

Women's Contributions to South Africa's
Truth and Reconciliation Commission

By Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

With Contributions by Fiona Ross and Elizabeth Mills

Women Waging Peace Policy Commission

February 2005

WOMEN WAGING PEACE is a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund that advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes around the world.

THE POLICY COMMISSION is conducting a series of case studies to document women's contributions to peace processes across conflict areas worldwide. The series was developed and conceived by Sanam Naraghi Anderlini.

Policy Commission

Managing Editor

Carla Koppell

Director

Sanam Naraghi Anderlini

Associate Director

Elizabeth Powley

International Law and Policy Officer

Jolynn Shoemaker

Hunt Alternatives Fund

Chair

Ambassador Swanee Hunt

Executive Director

Sarah Gauger

Senior Vice President

Ambassador Hattie Babbitt

www.huntalternativesfund.org

www.womenwagingpeace.net

ISBN 1-932679-10-3

© 2005 Hunt Alternatives Fund. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgments | iv |
| About the Author | iv |
| Project Background | iv |
| Key Findings and Recommendations | v |
| Executive Summary | vi |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Rationale | 2 |
| Methodology | 2 |
| Assumptions | 2 |
| Part One: Background and History | 4 |
| A Brief History of Apartheid | 4 |
| International Response to Apartheid | 5 |
| The ANC's Declaration of Armed Struggle | 5 |
| Transformation of National Party Thinking | 6 |
| Gender and the Negotiation Process | 6 |
| Establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission | 7 |
| Part Two: Findings | 9 |
| Statistical Findings on the Participation of Women | 9 |
| Women Commissioners and Staff: Creating a Victim-Friendly Process | 9 |
| Women Witnesses: A Different Approach Yielded Success | 14 |
| Women Leaders: Making Policy, Shaping the TRC | 16 |
| The Special Women's Hearings in Johannesburg | 17 |
| Women's Contributions As an Extension of the Ethos of <i>Ubuntu</i> | 20 |
| Conclusion | 24 |
| Endnotes | 26 |
| Appendix 1: Map of South Africa | 30 |
| Appendix 2: List of Acronyms | 31 |
| Appendix 3: Bibliography | 32 |

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although many individuals contributed expertise and insight to this report, the analysis and findings reflect my perspective alone.

I wish to thank Fiona Ross, associate professor of social anthropology at the University of Cape Town, and Elizabeth Mills, adjunct lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch, who served as research assistants on this study. Tamryn Bekker, assistant editor for *Cape Talk*, and Ebby Kabayadondo, tutor in the psychology department at the University of Cape Town, conducted some of the interviews. Thanks also to Lulama Magunya for the exceptional job she did of transcribing all of the interviews. Many of the interviewees are quoted throughout this study, while others wished to remain anonymous. Their insights made our work possible. Thanks to Judge Richard Goldstone, Vasuki Nesiah, and Ambassador Princeton Lymon for commenting on drafts. And thanks especially to Elizabeth Powley for the editing work she did on the final draft.

Finally, the following people at Women Waging Peace and Hunt Alternatives Fund made possible the publication of this report: Sanam Anderlini, Hattie Babbitt, Camille Pampell Conaway, Miki Jacevic, Carla Koppell, Mark Russell, Jolynn Shoemaker, and Vanessa Wu. Special thanks are owed to the chair of Women Waging Peace, Swanee Hunt.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela is associate professor of psychology at the University of Cape Town and an affiliate professor for the African Ethics Initiative at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. She is affiliated with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town as a senior consultant. Gobodo-Madikizela is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *A Human Being Died that Night: A Story of Forgiveness*, which won the Alan Paton Prize for nonfiction in South Africa. She was a member of the Human Rights Violations Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Wars and internal conflicts do not end simply with the signing of peace agreements. To avoid a resurgence of violence, it is necessary to develop and support measures for strengthening the governance, security, justice, and socioeconomic capacities of a state. This is a complex task in any society, but daunting in post-conflict situations. While the international community can provide assistance and valuable resources, the local population, which has no “exit strategy,” has the greatest commitment to building sustainable peace. It is therefore essential to draw on the assets, experiences, and dedication at the local level and among all sectors of society. One sector often overlooked and underestimated is women. In most post-conflict societies women are more than 50 percent of the population and are actively engaged in peace building while addressing the basic survival needs of their families and communities. Yet they are often portrayed as passive victims, and little regard is given to their actual and potential roles in fostering security.

In October 2000, for the first time in its history, the United Nations Security Council acknowledged that women have a key role in promoting international stability by passing Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. It called on all parties to ensure women’s participation in peace processes, from the prevention of conflict to negotiations and postwar reconstruction. The Women Waging Peace Policy Commission was established to examine peace processes with a particular focus on the contributions of women. This report, *Women’s Contributions to South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, documents and analyzes the ways in which women shaped South Africa’s post-apartheid transitional justice process.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

1. Women were influential in ensuring that the design of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the selection of commissioners were conducted through extensive consultations with representatives of civil society. The inclusiveness and transparency of the process, which distinguished it from previous truth commissions, in turn contributed significantly to the participation of women witnesses.
2. Women witnesses submitted 56.5% of the 21,227 testimonies presented to the TRC. Sixty percent of the women were black. Forty-one percent of the commissioners were women, and a significant percentage of women served as administrative staff for the commission—for instance, 75% of the regional managers were women.
3. Women were key players in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, and the commission often relied on these pre-existing women's networks and structures to identify potential witnesses—both black and white—and encourage them to make public and written submissions to the TRC.
4. Women witnesses often addressed the suffering of others, usually sons and husbands, in their testimonies as a conscious means of generating empathy and taking on a broader responsibility for the collective sense of national healing.
5. Women on the TRC were more likely than their male colleagues to follow the spirit of the TRC mandate. Women's comprehensive interpretation of the TRC's requirement to establish a "victim-friendly" process resulted in mechanisms that eased the trauma of testifying.
6. Separate structures for women, such as the Johannesburg Women's Hearings, provided an appropriate space for women to testify about crimes—including sexual violence—in a way that validated them, and added crucial dimensions to the TRC process, such as the establishment of a new "truth" and a more complete national record of the apartheid era.
7. The *ubuntu* approach to truth and reconciliation, predicated on the belief that "I am because we are," recognizes the value of dialogue as part of transitional justice efforts in post-conflict regions. This approach was evident in the testimonies of women who had experienced trauma or lost loved ones. Their ability to forgive perpetrators was possible because of their recognition of the humanity of the perpetrators.

Recommendations

International and national authorities establishing truth and reconciliation processes in post-conflict settings should:

1. include women legal experts, trauma counselors, and other women professionals in the earliest stages of establishing and designing those processes; ensure that all staff receive gender training;
2. create a transparent and open process; work with civil society to raise awareness of the truth and reconciliation process in communities throughout the country so that the maximum number of people can participate;
3. consult with women's groups and networks to identify issues that could make women reluctant to participate, and work with those organizations to encourage women's participation as witnesses;
4. ensure a victim-friendly process by establishing appropriate support mechanisms and post-testimony assistance, such as a private space to provide testimony on sex crimes or other forms of violence that victims do not feel comfortable speaking about publicly; and
5. strengthen partnerships among women politicians and civil society groups to encourage information sharing and the generation of gender-sensitive national policies on transitional justice.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ten years after South Africa's successful transition from a state built upon the subjugation of its majority population to one based on democracy, its relatively peaceful process of transformation is heralded as a model to other nations. In particular, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is held up as an example of a transitional justice mechanism that was able to both establish a more complete or "truthful" historic record of the apartheid era and contribute to the healing of a nation and the reconciliation of former enemies, both individual and institutional. South African women—black and white—played significant roles in the planning, development, and implementation of the TRC. Their participation as commissioners, staff, and witnesses contributed to the success of the TRC and, ultimately, to South Africa's transition.

This study documents the vital qualities that women brought to the process of transitional justice, through their testimonies at the TRC and through the positions they held while they served on the TRC. The study was conducted through the case study method of investigation. Researchers interviewed different categories of participants on the TRC, with special focus on women of diverse classes and races, and who played different roles. In addition to interviews, primary research was conducted in the TRC archives.

Background

The term "apartheid," coined by South Africa's ruling Nationalist Party (NP) government and codified into law in 1948, literally means "separateness." The NP's bedrock goal was racial, cultural, and political purity. The effect of apartheid was not only to legalize all forms of discrimination against blacks, but also to disenfranchise blacks and reduce them to second-class citizens. The NP had a strong basis in Afrikaner nationalism and enjoyed a significant majority in parliament, which grew even larger in the 1970s and 1980s when anti-apartheid opposition was at its peak both inside and outside South Africa. The party drew its membership from both Afrikaan- and English-speaking white South Africans, who formed a mere 13% of the total population.

The political transition in South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC) victory in the elec-

tions of April 1994 ushered in a new democratic order. Legal scholars applauded the new South African constitution as a document without equal: "There is probably no more inclusive provision [the Bill of Rights] in any state's constitution—surely not in any international rights instrument." The inclusion of women was a hallmark of South Africa's transition to democracy, and it contributed significantly to the promotion of social cohesion in a starkly and violently divided country.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Apartheid had a dehumanizing effect on all South Africans' lives—regardless of whether they were perpetrators, victims, or survivors of human rights violations. A major concern of the post-apartheid state was how to address the human rights abuses committed during apartheid rule, and how to bring about social cohesion in a country ravaged by violence. The result was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The process of transitional justice, as facilitated by the TRC, is one of restoring humanity. Women and men bring to transitional justice and other peace processes a wide range of experiences, thoughts, hopes, fears, desires, understandings, interpretations of events and life's courses, and explanations for how these have taken the shapes and forms that appear in the present. Their different roles and contributions are often determined by gender consciousness of past and present social institutions and political systems.

The interim constitution of South Africa established the TRC with a mandate period from March 1960 to May 1994 and a focus on four goals:

1. to establish as complete a picture as possible of the nature and causes of human rights violations in the period between 1960 and 1994;
2. to give victims of human rights abuses a chance to speak publicly about the abuses they suffered;
3. to grant amnesty to perpetrators of human rights abuses in exchange for full disclosure of atrocities they committed and a demonstration that those crimes were politically motivated; and
4. to lay the foundation for national reconciliation in order to break the cycle of violence.

Women assumed many vital roles on the TRC, including as commissioners, activists, bystanders, beneficiaries, victims, and survivors. These roles were sometimes willingly taken, sometimes less so, such as when a witness' statement was selected for public testimony.

Several factors contributed to a progressive and gender-sensitive TRC. The advocacy of women and women's organizations ensured that the TRC was established through a more open process than previous truth commissions. Both the design of the TRC and the selection of commissioners were conducted through extensive consultations with representatives of civil society. "Maximum transparency"¹ characterized the transition process, from negotiations to the writing of a new constitution. This study concludes that transparency is critical in processes of transition, and specifically truth and reconciliation commissions, as it creates possibilities for the vital inclusion of a range of actors in both the transition and post-transition phases. Women, often left out of political decision-making processes in times of transition, stand to benefit from an approach that is open and transparent.

Women as Commissioners and Staff

Women commissioners and staff approached the process of truth and reconciliation with compassion; their involvement and nurturing encouraged the participation of witnesses and facilitated the collection of testimonies. Interviews with members of the commission suggest, for instance, that men were more likely than women to focus on a strict interpretation of the law. While women commissioners and committee members complied equally with the binding principles of the TRC Act, women were more likely to also be guided by the *spirit* of the TRC Act. The Act included a definition of gross human rights violations and a requirement that the TRC establish a record of the nature and causes of these abuses. The act emphasized that the process had to be victim-friendly, yet the Act did not include specific language to convey what this entailed. Women on the TRC developed a victim-friendly model. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, TRC Chair, described women's role this way:

Women are quite extraordinary; you know the central role they played in the liberation struggle. It was wonderful for our commission to have women in leadership roles, at all levels, who then brought the special gifts that men don't have. I mean women are nurturers, and this is an important attribute. They are different, and they bring the richness of

being distinct and different. The element of nurturing was central in the work of all the committees of the commission, especially the human rights violations committee . . . Women who came to the commission knew that when they brought their stories of suffering to the commission they would be listened to, that the commission would provide some nurturing in a way that they hadn't experienced . . . The women were extraordinary.

Various scholars in the field of gender studies have noted this nurturing quality, described as women's "culture."² Some have pointed out that women have a perspective that is distinct from that of men.³ It is "a set of habits, values, practices . . . and a way of seeing the world" that is distinctly feminine. Men who were interviewed about the contribution of women in the TRC also supported this view and stated that they sometimes relied on women and men for different perspectives. The participation and leadership of women—in significant numbers—on the TRC made a qualitative difference in its execution and effectiveness.

Women as Witnesses

Through participation in the TRC, the public was given an opportunity to reflect on and acknowledge moral responsibility for the past. More than half of the statements received by the commission were made by women, with black African women accounting for approximately 60% of these statements.⁴ In general, men appearing before the TRC spoke directly about their own experiences of pain and spoke of it in straightforward terms as human rights violations. Women, for the most part, addressed the suffering of others, usually sons and husbands,⁵ and were more circumspect in speaking about their own experiences of human rights abuses than men.⁶ Yet a significant number of women who were interviewed for this study felt that this particular approach to testifying made their participation significant.

