoidable for the researcher to have a measure of subjectivity, caution had to be exercised to keep findings valid;

- Caution also had to be exercised that people are not stereotyped into groups according to especially race; and

- Caution had to be exercised when considering the life stories of especially political leaders, who could conceivably fabricate life stories which they expect would be accepted more reasonably and readily by potential followers.

The following key terms need to be defined:

- Apartheid: Apartheid refers to a carefully crafted and applied ideology of white race superiority over blacks in South Africa during almost seventy years of the twentieth century (Harvey, 2003). It was an ideology of racial separation, and reservation of certain privileges for the benefit of a small minority of the people of South Africa, and existed formally and informally.

- Defining moment: A defining moment refers to a defining place, time, event, situation or phenomenon, in which there is a confluence of powerful forces on an individual or group, which leads to a severe test of character, patience of belief, and often involves an experience of severe prejudice.

- Leadership: The definition proposed by Yukl (2002: 7) was used, namely: *"Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives"*.

- Member of Parliament: This term refers to a member of the South African National Assembly or a permanent delegate to the National Council of Provinces

- Political leader: For purposes of this study, this term refers to, and was limited to, elected South African Members of Parliament.

- Political leadership: This concept refers to leadership within the institutionalised dictates of a formal structure, while at the same time

making the leader accountable to his constituents and the total South African population.

This research constituted a phenomenological study, which was both explorative and descriptive, and used a qualitative methodology. It was explorative in the sense that a literature survey and interviews were conducted into the theory of leadership, and in particular into the influences of different variables on the formation of unique leadership styles. It was descriptive in the sense that it attempted to describe the difference between the influences of apartheid on oppressed and disadvantaged leaders, as opposed to those leaders who benefited from apartheid. This research depended largely on the relations by current political leaders of their individual life experiences in their respective life-stories. It was a necessary assumption that interviewees were completely honest and open in their responses and that all sources used were completely credible.

PROPOSITIONS

Five propositions were developed, which has a definite interrelatedness with each other. The aim of this research was to test these propositions by means of the data collected through both the literature review and semi structured interviews. These propositions were:

- *Leadership is a complex construct, which is composed of many different characteristics and influences.*

- *The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.*

- *Individual life histories influence leadership development.*

- *Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in itself have a significantly homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.*

- *Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research was designed to establish qualitatively how different life experiences under the system of apartheid may have had different influences on the leadership styles of current South African political leaders. The research methodology used in this research combined a study of existing theory, as embodied in relevant literature, with various relations of life experiences of

South African political leaders under apartheid, as have been related in autobiographies, articles and personal interviews with a sample of such leaders.

In this research the relevant population composed of all political leaders in the South African environment, whether they were Members of Parliament or not. From this population a sampling frame was drawn in terms of all South African Members of Parliament. A sample of 18 Members of Parliament was selected for interviews on the basis of their party political affiliations, sex, race, age and availability. The following diagram sets out the composition of the South African Parliament and of the selected sample, to reflect its representivity.

Table 7.1: Composition of South African Parliament and Research Sample

Party	Race					Sex		Total
	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	Male	Female	
ANC	243 (2)	20 (2)	12 (1)	39 (2)	1	208 (4)	107 (3)	315 (7)
DA	11 (1)	41 (2)	2	5	1	44 (2)	16 (1)	60 (3)
IFP	18	8	1	2 (1)	1	22	8 (1)	30 (1)
UDM	9	0	0	1	0	6	4	10 (0)
ID	1	2 (1)	0	4	1	5 (1)	3	8 (1)
NNP	0	6 (1)	0	3 (1)	0	8 (2)	1	9 (2)
ACDP	3	2	0	2 (1)	0	6 (1)	1	7 (1)
VF+	0	5 (1)	0	0	0	5 (1)	0	5 (1)
UCDP	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	4 (0)
PAC	3 (1)	0	0	0	0	3 (1)	0	3 (1)
AZAPO	1 (1)	0	0	0	0	1 (1)	0	1 (1)
MF	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2 (0)
Total	294 (5)	84 (7)	16 (1)	56 (5)	4 (0)	314 (13)	140 (5)	454 (18)

- Composition of research sample in brackets

(http://parliament.gov.za)

Data collection was multi faceted in the sense that it used both secondary data sources, such as existing literature, and primary data obtained by means of personal interviews. Obtaining in depth qualitative data from the persons interviewed, through life history methodology, where the interviewees explain their life experiences, decisions and turning points, added significant substance to existing secondary data. The technique of the interviews followed typical life history methodology, which collects data from people talking about the life experiences by which they are constituted, and which shapes the environment within which they find themselves. Life history methodology recognises that leaders have certain assumptions, norms, values and experiences that shape their leadership styles, beliefs and values, and that it emanates from early life experiences, influences from significant others, and influences from temporal circumstances. A large volume of data was collected by means of the interviews with members from the interview sample, which was analysed by the researcher. This required arranging the data in terms of common themes, trends and groups that makes most sense, and analysing the context of the interview data in a scientific way, in accordance with content analysis techniques which can be used to structure "open-ended" data for meaningful analysis.

The researcher conducted 18 individual such interviews, in terms of the interview schedule, which is attached as Annexure D. Each interview lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours. The interviews were structured in such a way as to initiate with general and comfortable talk designed to put the

interviewees at ease and to establish rapport between interviewer and interviewee. This assisted in encouraging the interviewees to be frank, open and willing to provide in depth answers to the interview questions.

Qualitative research is used in almost all recognised social science disciplines and study areas, as a result of which these research methods have to be adapted to fit the particular varying requirements (Schurink; 2003). It covers an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, encode and translate a particular phenomenon in a manner that is flexible and sensitive to social context, and seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon which is relatively unexplored. It emphasizes better than any other research method the uniqueness of the human situation (Krefting; 1991). In depth and unstructured interviews form important methods of qualitative research across different study areas. Life history methodology provides the best understanding of the complex processes people use to make sense of their situational realities (Musson; 1998). Despite the risk of researcher bias in the analysis of this data, content analysis has the benefit of being unobtrusive, unstructured, context sensitive and able to cope with large volumes of data (Harwood and Garry; 2003). In the premise of this study, qualitative research by means of personal in depth interviews generated far more valid and reliable data for purposes of analysis and conclusions. Life histories represent a complex composite of factors that make up an individual's life experiences, including the historical networks of human relationships, the influence of time and time periods, fads and fashions, as well as social structures, traditions and cultures.

