ADULTS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF RESILIENCE: OVERCOMING ADVERSITY IN A HIGH-RISK COMMUNITY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work, and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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SIGNATURE   **DATE**

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SUMMARY

Many adults living in previously disadvantaged communities were confronted with daily racism, oppression and the abuse of human rights during the apartheid government's ruling of South Africa. Since the demise of apartheid, however, many of these same adults have continued to be challenged by adversities, such as crime, violence, unemployment, poverty, gangsterism and drug and alcohol abuse on a daily basis. Despite these adversities many adults nevertheless manage to cope and thrive. Yet, little research regarding the nature of adult resilience within high-risk communities, especially within the South African context, exists. The aim of this study was to gain insight into, and understanding of, adults' experiences of resilience within a high-risk South African community.

In order to address the aims of the study, a basic interpretive qualitative study was undertaken. A high-risk community on the Cape Flats, Western Cape, was selected as the site for data collection, as it was known that adults in the community were exposed to high incidences of crime, violence, poverty, unemployment and gangsterism. The selected participants were viewed, both by themselves and by other community members, as resilient as they had managed to overcome years of racism, oppression and the abuse of human rights at the hands of the apartheid South African government. Additionally, participants had had to fight the harrowing effects of negative influences on a daily basis.

The findings of this study indicated that, despite being confronted with ongoing extreme situations of adversity, the participants managed to cope and remain optimistic. Resilient attributes, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal and community resources, were found to contribute to adults' experiences of resilience. Intrapersonal resources, such as the maintenance of a positive attitude, the ability to set goals and the willingness to make sacrifices in order to achieve personally set goals, emerged. Other intrapersonal factors which were attributed to the adults' experiences of resilience related to the awareness of, and dedication to, future planning and the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind. Interpersonal factors which came to the fore related to recognition of the importance of family relationships,

involvement in activities which served to uplift and empower others, and acknowledgement of the need to mix with a diverse group of people in order to gain exposure to new ideas and experiences. Community resources were recognised as playing an additional role in supporting adults in their quest for success, with resources, such as religious organisations, schools and clinics, being identified by the participants concerned. Despite exposure to adversity, resilient adults in high-risk communities were found to make use of three sources of resources and to continue to remain hopeful and positive about their future. This study demonstrates, then, that resilience in a high-risk community is related to the use of intrapersonal, interpersonal and community resources.
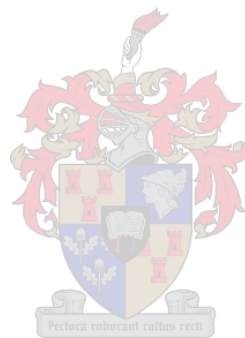
OPSOMMING

Baie volwassenes in voorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe het tydens die apartheidsbewind in Suid-Afrika daagliks met rassisme, onderdrukking en die skending van menseregte te kampe gehad. Sedert die afskaffing van apartheid staar baie van hierdie einste volwassenes egter steeds daagliks uitdagings soos misdaad, geweld, werkloosheid, armoede, bendewese en dwelm- en alkoholmisbruik in die gesig. Nogtans kry baie volwassenes dit reg om hierdie struikelblokke die hoof te bied en te gedy. Min navorsing oor die aard van veerkrag van volwassenes in hoërisiko-gemeenskappe, in die besonder in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, is egter gedoen. Die doelwit van hierdie studie was om insig in en 'n begrip van volwassenes se ervaring van veerkrag in 'n hoërisiko- Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap te verkry.

Ten einde die studie se doelwit te bereik, is 'n basiese, vertolkende, kwalitatiewe ondersoek onderneem. 'n Hoërisiko-gemeenskap op die Kaapse Vlakte in die Wes-Kaap is vir data-insameling gekies, aangesien dit bekend is dat volwassenes in dié gemeenskap aan 'n hoë voorkoms van misdaad, geweld, armoede, werkloosheid en bendewese blootgestel is. Die gekose deelnemers het hulself as veerkragtig gesien en is ook deur ander lede van die gemeenskap as sulks beskou, omdat hulle dit reggekry het om jare van rassisme, onderdrukking en die skending van menseregte onder die apartheidsregering in Suid-Afrika te oorkom. Daarby moes deelnemers daagliks teen die aangrypende gevolge van negatiewe invloede stry.

Die bevindinge van die studie het aangedui dat deelnemers, ondanks die voortgesette situasies van uiterste teëspoed, dit reggekry het om dit te hanteer en optimisties te bly. Daar is bevind dat intrapersoonlike, interpersoonlike en gemeenskapshulpbronne tot volwassenes se ervaring van veerkrag bydra. Intrapersoonlike hulpbronne, soos die handhawing van 'n positiewe houding, die vermoë om doelwitte te stel en die gewilligheid om opofferings te maak ten einde selfopgelegde doelwitte te bereik, het na vore gekom. Ander intrapersoonlike faktore wat tot die volwassenes se ervaring van veerkrag bydra, hou verband met die bewustheid van en verbintenis tot toekomsbeplanning en die belangrikheid van die

handhawing van 'n gesonde gees en liggaam. Interpersoonlike faktore wat na vore gekom het, hou verband met die erkenning van die belangrikheid van familieverhoudings, betrokkenheid by aktiwiteite wat ander ophef en bemagtig, en die erkenning van die behoefte om met 'n uiteenlopende groep mense te meng ten einde blootstelling aan nuwe idees en ervarings te kry. Gemeenskapshulpbronne het geblyk 'n bykomende rol te speel in die ondersteuning van volwassenes in hulle strewe na sukses, en hulpbronne soos godsdienstige organisasies, skole en klinieke is deur die betrokke deelnemers geïdentifiseer. Daar is bevind dat veerkragtige volwassenes in hoërisiko-gemeenskappe, ondanks blootstelling aan teëspoed, van hierdie drie tipes hulpbronne gebruik maak en steeds hoopvol en positief oor hulle toekoms is. Hierdie studie toon dus dat veerkrag in 'n hoërisiko-gemeenskap met die gebruik van intrapersoonlike, interpersoonlike en gemeenskapshulpbronne verband hou.
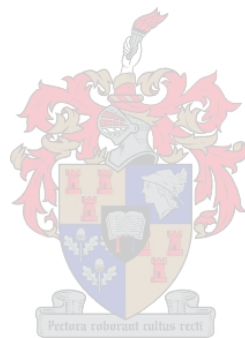
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CHAPTER ONE

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African adults from previously disadvantaged communities have been faced with wide-ranging challenges over the past five decades. Having to cope with the challenges set by multifarious social factors, such as discrimination, oppression, violence, abuse of human rights and adversities related to apartheid policies were the order of the day. Such adults were raised during a period of gross inequalities and disparities relating to race classification, which reflected the broader apartheid policies of South Africa in the areas of education, access to health care, employment, financial independence and security (Foster, Freeman & Pillay, 1997). Educational policies ensured that high-quality primary, secondary and tertiary education was more readily available to white South Africans than to individuals from other race groups. Furthermore, job opportunities were reserved for the 'white elite' while the majority of the population were forced to work for minimal wages and often under appalling conditions. In addition to having to cope with the above adversities, there was also the need to deal with everyday violent events such as killings, subjection to political detention, abductions and displacement, which invariably occurred in deprived disadvantaged communities of the day (Swartz, 1998).

Furthermore, many adults from previously disadvantaged communities bore witness to the armed struggle, which was a strategy of African resistance adopted in opposition to the oppressive policies of apartheid, and which, during the 1960s, intensified and resulted in a concomitant increase in the state's use of visible violence. During this period, "violence operated to install a great binary division between 'the blacks' and 'the whites' which marked the beginning of a time of bombs, guns, bulldozers and brutal tortures, a time in which violence was only nominally a crime in violation of the law" (Lazarus & Donald, 1997:242). Forced removals, assassinations, 'disappearances', detention and torture were common occurrences

in the lives of many adults. These experiences were traumatic, terrifying and potentially harmful to the psyches of people from disadvantaged communities.

Today however, twelve years after the demise of apartheid, the legacy of this inequitable system of governance continues to impact negatively on the lives of adults from previously disadvantaged communities. Although such adults now have enhanced access to increasing resources, many of them continue to be confronted with the atrocious effects of apartheid. Because many adults failed to receive an adequate education, their skills are, as yet, under-developed still denying them access to well-paying jobs. Their relative lack of financial security also prevents their accessing adequate, safe housing. Many of apartheid's children, who have now grown into adulthood, are still trapped within the confines of environments that are violent, lacking in resources and not conducive to healthy development. These adults continue to face the omnipresent adversities of unemployment, poverty, violence, gangsterism, HIV/Aids, substance abuse and illiteracy. Despite exposure to such adversities, however, some resilient adults nevertheless still manage to cope so successfully with their conditions that they, in fact, are able to thrive. The aim of this study was to develop an understanding of their resilience in the face of exposure to adversities in a high-risk community.

1.2   MOTIVATION FOR STUDY
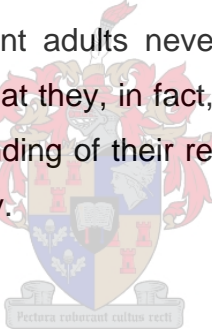
During the practical training undertaken as part of my Masters of Education (Psychology) course I participated in a community project conducted on the Cape Flats. Through my interaction with individuals involved in the project, I learned of adults living in the community who, despite being confronted by enormous adversities, nevertheless managed to cope and thrive. As a young white female I wondered how it was possible that individuals who had been oppressed, subjected to years of apartheid and who faced high levels of adversity on a continual basis could overcome these barriers and continue to cope and be successful. Despite the multiple barriers obstructing the path of coping for these people, I nevertheless continued to hear stories of triumph over what seemed to be insurmountable odds. Although I knew that many disadvantaged communities did "not necessarily succumb to oppressive conditions but instead tended to develop resources to cope with adversity" (Ahmed, Seedat, Van Niekerk & Bulbia, 2004:387), I wondered what

these resources were. While engaged in discussions with individuals familiar with the community, I realised that an opportunity existed for the voices of previously oppressed and marginalised adults, who were 'beating the odds' in their community, to be heard.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the relevant literature indicated that resilience research was preceded by a strong research focus on children at risk for psychopathology (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Rutter, 1987). Only during the early 1970s did a subtle shift in the research focus occur, with the spotlight being directed on children who were coping well *despite* exposure to significant adversity (Masten & Powell, 2003). The study of resilience attempts to understand how children, youth, adults and families cope effectively with adversity and seeks to explore the health-enhancing capacities, individual, family and community resources, and developmental pathways of vulnerable children and youth, who, against all odds, manage not only to survive unhealthy environments, but to thrive under adverse conditions (Greene, 2002; Ungar, 2003). An increasing fascination with resilience among researchers and service providers concerned with enhancing the capacities of at-risk children, youth and families has led many in the field of children's mental health to shift their focus from the pathology manifested in such situations to the strengths accessed in order to overcome such adversity (Antonovosky, 1987; Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2003). In shifting the focus away from studying factors that put individuals at risk for psychopathology, those factors which helped individuals to cope despite adversity were highlighted.

The aim of resilience research, then, is to increase our understanding of the pathways that lead to normal development despite prevailing high-risk or adverse factors (Norman, 2000). The rationale for examining resilience phenomenon rests on the assumption that understanding how individuals overcome challenges, recover from trauma and cope despite adversity will reveal processes of adaptation that can guide intervention efforts with others at risk (Masten, 1990). In addition, researchers continue to conduct studies in the hope of revealing ways in which to inoculate individuals against personal, familial, and environmental acute and chronic stressors (Hawley, 2000; Ungar, 2003). Explaining how individuals manage to achieve positive

outcomes in spite of adversity can potentially inform intervention efforts designed to foster adaptive coping (Freitas & Downey, 1998) and, in so doing, help to improve the lives of other vulnerable individuals and families (Garmezy, Masten & Tellegan, 1984; Luthar, 1991; Masten, 2001).

1.4   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The challenges facing adults living in previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa are staggering (Foster *et al.*, 1997). While violence and poverty are the most common and difficult challenges facing adults and youth, single-parent families, longer working hours, low educational attainment, alcoholism and drug abuse are also common phenomena in many South African communities. In addition, adults and youth have been exposed to racism, oppression and dangerous behaviours, such as unsafe sex and gangsterism, which often continue to impact youth as they advance into adulthood, continuing to influence and affect them during their adult lives. However, while human beings are vulnerable to both psychological and physical damage, it is known "that some emerge unscathed, or relatively unscathed, from situations that severely cripple others" (Tizard & Varma, 1992:7). Resilience researchers (Green, Taylor, Evans & Anderson Smith, 2002) continue to grapple with why, despite racism and discrimination, many individuals do not surrender to the effects of oppression and environmental stress. Although resilience research (Luthar, 1991; Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2003) has focused mainly on how children and adolescents respond to adversity and stressful life events, little relevant contextual research appears, as yet, to have been undertaken regarding South African adults' ability to cope with the adversity common in many communities throughout the country. Scant records exist of specifically adults' experiences of their own resilience in high-risk communities in South Africa. The aim of this study, then, was to gain a contextual understanding of adults' experiences of resilience, with a view to understanding how adults can overcome adversity within a high-risk community.