This pattern—women speaking *about* others and not focusing on their own pain—was controversial. The media often stereotyped women witnesses as the "crying team" of the commission. (This criticism was in line with the disdainful labeling of the commission by some people as the "Kleenex commission.") Others, including some activists for women's rights, were concerned that the focus of women witnesses on others silenced women's own voices; they argued that the TRC was guilty of presenting women as "secondary objects."⁷ But some of the women interviewed for this

project made it clear that women were conscious of what they were doing by not focusing on their own experiences. Far from undermining their own experiences and needs, women were purposefully trying to get others to remember their own loved ones who were murdered. That quality of “bringing others along” through their accounts was considered a strength by some of the women interviewed for this study.

The intentional method of communicating on behalf of others has been described as the relational element of public testimony; women take on the onus of speaking out in order to engage others and *on behalf of* others. This quality indicates women’s sensitivity to the need to create and strengthen social bonds through their stories of pain and their understanding of the appropriate language required to engage with transitional institutions such as the commission. In the end, this approach to testifying was an important contribution to the work of the truth commission.

A central tenet of *ubuntu*, an indigenous philosophy, is that “a person is a person through other persons.” Both the interim constitution and the TRC Act made specific reference to *ubuntu*. “There is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization.” This philosophy has practical implications, as demonstrated by the approach adopted by the TRC to grant a perpetrator amnesty in exchange for full disclosure of a crime and demonstration that the crime was politically motivated. This study highlights the need for future research on the ways in which the gender dynamic has influenced the manifestation of *ubuntu*, and especially how the ethics of *ubuntu* have provided women with the ethical leadership, moral courage, and political influence to lead South Africans to the road of moral humanity, which requires embracing one’s former enemies.

Special Women’s Hearings

Although the TRC was founded at a time of gender consciousness in post-apartheid South African politics, like all official institutions and organizations, it was subject to old influences and biases. Activists for women’s rights and women’s participation recognized the dangers of assuming that the TRC would be free from gender bias. Activists for women’s rights encouraged the TRC to acknowledge the constraints that initially framed its work, and called for a gender sensi-

tive TRC, which led to special hearings focusing on women’s experiences during apartheid.⁸ Subsequently, the TRC decided that each region would hold at least one Special Women’s Hearing.⁹

The special hearings focused on women’s experience of gross human rights violations and provided a safe space for women who otherwise might not have come forward to testify. The testimonies of women at the special hearings demonstrate that the language of forgiveness can be used as a powerful peace-building tool. By being open to forgiveness, the women allowed themselves and the perpetrators to move toward healing and restoring a common sense of humanity—of *ubuntu*. The approach adopted by women in South Africa—which can be called an “*ubuntu* approach”—could be drawn on by the international community when designing post-conflict intervention programs.

Conclusion

The success of the TRC as a transitional justice mechanism is related in large part to the transparency and inclusiveness with which it was designed and conducted—a transparency and inclusiveness that women activists advocated for and that, in turn, encouraged the participation of grassroots networks of individual women. Women’s leadership, as members of the commission and as staff in critical positions, contributed to a compassionate and nurturing ethic on the TRC that promoted reconciliation. Women’s willingness to testify, both about the abuses they suffered and particularly about the abuses that their loved ones suffered, contributed significantly to the establishment of a new “truth” in South Africa and to a public record of the crimes of the apartheid era.

Above all, this study shows that reconciliation cannot be expected to take place only within a prescribed space or time. Perhaps the most enduring effect of totalitarian rule and the systematic oppression under apartheid cannot be measured in terms of numbers of the dead, but in damage to the human spirit, which must be restored. The TRC’s mandate has officially concluded, but the restoration must continue for individuals and communities. Outside formal mechanisms such as the TRC, in the small spaces where human beings engage with one another daily, society will continue to heal the trauma of violent conflict. Our findings show that, in South Africa, women have been guides on that courageous journey.

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, more than ten years after South Africa's first democratic elections, the nation is still on a journey of transition from a racist regime to a full-fledged democracy. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) played a critical role in moving the country through this period of transition, and women, just as they have in the overall political transformation in South Africa, contributed greatly to that process.

In the last decade, women have taken up positions as central actors on the national and international political stage, campaigning for the recognition of women's rights in South Africa. In the first democratic elections in 1994, 117 women were elected to 24 percent of seats (117 out of 490) in the National Assembly and the Senate (now the National Council of Provinces). The commitment to gender equity was affirmed by the election of Dr. Frene Ginwala as Speaker of the National Assembly, and the subsequent election of Baleka Kaositsile as Deputy Speaker. This was a radical departure from the apartheid era, during which a mere 2.8 percent of parliamentary representatives were women.¹⁰

By 1998 South Africa ranked seventh in the world in terms of governmental representation, with women constituting 25 percent of the national-level representatives, and third in the world when ranked with other developing countries. The increase in women's political participation was directly related to the work of women during the anti-apartheid struggle to achieve social emancipation and national liberation. Another factor contributing to the increased political participation of women is the policies and affirmative action mechanisms adopted by the ANC. Of the 117 women in parliament in 1998, 76 percent (89 seats) were members of the ANC.¹¹

To demonstrate its commitment to the equality of women, the government established an Office on the Status of Women to oversee and coordinate gender-related policy. In 1997 parliament passed legislation to create a National Commission on Gender Equality. This body was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that non-statutory bodies and the government

fulfill their commitment to gender equality. According to Chapter Nine of the constitution, the Office of the Public Protector, South Africa's Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) were three of the six institutions created to promote gender equality in South Africa's new democracy.¹² It is interesting to note that women form the majority of the commissioners in the SAHRC. And, significantly, South Africa has a woman, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, as a key leader in the defense portfolio. As a Quaker, and the first woman to hold a post in the Ministry of Defense, Madlala-Routledge has noted the importance of promoting peace, and plays a key role in implementing state security policy. This is an indication of the important contributions South African women have made, at a national level, to South Africa's transition from a state ravished by violence to a state that advocates for peace and the importance of human life.

Women's political participation [is] directly related to the work of women during the anti-apartheid struggle.

In addition to their participation in politics and formal government positions, women have also engaged in South Africa's

transition through their involvement in NGOs, and through parastatal and community-based organizations committed to furthering the principles of equality in civil society. Women activists have been working in their communities to create programs that deter community members from resorting to violence as a form of resolving conflict. The number of organizations dedicated to empowering women, through adult education for example, has mushroomed over the past ten years. This is partly a result of the democratic government's expressed commitment to gender equality, as well as South African women's determination and commitment to further the goals of gender equality through their political and civil involvement.

An examination of the TRC demonstrates the myriad ways in which women contributed toward the process of transitional justice, and this study seeks to examine women's participation in the TRC on different levels: as commissioners, as witnesses who appeared before the TRC, and as support staff. This study seeks to answer the question: what are the characteristics that

women brought to the TRC process, and how did their participation on the TRC enhance South Africa's transition to democracy?

This study is divided into two parts. Part One is a presentation of an historical overview of the South African conflict and the development of events leading to the establishment of the TRC, including a gender perspective. Part Two focuses on the research findings and analysis.

Rationale

Peace research tends to focus on the oppression of women but does not often address the question of what women can and do bring to the peace process.¹³ Literature that analyzes "gender" in countries going through political transitions often focuses on the representation of women in conventional politics. Research in this area has usually yielded statistics on the number of elected women representatives in the post-transition phase in the countries studied and examined changes in legislation. These studies include little analysis of how women's participation influences policy change, and whether changes in laws have translated into changes in the position of women both at the official government level and at the social, non-governmental level.

There is limited published research on the role of women in political transitions and in processes aimed at building lasting peace. There is a paucity of research that examines the role of women, what they bring to the table of democratization, how their participation in transitional democracy shapes reform and the development of new policies, and whether women's involvement in transitions strengthens the quality of both the transition and post-transition phases. Furthermore, transitional justice in different political contexts offers opportunities for cross-cultural research on factors that influence transitions from non-democratic regimes to democratic countries, and the policy outcomes that emerge from these transitions. As models of transitional justice based on truth commissions gain in attention and popularity, literature analyzing the effectiveness of this approach to building a culture of peace after mass violence, and its applicability in different contexts, has increased. With very few exceptions,¹⁴ there is little or no focus on the role of women in published research on truth commissions. The present case study of the TRC in South Africa seeks to address this problem.

At a time when the unfolding story of the twenty-first century is a pursuit for vengeance through ruthless murder and bloody massacres, violent wars conducted with weapons of mass destruction, peace deals between former enemies collapsing into cycles of bloody conflict, and heads of state who are not afraid to publicly declare their desire to target other leaders and to "eliminate" them, South Africa today serves as an example of a country that, despite all predictions that it would descend into civil war, has embraced the shared goals of social reconciliation and managed to quell the instinct for revenge, even as it continues to struggle with serious social, health, and economic problems.

A number of publications have called for a gendered approach to understanding the different ways in which women and men testified about their experiences of human rights violations before the TRC¹⁵ and the special arrangements that were made by the TRC for women's testimonies.¹⁶ However, the unique qualities that women bring to processes of transitional justice, through their testimonies at the TRC or through the positions they held while serving on the TRC, have not been adequately researched. This study will explore these and other questions related to gender issues in the context of South Africa's TRC.

Methodology

This study was conducted through the case study method of investigation. Four researchers interviewed different categories of participants on the TRC, with a special focus on women participants. An attempt was made to include a diverse range of women on the TRC from different class and racial backgrounds. In addition to the interviews, the TRC archives were researched to establish the ratio of women to men who appeared before the Human Rights Violations Committee of the TRC. The Special Hearing on Women held in Johannesburg was the focus of an investigation. Other archival material such as video clips of the TRC were used both to get data on women's participation and to orientate members of the research team who had not been exposed to the TRC. Select literature was reviewed to guide the qualitative approach to the data analysis.

Assumptions

Scholar Sarah Ruddick has proposed that women have an innate nurturing capacity, and that this provides sufficient evidence that women could play a key role in peacemaking.¹⁷ Ruddick was criticized for assuming

that a propensity for nurturing comes naturally to women and that it forms part of the fabric of their identities. Her critics argued that the roles women took as mothers (as opposed to child bearers) were social roles, enforced by social codes, and that these should not be confused with an intrinsic tendency to peacefulness. The debate over men and women's capacities for peace and violence continues. It has been increasingly demonstrated in the literature¹⁸ that peacefulness is not necessarily easily attained or maintained: it is a condition wrested from the social and political possibilities at hand, and therefore needs to be nurtured over time. The gender dynamics within these conditions are not static but shift and change according to the changing nature of politics, society, and economic transformation, particularly in terms of women's economic empowerment. Gender categories, Moore informs us, are not "natural" but social: their meanings and uses have to be ascertained in specific contexts, not taken for granted.¹⁹ What women bring to processes of transition, and the differences between what women and men offer, thus needs to be addressed in each instance, in full recognition of the multiple roles and the shifts that may occur on different levels over time.

Women are actors and agents in various social and political arenas—their capacities to act may be enhanced in some areas and constrained in others. The question that needs to be explored is whether there are essential differences between women's and men's experiences and styles of engagement in the diverse and/or similar roles they hold. Do women do things differently, or do men and women work in ways that are analogous to one another? When it comes to political participation, such as peace building and processes of social and political transition, do women bring differ-

ent skills than men do? Are men's and women's styles complementary or contradictory? If women bring different skills, how do women's contributions enhance processes aimed at political transformation?

Women in South Africa played a critical part in the struggle for liberation and also in the process of transition from an apartheid regime to a democratic country that upholds human rights. This study does not assert that women are naturally more peace loving than men; neither does this study assume that all women share a common experience of conflict and of transitional justice processes. However, empirical evidence of women's experiences of conflict in southern Africa suggests that women experience conflict differently from men.²⁰ Given that women experience conflict in a particular way, their contributions to the TRC, as witnesses, commissioners, and personnel, are important to understanding South Africa's transition to a democracy.

A second assumption that frames this study is that women should be recognized for the key role that they played in South Africa's liberation and transition. Women offered a particular approach toward resolving their own painful experiences of apartheid, and they also provided other women (and men) with the space to witness the extraordinary emotional trauma that is inextricably connected to the events that took place between 1960 and 1994. In order to record a more complete picture of the past, and to move into a future of peace, the voices of men and women need to be heard. This study works from this assumption, and looks particularly at the contributions offered by the women who witnessed the process of transition through their involvement with the TRC.

PART ONE: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

A Brief History of Apartheid

Although apartheid was codified into law when the Nationalist Party took control of the government after the 1948 elections, the exclusion of blacks from participation in political life and their relegation to second-class citizenship in South Africa did not begin then. The foundations for apartheid were outlined by policies from an earlier era, during British colonial rule and in the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

The term *apartheid*, coined by the ruling Nationalist Party (NP) government, literally means separateness. The NP's bedrock goal was racial, cultural, and political purity. The effect of apartheid was not only to legalize all forms of discrimination against blacks, but also to disenfranchise

blacks and reduce them to second-class citizenship.

The NP had a strong basis in Afrikaner nationalism and enjoyed a significant majority in parliament,

which grew even larger in the 1970s and 1980s when anti-apartheid opposition was at its peak both inside and outside South Africa. The party drew its membership from both Afrikaans- and English-speaking white South Africans, who formed a mere 13% of the total population. The party became increasingly stronger with each decade after coming to power, which signalled increasing support among white voters.