An interview schedule was designed in such a way as to include administrative, classification and target questions that were mainly unstructured and open-ended in nature, to allow participants and the interviewer some freedom in their responses and probing, while at the same time drawing a clear frame of reference and border for the interviews. The questions relate mainly to the participants' life experiences, leadership and thoughts on apartheid.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provided valuable background and directive information for this research and especially for the analysis of the data obtained from the personal interviews. The literature review dealt with a synopsis of current leadership theory, a discussion of how life experiences can and do shape leadership style, the role of life-stories in leadership contextualisation, and an explanation of the characteristics of the system of apartheid.

<u>Leadership theory</u>

Over the years there has been an abundance of published literature about leadership as a concept, and especially with regard to the eternal search for what causes leadership to be effective. In this process the initial focus was on the traits and characteristics of the leader. The traits approach however

appeared to be inconclusive as an explanation of leadership effectiveness, as some traits appeared to be effective in one situation and not in another. The next focus was on leadership behaviour. The gist of the behaviour approach postulated that leadership behaviour could either be task oriented (planning, clarifying and monitoring tasks), relations oriented (supporting, developing and recognising followers) or change oriented (adapting, improving, flexibility, innovation). The so called social exchange theories of leadership examine how leadership effectiveness is influenced by the leader's power position and influence abilities. None of these theories have yielded a conclusive model for examining leadership effectiveness, and nor have any of those theories that emanated from a recent expanded view of the initial traits theory, including charismatic, transformational, servant, spiritual, ethical and shared leadership. The search for a single answer to the question of what leads to leadership effectiveness will continue for many years to come, but what seems to be clear is that leadership is a complex concept requiring adaptiveness, multiple skills and traits, and interpersonal relations at different levels.

Life experiences as shaper of leadership style

Bennis and Thomas (2002) convincingly argue that the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of human beings, and an essential characteristic of a growing and effective leader. They designed a model which examines how leaders make meaning out of certain intensely transformational life experiences, which the authors call "crucibles", and how this process shapes them and their

respective leadership styles. They conclude that life experiences have a profoundly significant developmental influence on leadership styles of individuals. As a leader moves through different stages of his or her life, the leader also moves through several distinct stages in respect of his or her leadership style. Bennis (2004) describes seven such stages with reference to Shakespearean characters, namely:

- The infant executive. A mentor or mentors change the young leader's life and perceptions of a mysterious world.

- The shiny-faced schoolboy. The young leader influences and wins people over.

- The lover. The leader sets out with the difficult task to set boundaries and fine-tunes working relationships simultaneously.

- The bearded soldier. The leader grows comfortable with his or her role, and acts confidently and with conviction.

- The wise general. The leader is at the height of his or her career and not only dictates to followers, but also listens to them, and brings about change.

- The statesman. The leader's power begins to wane and he or she prepares to pass on wisdom to others.

- The sage. The leader rediscovers and learns new things through mentoring of new leaders.

Experiences are unique to individuals. Not all individuals experience events in the same way. Their experiences not only depend on what happened to them,

but also how the individual perceived the event. The life experiences of a leader in his or her day-to-day life may have profoundly shaping influences on his or her leadership style. The first major such influence is the interaction with people and groups. These people range from parents, family, friends, colleagues, superiors, subordinates and role models. The nature of the leader's task may also influence his or her leadership style. Leadership development is especially acute when the task is dynamic and unpredictable. Bennis and Thomas (2002) state that where the ability to learn is a defining characteristic of human beings, the ability to continue learning is an essential skill of leadership. The post apartheid South African political leaders have learnt from the country's unfortunate history, which made it easier for those leaders to formulate strategy for development.

A life stories approach to leadership contextualisation

Leaders fashion stories, based on their positive and negative life experiences, to shape their identities and to influence their followers in very powerful ways. Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue that a leader's unique leadership style is derived from the meaning the leader attaches to the life experiences he or she enjoyed, which comprises his or her life story. If the followers identify with the leader's story, the story becomes effective in influencing the followers towards a desired outcome. Especially important in terms of the objectives of this research was the notion that a single event or phenomenon may be characterised by a number of conflicting stories, based on the different life experiences of

individuals during this event or phenomenon. Although the life history stories of leaders were influenced from their very first childhood experiences, and the influence of their parents and significant others, it is rooted to a very large extent in their relations in certain groups.

Leaders' identities are the products of the relationship between their respective life-experiences and their interpretation thereof in the form of their life stories (Shamir & Eilam; 2005). Each individual has a unique life story which represents the individual's past, present and possible future being. These stories therefore contribute significantly to the understanding of the development of these individuals, both for own personal development and for clearer understanding of them by others. Each person's unique life experiences, which find expression in their life stories, forms the basis for their self development, and provides a meaning system to shape their future actions. The following five major leadership development themes were identified by Shamir, Dayan-Horesh and Adler (2005):

- Leadership development as a natural process of a born leader or a late developer;

- Leadership development out of struggle and hardship to overcome some crucible;

- Leadership development as finding a cause through identification with a movement, ideology or outlook;

- Leadership development through both positive and negative learning and training experiences; and

- Performance of leadership functions by non-leaders who occupy leadership positions to which they were pushed or dragged into.

Although the life stories of leaders are unique in terms of each individual leader, it is still shaped in accordance with the historic and geographic events of the time. These events are however interpreted differently by individual leaders, according to their individual life experiences and make ups, despite the fact that the events might have been the same at a macro level. One of the most effective ways for a leader to spend time on the construction of his or her life story is to take time off for reflection. Many of the current South African political leaders have had the opportunity to reflect in such a way while they were exiled or incarcerated during the apartheid regime in the country (Mandela; 1994).

The system of apartheid

Apartheid was a system in which the White minority in South Africa institutionalised preferential treatment for themselves while discriminating against Black South Africans to the extreme. President Thabo Mbeki, in his State of the Nation address in the National Assembly, on 09 February 2001, describes the apartheid past of South Africa as a racially divided country characterised by masters and servants, racially inspired conflict, mistrust, denial of freedom to the majority, gross violation of human rights and repression, entrenched sexism, crime, violence and corruption (Mbeki; 2002). Karenga

(1999) suggests that racism is a practise of turning racial prejudice, hatred and hostility into public policy, and expresses itself in three basic ways, namely:

- <u>As imposition</u>:   positive acts of violence and force;

- <u>As ideology</u>:   justification of domination of one group over another on the basis of religious, biological or cultural characteristics; and

- <u>As an institutionalised arrangement</u>:   establishment of structures and mechanisms to ensure domination.