The purpose of this study was to explore and come to a better understanding of adults' experiences and perceptions of resilience within a high-risk community. In light of the above, the following research questions were formulated:

- What adversities confront the participants in their community?

- What resources contribute to the participants' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community?

1.5   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of this study was to understand adults' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community on the Cape Flats. The more specific objectives of this study were to gain an understanding of:

- the adversities that confronted participants in their community; and

- the different types of resources which support, or contribute to, participants' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community.

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to understand adults' experiences of their resilience within a high risk community, a basic interpretive qualitative research design was utilised. Qualitative research is described as research in which the data, instead of being numerically displayed, tend rather to be in the form of words, pictures and audio material (Punch, 2005). "A qualitative approach to research is sensitive to context and lived experience and aims for in-depth and holistic understanding" (Punch, 2005:238) by attempting to understand the actions of the research participants in detail, and then "attempting to understand the actions in terms of the actors' own beliefs, history and context" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:271). The aim of qualitative research is to describe and understand events within the concrete, natural context in which they occur. Only by understanding events as they occur against the background provided by the overall context and by perceiving how such a context gives meaning to the events concerned, can one truly claim to understand the events concerned. Such an understanding is an end in itself, which does not essentially attempt to predict what may happen in the future, but which allows for the appreciation of the nature of that setting and the faithful communication of such to others who are interested in that particular setting (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research has close links with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. Participants are seen as active agents who actively create meaning in their lives within and through their social context. "The world, or reality, is not the fixed, single,

agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding interpretations at a particular point in time and in a particular context" (Merriam 2002:4).

In qualitative research the researcher, as the main research instrument (Walford, 2001), gathers words or pictures, analyses them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process expressively and persuasively through the medium of language. Qualitative researchers emphasise the human factor in their intimate first-hand knowledge of the research setting, and avoid distancing themselves from the people or events that they study. "The researcher makes his or her presence explicit, is sensitive to prior assumptions and is forthright and open about his or her personal involvement" (Neuman, 2000:141).

"Interpretive research relies on first-hand accounts, tries to describe what it sees in rich detail and presents its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language" (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999:124). "The product of qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon. The researcher remains the primary instrument for both data collection and data analysis and has as his or her aim, the rich description of the end product in order to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these" (Merriam, 2002:7). It was with the above in mind that the researcher adopted a basic interpretive qualitative research design in her attempt to explore and understand participants' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community.

1.7   SITE SELECTION AND ACCESS

A community on the Cape Flats, situated on the outskirts of Cape Town in the Western Cape, was selected as the setting for this study. The community concerned is considered a high-risk community by the South African Police Service (SAPS), whose crime statistics (2005) indicate that the community experiences an extremely high crime and violence rate, characterised by the commission of such crimes as murder, rape, attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping, hijacking and those related to

the abuse of drugs. The rates of unemployment and poverty are also high in the community.

According to the SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre's report (2005), the community was established seven years ago as part of an initiative by the local authorities within the city of Cape Town to provide housing to a growing number of inadequately housed members of the population. Since the community was originally designed by the apartheid government of South Africa as a racially segregated area, most of the residents at the time of this study were coloured. It was, and continues to be, an economically disadvantaged community.

Housing in the community varies in terms of type, quality and size. Some of the houses, which are referred to as 'shacks', are constructed from corrugated iron, some from bricks with corrugated-iron roofs, and others from any available material. Prior to settling in the community, most residents had already lived elsewhere in the city of Cape Town (SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre Report, 2005) and, as such, the community is made up of individuals from various backgrounds, language, race and religious groups. According to Census 2001 data, the majority of residents in the community are Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers. In addition to Afrikaans, a number of residents also speak English with varying levels of fluency. Another group of residents has isiXhosa as its mother tongue and speak Afrikaans and English with varying levels of fluency.

Access to the site was gained with the help of individuals who had run projects and programmes in the area and who were thus known to the community. I was introduced to a community leader, who served as a key informant in this study. The key informant was selected because of his insider knowledge. The key informant introduced me to other adults who had lived in the community for many years, who had witnessed changes in the community, and who had knowledge of the community members' activities. These adults were also consulted and viewed as key informants in this study.

1.8   SAMPLING THE POPULATION

Since qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon in terms of the varying perspectives of the participants involved, it was vital to select a sample from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 2002). The selection of 'information-

rich cases', which allows maximal learning to take place regarding issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, is termed 'purposeful', or 'purposive', sampling (Patton, 1987:37). In purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study (Silverman, 2000).

A snowball sampling strategy was employed in this study in order to make contact with individuals who were viewed as resilient by their fellow community members, and who were able to provide the researcher with 'information-rich' data for this study. In an attempt to answer the research questions, it was important that participants who were identified by one another were members of the site selected for my study, were viewed as resilient by one another and by themselves.

1.9 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data was collected through observation, individual and focus group interviews which, according to Rossman and Rallis (1998:116), aid "qualitative researchers in capturing and representing the richness, texture and depth of what they study". In addition, the use of the above-stated three data collection methods facilitated methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of various data-gathering methods in order to construct the most accurate understanding of a specific phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

1.9.1 Observation

Observation refers to "the circumstance of being in or around an on-going social setting for the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of that setting" (Lofland in Patton, 1987:73), and can be described as a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation. Some researchers (McBurney, Mitchell & Jolley in de Vos, 2002; Punch, 2005) distinguish between naturalistic and participant observation. In naturalistic observation observers neither manipulate nor stimulate the behaviour of those whom they are observing (Punch, 2005), removing the possibility of the situation under observation being contrived for research purposes. During the process of observation, the researcher plays the dual role of data collector and interpreter (Coertze in de Vos, 2002).

For the purpose of this study, I employed naturalistic observation in an unstructured manner, and, rather than using predetermined categories and classifications, made observations in a natural, open-ended way. My belief was that categories and concepts for describing and analysing the observational data would more naturally emerge later on in the course of the study, during the analysis of the data, rather than having to be imposed on the data from the start (Punch, 2005).

1.9.2 Individual interviews

"Interviewing involves asking questions, listening to and recording answers, and then following up with additional relevant questions" (Patton, 1987:08). Interviewing, which is a way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations, as well as their constructions of reality, remains one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research (Punch, 2005). For the purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised as a method of data collection. The semi-structured interview contained a mix of more and less structured questions (Merriam, 2002), and was subject to guidance in order to ensure that pertinent information was gained from the research participants in response to more or less the same questions. By using an interview guide, the "interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style with the focus on a particular predetermined subject" (Patton, 1987:111).

1.9.3 Focus group interviews

In addition to the use of individual semi-structured interviews, a focus-group interview with the participants was also conducted. A focus group interview is "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic" (Patton, 1987:135) and provides, as its main advantage, the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on a set topic in a limited period of time (Morgan in Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis, which is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data entails searching for general statements about relationships among categories of data (de Vos, 2002). Data interpretation, however, "involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patters

and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions" (Patton, 1987:144).

Coding was used to locate themes and assign initial codes in an initial attempt to reduce the mass of data gleaned into appropriate categories. Such coding entailed a "process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Neuman, 2000:61) and involved re-reading all transcriptions and notes in order to identify critical terms or themes. Once the themes had been identified, a list of the themes was compiled to serve three purposes: firstly, to provide an overview of the emerging themes; secondly, to stimulate the identification of themes in future open coding; and thirdly, to build a universe of all the themes involved in the study, which could be reorganised, sorted, combined, discarded or extended in further analysis. The goal of the data analysis was to integrate the themes and concepts into an overall understanding that offered an accurate and detailed interpretation of the research arena involved (Mouton, 2001).

1.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order for this study to be ethically sound, the research gave due concern to the dignity and welfare of the participants concerned (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The nature of the research was explained to all the participants in language that they could understand (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). All participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and adequate information on the goal of the study, the procedures that would be followed during the course of the study, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which participants might be exposed, as well as the credibility of the researcher, were competently explained to the participants (de Vos, 2002). Participants were also assured that they would have an opportunity to request any information that they required about the nature, results and conclusions of the study. I attempted at all times to be honest and open with the participants. Reasonable measures were taken to honour all commitments made to research participants, and the privacy and confidentiality of all participants was recognised throughout the course of the study. All participants were assured that, although the researcher could identify a given

person's response, such identification would not be made public (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

1.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity, which refers to whether we are measuring what we are supposed to be measuring" (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:7), is regarded as synonymous with truth (Silverman, 2000). While external validity, which is also referred to as 'generalisability' by Lincoln and Guba (in Seale, 1999), refers to whether or not one's research findings can be generalised to other situations, internal validity refers to the "internal logic and consistency of the research" (Punch, 2005:254). The reliability or dependability (Lincoln & Guba in Seale, 1999) of a study refers to the degree to which the results of the study are repeatable or consistent (Neuman, 2000; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Various methods, including triangulation, peer examination and keeping an audit trail, were employed in an attempt to ensure the reliability and validity of the current study. Triangulation, which refers to the attempt to present a 'true' idea of a situation by combining different ways of looking at it, refers to "the use of multiple measures (investigators, theories, sources of data or methods) in order to explore the sample phenomena" (Neuman, 2000:138). Peer review "involves asking a colleague to scan one's raw data and assess whether the findings are plausible based on the data" (Merriam, 2002:26). An audit trail, according to Merriam (2002:27), "describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry". In addition, an attempt was made to ensure the generalisability of the study by providing a detailed, rich description of the setting studied, with the aim of providing sufficient information so as to enable others to judge the applicability, and generalisability, of the findings to other research settings. Firestone (in Merriam, 2002:29) referred to such a technique as 'case-to-case transfer'.

1.13 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For the purposes of the current study, the following definitions apply:

Resilience

The term resilience stems from the Latin term *resiliens*, which was used to refer to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance. The term has been defined in the

American Heritage Dictionary (1994) as "the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune" and has also now come to be applied to people who have successfully overcome the odds stacked against them – people who have successfully adapted in the face of adversity, stress or drastic change.

Adversity

In this study, the term 'adversity' refers to "any physiological, psychosocial, socio-cultural and environmental situations or conditions which threaten the normal development of an individual" (Wiener, 2003:77).

High-risk environment

A high-risk environment is perceived as one in which individuals are confronted with violence, unemployment, crime, poverty, inadequate housing, lack of resources, legal and illegal substance abuse and other forms of adversity on a daily basis.

1.14   OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One introduces, and provides the motivation for, the current study. The research problem, the research design and the methodology which guided this study are described in this chapter. The concepts which will be referred to throughout the study are clarified here. Ethical considerations and the constructs of validity and reliability are also emphasised.
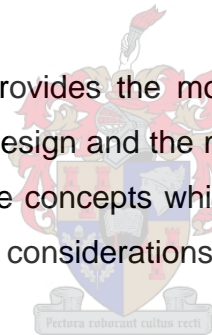
In **Chapter Two**, an overview of literature relevant to this study precedes an exploration of the constructs of resilience, adulthood, risk and adversity.

Chapter Three includes a detailed discussion regarding the paradigm, research design and methodology of the current study.

Chapter Four elucidates the process of data collection, data organisation and data analysis. Furthermore, the findings which emerged from this study are explored.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings which emerged during the course of this study. Limitations and recommendations of this study are also presented. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of this study and its findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a review of major research and literature findings surrounding the concept of resilience. Adulthood and its associated developmental tasks are explored first, followed by an overview of the challenges confronting adults in a pre- and post-democratic South Africa. Focus is also placed on the effects of exposure to adversity on adults, and on those factors known to place adults at risk. A review of the history of the field of resilience research, the way in which resilience is defined in the literature by various prominent researchers and an overview of the most common perspectives of resilience are also presented. An overview of the literature regarding the attributes of resilient adults serves to conclude the chapter.