The apartheid government was also characterized by a predominance of men in key leadership positions. As mentioned above, prior to 1994, women constituted only 2.8 percent of parliamentary representatives.²¹ One of the few women to be elected as a member of parliament during the apartheid era was Helen Suzman. Suzman was elected in 1953 and kept her seat until her retirement from active politics in 1989. In 1959 Suzman became the sole MP of the Progressive Party, a position she held for 13 years. A strong political opponent of the NP and human rights activist, Suzman has been lauded as "the parliamentarian who fought longest, hardest, and most consistently against all invasions of human rights and the rule of law."²²

The apartheid government was also characterized by a predominance of men in key leadership positions.

Recognizing the prevailing patriarchal prejudices of the apartheid government, many white South African women mobilized against the apartheid state through NGOs like the Black Sash and the End Conscription Campaign. These organizations played an important role in raising awareness around South Africa's military conscription and also around the impact of apartheid's discriminatory policies on the lives of the majority of South Africans. Individual women, like Ruth First, worked in alliance with apartheid's opposition, giving their skills, time, and money to further the resistance movement in South Africa.

A key factor in the political conflict in South Africa was the apartheid government's conscription law requiring young white males to join the army and the

deployment of police and later army troops into the black townships throughout the country. Tacitly or openly, white people supported their sons' participation in the war waged by

the apartheid government in black townships. Most whites believed that the government was doing the right thing in order to protect the state against the African National Congress (ANC) "terrorist" insurgents, as Nelson Mandela's organization was described then. Perhaps the strongest support of the apartheid government and its war in black townships and in the neighboring countries along the borders of South Africa was the Afrikaans church, the Nederduiste Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK). The NGK was the "moral" voice of the laws of apartheid, and church leaders used biblical justification for every controversial law passed by the government. There is sufficient evidence to show that spiritual leaders in the Afrikaans church did not create a moral climate in which its members could draw from their religious convictions and see apartheid as a crime against humanity.²³ Church leaders portrayed the crimes perpetrated by the apartheid government operatives not only as part of a broad political and military strategy, but also as divinely sanctioned acts. The religious context was significant in perpetuating the survival of apartheid and in maintaining its support among the majority of white voters.

International Response to Apartheid

It is ironic that the National Party, the party that led South Africa into legalized oppression, came into power in 1948, the same year that the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). South Africa, which was a member state of the UN, abstained from voting on the adoption of the UDHR. The National Party government had already begun formulating and implementing apartheid laws that would systematically violate the declared rights in the UDHR, as well as the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

In the early 1960s, the oppressive laws of apartheid began to come under strong condemnation from the UN and the international community. There were, for instance, non-binding UN General Assembly resolutions denouncing apartheid and Security Council resolutions that placed an arms embargo on South Africa. Subsequently, many multilateral and bilateral international instruments against apartheid passed, ranging from economic sanctions, to an arms embargo, to support for the armed anti-apartheid struggle. Perhaps the most significant of these instruments was the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1973.

The ANC's Declaration of Armed Struggle

The ANC was founded in 1912 to campaign for non-racial democracy and human rights. The ANC was popularized as a "people's liberation movement" when it formed a women's branch, the African Women's League in 1919, and formed the ANC Youth League in the 1940s. Women engaged in the liberation struggle in a number of ways that included and moved beyond women's involvement in the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). For example, women like Mamphela Ramphele and Cheryl Carolus were activists in the Black Consciousness Movement, encouraging all people who had been defined by the apartheid state as "non-white" to embrace their identity as beautiful and strong black individuals. Women also played a critical role as activists in the South African Students Organisation (SASO) and Communist Party (CP) by raising awareness of the liberation struggle among students in South Africa. Women's participation in the struggle against apartheid was, at times, undermined by the sexist attitudes and behavior of their male counterparts;

however, their experience of discrimination fueled their commitment to see the implementation of gender-sensitive democratic policies that would undermine racial and sexual discrimination.

For decades the ANC used peaceful forms of protest, but after 1960 the nature of the struggle was transformed. On March 21, 1960, the Pan African Congress (PAC), a breakaway organization from the ANC that had been established by Robert Sobukwe in the previous year, organized a protest against the apartheid government's pass laws. Several thousand black people gathered outside the police station at Sharpeville, a township in the northern town of Vereeniging, to protest the notorious pass laws that required blacks to carry internal passports that regulated all aspects of their lives. The police opened fire on the crowd, killing 69 (most of whom were shot in the back fleeing, and all of whom were unarmed) and wounding 186. Countrywide demonstrations, protests, and strikes followed as anger mounted in black areas. On March 30, the government declared a state of emergency, detained close to 20,000 people, and banned the PAC and ANC. The two political organizations went underground, and some of their members went into exile.

Both the PAC and the ANC concluded that this kind of brutality by the apartheid government spelled the end of peaceful protest. Force had to be answered with force. Nelson Mandela announced the establishment of *Umkonto we Sizwe* (MK, or "The Spear of the Nation"), an armed wing of the ANC that would carry out acts of sabotage, and went into hiding. The arrest of Nelson Mandela in 1963 and the raid on the farm Rivonia, where Mandela was in hiding with other leaders of the ANC, led to a long trial the following year and to life sentences for Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and six others.

The government responded by stepping up its security apparatus and establishing the notorious Bureau of State Security (BOSS), which soon became the most feared symbol of state repression. Over the next decades other discriminatory laws were passed, and repression spun out of control; hundreds of thousands of apartheid's opponents were detained without trial while thousands were severely tortured, and many died in detention. Women were not excluded from the harassment and torture endured under the apartheid government; their participation in the MK exposed many of them, as well as their male counterparts, to sexual abuse, humiliation, and torture by the state.

State-orchestrated violence escalated during the 1980s when covert operations units were established in the security police and defense departments; these units maintained a network of police informants (black and white), trained murder squads, and worked with scientists skilled in the “art” of biological warfare. There was an increase in the use of torture by the security police, mysterious deaths, the disappearance of political activists, mass killings, and police cover-up operations. At the same time, the police were given immense powers and immunity through laws that protected them from being prosecuted for the human rights abuses they committed. The liberation army of the ANC stepped up its armed struggle against apartheid and engineered several bombings of strategic targets. This intensified the violence between the government and the ANC. Initially, the ANC attacked “military targets,” but by the mid-1980s, the ANC exercised less caution in avoiding civilian casualties. It claimed that such deaths were in retaliation for massacres of black civilians in the black townships throughout South Africa, as well as those killed by the South African security forces in cross-border military missions aimed at ANC and PAC combatants who were operating from the neighboring countries such as Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe.

A significant factor in the rise of civilian casualties as a result of ANC bombing operations was the constitutional changes of 1983. These changes allowed for the participation of Indians and the mixed race group, the Coloreds, in parliament, and the exclusion of the country’s black majority. This triggered widespread violent protests and more repression from the government, and the anti-apartheid struggle shifted to a more violent level. Some of the most brutal scenes of violence were a result of the conflict between the ANC, which was the biggest anti-apartheid organization in South Africa with cross-racial and multi-ethnic membership throughout the country, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which was viewed by some to be collaborating with the government, and whose membership was mainly in the KwaZulu/Natal area.²⁴ The government stepped up its own violent measures. For the first time, troops of the South African Defense Force were deployed in black townships, first in the Eastern Cape, and then throughout the country. In

Women were exposed to sexual abuse, humiliation, and torture by the state.

this period of violence during the mid 1980s, the government imposed a series of states of emergency, which plunged the country into even more violent conflict.

Transformation of National Party Thinking

In the midst of country-wide violence, leaders of the National Party began to hold secret meetings with Nelson Mandela in prison, a clear sign that the government realized that the spiral of violence was leading the country to ruin and the international isolation of South Africa was becoming too much to bear. In May 1988, the government became more open about the contact it made with Nelson Mandela, and a committee was established to handle contact with Mandela and other members of the ANC in prison and in exile. The idea of a negotiated settlement originated with Nelson Mandela’s request for high-level talks between the ANC leadership and government. Mandela met with former President P. W. Botha in July 1989 and rejected Botha’s offer to release him on the condition that he denounce the armed struggle against apartheid.

In August 1989, Botha resigned from the presidency due to health problems. Nelson Mandela would later propose a “road map” for future negotiations to Botha’s successor, F. W. de Klerk, and a power-sharing plan for the NP and its rival organizations. De Klerk released Mandela from prison in February 1990. This was followed by the release from prison of other leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, the lifting of the bans of several liberation movements, and the repeal of all apartheid discriminatory laws. A process of transformation unfolded that would bring South Africans of all political organizations to the negotiating table. A series of discussions ensued, with signed accords marking important milestones in the process of negotiations. A major outcome of the early phase of multi-party dialogue was the establishment of a widely representative commission, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), which was established to negotiate the modalities of transferring power to the majority that resulted in the election of Nelson Mandela and the ANC in April 1994.

Gender and the Negotiation Process²⁵

“As women, citizens of South Africa, we are here to claim our rights!” These words open the Women’s

Charter. The Women's Charter was initiated by women in the ANC in 1992, and was adopted just before the 1994 elections by a national coalition of approximately 100 diverse women's organizations in South Africa. This charter was a result of a country-wide survey that encouraged women to declare their aspirations, needs, and interests in the democratic South Africa.²⁶

The visibility of women in campaigns and in post-apartheid policy-making debates in South Africa is sufficient evidence that women's involvement in the struggle against apartheid was not minor. South African women's role in their own organizations, and as fellow activists in the liberation movement, is well documented.²⁷ Yet when negotiations began, women had to *campaign* for inclusion. Joyce Seroke, who, like many anti-apartheid activists, was tortured and served several terms in apartheid's prisons, was interviewed for this study. Seroke explained that the inclusion of women at the negotiation table did not come naturally; former women activists played a fundamental role in ensuring not only the inclusion of women at the negotiation table, but also the inclusion of gender issues in the constitution of South Africa. "They [male participants at negotiations] had to face the facts and realise the huge contribution that we women made," Seroke said:

There was no way that they could simply forget all of that and wipe out the years of sacrifice: balancing our roles in the home—motherhood on the one hand, and demands of leadership in the political arena on the other. We absolutely had to be included, not just for numbers, but we wanted to be taken seriously. And they did. Look at our constitution now. Look at all the independent structures set up to monitor gender awareness in government and other sectors; and government supports that.

It was not an easy undertaking for women to play a role in drafting South Africa's constitution. They had to convince their parties as well as the entire constitutional assembly that women's rights needed to form an integral part of the constitution, but they were successful. The constitution, as a result of their effort, protects many essential rights for women and aims to improve the quality of life for those women discriminated against under apartheid. These include the right to

equality, education, access to adequate housing, health care services, and sufficient food and water.

Women parliamentarians have played a major role in mainstreaming women's issues. In consultation with civil society a report was drawn up in 1994 identifying the key areas that needed to be redressed. Part of South Africa's commitment to redressing gender inequality was demonstrated by its adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and its ratification of the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1995.

Men also added their contributions to the creation of gender awareness in the new government, especially in the creation of gender sensitivity among members of the ANC. In an interview with Albie Sachs, a constitutional court judge, he explained his motivation for the inclusion of the "gender clause" in the constitution.

By the time the TRC was established, there was sufficient political awareness and will among policymakers; conscious effort to include women on the TRC at different levels of

seniority was therefore expected.

Women parliamentarians have played a major role in mainstreaming women's issues.

Establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

A major concern of Codesa was what to do about the human rights abuses committed during apartheid rule and how to bring about social cohesion in a country ravaged by violence. The result was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The interim constitution of South Africa laid the foundations for the establishment of the TRC. The national unity and reconciliation themes that guided the work of the TRC were set out in the "postscript" of the interim constitution as follows:

This Constitution provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterized by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex. The pursuit of national unity, the well being of all South African citizens, and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society.²⁸

While the constitution emphasized reconciliation, another component that would be central to, and direct the work of the envisaged TRC process was giving voice to victims and survivors to allow them not only to tell their stories of pain and suffering, but also to hear public acknowledgment from perpetrators. In his speech to parliament, Dullah Omar, then Minister of Justice, clearly defined the government's desire for the TRC process to benefit victims:

If the wounds of the past are to be healed . . . if future violations of human rights are to be avoided and indeed, if we are to successfully initiate the building of a human rights culture, then disclosure of the truth and its acknowledgement is essential . . . It is the victims themselves who must speak. Their voices need to be heard.²⁹

The TRC had a mandate to focus mainly on four issues, namely:

1. to establish as complete a picture as possible of the nature and causes of human rights violations in the period between 1960 and 1994;
2. to give victims of human rights abuses a chance to speak publicly about the abuses they suffered;
3. to grant amnesty to perpetrators of human rights abuses in exchange for full disclosure of atrocities they committed and a demonstration that those crimes were politically motivated; and
4. to lay the foundation for national reconciliation in order to break the cycle of violence.

The TRC's mandate period extended from March 1960 to May 1994. March 1960 was chosen as the starting point in recognition of one of the most significant events in the political history of South Africa, the

Sharpeville Massacre, and also because March 1960 marked the turning point of the anti-apartheid struggle and a major landmark in South Africa's violent political conflict. May 1994 marked the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

Three committees were established to pursue the broad TRC mandate: the Amnesty Committee, the Human Rights Violations Committee, and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. The TRC was required to hold public hearings of as many victims' testimonies as possible in the prescribed period of 18 months. The Human Rights Violations Committee was responsible

for this task. Public hearings of all applications for amnesty were mandatory. To this end, the TRC Act granted the commission extensive rights, including rights of search and seizure, and the authority to issue subpoenas and

warrants of arrest. Seventeen commissioners, who were appointed by former President Nelson Mandela, and ten additional committee members with diverse professional, religious, and racial backgrounds oversaw the TRC's work in four regions: the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, and Natal. The main office of the TRC was set up in Cape Town, with centralized offices in the other regions.