A clear distinction must therefore also be made between formalised and non-formalised forms of apartheid. Apartheid was formalised through the proclamation of many racially discriminatory legislative Acts in South Africa, mostly after 1948. It was also formalised through the establishment of social structures which excluded Blacks from enjoying the same freedoms and opportunities as their White compatriots. Non-formalised apartheid, on the other hand, existed in the hearts and minds of those South Africans, mostly from the White minority, who truly associated with the separation ideology of apartheid. Ahmed Kathrada, who contributed immensely to the body of knowledge in respect of the life experiences of imprisoned black leaders on Robben Island through his many preserved letters, wrote that apartheid and the apartheid laws had brought disadvantaged people closer together and developed lasting friendships and networks (Vassen, 2002). The fall of apartheid brought an end to discriminating practises that oppressed development and prosperity for all South Africans. The rapid, peaceful and successful change in South Africa from being an apartheid state to a democracy can be seen as nothing short of a

miracle. It would not have been possible had it not been for collective and inspirational leadership.

<u>African and South African leadership</u>

The largest majority of leadership theory exists in terms of North American or European contexts. Traditional African leadership however differs in many respects from these existing theories. This necessitates the question of the relevance of existing leadership theories in an African and South African context. African leadership is traditionally built on participation, collectivity, responsibility and spiritual authority, and requires the elements of transparency, accountability and legitimacy (Lessem; 1996). Fabricius (2005) however quotes some staggering results from a global opinion survey suggesting strong public perceptions of dishonesty, incompetence and abuse of power by African leaders. Although the survey shows that 43% of the South Africans surveyed thought their political leaders to be dishonest, as opposed to the African average of 82%, this level of mistrust is still alarmingly high. The most basic difference between traditional Western leadership and traditional African leadership is that of individualism versus collectivism. In the South African context there exists a perceived similar difference between White and Black leaders. Kolchin (2002) suggests that a recently prominent body of knowledge commonly known as the "whiteness studies" has resulted in a widely shared premise that race was an ideological and social construct rather than a biological fact, aimed to differentiate between so called "Whites" and "Blacks" to

secure privileges and power for Whites. There is still a widespread disagreement of its goals, strategies and scope. What is clear is that it represents an important foundation for much further study in this regard. The result is that "race" is a subjective social construct that has no biological, scientific or cultural foundation. In the process of moving towards a new identity it is essential for both Whites and Blacks to develop a willingness to engage with and listen to each other with the intent to accept each others cultures and to adapt to a compromise position in which all groups feel comfortable. Leadership in South Africa is unique in that it encompasses elements of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership, which should theoretically clash. The recent history of South Africa has however shown that there are many transformational leaders around, to look forward to successful change towards the vision of a unified, non-racial and non-sexist South African nationality or race. The success of such change and transformation will however depend on leaders' openness and willingness to engage with each other, listen to each other, consider different perspectives, and negotiate a common understanding and process for future actions.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In analysing the data in a meaningful way it was necessary to consider what different life experiences life members had during their development years, how they were awakened to broader perspectives, and how this changed their

attitudes and future perspectives. It was also necessary to analyse their conceptualizations of leadership, and their development as leaders from the time when they first thought of themselves as leaders. Finally it was necessary to consider and analyse the different life experiences members had during the period of apartheid, how these experiences were related to the unique situations within which members found themselves at the time, and how these life experiences impacted on them and their respective developments and growth.

Different life experiences

1. <u>Development years experiences</u>

Parents or primary caregivers raised the interviewees during their development years in such a way that they were meant to believe the effects of the apartheid system as something that was just normal, and the way things were supposed to be. At this crucial development times in their lives the interviewees were ignorant to a large extent of the practical implications of political issues, such as apartheid or the struggle against apartheid. There was a remarkable concurrence amongst interviewees, whether they were Black, White, Coloured or Indian, that they were generally ignorant of political issues during this period of their lives. On a practical level, it was found that there were significant

differences in the life experiences of the interviewees during their development years. The most significant such differences appeared to be between:

- The privileges available to different racial groups;

- The living conditions of different racial groups;

- Urban and rural communities;

- The levels of interaction with members from different racial groups and

- The level of political activity of parents of these members during their development years.

On at least subconscious and experiential levels there were clear differences between especially whites who enjoyed almost exclusive privileges, such as comfortable housing, transport, domestic and garden workers, access to shops and restaurants, and the like, and so-called non-whites (which at the time included Blacks, Coloureds and Indians) who did not enjoy such privileges. One of the most fundamental cornerstones of apartheid was to establish a general belief amongst all people living in South Africa that Whites were superior, Blacks inferior, and privileges meant for the privileged Whites only. The most obviously visible aspects of apartheid are those that materialized in terms of so-called petty apartheid, in terms of which Whites enjoyed exclusive privileges, such as access to beaches, parks and restaurants, and Blacks were forced to adhere to strict pass laws and curfews.

One of the most notable observations from the interviews was the fact that children who had parents who were active in politics at the time, or who discussed politics openly at home, had a far earlier awakening to the political

situation in South Africa. They not only has a more acute awareness of what was happening in South Africa, but also had more relevant information to base their decisions on.

The most significant factor however that distinguished the life experiences of the haves and have-nots during apartheid however related to the financial and social situations within which the members had to grow up, and their respective access to economic opportunities. Generally Whites (and especially Afrikaans speaking Whites) enjoyed far better economic and social conditions than those of especially Blacks.

2. Awakenings to the effects of apartheid

There came a time for each of them where they would question the effects of apartheid, and seek answers to very difficult questions. Although an overwhelming majority of the members interviewed indicated that their respective awakenings to the broader meaning and implications of apartheid occurred at the time when they left their parents' homes to attend high school, university or a working life after school, there were vastly different experiences that led to these awakenings at earlier or later stages within this broad period. It was especially at university where members were exposed to different perspectives, which caused them to acutely consider the reality of apartheid and its impact on South Africans. The exposure to different perspectives at

university caused members to question the reasons for their experiences during their development years and to reflect upon what they had regarded as normal before.

In stark contrast to the university awakenings of many of the members interviewed, some members were forced into the reality of the apartheid labour market due to severe poverty at home. Here they experienced the discrimination, humiliations and harshness of apartheid first hand at a very young age. This contributed to some of these members becoming actively involved in political activism in the struggle against apartheid.

There were also different perspectives present in people who lived in rural areas and on farms, as opposed to those who lived in cities, and other urban areas, irrespective of their respective races. One of the most prominent life experiences that awoke people to the effects of apartheid in this period of their lives, was the fact that Blacks had to carry and produce so called pass books to justify their presence in certain areas. Most of the Black interviewees (and even Coloured interviewees) were locked up by the police on various occasions for not being able to produce pass books. This requirement was universally experienced as humiliating to the extreme and spurred members on to become more dedicated and committed to their struggle against apartheid.