2.2   ADULTHOOD AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

The period of adulthood covers the largest part of the life span, beginning from approximately the age of 20 and stretching into late adulthood, which begins at approximately 60 years of age (Gerdes, Louw, Van Eede & Louw, 1998:471). The progression from one stage of adulthood to the other is often characterised by transitional periods which may proceed fairly smoothly, as when goals and lifestyle change very little, or they may be very turbulent, as when associated with dramatic changes, for which a person may be ill-prepared. According to Gerdes *et al.* (1998), adults, like children, are required to perform various developmental tasks as they mature. Gerdes *et al.* (1998) provide an overview of the most important developmental tasks faced by adults. These tasks relate to four areas of adult life, namely tasks relating to the self, to interpersonal relationships, to work and leisure activities, and, finally, to the community. Besides the four above-mentioned developmental tasks, adults in the stage of late adulthood (65 years and older) are faced with further tasks, which include adjustment to physical changes, retirement, changes in income, establishment of peer affiliation, maintenance of intellectual

vitality, and adjustment to changes in the spouse or to his/her death (Gerdes *et al.*, 1998).

Lefrancois (in Gerdes *et al.*, 1998) points out two important factors to keep in mind when thinking about the developmental tasks of adulthood. Firstly, Lefrancois reminds us that developmental tasks are culture specific, and, secondly, that failure to complete a specific task does not result in 'abnormality' but, rather, one should remember that all individuals deal with the developmental tasks in a unique way.

The optimal development of adults is influenced by various factors, some of which relate to individual characteristics, such as age, gender and personality, while others relate to environmental influences, such as poverty, living standards and the availability of employment opportunities. The total context in which adult development occurs affects such development profoundly, while rapid change is often associated with a measure of instability and conflict (Gerdes *et al.*, 1998:478). In considering the developmental context of South African adults, one cannot ignore the historical-political context in which such development occurs. Clearly, South African adults have been exposed to a rapidly changing context since the early 1990s, which was a time marked by a move away from a pre-democratic society towards a post-democratic one. Both during and after the apartheid era, all adults, though especially black adults, have been faced with a number of challenges and adversities. The challenges and adversities to which they have been exposed will be discussed in the following section.

2.3   CHALLENGES CONFRONTING ADULTS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

Adults, particularly those from previously disadvantaged communities, were exposed to decades of racism, oppression, exclusion, violence and abuse of human rights resulting from both formal, and informal, apartheid government policies practiced at the time. Sonn and Fisher (1998:464) state that "there is no denying that oppression, the imposition of cultural systems, and other negative social forces (e.g. economic depression) adversely affect individuals and groups, often leading to pathological outcomes". Apartheid removed Black South Africans from a shared cultural heritage and imposed a racial label that implied that the group had a separate racial, ethnic and cultural identity, which should inflict a different life path on such people in

comparison to that of White South Africans (Mankowski & Rappaport in Sonn & Fisher, 1998).

Although the system of apartheid was abolished in the early 1990s, the effects of its policies still continue to influence the lives of many adults to this day. The most prominent apartheid 'after-effects' influencing the lives of adults in previously disadvantaged communities include: inadequate education and training opportunities, high levels of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and violence. These factors remain realities in the communities of many Black South Africans, negatively impacting on both the health and well-being of such adults.

Studies (Garson, 2006) show that while 65% of White and 40% of Indian South Africans have a high school or higher qualification, this figure is only 14% among Black, and 17% among Coloured, South Africans. This is due, in part, to the fact that during the apartheid years Black individuals were prohibited from attending so-called white schools, which generally tended to be better resourced and equipped, due to their relatively high rate of state funding, than were schools set aside for their own communities. In addition to being poorly resourced, educators at the so-called Black schools were only allowed to teach through the official medium of education, Afrikaans, which was a language in which many learners were not fully fluent. A combination of these factors resulted in large numbers of learners leaving school before they had matriculated or before they had even reached secondary-school level. A further consequence of the inadequacy in the provision of training and education for black children and adults has resulted in the current high levels of illiteracy in South Africa, with the national illiteracy rate being estimated at 30% (Garson, 2006). Illiteracy hinders still further the employment opportunities of many previously disadvantaged individuals. Inadequate education, skills and training can negatively impact on the economic status of many individuals, and, in turn, that of their children, helping to perpetuate the unending cycle of unemployment and poverty to which they are subject.

Unemployment is estimated to affect approximately 65% of South Africa's adult population (Garson, 2006), making it difficult, and often impossible, for adults to provide financially for their dependants and contributing to the poverty cycle that strangles the livelihood of many adults. The high number of poorly educated, untrained and under-skilled adults making up South Africa's workforce forces many

of these adults, especially those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, into low-paying employment, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty so common in many South African communities. It has been shown that "the difficulties of the unskilled worker are often transferred to the next generation" (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 1993), thus hindering the chances of the children born into such a situation ever being able to escape the cycle of poverty. Siegal (in McWhirter *et al.*, 1993) found that economic deprivation, or poverty, affected young people's images of their parents, affecting their behaviour toward adults in general. Therefore, in addition to the financial stress which accompanies poverty, adults are also likely to be confronted with their children's acting out and other problem behaviours. According to Biersteker and Robinson (2000), poverty in South Africa is characterised by female-headed households, increased numbers of very young and school-going children, unemployment, education being limited to primary level and race.

High levels of poverty and unemployment can force individuals to make use of criminal and violent means in order to survive. That random acts of violence and crime have a negative impact on the lives of individuals can hardly be contested; neither can the negative effect of the experience of family violence. Roughly one in three women in South Africa is subjected to on-going abuse in their relationships with their male partners (Biersteker & Robinson, 2000). Physical violence is present in almost one-third of domestic households in some areas of South Africa (Richter in Biersteker & Robinson, 2000). The impact of witnessing violence varies with age and gender, but the range of behavioural and emotional problems associated with it include emotional, cognitive and behavioural disturbances. Today, violence is still a common phenomenon in many communities, with acts such as rape, murder and hijacking occurring on a daily basis. Daily exposure to crime, violence and gangsterism is common, and, besides instilling terror into the lives of adults, violence can also result in parents feeling powerless and fearful about their children's future (Dubrow & Garbarino in Green, Taylor, Evans & Anderson Smith, 2002:241).

Solid evidence exists that mental health and physical well-being are negatively impacted by financial decline (McLloyd in McWhirter *et al.*, 1993), with economic factors exerting an influence on various domains of adults' lives, including their health, place and type of residence and their general standard of living. Many Black

South African adults were forced to live in substandard housing in underdeveloped and under-resourced areas by the oppressive governmental forces prevalent in apartheid South Africa. Inadequate housing often does not provide adults and their families with the protection that they need from the elements or from random acts of violence or crime. Adults, and their families, are also confronted with the further challenges posed by the HIV/Aids pandemic sweeping the country. The Department of Health estimated that 1.8 million South Africans were infected with HIV/Aids at the beginning of 1996, while a survey conducted by the Nelson Mandela/Human Sciences Research Council in 2002 found that 15.2 % of South Africans between the ages of 15 and 49 years were found to be infected with HIV/Aids (Freeman, 2004:141). According to the Child Health Unit of the University of Cape Town (1998), there are currently around 800 000 children in South Africa under the age of 18 years who have lost a mother to Aids, and by the year 2010 there could be as many as 5 to 7 million cumulative AIDS deaths in South Africa (Dorrington, Bourne, Bradshaw, Laubscher & Timaeus in Freeman, 2004:142). This scenario places a great burden on each infected and affected person. Depending on whom the ill person in the family is, other family members may be forced to take responsibility for tasks such as income generation, cooking and cleaning, caring for children, providing emotional support, and seeing to recreation. Adults in extended families are increasingly being forced to take in children of family members who have already died of HIV/Aids, thus placing an increasing emotional and financial burden on already over-burdened families. The stress of having even only one member of one's family HIV positive is considerable (Wright in Freeman, 2004), adding considerably to the challenges confronting adults in South Africa.

According to Peterson and Carolissen (2000), "the many stressors in the everyday lives of adults negatively affect their ability to be effective caregivers". The most common stressors identified by Peterson and Carolissen include unemployment, domestic violence, financial problems, alcoholism and exhaustion due to long hours at work. Adults, especially those in previously disadvantaged communities, are often blamed or negatively labelled by society for their perceived inability to care or provide adequately for their children. Blaming or labelling often occurs without acknowledgement of the extreme adversity under which many adults continue to live and, often, to thrive under.

2.4 FACTORS PLACING ADULTS AT RISK

Risk factors are influences, occurring at any systemic (i.e. individual, family, community or society) level, that threaten the positive adaptational outcomes of adults (Masten & Wright, 1998). Various researchers (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990; McWhirter *et al.*, 1993; Rutter, 2001) highlight a number of risk factors that could place adults at risk for psychosocial problems, such as emotional or behavioural problems, lower work achievement, alcoholism or coming into trouble with the law. Risk factors, such as family composition, poverty, low income and unemployment, inadequate housing, illiteracy, biological and gender factors, environmental influences, exposure to violence and lack of purpose could, potentially, place adults at risk.

One's family composition and quality of family life can affect one's strength and stability negatively (McWhirter *et al.*, 1993). Single-parent or large families place economic stress on the family's breadwinners, hampering their being able to provide adequately for them. In other words, families may be vulnerable economically due to their low income level (especially in the case of single-parent families), or because the sheer number of children makes coping on a 'normal' income hard. McWhirter *et al.* (1993) show that single mothers, whatever their employment status, are more likely to experience health problems, depression and anxiety. Statistics show that, in the USA, one in three single mothers subsist below the poverty level and more than half the children grow up in poverty (McWhirter *et al.*, 1993). Given the employment and poverty rate in South Africa, it is highly unlikely that South African single mothers are better off than are American counterparts.

Poverty is the risk factor most closely associated with the rise in family stress, and it is highly correlated with school failure and other problems (McWhirter *et al.*, 1993:23). Research also shows that economic loss influences children through the changes it produces in parental attitude, disposition and behaviour. Parents who suffered financial loss were found to be more tense, irritable, and explosive, as well as to be increasingly arbitrary and punitive in the discipline of their children (Elder, Liker & Cross, 1984; Lempers, Clark-Lempers & Simons, 1989 in McWhirter *et al.*, 1993:24).

Biological, health and gender factors are also known to place individuals at risk. Among poor youth living in urban areas, male gender can serve as a vulnerability marker, as boys are typically more reactive than girls are to negative influences within their own communities (Luther & Cicchetti, 2000). For individuals experiencing chronic and severe life adversities, research (Rutter, 2001) shows that those with low intelligence are more vulnerable to adjustment difficulties over time than are those with higher intelligence.

Environmental influences, such as changing economic and political trends, are evident throughout South African society. Some of the trends which can be seen as risk factors include the increasing incidence of: (a) job losses and unemployment; (b) poverty among families; (c) single-parent families; and (d) homeless families.

Ennui is defined by McWhirter *et al.* (1993) as boredom and is used to refer to an emotional state of non-involvement that comes from a lack of purpose. Many individuals, especially those who are unemployed or living in poverty, experience ennui, resulting in a sense of disconnectedness that increases the possibility that they are at risk. According to Pascal (1950), "Nothing is so unsufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without effort. Then he feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his weakness, his emptiness."

People develop individual characteristics, such as likes and dislikes, talents and disabilities, strengths and weaknesses that become engrained in their personalities. Individual characteristics, which are also shaped by the societal environment, originate in the perception of family roots and school conditions. McWhirter and others (1993:81) are of the opinion that at-risk adolescents and adults are those who do not acquire all the knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, and skills that they need in order to become productive adults. The failure to acquire such attributes may lead to a downward spiral resulting in multiple problems that could include academic failure, drug use, teen pregnancy, gangsterism and violence. Involvement in gangsterism often leads to the use and/or abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Another factor that is known to place adults at risk is exposure to, or involvement in, violence. The personal, interpersonal, and social consequences of violence and abuse are far-reaching. Chronic community violence has serious, negative

consequences for children and adolescents, whether they are victims or witnesses of violent acts (Osofsky in Nettles, Mucherah & Jones, 2000). The majority of adult criminals appear to have started out as juvenile delinquents (McWhirter *et al.*, 1993:174), who joined gangs with significant negative consequences for both the individuals and communities concerned. Gangs facilitate economic gain and an image of success for young people who appear to have no other way of seeing themselves as achievers than by participating in violence and crime.

Within the risk and resilience literature, however, it is evident that there is a move away from a focus purely on the elements of risk to a more positive focus on resilience. It is therefore essential to discuss adversity and risk factors in partnership with resilience and protective factors, and, as such, resilience, protective factors and attributes of resilient adults will be expanded on in the following section, which explores the effects that exposure to adversity has on adults.