Women on the TRC took on many roles, including as commissioners, activists, bystanders, beneficiaries, victims, and survivors. These roles were sometimes willingly taken, sometimes less so—as when a witness' statement was selected for public testimony—sometimes under the pressure of historical and social circumstance. The effects may differ, and may affect the extent to which women contributed to the work of transition.

Women on the TRC took on many roles, including as commissioners, activists, bystanders, beneficiaries, victims, and survivors.

PART TWO: FINDINGS

The findings section of this report is divided as follows: a brief presentation of some statistical information on the participation of women on the TRC, followed by the presentation and discussion of interview data, and data collected from research conducted on the website of the TRC.

Statistical Findings on the Participation of Women

The investigation into the number of women who participated in the TRC was divided into four categories: witnesses who appeared before the Human Rights Violations Committee, commissioners, committee members, and administrative staff. Of the total of 21,227 testimonies presented nationally by witnesses before the TRC, 56.5% were women. While victims of human rights abuses cut across racial lines, with historically oppressed black groups more represented than whites, the majority of them were black African; more than 60% of the submissions made by women to the TRC were by African women.

Therefore, there was a certain consciousness to have a significant representation of African women serve as the public face of the TRC: 41% of commissioners were women, 43% of them black African, 29% white, 14% mixed race, and 14% of Indian descent. Committee seats were divided equally between men and women. The commission had a significant percentage of women serving as administrative staff, and 75% of the regional managers were women.

There are several factors that contributed to the creation of a progressive balance of men and women on the TRC. The most critical of these was the openness with which the TRC was established, which distinguished it from previous truth commissions. Both the design of the TRC and the selection of commissioners were conducted through extensive consultations with representatives of civil society. “Maximum transparency”³⁰ is a factor that characterized the approach taken throughout the transition process, from negotiations to the building of the new constitution.

Findings in this study lead us to conclude that transparency is critical in processes of transition, as it opens up possibilities for the inclusion of a range of actors in both the transition and post-transition phases. Women, often left out of political decision-making processes in times of transition, also stand to benefit from an approach that is open and transparent. The TRC’s proceedings were open to the public, giving rise to what Alex Boraine calls “maximum transparency.”

Women Commissioners and Staff: Creating a Victim-Friendly Process

The work of the TRC was guided by the legal rules passed in parliament through the National Healing and Reconciliation Act of 1995 (TRC Act). Data collected from interviews with members of the commission suggest that men were more likely than

women to focus on the *letter* of the law, or its explicit provisions. While women commissioners and committee members were expected to comply with the binding principles of the TRC Act equally with men, where necessary, they were guided more by the

spirit, or implicit intent, of the TRC Act. For example, the spirit of the Act required that the TRC establish a record of the nature and causes of gross human rights violations, and that this be conducted within the Act’s definition of gross human rights abuses. The Act emphasised that the process had to be “victim-friendly,” but nothing was specified in the Act to convey what this entailed. Here is what one male commissioner who chose to remain anonymous said:

“Maximum transparency” is a crucial aspect of transitional justice processes, and, in the case of South Africa, it enabled a wide range of actors to contribute to South Africa’s reconciliation.

Our interpretation of the notion of “victim-friendly” was that—by “our” I mean some of us male commissioners—it was that we simply had to provide the setting that would allow witnesses to testify before the commission in the way they wanted. But the women on the commission said no, the TRC had to do more, that it had to provide emotional support for witnesses at all times. Now what do you call that? It is certainly a special quality. Something to do with caring. Men of course can be caring. But

there are certain things that sort of come naturally for women.

Glenda Wildschut, who was a commissioner based at the Cape Town TRC office, elaborated on this theme:

There is no doubt that women on the TRC approached the work differently. One of the things we thought seriously about was the question of support for witnesses. People were going to speak about their traumas for the first time; it was fine to provide the space and to sit and listen. But we had to think about what happens to them as they were considering coming to the TRC, and then when they finally came to tell their story. The idea of training TRC counsellors or “briefers” as we called them, who met with the witnesses before and after they testified, illustrates the care-giving elements of the TRC, and this is what women brought to the process.

Wildschut explained that it is understood within the field of psychology that when people deal with difficult material they need support. It is important to note that some of the men on the TRC also noted that women brought qualities beyond just their professional knowledge to the debates and planning on the TRC. Here is what Archbishop Desmond Tutu said about women’s involvement on the TRC:

Women are quite extraordinary; you know the central role they played in the liberation struggle. It was wonderful for our commission to have women in leadership roles, at all levels, who then brought the special gifts that men don’t have. I mean women are nurturers, and this is an important attribute. They are different, and they bring the richness of being distinct and different. The element of nurturing was central in the work of all the committees of the commission, especially the human rights violations committee . . . Women who came to the commission knew that when they brought their stories of suffering to the commission they would be listened to, that the commission would provide some nurturing in a way that they hadn’t experienced . . . The women were extraordinary.

Glenda Wildschut talked about the continuous caring for witnesses, and how the words spoken by commissioners provided an important “holding” experience for the witnesses:

We were very conscious of the potential psychological damage that could be triggered by testifying. It

was not enough to provide counseling for witnesses at the briefing and debriefing phase. What we said to witnesses when they appeared in public was also important to continue the thread of caring. So for example the comments made by commissioners at the end of a witnesses testimony conveyed a lot about the level of understanding, I mean the deeper level of connection both with the testimony and with the person testifying. I observed that women did this very well. Their statements and their questions, even if they were searching for clarification, or for factual detail, they always tried to connect with how the witness was feeling. And that was important.

It seems that the ability to connect was closely linked to the caring, nurturing quality of women’s role on the TRC. Tiny Maya, who was a committee member based at the East London office, remembers the “distinctly different” ways in which she and a male colleague approached their work:

It wasn’t that he was not concerned about the feelings of the witnesses and their emotional status during or before they testified. But he was certainly not focused on that. He was thinking about factual information, you know, the task at hand, which was to give factual information—“as complete a picture as possible” as the Act says. And it wasn’t that I was not conscious of the mandate of the Act, but I knew one could pursue further details of testimony through, for example, the researchers, or the investigators. What was of concern to me when a witness testified was how to get her or him to feel that this was his or her moment, that we did not just want the facts, we were also concerned about how they *felt*, and how they would be feeling in the days after their testimony. Of course we have no control of people’s feelings; we were not trying to be psychologists. But at least people knew that the commission was a place where they could unburden, secure in the knowledge that they could bring their feelings. In a sense their testimony was a package that came with the emotions—the fear, the uncertainty, confusion and all that had brought in their lives. Now, witnesses had to feel embraced to know that that was okay. Women in my view were the “embracing” arm of the commission.

These qualities described in the statements above by members of the commission seem to be crucial, especially where reconciliation is a goal. Reconciliation

focuses on the human factor, on factual information as well as on emotional content. For reconciliation to take place, both of these components of people's stories must be acknowledged. One of the important outcomes of a process of dialogue that conveys elements of caring and nurturing is that it opens up the possibility of transformation for victims and survivors as well as for those who caused their loss and suffering. Evidence for this can be found in the many stories of forgiveness that were heard before the TRC, which are discussed below.

Interviews with some of the women who were serving on the TRC as administrators suggest that women brought a special set of values to the process of political transition, values that are defined as intrinsically *of* women. Some women in the study talked about "gentleness" in their approach and talked about this quality as something that is decidedly *woman* and feminine. Marcella Naidoo, for example, who was the regional director of the TRC in Cape Town and administrative head of the public hearings process in the Western Cape, said:

TRC administrators suggest that women brought a special set of values to the process of political transition.

There was gentleness in the way that we worked together and with the members of the public. I'd say this is the feminine consciousness. There was, one might say, a certain measure of tolerance. I mean, here we were, working as women in the administration side of the TRC, and some of the people I supervised were from the former apartheid government. Now it was interesting to see men were more likely than us women to remark about this state of affairs. Sometimes it seemed as if men wanted the others to remember their past, actually not just to remember, but also to make them uncomfortable about it. But I was always conscious about how the very fact that circumstances of democratic change had thrown us in a situation where we had to work together must have been anxiety-provoking for so many of the whites, who in the past were in the employ of the apartheid government. So it was a kind of mission for me, to try and make others feel comfortable about themselves, rather than making them feel guilty . . . It's just part of caring. Yes, that's it. It's women's *ethos* of care. It's that quality of being a woman that allows women to reach out to others without feeling that they'll be losing any-

thing or compromising themselves in any way. Men, I think, are always afraid of losing something—their dignity, their power, and stuff like that. For me I know it was about how to make relationships in my team to work.

Naidoo said that she decided early on in her work on the TRC that she was not going to "mimic" men, as she found their approach to the work "stifling." "Every time we try to become like men in our leadership," she said, "it's not appropriate." She explained that it was all about approach. She explained that her "forceful but gentle" approach brought out the best in the administrative staff who were crucial in the day-to-day running of public hearings and other affairs of the TRC. Asked if her style of leadership could necessarily be associated with her being a woman, Naidoo responded without hesitation:

Oh yes, it is absolutely because I'm a woman. I've been there before you see; I've been looked down upon; I've been in situations where nothing much

was expected of me, both because I'm a woman, and because I'm black. I wouldn't want other women to go through that kind of experience. So I see its effects in their work and try to make sure that they come out of their terrified shells and become actors in the field of change.

There is significant support for this particularly "womanly" characteristic both in other statements of subjects interviewed as well as in scholarly work reviewed for the study. Mary Burton, one of the TRC commissioners, and a founding member and activist in the women's anti-apartheid movement, Black Sash, was asked what she brought to the work of the TRC. She pointed out that it was her sense of dedication to human rights issues throughout her life:

Having worked with women on these issues for most of my adult life, one comes to understand that there's a particular way—women do things with compassionate dedication. Most of the problems that were the target of our campaigns during apartheid years affected families; women were always the ones who felt the effects of the terrible laws acutely. For me the TRC was like an extension of my work in the Black Sash. I drew a lot on the skills I learnt working with other women for many years. When you see a woman with babies going

through so much suffering, as a woman your heart goes out to the mother. You know how it would feel were the roles reversed; you put yourself in her shoes. There's something that draws you to the pain of another mother, something that invites your empathy. And that was essential in our work on the TRC.

Asked how women contributed to the success of the TRC, Burton said:

The success of the TRC itself was a result of the contribution of all who were involved in it. Women were not always the ones whose contribution led to positive outcome of certain activities. But there's a management style that I think women brought to the TRC, an attitude of cooperation rather than competition. All commissioners had a sense of what the outcome of the TRC would be. There were many women on the TRC who were willing to go beyond the strict rules of the Act that governed the TRC, not to ignore the legal guidelines, but simply to find practical ways to do what they had to do, and at the same time maintain the spirit of the law. For example, in our Cape Town office, when we were making findings on the statements submitted to the commission, Pumla [TRC Committee member and the author of this study] and I realized that many submissions didn't meet the TRC's criteria for "victim"—people not found to be victims wouldn't qualify for the government's reparations. So we decided to broaden the criteria by applying the category of "severe ill-treatment" loosely. This made it possible for many women to be included as victims in the final TRC findings . . . I think we were driven by concern, compassionate concern, and knowing—understanding and being able to put ourselves in the shoes of many of the people whose statements we were reading. Our male colleagues were more likely to have insisted on the clearer, rigid standards, which required that one looked for evidence of physical bodily injury to make the judgment that a witness had suffered torture or the kinds of gross human rights violations recognised by the Act.

Mary Burton's statement touches on the special quality that women brought to the commission. Various scholars in the field of gender studies have noted this quality. It has been described as women's "culture."³¹ Some have pointed out that women have a particular characteristic that is distinct from the perspectives of

men and from their outlook in life.³² It is "a set of habits, values, practices . . . and a way of seeing the world" that is distinctly feminine. Men who were interviewed about the contribution of women in the TRC also supported this view and clearly showed that they sometimes relied on women and men for different perspectives. Charles Villa Vicencio, former head of research for the TRC and current director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, commented on what women brought to the TRC process:

There was a lot of competition on the TRC, and this certainly did not exclude women. Women, however, were less about competition than they were about getting our national agenda up and running. What happened in the research department is a good example. In the final days of the TRC, when victims' hearings had ended and the writing of the final report begun, women were by far the most productive. They were focused on producing good work, on getting the report right, not on competing for important roles as far as writing the final report was concerned. This quality of cooperation, as opposed to competition, is very often found more in women than men, and the women on the research team certainly demonstrated this.

In his statement, Villa Vicencio concurs with the aspects of difference between men and women that other interviewees identified. Perhaps another way of expressing this quality is the ability for empathic connection with those who appeared before the TRC. Some may consider an attitude of compassion toward another as a "weakness." In fact, this is probably why there has been a strong impulse to view the exclusion of women from political participation as "natural," to keep women in the confines of domestic affairs, and to view politics as largely a male domain on the basis that women are "weak" and that they are likely to fail as political beings. Yet, in the view of one of the researchers for this project, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (interviewed by Tamryn Bekker), empathy played a critical role in her work on the TRC: "There were some of us on the TRC who made a conscious decision to lead the way with demonstrating how critical empathic connection with different participants on the TRC was, connecting with people who carried different identities to the TRC." This stance was necessary, Gobodo-Madikizela said, and she believes that because women were willing to reach out and cross barriers,

they brought a more human element to what could have become a quasi-legalistic process:

My own work on the TRC was about this [reaching out]. I can cite at least one example that demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach. We had a problem on the TRC; public hearings had been in session for two months throughout all the regions, and white people were simply not visible at the hearings. As coordinator of the public hearings of the TRC in the Western Cape, I had to figure out a solution to this. The first step was to figure out how to engage white people with the process, to find something that they could make them identify with the work we were doing. Now, army conscription is one thing in apartheid history that affected all white families. So we approached a woman whose son had been killed in “action” and asked her if she could tell her story before the TRC. You must understand that this was quite radical, to bring a story from “the other side” to the human rights violations hearings. Most people within the TRC were outraged. A lot of behind-the-scenes work followed, where I had to get the support of the people in power, Archbishop Tutu, Alex Boraine, Dumisa Ntsebeza (the head of investigators), and then put together a conscript hearings “think tank,” which was drawn from across departments, including some sections in admin.