The awakening of people disadvantaged under apartheid led in some instances to those members either ending up in prison as a result of their political activist

activities against the system, or leaving South Africa to live in exile for many years. These two extreme experiences also impacted very differently on the development of these individuals. Those who were imprisoned reported feelings of hatred against Whites, much time for reflection on their principles and values, a greater commitment to fighting these injustices, and learning opportunities from experienced leaders such as Nelson Mandela. On the other hand, those who lived in exile became involved in an indirect manner to promote the struggle against South Africa, hoping to return to South Africa after the system had been overthrown.

A clear distinction could be made between the following life experiences that led to an awakening of the real impact of apartheid on the lives of South Africans, which led to significantly different ideologies, actions and perspectives:

- Members from the privileged group were largely ignorant of the abnormalities of apartheid until they experienced broader interactions with people who had different perspectives;

- Disadvantaged members in rural areas were ignorant of the real impact of apartheid on their living conditions until they came into contact with more politically aware people in cities; and

- Disadvantaged members in cities felt the brunt of apartheid and were at the forefront of the struggle against its unjust impact on their lives.

3. <u>Developing changed attitudes and perspectives into actions</u>

The fact that South Africans awoke to the realities of apartheid and its abnormal impact on their lives, albeit at different times in their respective lives, inevitably led to changes in their attitudes towards people of different colours, and of perspectives of the political systems of the time. A very clear contrast was identified between the realisations by members who enjoyed privileges under the apartheid system, namely that the system could not be sustained and needed to change sooner rather than later, as opposed to anger, unhappiness and determination of those who suffered under apartheid to bring an end to it.

One of the most unfortunate consequences of apartheid was the development of fear and hatred amongst different races. Hatred and bitterness made so called non-whites more determined to overthrow the system of apartheid to the extent that they were prepared to give up their freedom and even their lives for this cause.

Two broad categories of general attitudinal changes could be identified, namely:
- A realization that change away from apartheid was needed, but only in an organized and negotiated form to guarantee some measure of protection of Whites against retaliation; and
- A burning determination to abolish apartheid to secure equal privileges and opportunities for previously disadvantaged people.

The different life experiences of the interviewees had very different influences on their respective outlooks before 1994, and especially within the period during which apartheid was still in existence as a formal policy of the country. During this period three broad categories of future outlooks could be identified, namely:

- A deliberate ignorance of the realization of the injustices of the system of apartheid to continue enjoyment of exclusive privileges

- A realization of the need for change, and a conservative attempt to negotiate change while retaining privileges; and

- A deliberate fight to abolish apartheid, which fight could be divided into:

  o fighting from within the existing structures, such as the tri-cameral parliament and party political structures;

  o political activism in a subversive and violent manner through riots, protests and anarchy; and

  o support for political activists without becoming physically involved in such activities

Leadership

There are probably as many conceptualizations or understandings of the concept of leadership as there are people around thinking or talking about it. Some of these commonalities with regard to the members' conceptualization of leadership include the development of a vision by the leader, existence of

followers, influences over the followers, initiative by the leader, and decision making by the leader. It was interesting to note the difference in opinion with regard to the way in which decisions are to be taken, and ranges from consultative and collective decision making on one end, to autocratic decision making followed by convincing followers of the correctness of this decision on the other end.

It was also important to note the unique nature of political leadership, which comprises of two essential elements, namely:

- a leadership function within an institution; and
- a representative function of followers to whom the leader is accountable

It was observed throughout the interviews that the second above element is often not valued highly by political leaders, who prefer to formulate their own or their party's vision, and to sell this to as many followers as they can manage to convince that their vision is more compelling than that of an opposition party. Individual conceptualizations of leadership have unique bearings on how the leaders practice their leadership skills.

Although most interviewees tried to be very modest in suggesting that they never actively sought leadership positions, but were rather chosen by the people to be their leaders, this was not always practically the case. There was nevertheless support found for the notion that people observe leadership qualities in an individual, and their actions to promote such an individual to leadership positions have a profound influence on the development of the

leader. This should however not be equated to such a person necessarily becoming a leader due to pressures from others.

What seemed to be most significant in the early development of individuals to perceived leadership positions in their early and development years, were their physical traits and skills. In this regard it was reported that children who were opinionated, courageous, organized, and talked a lot at school, who were chairpersons of debating society, sports team stars and the like, were more readily regarded as leaders by their peers. In addition thereto, people considered favourably those persons who were passionate about issues that affected them personally, and who could articulate attractive strategies to deal with it. Their leadership started at a point before it was recognized by others, who were often instrumental in making these leaders aware of their leadership skills and potential.

Leadership is not a static concept, but it changes dynamically over time, depending on the needs of the situation and the orientations of both leaders and followers. There was a general consensus amongst the interviewees that leaders are energetic, passionate, unmovable, arrogant, strong willed and autocratic to an extent when they are young, but that they become far more calm, calculated, consultative and caring as a result of their experiences over time. One of the interviewees explained this point quite clearly in terms of the following saying:

"If you are not revolutionary when you are 20 you have no heart,

but if you are still revolutionary when you are 50 you have no

head."

There was general consensus that this change in attitude should be attributed to collective wisdom gained over years of different experiences and interactions with influential individuals, groups, or organisations.

The following aspects were identified to have had major influences on the development of leadership styles of the interviewees during and after the period of apartheid in South Africa:

- Political activism and the struggle against apartheid;

- Ignorance of the consequences of apartheid for ordinary South Africans;

- Realisation of unavoidability of changes in the political system;

- Peaceful transition to a democracy;

- International and national recognition;

- Changes in the political climate in the country; and

- Economic, social and cultural changes in South Africa.

The unfortunate experiences under apartheid and the realization of its consequences have caused leaders to be more open minded, consultative and tolerant, because of their acceptance of the fact that South Africa is a richly diverse country in terms of different cultures, values and beliefs. This development was the result of greater interaction amongst members of different

races, cultures and backgrounds, coupled with the willingness to learn about and from one another.

Apartheid

In much the same way as the different interviewees had different conceptualizations of leadership, there were found to be as many different conceptualizations of apartheid. This depended largely on how directly and to what extent the individuals were affected by the policies of apartheid. There was a unanimous feeling amongst interviewees that the system of apartheid was an unjust, unfair and cruel system of separation according to race, to afford exclusive privileges to one race over other races. There was strong support by even those who were oppressed under the system that apartheid was not fundamentally a system designed along racial lines, but rather a system designed to distribute scarce resources and privileges amongst those with whom the leaders of the time could associate with. There was similar support for the notion that separation in the way envisaged by apartheid was not a uniquely South African phenomenon, but that it was present in one form or another across the world. The only difference in South Africa was that it was a carefully and meticulously planned system that was codified into law, and strictly (even inhumanely) enforced.