2.5   EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO RISK AND ADVERSITY ON ADULTS

Individuals from previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa are exposed to a number of adversities on a daily basis. Risk and adversities are, according to Rutter (in Gilligan, 2000), most debilitating when they come in multiple forms. As adversities mount up, the cumulative negative impact seems to soar and individuals facing multiple adversities have a high probability of developing serious difficulties as they move along their developmental trajectories. "The likelihood of serious maladjustment for adults increases exponentially with increasing numbers of socio-demographic risks, such as low parental education, large family size, minority status and parental mental illness" (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000:865). Research also shows that it is possible that risk factors interact and that the effects are magnified when they co-occur or pile up, so that the overall effect is greater than is the sum of the individual risk factors. Smokowski (in Waller, 2001:293) suggests that "links between different risk variables often occur, forming risk chains". Poverty, for example, often coincides with unemployment, single-parent families, high stress levels, and other risk factors. Individuals facing two coexisting risk factors demonstrate a four-fold increase in adjustment problems, and when four or more risk factors exist, the risk can become ten-fold (Masten & Wright, 1998; Rutter, 1983). The above-mentioned studies highlight the damaging consequences that cumulative adversity can have on

South African adults from previously disadvantaged communities in light of its placing them at risk for violence, crime, substance abuse and unemployment.

2.6   RESILIENCE RESEARCH WITHIN A HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

A literature survey shows that researchers have, for more than three decades, shown much interest in individuals who develop well despite a context of significant adversity (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993). Before the term 'resilient' was coined, however, researchers tended to focus more on studying children at risk for development of psychopathology. Rutter (1985, 1987), for one, conducted a study which focused on children whose parents were diagnosed as mentally ill, but who did not themselves become mentally ill or exhibit maladaptive behaviours, while Garmezy focused his research on children from backgrounds characterised by low socioeconomic status (SES), who lived in the midst of various negative family backgrounds. Garmezy observed that many children at risk for psychopathology nevertheless were developing surprisingly well (Masten & Powell, 2003:2), which led to a shift in his research focus and, by the early 1970s, he began to focus his attention on the study of *competence* in children at risk due to parental mental illness, poverty and other stressful life experiences. Further pioneering work was conducted by Werner and Smith (1982) and Werner (1986), who followed a group of children, born in Kauai, for more than thirty years. One-third of the children were regarded as high risk, due to their having been born into poverty and having lived in troubled environments. The theoretical understanding, then, of what constitutes resilience emerged mainly from research into children at risk.

Although early risk and resilience research focused on the factors that placed children at risk for psychopathology or illness, it is evident throughout the literature that an influential group of researchers took notice of the research being conducted on children who were thriving despite living in a context of adversity. An arena for the discussion and exploration of resilience and positive development despite risk status or exposure to adversity was therefore created. The result was a shift away from a deficit or pathological orientation, which sought to explain why people became sick or became subject to a given disease category, and highlighted injury, pathology, victimisation and learned helplessness (Norman, 2000:1). The new focus was characterised by a salutogenic orientation in which signs of healthy functioning were

expressly identified, irrespective of the presence or absence of a diagnosable disease (Antonovosky, 1987). The idea that researchers should focus less attention on how people become maladaptive and more on a study of the fostering mechanisms that lead to resilience underpins the primary trends in risk and resilience intervention literature (Blundo, 2002; Greene, 2002; Ungar, 2003).

2.7   THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS OF RESILIENCE

The various definitions and perspectives of resilience that abound within the literature must be taken into consideration when thinking about resilience. Throughout the literature, the resilient individual has been broadly described as one who works well, plays well, loves well, and expects well (Garmezy, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1982). While Rutter (in Hawley, 2000:102) refers more specifically to resilience as "individual variation in response to risk", Werner (1986:72) refers to it as "successful adaptation following exposure to stressful life events". Garmezy (1993:129), in turn, regards resilience as "functioning following adversity". Masten's (2001) definition of resilience as a class of phenomena characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development is similar to Smith and Prior's (1995:168) conceptualisation of resilience, which they define as the "capacity to maintain healthy functioning in an unhealthy setting, or the maintenance of mastery under stress". Ryff and Singer (2003:15), who define resilience as "the maintenance, recovery or improvement in mental or physical health following challenge", focus not on the evasion of adversity, but rather on successful engagement with difficult events and experiences.

Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker's (2000) definition of resilience refers to a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. As in the work of other researchers and authors (Luther & Zigler, 1991; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990), two critical conditions are implicit in this definition: firstly, exposure to significant threat or severe adversity; and secondly, the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process. Resilience, then, is regarded as the absence of adversity or vulnerability. Rather than a single event, resilience refers to ongoing capabilities that are available to an individual despite the presence of past and present risk factors (Gutheil & Congress, 2000:40). Resilience can also be conceptualised as a pathway that individuals follow

over time in response to a significant stressor or series of stressors. Resilience refers to self-righting behaviour (Vallant, 1993) and success in encountering one form of stress may lead to renewed confidence in handling another form. "Resilience appears to be a common phenomenon that results in most cases from the operation of basic human adaptational systems which, if protected and in good working order, aid development even in the face of severe adversity" (Masten, 2001:227).

According to Luthar and Cicchetti (2000), the term 'resilience', rather than representing a personality trait or an attribute of the individual, rather is a two-dimensional construct that implies exposure to adversity and the manifestation of positive adjustment outcomes. Luthar and Cicchetti (2000:862) warn that use of the term 'resilience' "may be perceived as suggesting that if only individuals had a particular trait, or if only they displayed particular behaviours, then they could withstand adversities". The implication is that "resilient persons grew themselves up … they either had the right stuff all along or acquired it by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps" (Walsh, 1998:6). Also, no-one is resilient or vulnerable all of the time, as resilience is not static – rather, an individual may respond very differently to the same or similar stressors at different points in time. Various researchers (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001) recommend that competence despite adversity be referred to as manifestation of 'resilient' qualities rather than 'resiliency', which carries the misleading connotation of a discrete personal attribute.

Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000:574) furthermore state that "it is critical to note that the resilience researchers' emphasis on wellness by no means implies their dismissal of that which does not approach excellence". The focus, however, is simply on levels that are unexpectedly positive or, in other words, on those where outcomes are substantially better than one might expect on the basis of how most individuals are affected by the relevant adversity. Positive outcomes are those that are conceptually most relevant to the risk encountered, so that when serious life adversities, such as exposure to war, are encountered, the absence of psychiatric distress can be a more logical outcome than excellence in functioning at school, for example (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000).

Regardless of to which understanding researchers of resilience adhere, three commonalities present in the definition or conceptualisation of resilience exist. The first commonality amongst the various definitions or conceptualisations is that

resilience always surfaces in the face of hardship and involves the way in which people react or respond towards difficulties. Hawley (2000:102) states that "without struggle, resilience does not exist". The second commonality which is evident is the idea that resiliency carries an element of 'buoyancy'. In other words, resilient individuals are those who are able to 'bounce back' or 'rebound' from adversity. Thirdly, resilience is also described in terms of wellness or strengths, rather than pathology or weakness, and virtually all definitions of resilience assume that individuals and families exhibit a capacity to overcome difficult circumstances through the use of inherent and/or acquired resources and strengths.

2.8   PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE

Resilience research is grounded in a number of perspectives (Greene, 2002:14). The constructionist, ecological, strengths, and developmental perspectives of resilience will be discussed in this section.

2.8.1 The constructionist perspective on resilience

A constructionist understanding of resilience defines resilience as the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments in which the individual resources are defined as healthy, despite the conditions collectively being viewed as adverse (Ungar, 2003). Ungar's (2003) constructionist understanding of resilience challenges the dominant ecological view of resilience research.

2.8.2 The ecological perspective on resilience

Within the ecological perspective, resilience has been defined as health despite adversity (Masten, 2001) and is seen as "a multi-determined and ever-changing product of interacting forces within a given eco-systemic context" (Waller, 2001:290). An individual's environment is believed to consist of co-occurring levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that interact to influence development. The focus is not only on an individual and on what takes place in a system, but also on what goes on between systems. The most distal levels of the environment include the macro-system (which consists of cultural values, beliefs, and ideologies) and the meso-system (which refers to social structures that affect, but do not include, the individual). The level of the environment that exerts most influences on individual development and which includes the immediate context in which the developing individual interacts with people is the micro-system (Becker & Luthar, 2002).

Because the phenomenon of resilience occurs in the context of person–environment interaction, and the circumstances that influence resilience are embedded in family, school, neighbourhood and the larger community, resilience can be understood from an ecological perspective (Greene, 2002). Behaviour, then, is not considered the outcome of a single cause, but rather the result of multiple, complex person–environment exchanges over time.

Ecological approaches emphasise the multiple systems of influence within which people live. This perspective encourages the idea that human development does not happen in a vacuum, but rather is the product of continuous transactions between individuals and the physical, social, class, and cultural environments in which they live. Given the bi-directionality of the relationship person and environment, individuals influence adverse life situations as well as being influenced by them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

2.8.3   The strengths perspective on resilience

The change from a medical, pathological model that focuses on curing illness to a health model that concentrates on promoting health has been dubbed 'the strengths perspective' in certain helping professions (Norman, 2000). Strengths perspective theorists generally assume that, when individuals are given positive support, they have the inherent ability to transform their own lives. In other words, from a strengths perspective, "all individuals must be understood and assessed in the light of their capabilities, competencies, knowledge, survival skills, visions, possibilities, and hopes" (Saleeby in Greene, 2002:16).

2.8.4   The developmental perspective on resilience

The developmental perspective examines people's behaviour across their lifespan and encompasses an understanding of bio-psychosocial factors, as well as the spiritual realm (Conrad in Greene, 1999). Within this perspective, resilience and development are seen as ongoing processes of gathering resources that allow individuals to negotiate "current issues adaptively whilst providing a foundation for dealing with subsequent challenges, as well as for recovering from reversals of fortune" (Yates, Egeland & Sroufe, 2003:250). Development is conceptualised as a hierarchically integrative process in which "earlier patterns of adaptation provide a framework for, and are transformed by, later experiences to yield increasing

complexity, flexibility, and organization" (Yates *et al.*, 2003:246). Developmental theorists assert that there is general coherence in the unfolding of competence over time, such that early success or failure sets the stage for subsequent success or failure as future challenges arise (Ripple & Luthar, 2000). In other words, prior experience is not lost, but is incorporated into new patterns of adaptation and resilience, and, because they affect the way in which later experiences are integrated, early experiences are seen as important factors when considering later adaptive strategies. This sentiment has been echoed by various researchers (Ripple & Luthar, 2000; Yates *et al.*, 2003), most of whom seem to believe that competence, or resilience, in one developmental period provides the individual with a foundation that facilitates successful encounters with other developmentally appropriate issues. The converse is true then, too: maladaptation at a previous stage of development might compromise a child's ability to engage with other developmentally appropriate tasks effectively.

According to Cicchetti and Garmezy (1993), the longer an individual is on a particular developmental pathway, the less likely it becomes that he or she will deviate from the course. As there is always an exception to the rule, the developmental perspective of resilience allows for the "exploration of processes that mediate continuity in adaptation, as well as of those mechanisms that precipitate changes in functioning over time" (Yates *et al.*, 2003:247). Such a perspective recognises the likelihood of "continuity and discontinuity at various points in development, seeking to identify the stressors that typify transition points in development, and emphasizing the need for an awareness of the personal vicissitudes that mark the lives of persons who occupy 'at-risk' statuses" (Garmezy & Masten, 1986:504). Developmental theorists have become increasingly concerned with how people negotiate life transitions with competence. Resilience is often discussed in terms of risk and protective factors (Garmezy & Masten, 1986; Rutter, 1989). "By thoroughly understanding the factors that pull subjects toward or away from increased risk at various age periods, one not only acquires a deeper understanding of their development but also gains valuable information for primary prevention" (Sroufe & Rutter in Garmezy & Masten, 1986:506). However, the perspective also recognises that the same developmental origins can result in different outcomes (multi-finality) and that different beginnings may meet at an equal developmental endpoint (equi-

finality). As Anthony (in Yates *et al.*, 2003:252) states: "Early resilience will not be extinguished; although it may go underground for a while, it will later present itself as surprising and unexpected strengths in the behaviour of the older individual". Thus, the study of apparently resilient individuals who never seem to manifest clinically disordered behaviour may offer as much to our inquiry as will the study of those who are severely maladapted.

Although differences exist between the above perspectives of resilience, the concept of resilience is defined in very similar ways as the "ability of certain individuals who appear to be at risk to bounce back from adversity, to cope with and manage major difficulties and disadvantages in life, and even to thrive in the face of what appear to be overwhelming odds" (Dent & Cameron, 2003:5). Furthermore, personal resilience is viewed as a developmental process influenced by the multi-systemic environment in which one lives.

The conceptualisation of resilience requires due recognition of the protective factors that exist within a particular system or society.