The decision to bring stories of conscription to public hearings was in part political. But it was mainly a result of a sense—as a woman—that those women who lost their children in a violent “war” can’t be satisfied simply with brandishing the “heroes” flag over the death of their sons. As it turned out, there were many ex-conscripts who needed to face the public to talk about their experiences in a war that history has proved was unnecessary. The result of the efforts to bring those stories on board was that for the first time, we had a much more visible white presence at our hearings, and white people started attending public hearings.

A special identification with the families of the soldiers who lost their lives in apartheid’s war, particularly with the mothers, was a main reason for the strategic decision to focus on the story of conscripts in the former South African army, and the decision became a turning point in the way that white South Africans responded to the TRC process. Gobodo-Madikizela continued:

I believe that many women on the TRC shared my sense of empathy, and there are women whom I

wouldn’t include in this category. I’m reluctant to conclude, however, that men on the TRC were low on empathic skills. But empathy, expressed by commissioners and witnesses alike on the TRC, went a long way; it really gave the TRC what is now its historical reputation. Without empathy, I don’t think the notions of shared ideas about future and reconciliation—let alone forgiveness—would have been realised as the symbols of hope that they’ve represented in the collective minds of South Africans.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela explained that in her work she was motivated by a sense of compassion and understanding of the pain and silence that most of the witnesses who came to the TRC had endured. Did she think compassion was a quality unique only to women?

I think that women are more comfortable, more ready to show their compassion than men. There are men who are compassionate, and who are not afraid to show this side of their personality. Archbishop Tutu famously broke down at a public hearing of the TRC, moved by the testimony of a witness during the first week of the TRC public hearings. Most women don’t have fears that their “soft” side might be a sign of weakness, or that it might diminish them in any way. Victims of trauma, wherever they are, do better when messages are communicated clearly, and one of the things they need is clear communication of support. When women are in positions of leadership, they can be relied on to provide this. To get perpetrators of systematic abuse to acknowledge wrongdoing, one has to be able to empathize to some degree with them and to be emotionally present, to be willing to get into the shoes of the perpetrator in order to understand him—in South Africa’s TRC the perpetrators were men—without feeling that one is relinquishing one’s moral stance. Part of the reason that some conflict resolution interventions don’t lead to any significant dialogue about reconciliation is that there is little focus on how to create an environment in which perpetrators can acknowledge wrongdoing. That acknowledgement is what invites the victim to engage and to reach out with forgiveness, if not forgiveness with acceptance. Some measure of compassion is critical for this to happen, and this is why so many disclosures by perpetrators were accompanied by remorseful apologies.

It seems that the unique qualities that women brought to the TRC helped them find ways to extend the

mandate of the Act to make the process of the TRC more inclusive. The example of the special hearing on conscripts, described in the interview above, illustrates this point. In addition, Gobodo-Madikizela approached leaders of the *NGK Moeder Kerk* (“Mother Church”) to discuss the possibility of their speaking about the Afrikaans Church’s support of apartheid. The leaders of the *NGK* in Stellenbosch appeared to present testimony about the Afrikaans Church’s role in promoting support for the policies of apartheid within the Church at the same hearing where the mother of a young man killed while serving on the South African army testified. The significant attendance by whites at this hearing was a symbol of hope for the dialogue that the TRC had started, and an illustration of how the ethic of compassion works. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela elaborates on the issue of compassion:

Since that public hearing that received so much publicity, both because of the number of white people who attended, and also because of the story that many white people identify with, I have reflected on the first meeting I had with one of the mothers of the men killed in apartheid’s war. In the days preceding my meeting with her I thought to myself: how sad that women whose young sons were killed fighting apartheid’s war could not be given space to talk about their pain of loss. I knew that there would be some who may still feel that apartheid was right. But I was convinced—I know you’ll ask me why I was convinced—that there would be mothers who had questions then, but could not speak out. Those were the mothers I had in mind, and hopefully their testimony would cause others to rethink their stance.

It was concern for the voices of those mothers who probably felt the TRC was not for them, that I suggested to the TRC Human Rights Violations Committee that we include the story of army conscription. There was a lot of opposition to the idea, with some on the TRC saying, “how can we invite people who waged a war in the townships and killed so many people to share a platform with victims. How can we invite them to a victims’ public hearing?” My position was that the TRC is interested in “a full picture” of the causes of human

rights abuses, and that part of getting the full picture is allowing a diversity of voices, including those who, for whatever reason, now feel wounded by their support of apartheid policies. You know what surprised me the most at that hearing? It was not the number of white people who turned up, but

the support that black women witnesses gave the white woman whose son’s story was told to the TRC. She was the only white mother when the witnesses met us for a debriefing session after the hearing,

and the women who could speak English or Afrikaans said something supportive to her, those who couldn’t express in words what their feelings were smiled at her or made some human connection. One of the women went up to her and just embraced her. This was, for me, compassion—*women’s* compassion—at work.

The results of this research demonstrate that women’s presence in significant numbers among commissioners and staff provided a nurturing environment that allowed for a generous interpretation of the TRC mandate and a victim-friendly atmosphere. These contributions are highlighted because they emerged as unique or distinct from the contributions of men. This is not to say, however, that women did not make contributions in areas that are more stereotypically “masculine” or in ways that their male colleagues did, too. Commissioner Yasmin Sooka, for instance, has been recognized for her contributions in terms of legal analysis, and other women made contributions “regarding hard-nosed research into the patterns of human rights violations.”³³

Women Witnesses: A Different Approach Yielded Success

As stated earlier, more than half the statements received by the commission were by women, and submissions by African women account for approximately 60 percent of these statements.³⁴ In general, men appearing before the TRC spoke directly about their own experiences of pain and spoke of it in straightforward terms that directly addressed their experiences as human rights violations. However, for the most part, women addressed the suffering of others, usually sons and husbands.³⁵ Women were more circumspect in speaking about their own experiences of human rights

The qualities that women brought to the TRC helped them to . . . make the process of the TRC more inclusive.

abuses than men.³⁶ Yet some women who were interviewed for this study felt that this approach to their testimony made their participation particularly significant:

When I went up there I didn't want to talk about me. No. How would that bring out my son's story? How would it help me heal this void of silence? How would it get other mothers to hear what our children went through, especially those mothers who had a normal life and whose children had normal upbringing? I wanted to talk about my son not only to resurrect his memory, but also to say: "hey, listen, here is a human being, a child, a son, who was loved by his mother, who was tortured, murdered, died for his country." Then you invite others to participate in the process of remembering your child. I think it's a sense of sacrifice that women are capable of, a certain kind of abandonment—is that the right word? Anyway, this kind of putting yourself behind others. That's something women can do, to put others first, for the greater good. That's what we were able to do [quote from Nomsa].

What good would it be to talk about myself? My pain is evident in the words I express about the loss of my son. I wanted to talk about my son so that all the white women who lost their sons in the army can know that the time for silence is past and gone. So that they too can realise that the truth commission was not just for blacks, but also for whites. Ja, men spoke about themselves when they came to the truth commission. But you see that's how men are. It's about themselves, what they went through, their pain, their struggle. But women are able to step back and say: how can we make this story ours? That's what I did on the commission, and I did that by not focusing on myself in my testimony about my son [quote from Ann-Marie].

This illustrates that public testimony can be used as a tool of engagement with others, to get people to vicariously experience the pain that others felt, and to enable them to find language to speak about the unspeakable. This was the essence of the TRC, to get South Africans to confront their terrible past and to find

space to deal with the diverse emotions that this history evokes. This is the most crucial element of the process of public testimony, getting the public to participate in the testimonial act of those who suffered and those who caused the suffering. Through participation in the process of the TRC, the public was given an opportunity to reflect on the past in a way that forced people to acknowledge moral responsibility about the past. Anne-Marie's testimony (above) before the TRC was particularly important because getting *white* people to identify with the TRC process was part of the goal of the commission, since so many of them perceived the TRC's work as a process that was set up *against* them. Indeed, Anne-Marie's testimony before the TRC led to tremendous response, with whites turning up in greater numbers than they had in previous TRC public sessions.

This pattern of TRC testimony by women before the human rights violation committee, i.e. women speaking *about* others and not focusing on their pain, was often negatively remarked upon in the media, and women witnesses were represented in stereotypic terms as the "crying team" of the commission (this criticism was in line with the disdainful labeling of the commission by some people as the "Kleenex commission"). Others, such as activists for women's rights, were concerned that these testimonies focusing on others silenced women's own voices and argued that the TRC

was guilty of presenting women as "secondary objects."³⁷ But the statements from some of the women interviewed for this study show clearly that women were sometimes conscious of what they were doing by not focusing

on their own experiences, and in fact, were not undermining their own experiences and needs, but were purposefully trying to get others to remember their loved ones who were murdered through the violations of the past. Some of the women witnesses interviewed for this study commented on the quality of "bringing others along" and contended that women's strength lies in the way that they are able to communicate.

This conscious intention to communicate has been described as the relational element of public testimony; women take on the onus of speaking in order to engage others and *on behalf of* others. This "instantiates responsibility before the dead, which is the condition

Women made contributions regarding hard-nosed research into the patterns of human rights violations.

of possibility for any and all responsibilities.”³⁸ This formulation, which emphasizes the ways that witnessing is forged in relation to another, is in contradistinction to critiques that represented the TRC simply as a process that “failed” women, and instead encouraged their focusing away from themselves in their testimonies. Thus, women’s testimonies are represented in terms of an ethical engagement. This quality indicates women’s sensitivity to the need to create and strengthen social bonds through their stories of pain and a consciousness about the appropriate language to engage with transitional institutions such as the commission. In the end, this approach to testimony was an important contribution to the work of the truth commission.

Although many women “who came before the commission did speak of what their loved ones had suffered rather than what they had suffered themselves,” notes Vasuki Nesiah, Senior Associate at the International Center for Transitional Justice, at the same time “a significant minority also spoke of their own trauma and the human rights abuses that they had suffered.”³⁹ The contributions of these women witnesses must be recognized as well.

“Women tend to have a particular way of doing things; particular styles, particular communications, particular attitudes,” Judy Bekker said. They bring a more human element to what they do, an “embracing the people element.” This “embrace” of the human element is evident in what Joyce Seroke, former committee member of the TRC and current chair of the Gender Commission, says:

Women were able to give of themselves when they were fighting against apartheid. They kept up this spirit when they were on the TRC, those who served on it, and those who were witnesses. They used their voices to uphold the spirit of participation. I know that this is certainly what drove me in my work: how to engage others, how to use my power on the TRC to engage others, to give them a voice. As you know, I went out of my way in the Johannesburg office—when the men were set on the legalities of running the TRC—to start focus groups with communities and to talk to them about how best we could make the public receptive of our

[Through their testimony, women] were trying to get others to remember their loved ones who were murdered.

work. This went far in getting people engaged with what we were doing. My concern, my efforts to get others on board was borne out of years of working in women’s organizations. It’s easy to see how this approach to our work is an extension of our roles in the home. As mothers, we’re in the business of nurturing in the home. Why do you think so many community organizations are led by women, and

welfare functions are performed by women? You see a lot of this—women extending their capacity for care—in the many AIDS volunteer services that have sprung up throughout the country.

In discussions of gender differences between men and women, the question that is always asked is whether what we perceive as profound differences between men and women stand up to scientific scrutiny. There are also, of course, political issues raised by debates on difference and concerns about whether discussions of difference, particularly in the gender domain, may inappropriately categorize women and unwittingly discredit them and serve instead to fuel arguments advocating the unsuitability of women in certain roles of leadership. There is evidence in the literature suggesting women’s unique roles of care and compassion; women have traditionally been placed in the caring professions and have had a central role in community and societal building.

While there is some scholarly evidence that shows critical differences between men and women,⁴⁰ women should be able to participate in peace and political transition processes because they are citizens, not solely because they have something to contribute as women. Studies such as the present one are, however, necessary to get to the stage where institutions of redress and accountability are not predicated on models of the world that favor masculine experience or render it the standard against which all forms of experience are measured.

Women Leaders: Making Policy, Shaping the TRC

As was the case during the struggle to end apartheid, women took up a range of positions in the period leading to the elections, in relation to the TRC’s work, and in the post-TRC period. In all of these roles, women were involved as individuals engaged in what

has been referred to as “remaking a world.”⁴¹ “Remaking a world” is something that, according to Joyce Seroke, former Human Rights Violations Committee member and chair of the Gender Commission, “requires sustained effort on the part of activists for women’s rights.” Seroke is one of those women whose role and contribution is well known from the days of the anti-apartheid struggle. Asked what was most significant about women’s “sustained effort” in periods of transition, Seroke explained that institutions that are not inherently discriminatory may fall into the trap of excluding women if there is no clear and conscious plan to include women. “And once women are in,” Seroke continued, “women are able to draw on their networks in their previous activist work, draw strength, confidence, and support from fellow comrades with whom they know they share similar goals.”