Apartheid was described as the fundamental and complete separation of people based on a notion that they are culturally different from one another and would come into conflict if they were to have contact with each other. In order to attain separation in the way that apartheid intended to do, it was thought at the time by such leaders as Verwoerd, Vorster and PW Botha, that petty apartheid would be the most direct and visible measures to achieve this separation. Statutes were therefore enacted and enforced to deny non-whites access to certain areas or facilities, such as shops, beaches, public toilets etc. The separation of apartheid caused groups to be ignorant about one another, and led to hatred of one another. It is interesting in this regard that one of the interviewees described apartheid as exactly APART and HATE.

Three broad categories were identified in the interviews within which members had relatively similar experiences, namely: the life experiences of those who were advantaged under apartheid, those who were disadvantaged by apartheid, and those who were not directly affected by apartheid.

1. Life experiences of members who were advantaged under apartheid

An overwhelming majority of the interviewed members who belong to this so called previously advantaged group raised the fact that they were largely unaware or ignorant of the effects and impact of apartheid during their development years. They were influenced to this attitude by their parents who led them to believe that apartheid was normal and that it was completely natural

to have separation and different treatment according to racial determinants. Although they observed the practicalities of petty apartheid, they did not spend much time thinking deeply about these issues. They merely accepted, as they were taught, that these abnormalities were in fact normalities. The fact that young Whites were brainwashed at the time to believe that they were superior to Blacks had the unfortunate effect that many of them became racist. During the time of apartheid Whites generally had exclusive opportunities and rights of enjoyment of all privileges that life in South Africa could offer, and took these privileges for granted. At the time when these members started to realise the injustices of apartheid, whether at high school, university or work, they concluded that they system was not sustainable and had to change eventually.

2.   Life experiences of members who were disadvantaged under apartheid

The life experiences of members from this category were in stark contrast to those of the previous group. This group consisted of a cosmopolitan majority of South Africans, including: Blacks, Coloured, Indians, and other people not classified as White by the South African government. In essence their life experiences were of acute marginalisation, oppression, constant harassment, denial of rights, benefits and opportunities, and of artificial inferiority to Whites.

Whereas Whites were largely ignorant of the effects of apartheid during their development years, non-whites were painfully aware of its impact on their lives.

Not only did they have to live in poverty and in undeveloped land, but had to struggle to travel to shops, schools, and entertainment areas by foot. These experiences led to the development of strong feelings of resistance against the white government and its racist policies for apartheid. This not only infuriated Blacks, but made them determined to bring an end to this system that was so cruel to their parents.

These experiences led to a number of Blacks taking up armed resistance against the oppressive government from both within the country and outside its borders. Many of these activists were imprisoned for very long periods of time. Others spent many shorter periods of time in various prisons where the conditions were absolutely disgusting. Others left South Africa in search of normality in countries where they would always be strangers. Many of these exiled South Africans supported underground political organizations such as the ANC, which was banned in South Africa. Even more others decided to fight against South Africa from within the country's borders until such time as the inevitable collapse of the apartheid system could be secured. For many they paid the ultimate price in their struggle, but with the conviction that the fight was always going to be worthwhile.

The so classified mixed race group perceived their circumstances to be utterly confusing. This sharpened their senses of how wrong the system of apartheid was. Even though some of these members were classified as white, they

associated with the suffering of Blacks, Coloureds and Indians in South Africa as a result of the very direct and personal effects of apartheid on their lives.

3.   Life experiences of members who were not directly affected by apartheid

There was a continental feeling that apartheid had brought a shame to the continent, which led to solidarity with those who fought against the system. Although some Black South Africans commented that they were not directly affected in the rural areas, this is to be questioned. They did not have the freedom to move out of rural areas to cities freely to take up economic opportunities as equals, nor did they have rights to freedom of movement and property ownership. In addition thereto they were marginalized and reduced to positions of extreme poverty and material deprivation. In the end it can be stated with conviction that apartheid affected every single person living in South Africa, albeit to different degrees and in different ways.

The impact of apartheid experiences on South Africans

Although apartheid can be seen as the single most defining moment or era of its time in South Africa, the separatist nature of it presented different opportunities, challenges and experiences to all South Africans. All of the interviewees agreed that their individual experiences under apartheid have had a major impact on their respective beings, attitudes, styles and perspectives. Two important

consequences of the demise of apartheid in South Africa are remorse and forgiveness. One would logically expect Whites to show real remorse for the hardship, oppression, hate and humiliation that apartheid caused to so many South Africans. To a large extent this has happened. On the other hand there is the issue of forgiveness, which is expected to reside in the members of the groups who were disadvantaged under that system of apartheid. The peaceful transition to a free democracy in South Africa would not have been possible without significant forgiveness for the injustices of the past.

There was also agreement amongst the interviewees that a crucible such as apartheid, whether the individual was advantaged of disadvantaged under it, presented very important experiences to reflect on in later life when the leaders have reached a more mature level of leadership. This reflection, together with increased communication and understanding, goes a long way towards building tolerance, accommodation and trust, which in turn brings hope, unity and stability to the country. The political leaders interviewed agreed that this sad episode has made it possible for them to become committed to the goal of never allowing similar inhumanities in the country.

Interviewees stated the following as the lessons they have learnt from the impact that apartheid has had on their lives, and consequently on their leadership styles:

- Respect and equal treatment for all people;
- A spirit of forgiveness for past injustices and optimism for the future;

- A greater focus on shared interests than colour differences;

- An understanding of hardships and burning issues people are confronted with;

- A preparedness to adapt, tolerate, accommodate and communicate;

- Development of friendships across racial lines;

- A pride in the new South Africa and all of its people;

- To be more collective and consultative in making decisions; and

- Willingness to learn other cultures despite initial culture shocks.

The influences stated above however developed to its current form after apartheid was formally abolished in South Africa, and was preceded by influences on leaders which could be comfortably categorized in terms of the following three homogeneous groups:

- A determination and commitment to fight against the injustices of apartheid, even if it cost the leader his or her life or freedom;

- A willingness to negotiate a peaceful abolishment of apartheid in such a way as to avoid reverse apartheid, but rather to secure equal rights and opportunities for all South Africans; and

- A fundamental belief in the separatist principles of apartheid and opposition to the political and social changes that characterized development in South Africa since 1990.

A striking metaphor which was uncovered during the interviews, and which found universal support from the interviewees, is that the impact of apartheid on

the three main generations living in South Africa at present could be summarized as follows:

- Grandparents, who were already grown up at the time when apartheid was introduced in South Africa, still have strong memories and influences of apartheid in their minds;

- Parents, who were the ignorant children of apartheid and awoke to its effects later in their lives, constitute the transforming generation who had to deal with the problems of abolishing apartheid and building a democracy; and

- Children, who now grow up in a free and democratic South Africa where they could build lifelong friendships with members of different races, religions and cultures.