2.9   PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are believed to act as moderating or buffering effects on stressful events and have been defined as "influences that modify, ameliorate or alter a person's response to some environmental hazard that predisposes to a maladaptive outcome" (Smith & Carlson, 1997). Masten (in Greene, 2002:34) states that the term 'protective factor' generally "describes the circumstances that moderate the effects of risks and enhance adaptation". The development of strong, resilient human beings seems, then, to be related to protective factors commonly grouped into three categories, namely those relating to one's personality, and social and family environment. Firstly, personality variables are known to support the development of resilience. Personality variables related to resilience in the face of adversity include one's temperament or disposition, as well as one's cognitive skills and styles of communication. The social environment can provide individuals with external opportunities for development and support in the face of adversity. In addition, the family environment has both a direct and indirect influence on the development of resilience (McWhirter *et al.*, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1982; Werner in Smokowsi, Reynolds & Bezruczko, 1999). The effects of adversity on adults are less important

for individuals who possess adequate personality, familial and social resources, compared to those who do not (Dumont & Provost, 1999).

However, the interplay between risk and protective factors is much debated in the literature. Masten (in Greene, 2002) argues that risk and protective factors are polar opposites, in that competence decreases as stress increases, and vice versa. Masten's argument is echoed by Sameroff, Barto, Baldwin, Baldwin and Siefer (1998), who agree that the more the risk factors are to which an individual is exposed, the worse the outcome for the individual, while the existence of a number of protective factors is related to the likelihood of better outcomes. Masten (1990) also highlighted the idea that protective factors do not necessarily yield resilience, as it is possible that protective processes may not suffice if the vulnerability of the individual or the severity of the adversity is too great to overcome. Rutter (1983), in contrast, is of the opinion that risk and protective factors interact to produce an outcome and that, just as risk factors may differ across developmental periods, so, too, can protective factors. The relationship between resilience, risk factors and protective factors extend both backward and forward through time (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Understanding how individuals cope in the face of cumulative challenges is viewed as a fundamental route to understanding resilience as a dynamic process. Therefore, although there have been many attempts to describe interpersonal and social factors that contribute to resilience, these factors should be considered part of a dynamic interaction rather than in isolation of one another.

2.10   ATTRIBUTES OF RESILIENT ADULTS

Adult resiliency is discussed far less frequently than is resiliency in younger people (Gutheil & Congress, 2000) and a review of the literature showed that the study of resilience in later life is still largely unchartered territory. Resilience is infrequently used to explain the way in which adults cope with unexpected or challenging life events, which may be due to the fact that most of the early pioneers who studied resilience focused on younger people (Lewis & Harrell, 2002; McCubbin & Thompson, 1999). Lewis and Harrell (2002), however, state that, given the current emphasis on a strengths perspective and the dramatic increase in the number of older persons, the time seems right to advance the study of resilience to include adults. In addition, resilience can be achieved at any point in the lifecycle, and there

is a need for additional work on at-risk individuals' achievement of positive outcomes in later life (Staudinger, Marsiske & Baltes, 1995). Adulthood is replete with difficult challenges and adversity (e.g. acute health events and chronic stressors, such as care-giving, financial strains, etc.) making it a valuable period for understanding how challenges are successfully negotiated.

Research (Masten, Burt, Roisman, Obradovic, Long & Tellegen, 2004) suggests that the period of transition to adulthood may afford special risks and opportunities as young people acquire greater functioning capacity and autonomy; reach legal age for many privileges and responsibilities; leave home; enter the workforce or higher education; fall in love; marry; and begin families. These key 'turning points' are often discussed in the literature and occur mainly during the transition years between adolescence and adulthood. Although the literature regarding transitions to adulthood is largely undeveloped, there do seem to be various individual and contextual differences in adolescence and emerging adulthood that predict a successful transition. Masten *et al.* (2004) document that the role of opportunities is of importance, as is the role of agency on the part of the individual. In Masten's reference to the role of agency, she includes motivation, future orientation, the ability to plan and coping abilities in her conceptualisation. Childhood resilience is expected to endure the transition to adulthood because, say Masten and others (2004), success in age-salient developmental tasks shows strong continuity from one age period to the next and because those already manifesting resilience clearly have adaptive capacity for negotiating challenges in their lives. The transition to adulthood has also been seen to provide opportunities for individuals to leave behind some of the burdens of childhood, and may offer substantially more legal latitude and choice regarding one's life, activities, and relationships. New capacities for autonomous functioning, planning, self-direction and decision making become available toward the end of the second decade of human development. This situation may provide new chances for maladaptive teenagers to change direction by choosing to move into new and healthier contexts, both by seeking or responding to the boost that adult mentors can provide, and by organising their actions more effectively toward reaching their goals (Masten *et al.*, 2004).

Although the literature that examines resilience among adults is not nearly as extensive as that which examines resilience among children, commonalities were

identified between both resilient children and adults. In order to provide the reader with a succinct understanding of the common attributes of resilience, such attributes will be clustered into the following groups: firstly, individual attributes; secondly, family and inter-personal attributes; and, thirdly, ecological attributes.

Some studies of how adults have coped successfully with highly stressful situations conclude that the resilient individual has a "hardy personality" (Lewis & Harrell, 2002:281) which is characterised by a strong internal locus of control, an ability to see the positive aspects of change, and an ability to find meaning and value in what one is doing. Rutter (1985) views the resilient adult as one who has a sense of self-esteem and confidence, possessing a repertoire of social problem-solving approaches and imbued with a sense of self-efficacy (i.e. a belief in the capacity to influence events and make a difference to life in the present and future). Common traits highlighted amongst resilient individuals include self-esteem, self-efficacy, hope, personal control, self-understanding and learned optimism. Self-efficacy also includes the sense of security that comes with the belief that one's external and internal world are predictable and hopefully, that life makes sense, and that one has some control over one's self, the current environment, and one's future destiny. Many studies have demonstrated the association between self-efficacy and resiliency (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1992), stating that self-efficacy may function protectively by motivating attempts at adaptation. Beardslee (1989) states that adults who demonstrate self-understanding, an internal psychological process in which a person makes causal relationships or linkages between experiences in the world and his or her inner feelings, also tend to be highly resilient. Good verbal communication and social skills (Werner & Smith, 1982), an internal locus of control, impulse control, reflectiveness (Garmezy, 1985), high self-esteem and positive self-regard are all associated with resiliency. An ability to delay gratification and maintain a future orientation is also associated with resiliency.

Research completed by Masten and Coatsworth (1998) revealed that highly stressed participants with more developed competence had a greater ability to use humour, were more readily able to find the comic in the tragic, and used humour to reduce tension and to restore perspective. During various research studies, Garmezy and others (1984) found that highly stressed but able individuals had higher humour generation scores than did their equally stressed, but less able, counterparts.

Humour may also help to maintain social relationships, complementing resiliency by so doing.

Furthermore, research (Beardslee & Podorefsky, 1988; Norman, 2000) suggests that resilient individuals are those with the ability to differentiate between the possible and the impossible, who are able to appraise the consequences of their actions realistically. Better adapted individuals had the ability to more accurately assess the stress levels with which they had to deal, and to realistically appraise their capacity to act and affect the situation (Garmezy & Masten, 1986; Werner, 1986). Norman (2000) maintains that the psychological ability to step back from a dysfunctional environment and to maintain a healthy separateness from the maladaptive patterns of significant others (known as adaptive distancing) has been shown in many studies to be an important resiliency factor. In other words, resilient individuals seem able to keep themselves from becoming enmeshed in, and repeating, harmful patterns which can be summarised as the "ability of adults to think and act separately from the troubled persons in their lives" (Norman, 2000:7).

Resilient individuals appear to have certain personality characteristics or skills in common and the following psychological traits are associated with resilience throughout the literature:

(a) the absence of organic deficits; (b) an easy temperament; (c) increased responsiveness, flexibility, and adaptability; (d) an internal locus of control; (e) having sufficient sense of humour to generate comic relief, reduce stress, and find alternative ways of looking at things; (f) sound intellectual skills; and (g) religious faith (Rutter, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1982). From the psychological vantage point, resilience is the development of clusters of self-protective behaviours or strengths (Greene, 2002). However, it remains important to note that personal attributes are not implanted in individuals, but are substantially shaped by life circumstances. Many personal characteristics that may seem to reside in the individual are, in fact, continually shaped by interactions between the individual and aspects of his or her environment. Therefore, while individual attributes may be important, it must also be remembered that resilience emerges in a supportive, interpersonal context (Gilligun, 2001).

Intellectual skills are also often correlated with resilience (Garmezy, 1985). Resilient adults tend to be resourceful and effective problem-solvers, as they may be able to quickly and accurately discern danger, find safe escape routes and locate sources of help. Sternberg (in Masten *et al.*, 1998) defines intelligence in terms of mental activity directed at adaptation.

Much of the research concerning interpersonal protective factors relate to children and families, although there are some interpersonal factors that have been noted (Norman, 2000) to promote the resiliency of people of all ages. These factors are the maintenance of positive, caring relationships; a positive family or other intimate environment; affiliation to social clubs and religious organisations and sufficiently high expectations (Coke & Twaite, 1995; Rutter & Quinton, 1984; Werner, 1995).

Being part of a positive family or other intimate environments benefit the resiliency of adults, children and adolescents. Family activities communicate a feeling of solidarity and continuity, adding to a sense of security and predictability that encourages the development of resilience (Wolin & Wolin, 1993). In addition, resilient adults tend to be those who are, or who have been, surrounded by just 'high-enough' expectations of significant family members (Mills, 1991; Rutter, 1989; Walsh, 1998). Sonn and Fisher (1998) note that the role of religious and groups provide opportunities for participation, and for the development of a sense of community and belonging.

Adults who are successful into old age generally maintain and benefit from their social ties. Adults who are resilient have: the ability to gain social competence; the capacity to be flexible, empathetic, and to communicate effectively; the ability to use problem-solving skills; the ability to plan, seek help, and think critically and reflectively; and the ability to develop a sense of critical consciousness, an awareness of oppressive structures and how to combat them (Rowe & Kahn, 1998). The ability to understand and respond to another's feelings (i.e. empathy) has also been identified as a resiliency trait in various studies.

The environment beyond the individual and the family also provides opportunities for positive growth and the development of resilience. Resilient adults are known to make use of support or resources in their social environments, with adequate social support being known to offset or moderate the impact of stress on health. Social support networks function to decrease the effects of stress on adults, with resilient

adults, more often than their non-resilient counterparts, making use of their community networks. Additionally, involvement in community activities fosters individual talents and contributes to a sense of competence, efficacy, esteem and well-being (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) and also offers adults a channel to express their energy in socially acceptable ways (Dumont & Provost, 1999). Religious practices and beliefs are also known to play an important role in the lives of resilient adults (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990). While religion may enhance positive beliefs about the self, it also provides the individual with a sense of social connectedness. Resilient adults are also those who have the ability to foster supportive friendships, which, in itself, is a characteristic of sound adjustment and resilience (Smith & Carlson, 1997).

2.11   SUMMARY

A discussion of the recent literature regarding the concept of adult resilience was presented in this chapter. The chapter commenced with a study regarding the nature of adulthood and its related developmental tasks, which was followed by a description of the many adversities and challenges confronting South African adults. Mirroring trends in resiliency literature, the focus of this chapter then moved away from a focus on risk to one on resilience. Resilience research within a historical context, theoretical definitions of resilience and perspectives of resilience were also discussed. Attributes of resilient adults were enumerated.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN
AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that guided this study. The chapter begins with a discussion regarding the nature of paradigms and highlights three research paradigms common to research in the social sciences. The research design that guided this study is introduced, and the setting, population and sample are described. As data collection remains an important aspect of any research study, this chapter provides a thorough description of the methods of data collection and analysis used in the study. The chapter concludes with an in-depth explanation of the methods used to ensure the study's validity and reliability.

3.2   PARADIGMS

All scientific research is conducted within a specific paradigm (Kuhn, 1962), which is the fundamental model or frame of reference that researchers use to organise their observations and reasoning (Babbie in de Vos, 2002:266). Paradigms define for researchers the nature of their inquiry along three dimensions, those of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:6) and, as such, act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and which commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:36). Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied, and what can be known about it, while epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. Methodology refers to how the researcher may go about practically studying whatever s/he believes can be studied (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

3.3   RESEARCH PARADIGMS AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Within the social sciences, various research traditions, schools of thought or paradigms exist. Social science is defined as "the branches of science that deal with

the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society" (Webster in de Vos, 2002:4). Three influential research paradigms in the social sciences are positivism, critical theory and interpretivism (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; de Vos, 2002). Each research paradigm is linked to a specific methodological approach often used in the social sciences. The three methodological approaches, to which each paradigm is generally linked, are quantitative research, participatory action research and qualitative research. The following section discusses each of the three research paradigms separately, including a description of the ontology, epistemology and methodology of each. The discussion will begin with the positivist research paradigm, followed by the critical research paradigm and will end with the interpretivist research paradigm which informed this study.