Although the TRC was founded at a time of gender consciousness in post-apartheid South African politics, like all official institutions and organizations, it was subject to old influences and biases. Organizations such as truth commissions are not without inequities simply because they are established to pursue human rights. Activists for women’s rights and women’s participation recognized the dangers of making this assumption with regard to the TRC. Progressive organizations established with good intentions are established within structures of (political) patriarchy, and even when they achieve relative proportional representation of women, they often fall into the trap of re-enacting the very problematic inequities that they seek to eradicate and repeating the “patchwork quilt of patriarchies,”⁴² where political transition is bound by a blanket of patterns of male domination. Activists for women’s rights played a critical role in encouraging the TRC to take cognizance of the constraints that initially framed its work, and called for a gender-sensitive TRC, which led to special hearings focusing on women’s experiences during apartheid.⁴³ Subsequently, the TRC decided that each region would hold at least one Special Women’s Hearing.⁴⁴ The first hearing dedicated exclusively to women was held in Cape Town in 1996, followed by a hearing in Durban in October 1996.⁴⁵ This report focuses on the final Special Women’s Hearings, held in Johannesburg in July 1997.

Activists for women’s rights played a critical role in . . . call[ing] for a gender-sensitive TRC.

The Special Women’s Hearings in Johannesburg

It was recognized by the TRC that women had a vital role to play in fulfilling the TRC’s mandate to collect as “complete” a picture of the events that took place between 1960 and 1994 as possible. In response to gender activists’ recommendations, the TRC set up a forum, namely the Special Women’s Hearings, in the major TRC locales throughout South Africa to encourage women to come forward as witnesses.

Provided with a space specifically dedicated to ensuring that women felt “safe” as witnesses, many women used the platform of the Special Women’s Hearings to share their experiences of human rights violations with the TRC. Significantly, these women contributed to the “truth” element of “truth and reconciliation” through

their willingness to bear “witness” to the heartache and trauma they experienced during apartheid, thus enabling a more complete picture of the way in which *both* men and women, and both those

who appeared before the TRC and those who didn’t, experienced human rights violations in South Africa.

A total of 17 testimonies were recorded at the Johannesburg Special Women’s Hearings. Two of these testimonies were relayed by men.⁴⁶ Each of the testimonies focused on the experiences of women in the region of Johannesburg during the apartheid era. An all-women panel was set up for all of the Special Women’s Hearings in order to encourage women to speak freely about their experiences of human rights violations.

The panel included a chairperson and a number of TRC commissioners. The people on this panel were responsible for facilitating the women’s testimonies. At the Special Women’s Hearings in Johannesburg the chairperson introduced each of the witnesses.

Following the chairperson’s introduction of the witness, Ms. Seroke, Ms. Sooka, and Ms. Mkhize led the women through their testimonies. Along with the chairperson, these facilitators were responsible for clarifying any unclear statements and for eliciting information pertinent to further investigation of human rights violations. Of particular importance were the concluding comments made by the chairperson, which highlighted the main themes of the testimony, thereby validating the experiences of the women and

men who came forward to testify. As mentioned above, the chairperson made an effort, in line with the *spirit* of the TRC's mandate, to recognize the emotional strain that many of the witnesses experienced as they testified. In many of the testimonies, the TRC commissioners allowed space for the witness to be silent, to cry, and to talk about their experiences, without only looking to extract information about the events to which the witness was testifying. Furthermore, the commissioners engaged with the witnesses in empathetic dialogue, letting the witness know how their testimonies touched them.

Thenjiwe Mtintso, the chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality, spoke at the opening ceremony of the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearings. She commented on the value of women speaking as "active participants and direct survivors of the violation of human rights . . . [Women are] being brought on to the center stage."⁴⁷

Sheila Masote, the first woman to testify at the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearings, described how her identity was defined by men as she grew up, and when she was married: "I'm always either Zef's daughter, Mathopeng's daughter or Mike Masote's wife . . . But no, I feel I am me. And this is why I am here."⁴⁸

Thus began the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearings—with an emphasis on women's direct experiences of gross human rights violations. The following section demonstrates that the platform these women were given to narrate their experiences not only facilitated their healing, but also demonstrated the way in which women can contribute towards reconciliation and the process of transitional justice.

The women's testimonies reveal the extent to which many women, like themselves, were "de-humanized" at the hands of people acting on behalf of the apartheid state and also by comrades and activists involved in faction fighting. Thenjiwe Mtintso asserts, in her introductory speech, the importance of talking about atrocities in order to begin or complete healing. Healing happens on many levels, and the women who testified in the Johannesburg Women's Hearings demonstrated how healing can move beyond the individual to other women who shared similar experiences and, in some cases, to the people who violated those human rights. Layered throughout a significant number of testimonies is the thread of *ubuntu*; as the women spoke of the cruel and inhumane acts commit-

ted against them, their words (and their silences) spoke of a common humanity that they shared with their perpetrators.

Deborah Matshoba was an executive member of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO)—her involvement in this organization was perceived as threatening and she was arrested for the first time in 1976. She was released a few months later but was re-detained under Section Six of the Terrorism Act. During her time in the Pietermaritzburg prison in KwaZulu/Natal, Deborah was interrogated by a group of policemen. She was manacled to an iron ball and forced to stand and write about her involvement in SASO. After being beaten and strangled, she was taken to a police station where she was expected to die.⁴⁹

Following her description of her abuse at the hands of policemen, Matshoba recalled a policeman who demonstrated kindness towards her.

I remember somewhere along the line I was very fortunate that these uniformed policemen came. It was an Afrikaner. I will never forget his name, Taljaard. He told me that he thought I was mad . . . I tried to explain to him and he listened carefully and understood that no, I was actually a political prisoner and I had just been tortured. He smuggled an asthma spray and tablets for me and helped me hide them in the cell . . . I was not allowed to see a doctor, but ultimately Taljaard called a doctor . . . [H]e even said to the doctor we do not want her dying here. On the doctor's instructions I was finally taken back to the Pietermaritzburg prison.⁵⁰

The statement above demonstrates Matshoba's recognition of Taljaard's humanity. In this way she practices the philosophy of *ubuntu*; unlike the nameless policemen who tortured her, this man's humanity was recognized and remembered in this statement. Taljaard's humanity was valued, to the extent that she remembered his name and recalled his attempts to save her life in her testimony. Thus, not only did Matshoba refer to the atrocities committed by the policemen during her detention, she also acknowledged that individuals who worked on behalf of the apartheid state, like Taljaard, were capable of showing compassion. Matshoba, through her testimony, was also able to recognize the humanity in a person who, at the time, represented an inhumane state. This attitude contributes significantly towards transitional justice because it overtly encourages victims of politically motivated violations to demonstrate tolerance and

compassion, when dealing with people who have acted on behalf of an undemocratic government.

Matshoba's testimony at the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearings also demonstrated her ability to engage with people who acted on behalf of the apartheid state. In her testimony Matshoba recalled an instance of communicating with a prison wardress. She had overheard a conversation between the wardress and her boyfriend. When the wardress came to her ward Matshoba asked her why she was crying, and Matshoba said to her,

Your boyfriend has come to say goodbye to you. He is on his way, he was going to Katimamolelo, being posted there . . . See, you are in the same position as I am . . . She melted and she listened.⁵¹

Her willingness to engage with the prison wardress is an example of *ubuntu*—she spoke directly to the human issues that the

wardress was struggling with. In this way, Matshoba encouraged the wardress to also understand the situation that Matshoba was in.

She [the wardress] listened and she cried. She cried and later she opened the cell and asked me if I had a family. I told her I have got a son, I have got a husband and I come from a respectable family. She changed her attitude. Both [wardresses] changed their attitude whereas all the time they had been actually asked to treat me very brutally and this is how . . . prison wardresses collaborated with the system.⁵²

Matshoba was open to dialogue with a woman who symbolized brutality in the prison system, and this resulted in an open and transformative relationship. Understanding and recognizing the humanity of perpetrators and victims, or survivors, can play a powerful role in reconciliation between these two groups of people in a post-conflict situation. It can be used in future models of conflict resolution and transitional justice.

Conflicts do not necessarily exist only between the state and the state's opponents. In the case of South Africa, conflict developed because of faction affiliations in organizations, such as the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party, that opposed apartheid. Thandi Mavuso, for example, was an activist in the ANC in a

township called Thokoza. She had been warned that her house would be burned down by a group that was antagonistic toward the ANC. Shortly thereafter, her house was attacked and burned down. During this attack she and her grandchild were shot and her husband was captured.⁵³

In her testimony, she calls on the man who initiated the attack to come forward and talk with her.

As I have already said . . . this man use to kill children and police would see him and the police were looking after him, but the day he came to shoot at our house, even now I would, I would like to, I would really like to see him coming to apologize to us . . . I would really like to see him coming to ask

for forgiveness. I forgave him on that very day, but I still want him to come out, because he was working with this organization that did not want to see a black person liberated here.⁵⁴

The language of forgiveness emerged in the testimonies at the Johannesburg Women's Hearings.

Mavuso's conciliatory approach toward the man whom she knew was responsible for the attack on her home, her family, and her life demonstrates her ability to engage constructively with the perpetrator of these crimes. Her ability to forgive this man on the day that she was attacked also points to an underlying philosophy of forgiveness. In this case, Mavuso calls on the perpetrator to acknowledge the role that he played in the attack on her home and family. Her compulsion meets her own need for the perpetrator to take responsibility for the attack, and reaffirms the *ubuntu* philosophy, which encourages people to acknowledge their responsibility for the welfare of others.

The language of forgiveness emerged in the testimonies at the Johannesburg Women's Hearings a number of times. The testimony provided by Nozibonelo Mxathule clearly demonstrates her desire to forgive the man who beat and attempted to rape her in 1991. She states that

[the perpetrator] never even came to ask for forgiveness from me. This happened over seven years ago . . . I can forgive him. I know you can forgive somebody even though they . . . might have hurt you in the past. I so wish he could come to me, where I stay and ask for forgiveness. I would forgive [him].

Both Mavuso and Mxathule demonstrate a profound ability to resolve past atrocities through forgiveness.

Their testimonies suggest that the language of forgiveness can be used as a powerful peace-building tool; through being open to forgiveness, the women allow themselves, as well as the perpetrators of the violations, to move towards healing and restoring a common sense of humanity. The approach that these women adopted towards transitional justice in South Africa can be drawn on by the international community when designing post-conflict intervention programs.

In some cases the women who testified at the hearings did not know the identities of the perpetrators who committed the human rights violations against them. Desmond Tutu (1999) writes about a woman named Babalwa Mhlauli whose father was brutally killed because he was an anti-apartheid activist. After detailing her story as the child of an activist, and of her mother's humiliation by the security forces, she said that she wanted to know who had killed her father. In a quiet voice she uttered an evocative statement, "We do want to forgive but we don't know whom to forgive."⁵⁵ In this way Babalwa Mhlauli invited the people who had killed her father to come forward, to identify themselves, and to be forgiven by the daughter of the man they murdered.⁵⁶

This language of invitation emerged throughout the general TRC hearings.⁵⁷ Similarly, this subtle and powerful language was threaded through the women's hearings in Johannesburg. Thandi Mavuso and Nozibonelo Mxathule's testimonies both demonstrate women's capacity to forgive the people who had caused deep pain and sadness in their lives.

In 1976 Lephina Thobela's son was arrested in Nelspruit. In an endeavor to protect him after he was released from prison, Thobela's family refused to tell the security police where he lived. As a result, thereafter they were targeted by the security police. In 1985 Thobela's husband formed a committee to discuss the lack of schooling in Nelspruit. This was perceived as a threat to national security, and Thobela's home was bombed shortly thereafter. Her two daughters (one of whom was pregnant) were killed as a result of this attack. Thobela's hand was damaged, and her husband suffered severe physical and emotional trauma. Her husband's condition deteriorated until he died in 1989.⁵⁸

In her submission to the women's hearings Lephina Thobela said, "My request to the TRC. I want to know as to who killed my children, who actually threw

the grenades."⁵⁹ She had acquired information that pointed to a person named Mamasela, but she did not know conclusively that he was responsible for the attack on her family. Her desire to communicate with the perpetrator of this crime is reflected in the following statement: "Maybe if he wants to ask for forgiveness, but I want to know as to who killed my family. I want to sit down with Mamasela. I want him to explain as to what he was doing . . . I will never be at peace with myself if I do not know as to who killed my family."⁶⁰

Lephina Thobela invited the man who killed her children to talk with her. Instead of refusing to forgive or engage with Mamasela, Thobela indicated her desire to know the man who committed the above-mentioned crimes, and to understand why he acted so cruelly. Thus, according to Thobela's testimony, revenge and retribution would not facilitate her healing.

The importance of reconciling oneself with human rights violations, and with the perpetrators of these violations, is underlined throughout Thobela's testimony. Her aim was not to dehumanize the perpetrator through retributive punishment; her primary aim was to engage with him in order to find peace within herself. The international community can learn from and incorporate this conciliatory approach, which recognizes the futility of punishment and the value of dialogue, when considering transitional justice in post-conflict regions.