This aspect seemed to fill South African political leaders with hope and optimism for the future of South Africans, with a unified identity.

Leadership styles of South African political leaders

The term leadership style was interpreted in this research to refer to particular leader behaviour in different situations. To make deductions and conclusions regarding the leadership styles of South African political leaders, the interviewees were asked direct, but open ended, questions, such as:

- How do you go about leading others? Can you give me some examples?

- What metaphor would best describe your leadership style? Why do you say so? To what do you attribute your leadership style?

- How has your leadership style changed over the years, if at all? What caused these changes?

- What are the principles or values by which you lead?

- What inspires you?

- When you are confronted by a crisis, what do you do?

The interviewees referred to many critical incidents in their life stories as it relates to the period of apartheid, and its influence on their respective leadership styles. These critical incidents were found to be very helpful in this exploratory research to examine a specific phenomenon. Although leaders change the general pattern of their behaviour in accordance with environmental and situational changes, they are generally prone to implement a combination of task-, relations-, and change oriented behaviours to adapt thereto. The research found that leaders are at different stages of their leadership development, and that these differences could be attributed to their various life history experiences, including their ages, sexes, backgrounds, physical experiences and exposure to learning opportunities.

It seemed clear from the interviews that most of the Members of Parliament is still at a point where they have not formed a clear and comprehensive conceptualisation of leadership – and especially political leadership. A comparison between the interviewees' conceptualisation and implementation of

leadership shows the often acute misalignment of the two aspects. This reflects on a general inability (at this stage of their respective leadership development stages) to match an ideal leadership style with the influences of reality.

Although all of the interviewees realised the necessity of an existing follower base for their leadership, there were vast differences in the roles they foresaw that followers played in this relationship. At least two of the interviewees admitted directly that they led with a measure of autocracy, and that their leadership dictated solutions to their followers. Many of the other interviewees sought to describe their respective leadership styles as consultative, collective and participative, while at the same time admitting that they generate policies, which they then strive to convince their followers to accept. This confirms the low level of conceptualisation and understanding of leadership as a construct.

The interviewees were also interviewed directly on how their leadership styles changed over time, and what they perceived to be the reasons for any changes in their styles. There was found to be overwhelming support for the notion that leaders are more energetic, autocratic, self-centred and revolutionary when they are young, and that experiences over the years cause them to become more calm, collected and calculated. An interesting remark though was that the collective political leadership of a country needed a healthy blend of young revolutionary leaders and older experienced leaders, in order to take innovative actions while maintaining a firm course along the mandate given to the political

leaders by their constituents. One interviewee summed it up strikingly as follows:

> *"If you are not revolutionary when you are twenty you have no*
>
> *heart, but if you are still revolutionary when you are fifty you*
>
> *have no head."*

Most significantly for purpose of this research is the data obtained in respect of the leadership styles of political leaders during the period of apartheid, the influences of life experiences thereon, and their current leadership styles and reasons for it. Two broadly opposing groups of individuals were identified in terms of the nature of their relative positions under apartheid, namely the advantaged Whites, and the disadvantaged non-whites. There was a similar division to be noted in the leadership styles of the individuals who made up those two groups, namely an exclusive and defensive style that characterised the ruling Whites in South Africa, and a revolutionary and collectivist leadership style of non-white leaders who sought to overcome the negative effects apartheid had on their fellow non-whites. These conflicting leadership styles were also distinguishable in terms of it's Eurocentric versus Afrocentric natures. Whites tended to be more Eurocentric, displaying high levels of performance orientation, assertiveness and uncertainty avoidance. Black leaders on the contrary displayed more Afrocentric leadership characteristics, such as collectivism and human orientation.

Despite the opposing leadership style backgrounds of the members interviewed, in relation to their life experiences that constitute their respective life-stories, they seemed to have reached a point in time where there is an increasing movement towards Afrocentric leadership characteristics and styles amongst all interviewees. This could be directly attributed to the unifying experiences after 1994 in South Africa, and the universally experienced successes of the peaceful transformation of South Africa into a democracy. The interviewees however expressed the collective opinion that transformation would not have been as successful as it turned out to be if it was not for the openness and willingness of all political leaders to share their experiences, reflections thereof, and the shaping influences thereof on their current meaning systems and styles.

CONCLUSIONS

At the offset of this research five propositions were developed and formulated, which was subsequently tested by the information collected during the research process. It was therefore necessary to make conclusions regarding these propositions, in an attempt to find a deeper meaning to it.

First proposition: *Leadership is a complex construct, which is composed of many different characteristics and influences.*

The research suggested that leadership should be seen as a complex and adaptive combination of the most effective elements from all known leadership paradigms. The interviewees each had their own conceptualisations of leadership, and opinions about their own leadership styles that they apply to lead others. It became very clear during the interviews that there were vastly different interpretations of practical leadership amongst the interviewees, despite the fact that they all had a broadly similar understanding of the theoretical basis of political leadership. The practical application of their respective leadership skills and styles were shown in many instances to deviate substantially from their theoretical conceptualisation of leadership, and the ways in which they believe a leader should lead.

Second proposition: *The life histories of individuals comprise of a combination of unique life experiences and subjective interpretations of those experiences.*

The research showed that the most defining characteristic of individual life experiences is the uniqueness thereof to each and every person. Even similar *de facto* experiences by different individuals were subjectively perceived to be different, and consequently had varying influences on the individuals in accordance with their respective appreciations thereof. Individuals interpreted

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their life experiences subjectively to make meaning from it, and to shape their identities in the form of their life stories.

Despite the fact that the South African population could easily be divided into two opposing groups in relation to their respective positions as either advantaged or disadvantaged under the system of apartheid, the research has uncovered data relating to vastly different experiences by members within one specific such group. Relevant examples in this regard as appeared from the research include, amongst others:

- the different life experiences of Blacks who lived in rural areas compared to those who lived in cities;

- the very different experiences of those who were either incarcerated, exiled or free;

- the different experiences of political activists versus those who were passive or ignorant of political realities in South Africa; and

- the different socio economic environments and conditions within which people from similar groups lived.

The research therefore concluded that a combination of unique life experiences and the subjective and personal interpretation thereof, form the interpretive basis and meaning system from which the leader acts and justifies his or her actions, and therefore supports the proposition.

<u>Third proposition:</u>   *Individual life histories influence leadership development.*

Leaders reported that they continuously extract wisdom from past experiences to shape their respective beings and futures, in a process of reflection and adaptation. They learn from their past mistakes and successes, and take to heart the lessons learnt in the evolution of their lives.

Although it became clear that life experiences were overwhelmingly individualistic in nature, certain defining eras provided similar life experiences for certain groups, thereby giving them a shared history, culture and background. It was however the intensely transformational individual life experiences within those eras that had the most profound influence on the development of individuals.