3.3.1 The positivist paradigm

Auguste Comte (1798–1857), regarded as the father of positivism, began developing the main ideas underlying positivism between 1862 and 1829. The main aim of positivist social research is "to establish universally valid, causal laws of human behaviour" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:22). Ontologically, positivists view the nature of reality as stable and law-like. Epistemologically, positivists believe that research should be clinical, neutral, controlled and objective. Positivist researchers believe that researchers should be free of values that might otherwise impair their objectivity and undermine the validity of the knowledge. Objectivity and detachment are striven towards in positivistic epistemological beliefs.

From a methodological viewpoint, positivists hold experimental control, structured and replicable observation and measurement, quantification, generalisation and objectivity essential (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Positivism has traditionally been linked to a quantitative methodology in the social sciences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), which has objective measurement as one of its main aims (de Vos, 2002:79). Positivists generally formalise causality in law-like statements and support the idea that the primary source of knowledge is to be found in experience and observation. In other words, unless data can be confirmed though our senses, it cannot be accepted as scientific. Pure logic or personal insights, for example, are rejected by positivists as sources of scientific data, as they cannot be verified through the senses.

3.3.2 The critical paradigm

A critical research paradigm "is one that recognises that a great many of the actions people perform are caused by social conditions over which they have no control, and that a great deal of what people do to one another is not the result of conscious knowledge and choice" (Fay in Babbie & Mouton, 2001:35). Critical research, then, attempts to uncover those systems of social relationships that determine the actions of individuals and the unanticipated, though not accidental, consequences of such (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:36).

Critical research has, as its aims, the transformation or change of the human condition through the critique of those alienating or repressing factors that sustain their alienation, self-deception or false consciousness and the emancipation of individuals, communities and societies through the "uncovering, examination, and critiquing of the social, cultural, and psychological assumptions that structure and limit our ways of thinking and being in the world" (Merriam, 2002:9).

3.3.3 The interpretivist paradigm

Interpretive research can be traced back to the work done by the German sociologist Max Weber (1854–1920) and the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), who were of the opinion that there were two fundamentally different types of science: the natural sciences, which were based on abstract explanations, and the social sciences, which were based on empathetic understandings of the everyday lived experiences of people in specific settings (de Vos, 2002). Within the interpretivist research paradigm the aim of the social sciences is defined as "understanding (not explaining) people as people are regarded not as biological organisms, but as conscious, self-directing, symbolic human beings" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28).

Ontologically, the interpretivist research paradigm denies the existence of any one truth or reality, supporting, instead, the idea of pluralism. Several orders of realities, each with its own special and separate style of existence, are believed to exist and every individual is believed to have his/her own "internal reality of subjective experience" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:6). This paradigmatic view asserts that the reality to be studied consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world. Epistemologically, interpretivist researchers attempt to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant's perspective and are "interested in

understanding what those perspectives are at a particular point in time and in a particular context" (Merriam, 2002:4). In contrast to positivist researchers, interpretivists do not take on an objective stance in relation to their research or the research participants, but instead assume an empathetic and subjective attitude. The interpretive paradigm denies the existence of an objective reality independent of the frame of reference of the observer.

The methodology which fits most closely with the interpretivist paradigm employs qualitative research methods, which "stem from an anti-positivistic, interpretive approach" (de Vos, 2002:79). Qualitative research methods are those which elicit participant accounts of meaning, experiences or perceptions. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words and involves identifying the participant's beliefs and values that underlie the phenomenon (de Vos, 2002). The main aim of qualitative research methods is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. "Such methods are often relied on by researchers aiming to present authentic interpretations that are sensitive to specific social contexts" (Neuman, 2000:139). Researchers who make use of qualitative research methods use an emic perspective of inquiry, or, in other words, derive meaning from the subject's perspective. Such researchers are concerned with understanding rather than explanation; naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement; and the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to the outsider perspective that predominates in the quantitative paradigm (de Vos, 2002:79). In light of such an explanation, interpretivist qualitative research is naturalistic and draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of participants in the study. Qualitative researchers view social worlds as holistic, engage in systematic reflection on their own roles in the research and are sensitive to their personal biographies and how these shape the study (Rossman & Rallis in Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Given the aims and nature of this study, I have situated my research in an interpretivist research paradigm. The focus of this study is on the experience of the research participants and is concerned with the meaning that the participants give to their resilience within a high-risk community. The interpretive research paradigm directed the use of qualitative research methods, both in the collection and analysis of the data, for this study.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is defined as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem (Mouton, 1998) and therefore guides the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In developing a research design, the researcher must make a series of decisions along certain dimensions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Firstly, researchers must decide which research paradigm will inform the research, the purpose of the research, the context within which the research will be carried out and which research techniques which will be used in order to collect and analyse the data. The paradigm guiding the current study was a basic interpretive, qualitative one. By ensuring that the purpose of the study, and the methods used to conduct the study, fitted logically within the chosen research paradigm, the principle of coherence (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) was preserved.

3.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated:

- What adversities confront the participants in their community?

- What resources contribute to, the participants' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community?

- What resources support participants' in over-coming adversity?

3.6   LITERATURE STUDY

A review of the literature allowed for the registering of previous research on the specific topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The literature review served various functions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). It demonstrated the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions and provided additional related research. The literature review also served to identify gaps existing in the previous research. Finally, the literature review refined the research questions by embedding the questions in larger empirical traditions.

3.7   SETTING OF THE INQUIRY

The setting for this study was a high-risk community on the Cape Flats. Community members were found to be individuals predominantly belonging to the black and

coloured races, as the community was established as a racially segregated one by the previous apartheid government of South Africa. The community is characterised by poverty, gangsterism, violence, crime, unemployment, illiteracy and alcohol and drug abuse. Some adults, despite being faced with adversity on a daily basis, nevertheless manage to cope and succeed in this community. As the aim of this study was to explore and understand adults' experiences of their resilience within a high-risk community, this particular community seemed an appropriate choice of setting for my study.

As a white, middle-class female researcher, access into the community was gained with the help of key informants who had insider status in the community. Taking South Africa's history of apartheid and strict racial divide into account, the undertaking of this study, given its setting, would not have been possible without the help of the above-mentioned key informants. As the research participants and current researcher differed radically in terms of culture, class, gender, race, historical background, educational level, socio-economic status and context, the researcher was regarded as an 'outsider' by the participants. As stated by Daniels (2003:193), "South Africa's history of racial laws and legalized segregation has left a legacy of stereotyping the 'Other' that the races find difficult to discard". It was important for the researcher, as a citizen of a democratic South Africa, to break through the existing entrenched racial boundaries and divides and to forge a way forward by recognising the strengths and resilience of 'the Other'.

3.8   SAMPLING THE POPULATION

A population is defined as "the total set from which the participants of a study are chosen" (de Vos, 2002:198) and is the group about whom conclusions are to be drawn (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Because the population for this study could, potentially, include vast numbers of people, it was impossible to study all the members of the population. Instead, a sample, consisting of the actual group of people who were included in this study and from whom the data was collected, was selected from the population. Since qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants concerned, it was important to select a sample from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 2002). 'Information-rich cases' (Patton, 1987), which are cases from which one can learn a

great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, were included in the sample.

While researchers make use of various sampling strategies when selecting samples from a particular study population (Neuman, 2000), there are two over-arching types of sampling: purposive and non-purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to sampling in a deliberate way (Punch, 2005) and is often used in qualitative research in order to ensure the selection of information-rich cases (Merriam, 2002). A purposive sampling strategy, in the form of snowball sampling, was utilised in this study. Snowball sampling refers to the technique of collecting data on a few located members of the target population and then requesting that these participants provide information needed to make contact with other individuals of the population with whom they are familiar. Therefore, "snowball sampling refers to the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:167). Snowball sampling was utilised in this study for various reasons. Firstly, it allowed the current researcher to select unique cases that were especially informative. Secondly, the use of snowball sampling allowed the accessing and selection of members of a difficult-to-reach population. Thirdly, it allowed the identifying of particular types of cases appropriate for in-depth investigation.

Purposefully selecting a sample "represents a key decision point in a qualitative study" (Creswell, 1998:118) and researchers designing qualitative studies should have clear selection criteria in mind before selecting their sample. In this study, access to participants was gained with the assistance of key informants who were members of, and had insider status in, the specific community (Creswell, 1998). With the selection criteria for this study in mind, key informants were requested to identify individuals who were eligible to take part in the study. These participants then identified others who, they believed, met the sample criteria. Participants selected to partake in the study, apart from being adult members of the site selected for the study, had also to view themselves as resilient, as well as being viewed by other community members as resilient. Four participants, ranging in age from 32 to 59 years, were identified to engage in the study.

3.9   RESEARCH METHODS

3.9.1   Data collection

Data collection can be viewed as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering information pertinent to the answering of emerging research questions (Cresswell, 1998:110). Within the context of qualitative research, observation and interviewing are usually utilised to collect the relevant data (de Vos, 2002:321). The principal researcher, who was the primary instrument for data collection, was constantly aware that the use of self in the data collection process needed to be guided by ethical considerations at all times (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Additionally, in order not to distort the social meaning or significance of the experiences of the sample population, data collection was carried out in the homes, churches and gardens of the participants. The methods of data collection utilised in the study were observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews.

3.9.2   Observation

Observation, which has a long tradition in the social sciences, entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, and objects in the social setting chosen for study (Punch, 2005). In qualitative research, two types of observations are found, namely simple observation and participant observation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In simple observation, the researcher remains an outside observer, while in participant observation the researcher is both a member of the group being studied and a researcher. Observations can range from highly structured, detailed notations of behaviour guided by checklists to more holistic descriptions of events and behaviours (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:106). The advantages of observation as a data collection technique are that it can be conducted anywhere and that there is always an observing, thinking researcher on the "scene of the action" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

For the purposes of this study, simple, unstructured observation was conducted. An attempt was made at all times to follow the suggestion of Dane (in Strydom, 2002) that observers should refrain from either manipulating or stimulating the behaviour of those whom they are observing. The situation being observed was thus at no stage deliberately contrived for research purposes (Punch, 2005:179). As advocated by Strydom (2002), the aim of the observations was to gain in-depth insight into the

everyday lives, experiences or 'realities' of the research participants and therefore focus was lain on the everyday and natural experiences of the participants involved. The surroundings and research participants were observed as they naturally unfolded. The logic behind unstructured observation is that "categories and concepts for describing and analysing the observational data will emerge later in the research, during the analysis, rather than be brought to the research, or imposed on the data, from the start" (Punch, 2005:180).

3.9.3 Individual interviews

Interviews are one of the main data collection methods in qualitative research, basically entailing asking questions and receiving answers. Interviews are utilised in an attempt to understand the world from the research participants' point of view, to unfold the meaning of personal experiences and to uncover the intricacies of their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale in Mouton, 1998:292). During the process of interaction between the researcher and the subject, the subject's world is discovered and interpreted by means of qualitative methods (de Vos, 2002). Furthermore, the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:108). In qualitative research, interviewing is used primarily to understand research participants' experiences and constructions of reality.

Interviews are distinguishable from one another in terms of their being "structured, semi-structured or unstructured" (Fontana & Frey in Punch, 2005) or, synonymously, as "standardized, semi-standardized or non-standardized" (Fielding, 1996). In structured, or standardised, interviews participants are asked a series of pre-determined questions, with their responses slotting into pre-set categories. All participants are asked the same questions, in the same order, in order to increase the level of standardisation. "Semi-structured, or semi-standardised, interviews are defined as those organised around areas of specific interest that still allow flexibility in scope and depth" (Greef, 2002:298). Unstructured, or non-standardised, interviews are conducted without making use of any of the researcher's prior information, experience or opinions in a particular area and are referred to as a "conversation with a purpose" (Greef, 2002). While interviews can vary along a continuum of structured to unstructured, they also vary in terms of whether they ask open or close-ended questions. Open-ended questions are those which provide very

little structure in terms of the respondents answers. Instead of the respondents being asked to give merely a 'yes or no' answer, they are free, in this case, to provide as much, and as varied, information in their replies as they choose. Close-ended interviews are those that ask very structured questions, and which demand structured or limited answers.

For this study, use was made of semi-structured interviews with an open-ended approach that allowed for a selection of a general list of topics to be covered. Semi-structured interviewing, based on the use of an interview guide, was employed during the interviewing process. All the individual interviews were audio-taped with the participants' permission, and transcribed verbatim.