Women's Contributions As an Extension of the Ethos of *Ubuntu*

The embracing and practicing of the *ubuntu* philosophy was important to the success of the TRC in many ways. It helped witnesses and other participants speak to their shared humanity and responsibility and empathize and forgive. There are numerous interpretations of *ubuntu*. Mfuniselwa Bengu⁶¹ says that, like the concepts of culture and democracy, *ubuntu* does not escape being defined differently by different people. Some definitions, like the one offered in the White Paper on Welfare,⁶² manage to relate the essence of *ubuntu*:

The principle for caring for each other's well being will be promoted and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the

individual's humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.⁶³

Similarly, Johann Broodryk,⁶⁴ director of the Ubuntu School of Philosophy, suggests that the core values of *ubuntu* include humanness, caring, sharing, respect, and compassion.

A central tenet of *ubuntu* is that "a person is a person through other persons." This philosophy has practical implications, as demonstrated by the approach adopted by the TRC. The perpetrator is granted amnesty in exchange for a full disclosure of the crime for which amnesty was applied and an ability to demonstrate that the crime was politically motivated. Archbishop Tutu has explained that

Ubuntu means that in a real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined.⁶⁵

Apartheid had a dehumanizing effect on all South Africans' lives—regardless of whether they were perpetrators of human rights violations or were the victims, or survivors, of these violations. In line with the philosophy of *ubuntu*, the process of transitional justice, as facilitated by the TRC, is one of restoring humanity.

Thus, the concept of *ubuntu* takes prominence in the TRC Act. The South African interim constitution states:

There is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimisation.

Alex Boraine articulates the centrality of *ubuntu* in the work of the TRC:

Ubuntu represents personhood, humanity, group solidarity, and morality. . . . [T]he Truth and Reconciliation Commission pointed to the need for more community-orientated jurisprudence that acknowledges the reality that individuals are part of a much larger social context.⁶⁶

Women were key players in NGOs and community-based organizations, and the Commission often drew on these pre-existing networks and structures in order to identify potential witnesses and encourage them to make public and written submissions to the TRC. Most of the work done by women within NGOs was as volunteers, and women interviewed for this study pointed out that their participation in organizational work was motivated by a desire to build security within families and communities after the rupture and social destruction caused by political violence. "Women have always taken on broader responsibilities for the benefit of the collective," said Mirriam Moleleki, director of a community-based organization in a township near the wine lands town of Worcester. She continued:

Our commitment—with the other women that I've been involved with in the community—to the TRC

process was nothing new for us. We approached the TRC in part to share our experiences of suffering, the humiliation we endured under apartheid, all those years of fighting and humiliation, fighting and resistance. But in a way for us it was also a continua-

tion of our concern for others: there are many stories out there that we knew wouldn't make it to the TRC stage, and to its records. So you could say we were their voice—Oh yes, we knew this is what we were doing, that we were not only going to tell our *individual* stories. We were going to talk about what happened to our community. It's that realization that you are not alone, that your existence is dependent upon that of others in one's community. Your community has endowed you with a sense of who you are, a sense of belonging, a sense of dignity in the face of daily humiliation under apartheid. So therefore you owe it to your community to give back to them in whatever way you can. This is particularly important in times of crisis. People needed one another during crisis. Coming on the stage of the TRC and telling the world not only what happened to us, but also what happened to our communities was an extension of this sensibility.

Mandisa Monakali expressed this responsibility towards the community in terms of the African ethos of *ubuntu*. Monakali is the director of *Ilitha Labantu*, an organization that was set up in the township of

Women were key players in NGOs and community-based organizations, and the Commission often drew on these pre-existing networks . . . to identify potential witnesses.

Gugulethu near Cape Town in the 1980s as a counseling center for victims of domestic and political violence. Monakali served as a volunteer counselor on the TRC, and her agency was identified by the TRC as a center where victim statements could be submitted. "Black women have always been strong in their communities," Monakali said when asked what women contributed to the TRC and the transitional process in South Africa. She explained:

This strength and commitment to one's community was borne out of the African ethos of *ubuntu*, which states that you owe your existence to the generosity of the humanity of others, so you owe it to the collective to extend the same generosity. You know [speaking to Pumla] how I sacrificed my time to the work that you asked me to do when I joined the TRC briefers. It was an important moment in our history, and so to bring our people on board, to inform and to support them, work had to be done. You remember how packed our offices often were with people who wanted to tell their stories. And we did it not for pay. We did it because that's what you do when there's need. It's what's required, you help out, you fill in, and you participate. It is *ubuntu*. I dare say that women are more inspired by *ubuntu* than men. *Ilitha* [her organization] would never have been able to throw all its energy in support of the TRC work on the ground if we were not an all-women team. Men would have asked for this and that; this amount for their time, that amount for goodness knows what else. Women, I find, at least in the communities where I've worked, take care of one another, and of one another's families. They've done this as mothers, as wives, as fellow victims—as victims, but they don't simply stand around and weep. Women are able to extend themselves beyond the call of duty. The name of ethics of care, the name of *ubuntu*, I say, is "woman."

Another woman who had appeared before the TRC, Yvonne Khutwane was the first woman to testify publicly about sexual abuse at the hands of a young soldier when she was arrested for her anti-apartheid activism. Her testimony added a crucial dimension to the TRC process, one that had as yet not been revealed before the TRC, for the usual reasons that cause women to refrain from discussing their experiences of sexual violation in public. Asked for the purposes of the present study what motivated her to break her silence on the public forum of the TRC, Khutwane explained that she experienced a feeling of warmth and a sense of

safety when she testified before the TRC, and she attributed this to *ubuntu*, which welcomed her and was shown to her by TRC staff both during the pre-hearings preparation and in the acceptance she felt during her public testimony.

A statement by Cynthia Ngewu, whose son was killed brutally by the apartheid police, and which she made during a public discussion on reconciliation, is pertinent: "This thing called reconciliation . . . if I am understanding it correctly . . . if it means this perpetrator, this man who has killed Christopher Piet [her son], if it means he becomes human again, this man, so that I, so that all of us, get our humanity back . . . then I agree, then I support it all." In an interview for the present study she further explained:

When you see the sorrow in your enemy's eyes, it's very difficult, my child, to throw back anger and hatred at him. Some of these young men who did these terrible things are the same age as our children whom they killed. Now how can you deny them when they are begging to be accepted back by us? No, we are mothers. It doesn't mean we are not angry. But what does anger help? Anger comes and goes, but there's a point where you feel: this is another woman's child. What if he were my son? What would I have wanted his mother to do were my son in his shoes and he in my son's? We mothers know these things. When I reach out to the man who killed my son, I think I was thinking more about his mother, I think—yes, that's what it is, I was thinking about his mother. Mothers know these things, my child.

The above statement perfectly captures the meaning of *ubuntu*. The concept, which is also captured in the phrase, "I am because we are," has emerged in studies looking at South Africa's transition as the best possible explanation for the reconciliation and gestures of forgiveness that were witnessed at the TRC. In terms of *ubuntu*, all people are valued as part of the human community and are worthy of respect. Thus, rather than an ethos based on individuality, the central values of *ubuntu* are based on unity.⁶⁷ According to Myers,⁶⁸ the concept of identity in the African context includes the whole community, and is inspired by the belief: "I do not exist alone, but out of the interaction and properties of the collective." In his book *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Tutu captures the essence of *ubuntu* in the following apt description:

My humanity caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours . . . a person is a person through other persons. It is not, "I think, therefore I am." It says rather: "I am human because I belong. I participate, I share." A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, is affirming to others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good . . . he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.⁶⁹

Archbishop Tutu's statement sums up the moral code that is expressed in the preceding statements as the principle that motivated women's strategic participation on the TRC. The relationship between the concept of *ubuntu* and the role of women on the TRC, however, still has to be investigated. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests a link

between the African ethos of *ubuntu* and the successful transition to democracy in South Africa; however, there has been little attempt to integrate these studies, both in terms of discipline and methodology. More needs to be done if the concept of *ubuntu* is to be used to explain women's contribution in political transition.

What is needed is perhaps to invite an inter-disciplinary team of practitioners, academics, and other professionals to examine whether, and how, the concept of *ubuntu* is linked to processes of political transition in the African context, using examples from the TRC as well as from the traditional system of restorative justice called *gacaca* in Rwanda. If this investigation is pursued, perhaps a major theme of the study should focus on the ways in which the gender dynamic has influenced the manifestation of *ubuntu*, and especially how the ethic of *ubuntu* has provided women with ethical leadership, moral courage, and political influence to lead South Africans on the road to moral humanity.

The ethic of ubuntu has provided women with ethical leadership, moral courage, and political influence.

Conducting a study as proposed here will help provide some evidence that peace does not only come via the legal route, but also can sometimes be achieved via the *moral* route: extending humanity

to those we may not under normal circumstances include in the circle of those who are part of our repertoire of everyday experience.

CONCLUSION

The ANC government's commitment to a "people-driven" transformation has resulted in the creation of innovative methods to involve people at a local level in various government structures, and South African women continue to find ways to promote South Africa's transition.

Post-conflict countries in transition would benefit from the transitional justice approach developed by the women commissioners and witnesses at South Africa's TRC. Women commissioners highlighted South Africans' shared humanity through their "ubuntu approach" to the process of transition, encouraging and facilitating personal awareness and empathy with the witnesses. Aspects of this approach include creating a "victim-friendly" space for witnesses to feel safe while testifying, as well as after they have submitted their testimonies.

"Maximum transparency" is a crucial aspect of transitional justice processes, and structures facilitating inclusive and open dialogue between civil society and government should be incorporated into the foundation of transitional justice policy. In the case of South Africa, transparency enabled a wide range of actors to contribute to South Africa's reconciliation. Similarly, when formulating transitional justice policies, post-conflict countries should encourage the participation of women at all levels of the transition process and engage with civil society in order to establish effective ways of incorporating women into the process of transition.

This report concludes by relaying a story told by the principal researcher in this study, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, author of the book *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Story of Forgiveness*:

The woman in the audience raised her hand and waved it frantically. It was early 2003 and I had just given a lecture at the Los Angeles public library during my US book tour. The reporter from the *LA Weekly* who was chairing the event announced that she was going to take the last question, and I pointed at the woman who seemed desperate for a chance to speak.

Post-conflict countries would benefit from the transitional justice approach developed by the women commissioners and witnesses at South Africa's TRC.

"I am an Afrikaner," she said. "I read your book last night and feel an incredible need to speak right now." She went on to explain that she had come to the US to pursue postgraduate studies in international relations; she had been burdened with guilt for having benefited from apartheid, and that reading the book had stirred her deeply. Her voice trembled as she continued: "When I complete my degree I want to return home to South Africa and to pay back in whatever way I can. More than anything," she said, now weeping visibly, "I want to ask for forgiveness for having benefited from a system that destroyed so many lives."

The woman was crying and trying to speak, and she cast a lonely figure; she had exposed herself and made herself vulnerable. She had told her deepest truth in public. I took a few steps forward and extended my hand to reach out to her from the edge of the stage. She came towards me, still sobbing. There was stillness in the packed auditorium.

You could have heard a pin drop. As we embraced, the audience applauded.

Listening to the long applause, and remembering the deep silence in the large hall when she spoke earlier, it was clear to me that the applause was not simply a response of approval. The spontaneous gesture between us had stirred something in the mainly white American audience. Two people from different sides of history in a country that almost descended into civil war, coming together in a spontaneous embrace after this "conversation" about the past. It was a story that resonated with the audience longing for resolution of their own past, not least the as-yet-unacknowledged trauma of slavery that continues to haunt both white and black Americans.

Not all Afrikaners, or white South Africans for that matter, are willing or able to engage privately or publicly in the way this woman did. Seeds of hatred continue to fester among many whites who feel that the new democracy in South Africa and the freedoms enjoyed by blacks have robbed them of their heritage. Some whites feel marginalized by a process that has

ended decades of legalized oppression of blacks by the apartheid government. They resent the power that the democratic changes have bestowed on a black-led government. Some Afrikaners have even lashed out in vengeance in the past through bombing sprees.

Discontent among whites has sometimes been seen as evidence of racist attitudes that will not go away. This may be so. But the bitter memories that have been unleashed by the transfer of power to the black democratic government must also be considered.

Reconciliation cannot be condensed into a quick-fix project, one that has to take place within a prescribed space of time. It needs ongoing work, on a personal level and on a public level. Perhaps the most enduring effects of totalitarian rule and the systematic oppression under apartheid cannot be measured in terms of numbers of the dead, but in immeasurable losses of the human spirit. That is what has to be restored. And, according to findings in this study, women have showed incredible gifts to help make this happen.

Ordinary people, under certain circumstances, are capable of far greater evil than we could have imagined. But so are they capable of far greater virtue than they might have thought. To restore the human spirit

in society, to open the door to the possibility of transformation, political transition must be led by the compassion that unites human beings. That road to regaining humanity, the true freedom from the "bondage of fear," that Alan Paton spoke about so prophetically in his book, *Cry the Beloved Country*, will be reached only through consistent dialogue about the past.

The woman at the Los Angeles library spoke the truth of her heart. It was a simple communication of what she felt. She and Gobodo-Madikizela reached out to one another and shared a common idiom of humanity as South Africans, regretting their past, wishing to mend it. She returned to South Africa in the summer of 2004 and lived in a KwaZulu/Natal African rural home for three weeks, learning the language and culture of the Zulus, and volunteering in a community project. That is her healing. But it also provides an important lesson for others. It is in these small steps, in the small spaces where human beings engage with one another as human beings, that societies emerging out of trauma and violence will change. The challenge is to have the courage to start. Our findings have shown that in the South African situation, women have dominated that courageous journey.