The data obtained from the interviews supported the existing research in respect of the proposition that leadership development is generally enhanced if it moves through the three processes of action, observation and reflection, as proposed by Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy (1993).

<u>Fourth proposition:</u> *Apartheid was a time line event that encompassed many different life experiences of individuals within the broad phenomenon, which phenomenon does not necessarily in*

itself have a significantly homogeneous effect on the shaping of leadership styles. What is a more significant shaper of leadership style is the leader's experiences in and attitude towards the event or phenomenon.

The research has shown that individuals have unique experiences even under a single phenomenon. These different experiences are diversified as a result of their different de facto life experiences, as well as their different subjective interpretations and perceptions thereof. The mere separatist nature of apartheid implied that members of different race groups would have vastly different life experiences.

Although apartheid can be seen as the single most defining phenomenon in the recent history of South Africa between 1948 and 1994, the interviewees have shown through the relation of their life stories that it was not the phenomenon of apartheid per se that influenced leadership styles of the political leaders interviewed, but rather their unique and individual life experiences within the system of apartheid.

It is however not only the leaders' individual experiences within the broader system of apartheid that influenced the development of their respective leadership styles, but also, and possibly more so, their personal interpretations of these different life experiences, which were highly subjective. These two

elements, namely the life experiences themselves and the subjective interpretations thereof, as embodied in a combined way in the life-stories of the leaders, were the most crucial and most significant influences on their leadership styles, values, beliefs and principles.

Fifth proposition: *Life experiences under the phenomenon of apartheid influenced the leadership styles of South African political leaders differently in accordance with their unique life experiences itself, and their subjective interpretations thereof.*

The literature survey strongly supports the proposition that individual life experiences have a profoundly significant developmental influence on the leaders' leadership styles. It became abundantly clear from all of the interviews conducted in the research that the system of apartheid in South Africa was such an omnipotent phenomenon of the time, that the individual life experiences under the system had profound influences on the lives, development and leadership styles of all South Africans at the time. Apartheid was everywhere and affected everyone in South Africa. Although interviewees from especially the advantaged group were of the opinion that they were largely ignorant of the effects of apartheid on their fellow citizens' lives for the most of their development years, the system of apartheid nevertheless influenced the living conditions of different racial groups in South Africa according to whether they

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were classified as White or non-white. These influences might appear to be subtle and naively unobservable, but were real, and had significant influences on social and economic conditions affecting different groups in South Africa.

This research has shown that a leader's leadership style is to a large extent the product of the relationship between the leader's unique life experiences and his or her interpretation thereof in the form of an individual and unique life-story.

The interviews produced very direct information with regard to how the different life experiences of South Africans changed their attitudes and perceptions, and impacted on their respective developments of leadership styles over time. It was found that there was a direct relationship, during the time of apartheid, between the different life experiences of the haves and the have-nots and their respective leadership styles. On the side of those who benefited from apartheid there was a general style of enforcement of their superiority and exclusive rights to privileges, while those who were disadvantaged under apartheid made conscious decisions to fight against the system with conviction and determination. They wanted to obstruct and break the system down.

These attitudes and styles are to be clearly distinguished from the more similar experiences, influences and styles that have become characteristic of the period after the demise of apartheid in South Africa, where people from all races now stand united to a large degree towards building a new nation. The conflicting focuses and resultant conflicting leadership styles have disappeared.

IMPLICATIONS

This research has highlighted the importance of open and honest communication by individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and races, to cultivate understanding of each other, which is a necessary prerequisite to building a unified and prosperous future South African common identity and nation without a deep knowledge of the different backgrounds and experiences of all South Africans, and how those impacted on their current make-ups, complete trust of one another will not be possible.

Consultation and dialogue will lead to greater understanding, trust and tolerance, but will also provide a sound basis for the determination of common objectives and vision for the future generations of South Africans. What has happened in South Africa since 1994 in respect of transformation, freedom, equality and a spirit of collectiveness have filled the interviewees with optimism and hope for the future. This in itself should stem ordinary South Africans positively to share this optimism and hope of its political leaders, who are dedicated and committed to build a prosperous future for all South Africans based on the enshrined values and principles set out in the South African Constitution.

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ANNEXURES

A.   Composition of South African Parliament and Cabinet in terms of
     race, gender and party political affiliation, as in March 2005

B.   Composition of sample for purposes of interviews

C.   Interview schedule

D.   Leadership Development Model

E.   Interview Consent Form

F.   Benefits and limitations of content analysis

G.   Analysis of sample composition

ANNEXURE A: COMPOSITION OF SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT: 31 MAY 2005

Party	Race					Sex		Total
	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	Male	Female	
ANC	243	20	12	39	1	208	107	315
DA	11	41	2	5	1	44	16	60
IFP	18	8	1	2	1	22	8	30
UDM	9	0	0	1	0	6	4	10
ID	1	2	0	4	1	5	3	8
NNP	0	6	0	3	0	8	1	9
ACDP	3	2	0	2	0	6	1	7
VF+	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	5
UCDP	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
PAC	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
AZAPO	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
MF	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2
Total	294	84	16	56	4	314	140	454

COMPOSITION OF SOUTH AFRICAN CABINET: MARCH 2005

Party	Race					Sex		Total
	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	Male	Female	
ANC	21	2	1	2	0	15	11	26
DA								
IFP								
UDM								
ID								
NNP		1				1		1
ACDP								
VF+								
UCDP								
PAC								
AZAPO	1					1		1
MF								
Total	22	3	1	2	0	17	11	28

(http://www.parliament.gov.za)

ANNEXURE B: COMPOSITION OF INTERVIEW SAMPLE FROM SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

Party	Race					Sex		Total
	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	Male	Female	
ANC	2	2	1	2		4	3	7
DA	1	2				2	1	3
IFP				1			1	1
UDM								0
ID		1				1		1
NNP		1		1		2		2
ACDP				1		1		1
VF+		1				1		1
UCDP								0
PAC	1					1		1
AZAPO	1					1		1
MF								0
Total	5	7	1	5	0	13	5	18

1. **ADMINISTRATIVE DATA** (Collected and completed before the interview)

Political leadership position											
Age											

Sex		Race					Highest formal education		
Male	Female	Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Other	School	Diploma	University

Political party affiliation											
ANC	DA	IFP	UDM	ID	NNP	ACDP	VF+	UCDP	PAC	AZAPO	MF

2. **CLASSIFICATION QUESTIONS**

2.1 Tell me about where you grew up and what the conditions were. What do you remember most about the early years of your life?

2.2 Tell me about your parents. What did they do? In what ways did they influence your life? What about the rest of your family?