3.9.4   The interview guide

An interview guide (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) is prepared in advance in order to make sure that essentially the same information is obtained from a number of people through coverage of the same material. Such a guide serves as a basic checklist during the interviews to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. The interviewer is thus required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to specific respondents in the context of the actual interview. The interviewer remains free to build up a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style – but with the focus on a particular predetermined subject (Patton, 1987:111). The advantages to be obtained by making use of an interview guide are numerous. Patton (1987:112) states that the outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational. The researcher is also aware of the limitations in using an interview guide, however, and the fact that, as stated by Patton (1987:112), "important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Additionally, interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses."

For the purposes of this study observations were made of the homes, lifestyles and family interaction patterns of the participants. The neighbourhoods, and their goings-

on, of the participants' were also observed. Non-verbal behaviour was also observed during both individual and focus-group interviews.

3.9.5 Focus group interviews

A focus group interview, consisting of a "carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger in de Vos, 2002:306), was also conducted. Focus group interviewing is, therefore, an "open group discussion between specifically selected persons under the leadership of a group leader who is trained and experienced in handling group dynamics" (de Vos, 2002:90).

The aim of the focus group interview was to collect information-rich data "in a social context where people could consider their own views in the context of the views of others" (Patton, 1987:135). The focus group interview also functioned as a method of 'checking' data collected during observation and individual interviewing. Mouton (1998:291) indicates that data is more likely to emerge in focus groups than in a one-to-one interview, because "group dynamics can be a catalytic factor in bringing information to the fore". The main advantage of the focus group interview was the "opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on the topic in a limited period of time" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

All four participants in this study took part in the focus group interview, which lasted approximately 90 minutes, and was conducted in a community church hall. The interview was both recorded (with the participants' permission) and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts of the focus group interview were used in conjunction with individual interviews and observation for purposes of this study.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data and entails a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:150). No one kind of data analysis exists, but rather a variety of approaches related to the different perspectives and purposes of researchers. "Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience or phenomenon being studied" (de Vos, 2002:339). In this study, data collection and analysis hand-in-hand built a sound

interpretation of the data. Open coding was utilised in order to analyse the data. Guidance was provided by initial themes that emerged from the data, though the themes were modified as the data collection and analysis progressed. A detailed description of the process of data analysis, as well as the findings that emerged from such an analysis, will be presented in Chapter 4.

3.11   RELIABILITY AND GENERALISABILITY

The validity and reliability of this study was ensured by the implementation of various methods to safeguard its trustworthiness. Triangulation, peer review and audit trailing were three of the methods employed in the study, which will be described in the following sections.

3.11.1 Reliability

The term 'reliability' "refers to the extent to which findings can be replicated" (Merriam, 2002:27) and to which "consistency through repetition can be maintained" (Dey, 1993:250). In order for the study to allow for replication, an audit trail was documented. An audit trail "describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 2002:27). Detailed account was kept of how the study was conducted and of how the data were analysed in order to ensure the reliability of the study.

3.11.2 Validity

'Validity' refers to the "extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers" (Silverman, 2000:175). In qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), validity is defined by the degree to which the researcher produces observations credible to self, the subjects being studied and the audience of the study. In its broadest sense, then, validity refers to the degree to which the research conclusions are sound. As the focus and emphasis on 'validity' in qualitative research is one of the ways of ensuring legitimate knowledge, it is thus of utmost importance. Both internal and external validity are used as guiding concepts in the search for validity throughout this study.

3.11.2.1   Internal validity

Internal validity refers to whether or not one is measuring the theoretical construct or trait that one claims to be measuring. This can be discovered by asking the question "How congruent are one's findings with reality?" (Merriam, 2002:25).

Qualitative researchers can attempt to ensure the validity of their studies in various ways, including by means of triangulation, member checks and peer review. "From an interpretive perspective, triangulation remains a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability" (Merriam, 2002:260) and refers to the attempt to secure a 'true' idea of a situation by combining different ways of looking at it. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple measures (investigators, sources of data, methods, and theories) to explore the sample phenomena (Neuman, 2000:138). Investigator triangulation refers to the use of several different researchers or evaluators, which is useful in drawing one's attention to what might otherwise be unnoticed researcher effects (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:431). Data triangulation refers to the use of a variety of data sources in a study, in terms of which data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question. Methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods to study a single problem, for example interviewing and observing.

In order to ensure that the data of this study were 'contextually true', the current researcher made use of triangulation. Information gained during individual interviews was checked against information gained from the focus group interviews, and vice versa. Data gained from the observations provided the basis for the third data collection method, and were also used when validating, or checking, the data obtained.

In light of Merriam's (2002:26) finding that a "thorough peer examination would involve asking a colleague to scan some of the raw data and assess whether the findings are plausible based on the data", peer review was used as yet another strategy that helped to ensure the validity of the current study.

3.11.2.2   External validity or generalisability

External validity, also referred to as generalisability, refers to whether or not one's research findings can be generalised to other situations. In qualitative research generally, and as was the case in this study, "small non-random samples are

selected purposefully, and it is therefore not possible to generalize statistically" (Merriam, 2002:28). By giving a contextually rich description of this study, and especially of its findings, the hope is that others will be able to extract that which is most readily applicable to other studies, settings or populations. The provision of sufficient information should enable others to judge whether the findings are, in fact, generalisable enough to allow for transference to their own studies or settings. This technique has been referred to as case-to-case transfer by Firestone (in Merriam, 2002). In other words, "rather than insisting that others get the same results as the original researcher, reliability lies in others' concurring that given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and reliable" (Merriam, 2002:27). It is important to remember, however, that "qualitative studies by their nature cannot be replicated because the real world changes" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:195). However, once having gained a lucid understanding of this study's research methodology and findings, researchers should be able to decide for themselves whether or not the results are, indeed, generalisable to other settings, populations or studies.

3.12   SUMMARY

This chapter provided a detailed discussion regarding the paradigm, research design and methodology on which the current study is based. Data collection and data analysis techniques were presented, with the chapter concluding with a discussion of the techniques utilised in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. The description of the research design and methodology, as well as of the data analysis techniques, should make the results and findings clear to others.

The next chapter will provide the reader with a comprehensive description of the data collection and analysis techniques utilised in this study, and aims to provide a rich, thick description of the data findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the process of data collection, data organisation and the method of data analysis utilised in this study. In order to place the study and its findings in context, the biographical details of each participant are presented. The findings that emerged from this study are discussed in detail, and are supported by excerpts from the participants' interviews. The findings are organised and presented in three core categories.

4.2 PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection took place by means of semi-structured individual interviews, a focus-group interview and observations. The individual interviews were conducted in various settings within the community. The interviews, which were all audiotaped, each lasted from between 60 to 90 minutes. The focus group interview was held in the community church hall, which was, logistically, the easiest place for the participants to meet. All the participants had also met each other before and seemed comfortable in sharing their views, ideas and experiences with one another. The focus group interview, during which all four participants were present, lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes. Both the individual and focus group interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. In addition, the researcher's observations regarding the community, the participants and any other relevant information were also documented. Details pertaining to the physical environment were noted, while information relating to the participants' interaction styles, their enthusiasm regarding the study and their general non-verbal behaviour, for example, were also noted.

4.3 DATA ORGANISATION

In order to organise and account for all the data, various strategies were employed. The dates and times of all interviews were recorded in the researcher's personal research file, as well as on both the interview audiotape and in the transcription.

Records were kept of each interview in both electronic and hard-copy format, which were stored safely in order to protect the confidentiality of each participant. Once the interviews had been transcribed, all the data were perused in order to ensure complete accountability. All data, including the transcriptions, were chronologically filed.

4.4   DATA ANALYSIS

"Data analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place" (Bernard, 2000:419). The aim of data analysis "is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data" (Mouton, 2001:108). Qualitative data analysis, then, is based on the reduction, consolidation, interpretation and verification of data. The reduction of data occurs throughout the analysis, of which it forms an implicit part (Punch, 2005). Coding, which was used as a means of data reduction in the study, will be discussed in detail. Coding aims to create categories by which data can be organised. In order to reduce the raw data to themes or categories, three methods of coding were utilised in this study, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding.
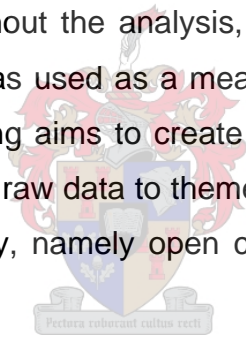
4.4.1 Open coding

Open coding, which entails the "naming and categorizing of phenomena through a close examination of the data" (Strauss & Corbin in Merriam, 2002:148) formed the first stage in the data analysis process. After reading and rereading the transcribed interviews and other data numerous times, a line-by-line rereading was undertaken keeping the following basic question in mind: "What is this about?" (Creswell, 1998). Such an interrogation facilitated 'taking apart sentences or paragraphs and giving each a discrete code' (Strauss & Corbin in de Vos, 2002:346), which is referred to as the 'fracturing' and 'breaking open' of data (Punch, 2005).

While coding the data, similar phenomena were given the same, or similar, names, which were then written into the interview transcripts and field notes. This was done in order to make the following step of categorising the codes easier. Categorising refers to the "process of grouping concepts that seem to pertain to the same

phenomena together" (de Vos, 2002:347) and is regarded as a "process of funnelling the data into relevant categories for analysis" by Dey (1993:42). While there are, according to Strauss and Corbin (in de Vos, 2002), many different ways of recording categories, the researcher chose to manually record all the codes present in the original documents in a written out memo. Once all the codes were transferred to a single memo, categorisation started. After the codes had been categorised, each category was assigned a specific name, clearly reflecting the data that it represented. Axial coding followed on the process of open coding.

4.4.2 Axial coding

Axial coding is defined by de Vos (2002) as "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories". In contrast to open coding, in which the main focus was on assigning codes to the data, attention was now concentrated on the initial coded categories during the process of axial coding (Neuman, 2000). During this phase of analysis, patterns emerging between sections of the data which had the same codes, as well as between similar categories, were identified.

4.4.3 Selective coding

The process of selective coding integrates "the categories to form a substantive theory" (Strauss & Corbin in Merriam, 2002), and entails "the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and validation" (Strauss & Corbin in de Vos, 2002:349). The core category is the central phenomenon around which other categories are integrated (Punch, 2005). Once the core categories had been identified, the remaining data categories were related to them. Related categories were grouped together, in accordance with the initial research questions posed at the beginning of this study. The research findings (categories) were then organised into core categories of data that were created in order to capture the nature of adults' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community. The core categories were named, taking into account concepts discussed in the literature and the initial research questions. The core categories relate to adults' experiences of resilience and the adversities to which participants are exposed.