ENDNOTES

¹Boraine, Alex. *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Cape Town and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 270.

²Bystydzienski, Jill M. *Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Strategies for Empowerment*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

³Dubois et al., 1985: 56–57

⁴See also: South Africa. Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report Volume 1*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1998. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.stanford.edu/class/history48q/Documents/EMBARGO/VOLUME1.HTM>>. 169.

⁵Both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine, chair and deputy chair of the TRC, deal with this issue in their books respectively (Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. London: Doubleday, 2000; Boraine.)

⁶Ross, Fiona C. "Speech and Silence: Women's Testimony in the First Five Weeks of Public Hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Remaking A World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery*. Eds. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 250–280.

⁷Goldblatt, Beth and Sheila Meintjes. *Gender and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1996. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/gender.htm>>.

⁸For detailed information on the campaign for a women's hearing, see Goldblatt and Meintjes.

⁹Graybill, Lyn. "The Contribution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Toward the Promotion of Women's Rights in South Africa." *Women's Studies International Forum* 24.1 (2001): 1–10.

¹⁰Myakayaka-Manzini, Mavivi. "Women Empowered—Women in Parliament in South Africa." *Women in Parliament: Beyond Borders*. Ed. Azza Karam. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.idea.int/women/parl/studies5a.htm>>.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²South Africa. *Report of the Democracy, Human Rights, and Gender Equality Consultative Meeting*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1997.

¹³Reardon, Betty. "Women's Visions of Peace: Images of Global Security." *The Gendered New World Order: Militarism, Development, and the Environment*. Eds. Jennifer Turpin and Lois Ann Lorentzen. New York: Routledge, 1996.

¹⁴See, for example: Hayner, Priscilla. *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

¹⁵See Goldblatt and Meintjes; Graybill.

¹⁶See Goldblatt and Meintjes; Ross, Fiona C. *Bearing Witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press, 2003; Tutu.

¹⁷Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990.

¹⁸Das, Veena and Arthur Kleinman. "Introduction." *Remaking A World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery*. Eds. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 1–30; Das, Veena, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Eds. *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; and Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock. *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

¹⁹Moore, Henrietta L. *Feminism and Anthropology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.

²⁰Machel, Graça. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 1996. 12 December 2004 <http://www.unicef.org/graca/a51-306_en.pdf>.

²¹Manicom, L. "Claiming Our Rights as Women." *Democracy, Globalisation and Transformation in Southern Africa*. Ed. Linda Freeman. Montreal: Canadian Research Consortium on Southern Africa, 1996.

²²Suzman, Helen. *Holding the High Ground*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1991.

²³Leaders of the NGK in the main Afrikaans church in the Western Cape, *Die Moeder Kerk* ("Mother Church"), to which all former South African presidents during apartheid rule, except F.W. de Klerk, belonged, appeared at a Truth and Reconciliation Commission public hearing in Cape Town to apologize for "aiding" apartheid. (For a discussion of the role of religion in apartheid, see: Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. *A Human Being Died That Night: A Story of Forgiveness*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.) A poignant example of how religious justification was used by apartheid leaders was the type of Bible issued to former conscripts into the South African Defence Force (SADF). There were two peculiar features that stood out about it. The first was the gold star-shaped army insignia embossed on the maroon front-page cover of the Bible. The second was the inscription in Afrikaans on the first page, which read: "Message from the State President: P. W. Botha. This Bible is an important part of your calling to duty. When you are overwhelmed with doubt, pain, or when you find yourself wavering, you must turn to this wonderful book for answers. . . . Of all the weapons you carry, this is the greatest because it is the weapon of God."

²⁴The conflict between the ANC and the IFP has erroneously been characterized as "ethnic." This mistaken assumption is based on another misreading of the conflict between the ANC and IFP, which is that the followers of the ANC are mainly from the Xhosa speaking ethnic group while the IFP's members are Zulus. From its inception, the ANC was established on principles of non-racism, and so its membership comprised all racial and ethnic groups. The portrayal of the ANC-IFP conflict as "ethnic" was probably the former apartheid government's strategy to present the conflict to the world as "black-on-black" violence.

²⁵For additional discussion, see: Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Reforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*. Washington, DC: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004. 12 December 2004. <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/SouthAfricaSecurityFullCaseStudy.pdf>>.

²⁶Myakayaka-Manzini.

²⁷Kimble, Judy and Elaine Unterhalter. "ANC Women's Struggles, 1912-1982." *Feminist Review* 12 (1982): 11-35; Mfengu, 1997; Moleleki, 1997.

²⁸South Africa. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 200 of 1993*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1994. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/legislation/1993/constit0.html?rebookmark=1>>. The Act was ratified on December 22, 1993, and implemented on April 27, 1994.

²⁹Qtd. in Boraine 41.

³⁰Boraine 270.

³¹Bystydzienski.

³²Dubois.

³³Nesiah, Vasuki. Email to the editor (Elizabeth Powley). 8 November 2004.

³⁴See also: South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report Volume 1* 169.

³⁵Both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Alex Boraine, chair and deputy chair of the TRC, deal with this issue in their books respectively (Tutu; Boraine).

³⁶Ross, "Speech and Silence . . ."

³⁷Goldblatt and Meintjes.

³⁸Sanders, Mark. *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.

³⁹Nesiah.

⁴⁰For a discussion of, see also: Baron-Cohen, Simon. *The Essential Difference: Men, Women, and the Extreme Male Brain*. Cambridge: Basic Books, 2003.

⁴¹Das and Kleinman.

⁴²Bozzoli, Belinda and Mmantho Nkotshe. *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983*. London: Heinemann, 1991.

⁴³For detailed information on the campaign for a women's hearing, see Goldblatt and Meintjes.

⁴⁴Graybill.

⁴⁵The fourth region in which TRC hearings were held was East London. No Special Women's Hearings were held in this region.

⁴⁶These men were Alli Maziya and Simon Malakoane on July 29, 1997.

⁴⁷South Africa. Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Transcript of the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearing*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1997.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Tutu 115.

⁵⁶Tutu.

⁵⁷See: Ross, *Bearing Witness . . .*; Tutu.

⁵⁸South Africa, *Transcript of the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearing*.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Bhengu, Mfuniselwa. *Ubuntu—The Essence of Democracy*. Cape Town: Novalis Press, 1996.

⁶²South Africa. *White Paper for Social Welfare: Principles, Guidelines, Recommendations, Proposed Policies and Programmes for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1997. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.socdev.gov.za/Documents/1997/wp.htm>>. Para. 24.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Broodryk, Johann. *Ubuntu: Life Lessons from Africa*. Waterkloof, South Africa: Ubuntu School of Philosophy, 2002.

⁶⁵Tutu 35.

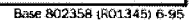
⁶⁶Boraine 362, 425.

⁶⁷Myers, 1993

⁶⁸Myers 21.

⁶⁹Tutu 31.

⁷⁰Meintjes, Sheila. *Gender, Citizenship, and Democracy in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1995.



APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ANC | African National Congress |
| ANCWL | African National Congress Women's League |
| ANCYL | African National Congress Youth League |
| BOSS | Bureau of State Security |
| CEDAW | Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| Codesa | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| ECC | End Conscription Campaign |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| MK | Umkonto we Sizwe |
| NGK | Nederduiste Gereformeerde Kerk |
| NP | National Party |
| PAC | Pan African Congress |
| RDP | Reconstruction and Development Program |
| SASO | South African Students' Organisation |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| UDHR | United Nations Declaration of Human Rights |
| UN | United Nations |

APPENDIX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderlini, Sanam Naraghi. *Negotiating the Transition to Democracy and Reforming the Security Sector: The Vital Contributions of South African Women*. Washington, DC: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2004. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/SouthAfricaSecurityFullCaseStudy.pdf>>.
- Baron-Cohen, Simon. *The Essential Difference: Men, Women, and the Extreme Male Brain*. Cambridge: Basic Books, 2003.
- Bell, Terry and Dumisa Buhle Ntsebeza. *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid, and Truth*. London and New York: Verso, 2003.
- Bhengu, Mfuniselwa. *Ubuntu—The Essence of Democracy*. Cape Town: Novalis Press, 1996.
- Boezak, S. Ed. *Redefining Politics: South African Women and Democracy*. Johannesburg: Commission on Gender Equality.
- Boraine, Alex. *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Cape Town and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bozzoli, Belinda and Mmantho Nkotsoe. *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983*. London: Heinemann, 1991.
- Broodryk, Johann. *Ubuntu: Life Lessons from Africa*. Waterkloof, South Africa: Ubuntu School of Philosophy, 2002.
- Bystydzienski, Jill M. *Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Strategies for Empowerment*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Das, Veena and Arthur Kleinman. "Introduction." *Remaking A World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery*. Eds. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 1–30.
- Das, Veena, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Eds. *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Doxtader, Erik and Charles Villa-Vicencio. *Through Fire with Water: The Roots of Division and the Potential for Reconciliation in Africa*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2003.
- Du Toit, Fanie. Ed. *Learning to Live Together: Practices of Social Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2003.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. *A Human Being Died That Night: A Story of Forgiveness*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.
- Goldblatt, Beth and Sheila Meintjes. *Gender and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1996. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/submit/gender.htm>>.
- Goldstone, Richard. *For Humanity: Reflections of a War Crimes Investigator*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Graybill, Lyn. "The Contribution of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Toward the Promotion of Women's Rights in South Africa." *Women's Studies International Forum* 24.1 (2001): 1–10.
- Hayner, Priscilla. *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Kimble, Judy and Elaine Unterhalter. "ANC Women's Struggles, 1912–1982." *Feminist Review* 12 (1982): 11–35.

- Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock. *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Machel, Graça. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund, 1996. 12 December 2004 <http://www.unicef.org/graca/a51-306_en.pdf>.
- Manicom, L. "Claiming Our Rights as Women." *Democracy, Globalisation and Transformation in Southern Africa*. Ed. Linda Freeman. Montreal: Canadian Research Consortium on Southern Africa, 1996.
- Meintjes, Sheila. *Gender, Citizenship, and Democracy in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1995.
- Moore, Henrietta L. *Feminism and Anthropology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- Myakayaka-Manzini, Mavivi. "Women Empowered—Women in Parliament in South Africa." *Women in Parliament: Beyond Borders*. Ed. Azza Karam. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.idea.int/women/parl/studies5a.htm>>.
- Reardon, Betty. "Women's Visions of Peace: Images of Global Security." *The Gendered New World Order: Militarism, Development, and the Environment*. Eds. Jennifer Turpin and Lois Ann Lorentzen. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Ross, Fiona C. *Bearing Witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press, 2003.
- Ross, Fiona C. "Speech and Silence: Women's Testimony in the First Five Weeks of Public Hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *Remaking A World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery*. Eds. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 250–280.
- Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990.
- Sanders, Mark. *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.
- South Africa. *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 200 of 1993*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1994. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.polity.org.za/html/govdocs/legislation/1993/constit0.html?rebookmark=1>>.
- . *Report of the Democracy, Human Rights, and Gender Equality Consultative Meeting*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1997.
- . Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Transcript of the Johannesburg Special Women's Hearing*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1997.
- . Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report Volume 1*. Johannesburg: TRC, 1998. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.stanford.edu/class/history48q/Documents/EMBARGO/VOLUME1.HTM>>.
- . Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*. Cape Town: Juta, 2003. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/index.html>>.
- . *White Paper for Social Welfare: Principles, Guidelines, Recommendations, Proposed Policies and Programmes for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government of South Africa, 1997. 12 December 2004 <<http://www.socdev.gov.za/Documents/1997/wp.htm>>.
- Suzman, Helen. *Holding the High Ground*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1991.
- Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. London: Doubleday, 2000.

ABOUT WOMEN WAGING PEACE

Women Waging Peace, an operating program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of women in formal and informal peace processes around the world. More than 400 women peace builders in the “Waging” network, all demonstrated leaders with varied backgrounds, perspectives, and skills, bring a vast array of expertise to the peacemaking process. They have met with over 3,000 policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts.

ABOUT THE POLICY COMMISSION

The Policy Commission is conducting a series of case studies to document women’s contributions to peace processes across conflict areas worldwide. The studies focus on women’s activities in conflict prevention, pre-negotiation and negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction—including governance; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and transitional justice and reconciliation. This body of work is pragmatic and operational, offering suggestions, guidelines, and models to encourage policymakers to include women and gender perspectives in their program designs.

ADVISORY GROUP TO THE POLICY COMMISSION

Hizkias Assefa

Professor of Conflict Studies
Conflict Transformation Graduate Program
Eastern Mennonite University;
Founder and Coordinator
African Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Network

Leon Fuerth

J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Professor
Elliott School of International Affairs
George Washington University

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

former Minister of Finance, Liberia;
Coauthor, UNIFEM’s
Women, War, Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment

Jane Holl Lute

Assistant Secretary-General
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations

Rita Manchanda

Program Executive
South Asian Forum for Human Rights

Jane Mansbridge

Faculty Chair
Women and Public Policy Program
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Luz Méndez

President
Advisory Council
National Union of Guatemalan Women

Thandi Modise

Chairperson, Portfolio Committee on Defense
Parliament of South Africa

Olara Otunnu

Under-Secretary-General and
Special Representative for
Children and Armed Conflict
United Nations

John Ruggie

Evron and Jeane Kirkpatrick
Professor of International Affairs
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Nancy Soderberg

Vice President
International Crisis Group