2.3 What was it like growing up during the years of Apartheid in South Africa?

2.4 Where were you during the longest period of your life between 1948 and 1994?

        Mark applicable box with an "X"

Free, in South Africa	
In prison	
Exiled outside of South Africa	

3. **TARGET QUESTIONS**

3.1 *Life experiences*

3.1.1 Draw "x" on the points of your lifeline that represent major defining moments in your life:

_____

Birth   Now

3.1.2 Describe what those moments are. Why do you see them as defining moments?

3.1.3 What defining influences did each of them have on you?

3.1.4 How would your current position / attitude / style have been different if the defining moment(s) did not take place, or had been different?

3.2   *Leadership*

3.2.1 When did you first begin to think of yourself as a leader? Why?

3.2.2 Are there any persons you consider as having influenced your thinking of leadership? Who are they and how did they influence you?

3.2.3 What do you understand under the terms "leadership" and "political leadership"

3.2.4 How do you go about leading others? Can you give me some examples?

3.2.5 What metaphor would best describe your leadership style? Why do you say so? To what do you attribute your leadership style?

3.2.6 How has your leadership style changed over the years, if at all? What caused these changes?

3.2.7 What are the principles or values by which you lead?

3.2.8 What inspires you?

3.2.9 When you are confronted by a crisis, what do you do?

3.3   *Apartheid*

3.3.1 What do you understand under the term "Apartheid"?

3.3.2 When did you first become aware of Apartheid and its impact on your life? How did you become aware? How did it make you feel?

3.3.3 What life experiences under the system of apartheid do you remember most?

3.3.4 What influence did these experiences have on your life? How did they change you as a leader? Why?

3.3.5 Describe your relationships with people who are racially different from you. What did you find easiest to establish those relationships? What did you find hardest to establish those relationships?

ANNEXURE D: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL

ERA

CRUCIBLE

Experiences

Organisation
of meaning

Leadership
competencies

INDIVIDUAL
FACTORS
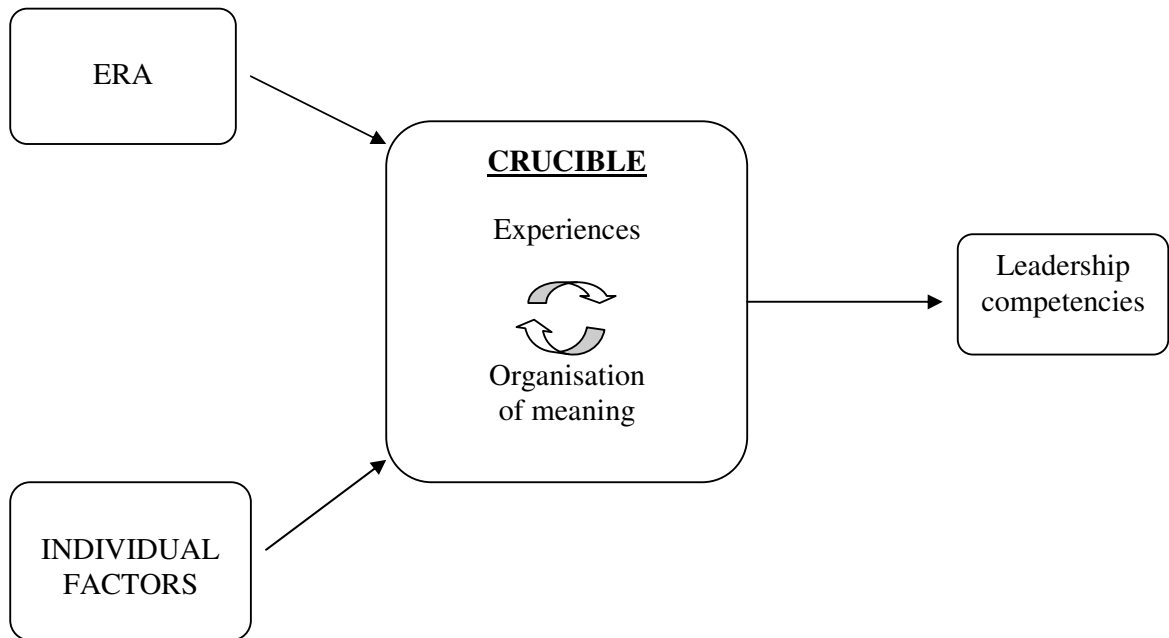
(Bennis and Thomas, 2002:4)

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Interview Consent Form

I agree to be interviewed by Neil Ulrich, who is conducting research for the purpose of completing a Masters Degree in Business Leadership at the UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership. This research will investigate how different life experiences under the system of apartheid in South Africa influenced the leadership styles of current South African political leaders.

I understand that the interview will last between 1 and 1,5 hours to complete and agree to have it tape recorded. I however reserve the right to have the tape recording of the interview stopped at any time should I feel so. I also acknowledge that my words and opinions may become part of the contents of the research report that will be produced to the UNISA Graduate School of Business Leadership. I have been assured by Neil Ulrich that every effort will be made to accurately capture my words. Neil Ulrich has agreed to be bound by the research ethics of the Academy of Management to protect the interests of the research subjects. If at any time I feel that the interview is becoming uncomfortable, I may end the interview.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Name: _____

ANNEXURE F: BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Benefits	Limitations
Flexibility of research design, i.e. types of inferences	Analyses the communication (message) only
Supplements multi-method analyses	Findings may be questionable alone, therefore, verification using another method may be required
Wide variety of analytical application	Underlying premise must be frequency related
May be qualitative and/or quantitative	Reliability – stability, reproducibility, accuracy of judges
May be automated – improves reliability, reduces cost / time	Validity – construct, hypothesis, predictive and semantic
Range of computer software developed	Less opportunity to pre-test, discuss mechanism with independent judges
Copes with large quantities of data	Undue bias if only part data is analysed, possibly abstracting from context of communication
Unobtrusive, unstructured, context sensitive	Lack of reliability and validity measures reported, raising questions of credibility
Development of standards applicable to specific research, e.g. negotiations	

ANNEXURE G: ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE COMPOSITION

1.   Analysis by race

Black	White	Indian	Coloured
5	7	1	5

2.   Analysis by party political affiliation

ANC	DA	IFP	UDM	ID	NNP	ACDP	VF+	UCDP	PAC	AZAPO	MF
7	3	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0

3.   Analysis by age

30 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 – 80
2	7	6	2	1

4.   Analysis by sex

Male	Female
13	5

5.   Analysis by highest educational level

School certificate	Diploma	University degree
3	1	14

6.   Analysis by geographic presence

Living freely in SA	Exiled outside SA	In prison
13	2	3

7.   Analysis by political awareness at home

No political discussions	Political discussions at home	Active political participation by parent
11	4	3