The process of data analysis is conceptualised in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1: PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        OPEN CODING          │
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        │
        │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
        ├────────│   Categorisation of codes   │
        │        └─────────────────────────────┘
        │
        │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
        ├────────│    Naming of categories     │
        │        └─────────────────────────────┘
        │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        AXIAL CODING         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
        │
        │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
        ├────────│    Pattern identification   │
        │        └─────────────────────────────┘
        │
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│       SELECTIVE CODING      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
        │
        │        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
        └────────│      Integration of data    │
                 └─────────────────────────────┘
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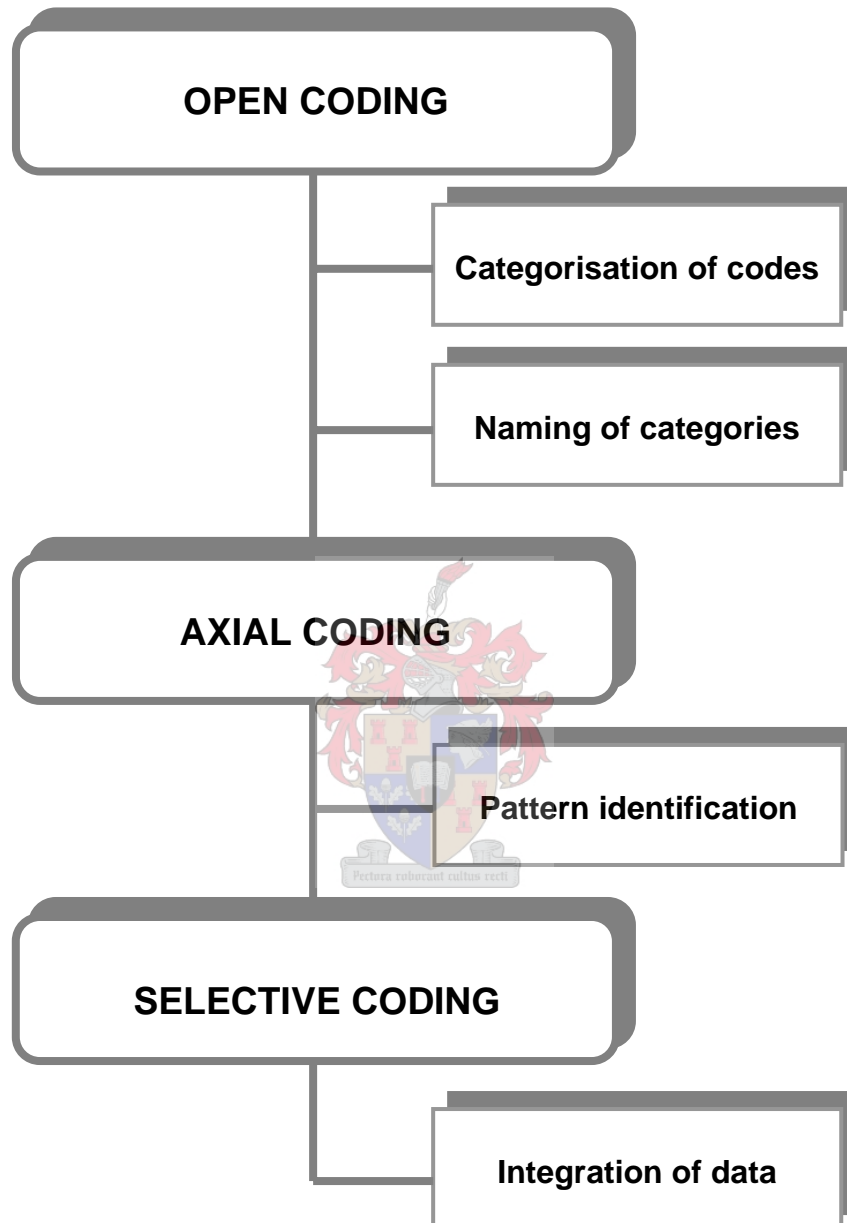
4.5   BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

The population from which the participants were drawn consisted of resilient adults from a high-risk community on the Cape Flats, Western Cape. The adults were perceived by themselves and others in the community as resilient. All participants belonged to the Coloured race group and ranged in age from 22 to 59 years. Three of the four participants spoke Afrikaans as their home language, while the home

language of the other was English. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the participants' biographical data. All names are fictitious.

TABLE 4.1: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

	Gender	Age	No of Children	Number of individuals in household	Marital Status	Education Level	Employment Status
Brandon	M	47	2	4	Married	Std 10 Electrician by Trade	Self-employed
Solly	M	53	4	6	Married	Grade 4	In full-time employ
Melanie	F	32	-	0	Single	Tertiary	In full-time employ
Jackie	F	59	1	2	Single	Grade 6	In part-time employ

All the participants lived in the same community and belonged to the same race group. While the two male participants were both married, the two female participants were single. Three of the four participants did, however, have children who were dependent on them. While two participants had completed Grade 12, the other two had been unable to complete their primary school careers. Only one participant had enrolled in a tertiary institution after Grade 12 and had completed her studies successfully. Two of the participants were in full-time employment, one was self-employed, while the fourth was employed on a part-time basis.

Brandon is a 47-year-old, married man who lives on the Cape Flats with his wife and two children. After matriculating, he qualified as an electrician and is currently self-employed, which allows him to provide financially for his family. Brandon reported a history of alcohol and drug addiction, which he had managed to overcome in recent years. His experience of drug and alcohol addiction was a very negative and harrowing one, as it had not only affected himself, but his family too. Although not an

easy or a quick process, overcoming his addiction was perceived as a personal success for Brandon and, according to him, had changed his life dramatically. Brandon was also at one stage deeply involved in the gangsterism rife in his community and thus had participated in a number of violent and criminal activities. Brandon had spent approximately seven years in jail for various crimes, including the murder of a number of people. Brandon had, since then, managed to extricate himself from gangsterism.

Solly, who was, at the time of the study, 53 years old, is married and has four children, three of whom have completed their secondary schooling. While Solly did not have the opportunity to complete his own primary schooling, having had to leave school in Grade 4 (Std 2), he has, nonetheless, managed to find permanent employment. Both Solly and his wife provide financially for all four of their children, who themselves have not been able to secure permanent employment. While providing for a family of six on the salaries of two of its members is not an easy task, Solly prides himself on being able to do so. With much shame and embarrassment, Solly exposed his personal experiences with alcohol and drug abuse, and described in much detail how he had physically and verbally abused his wife and children when intoxicated or high in the past. Despite verbally and physically abusing his wife, however, Solly spoke of her loyalty towards him and of the positive role that she had played in his life, and the lives of their children. Solly has managed to overcome his alcohol and drug addiction, however, and has not used alcohol or drugs for a decade.

Thirty-two-year-old Melanie is a single, coloured female woman who grew up in a mixed race family. Melanie has two elder brothers. While Melanie's father is a black man and her mother is a coloured woman, she was raised in the township of Langa, in the Western Cape. Langa is described by Melanie as an 'African township', where most of the people are black and behave according to the prevalent black culture. During her teenage years, however, Melanie's family moved to the community in which she currently resides, which, at the time, was "mostly coloured", according to her. Melanie matriculated, completed her tertiary education and is currently employed by a firm in Cape Town. Melanie carries the financial burden of having to support her family and brothers, who are on disability grants.

Jackie is a 59-year-old, English-speaking woman who was raised in the Eastern Cape. She attended school until Grade 6, and later joined a Roman Catholic Convent. At the age of approximately 23 years, she left the convent and moved to the Western Province. Jackie never married and is the single parent of a son who recently failed his matriculation examinations. In addition, her son has begun to abuse drugs. Jackie is employed on a part-time basis as a domestic worker.

4.6   RESEARCH FINDINGS

A discussion of the findings, according to the core category in which they were grouped, follows. Table 4.3 (Appendix C) and Table 4.4 (Appendix D) illustrate how the initial findings were organised into the core categories which are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Excerpts from the interviews will be used to confirm the validity and reliability of the categories, as well as to provide a rich description of the data (Merriam, 2002). The researcher, however, both simplified and clarified the excerpts, omitting words, sentences, and paragraphs (including her own questions) in order to create a more readable presentation of the data provided. However, every effort was made to preserve the individual participants' phrasing and characteristic modes of expression, and, in translating from Afrikaans into the medium of English, the researcher attempted at all times to use synonymous wording in order not to lose the nuances of the participants' original statement.

TABLE 4.2: DATA ANALYSIS: CORE CATEGORISATION

CORE CATEGORIES	CATEGORIES	P1	P2	P3	P4
ADVERSITIES EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS	Unemployment		X	X	X
	Poverty	X	X	X	X
	Crime, violence & gangsterism	X	X	X	X
	Difficulty completing one's education	X	X	X	X
	Alcohol and drug abuse	X	X	X	X
	Social Integration	X		X	X
INTRA-PERSONAL RESOURCES	Future Planning	X	X		X
	Religion	X	X	X	X
	Discipline	X	X		X
	Goals and vision	X		X	X
	Positive Attitude	X	X	X	X
	Sacrifices	X		X	X
	Health	X	X	X	X
	Determining one's own success	X		X	X
	Learning from past experiences	X		X	
INTER-PERSONAL RESOURCES	Education	X	X	X	X
	Parenting	X		X	X
EXTERNAL RESOURCES	Religious organisations	X	X	X	X
	Parents and family members	X	X	X	X
	Community unity	X	X	X	X
	Friends and colleagues	X	X	X	X
	State resources	X	X	X	X

4.6.1 Adversities experienced by participants

The different types of adversities experienced by participants in their community were identified as the first of three core categories, as it relates to the initial research questions posed. The themes contained within this specific category relate to the nature of adversity to which the participants are exposed, and include difficulties related to: unemployment; poverty; alcohol and drug abuse; gangsterism; crime and violence; difficulty in completing one's education; and social integration. Each theme within this core category will be discussed individually.

4.6.1.1 *Unemployment*

Although none of the participants is unemployed, all participants, nonetheless, highlighted unemployment as a serious challenge in the lives of their families and community members. Solly explained that unemployment in the community is common:

> *The jobs are poor. There are people who just stay at home, who don't have work. The work is hard. It's difficult to get work.*

Melanie also commented on the high rate of unemployment:

> *The youth is also faced with the high rate of unemployment. That's a fact we can't run away from. Our people are still unemployed. Then you ask the question: But how is this possible?*

Jackie is the only participant who is not currently employed on a full-time basis. She explained that she was unable to find work due to her age, and that this led to a feeling of frustration. She explained that unemployment resulted in many individuals in the community 'giving up'. She explained that unemployment led individuals to say *"Ag, I give up. There's no work. There's no money."* Such perceptions appeared to push them towards abusing drugs.

4.6.1.2 *Poverty*

Poverty was mentioned by all participants as a challenge to their everyday standard of living. Despite the fact that the participants managed to cope well, they were all

affected by poverty in different ways. Jackie spoke about poverty in the following way:

> It's just the poverty. I can tell you from my own personal experience. It's not an easy thing to be poor. So poor that you don't even have a job. It's not easy.

Living in dire poverty, many participants had difficulty in meeting their basic day-to-day needs. Solly explained:

> There's just never money for what you would like to do. Like me, I need a pair of shoes. The finances are the biggest (challenge). It's the biggest challenge, because you would like to do something, or get something, but you can't.

4.6.1.3   Alcohol and drug abuse

The abuse of drugs and alcohol by adolescent and adult community members was highlighted as an adversity to which all participants are exposed. The challenge of raising competent children amongst those who commonly abuse drugs and alcohol was also cited as a parenting challenge by those participants with children of their own. Brandon highlighted his concerns by stating that:

> There are always sideshows, like gangsterism, drugs, wine, and then there is youth, sexuality and drugs. And you know, the most challenging is to get away from those three things: sexuality, drugs and alcohol, and gangsterism. Those are the things that are destroying our community.

Solly highlighted the incidence of drug and alcohol abuse in the community and explained that one was continually confronted with these negative aspects. Solly, like Brandon, expressed his concern for the youth in the community who could easily become caught up in the use of drugs and alcohol:

> There are too many shebeens and dagga smokers. We live amongst the people who use them.

4.6.1.4 Crime, violence and gangsterism

All of the participants highlighted the theme of crime, violence and gangsterism. Crime and violence seemed to pervade the lives of all the participants, with each of them having been confronted with gangsterism at some stage of his or her life. Solly spoke about people coming into his home without his permission, and the fear that he experienced when his sons brought friends home to visit. He explained that, while he was not someone to chase other people's children away from his home, he did not approve of them entering his home, as he believed that they came merely to see what was in the house for them to steal. He further explained:

So far it is still okay, but it's getting to Christmas now. Then you must be very careful. Lots of people, guys, thieves that grab one's stuff and run away. One must be very careful.

Melanie shared her experience of living with crime and violence on a daily basis:

I do not feel really safe in the place when gangsterism was really at its peak, and I also think that being faced with it daily, being at a school where violence takes place each and every day and when you kind of see these people … It just brought about an uneasy feeling, walking in the road and sometimes it happen that you have to speak to these people and you're not comfortable. It's not nice to speak to these people and knowing what they do.

Solly had the following to say regarding gangsterism in the community:

Those gangsters who do those things, they are not going to change. They won't come out of that thing. They are going to do wrong things, steal people's stuff and things like that, break in.

Melanie stated:

I never knew about gangsterism until we came to Delft. It was something horrible for us and we never knew about violence taking place in your street.

Jackie, too, expressed her opinions regarding crime and violence in the community and explained that, like Melanie, other community members live in fear. She related a story about an attempted mugging earlier in the week, stating that it was a common occurrence in the community. Brandon explained that he lived in fear of his and his family's, safety.

4.6.1.5   Difficulty in completing one's education

While securing a solid education was viewed by all the participants as a passport to success, financial stability and an opportunity for upward movement, only two out of the four participants had managed to complete secondary school, and only one had embarked on a tertiary education. The difficulty in completing one's education was highlighted by every participant, and poverty, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse were cited as the greatest hindrances to gaining the education that the participants desired. Melanie named finishing school as one of the leading challenges for individuals in her community and stated:

> *You find number one (challenge) is finishing off their school years. With all the influences within the area it is kind of difficult. That's why I say point number one is for youth to really finish their school years and that's the basic thing. When you finish with matric, then at least you can look out for something else. And you've got options, but the main thing really is, the biggest challenge is to finish their school years and that's the most, that's, I think that's a very serious thing in Delft.*

Brandon stated that, although his ideal in life was to study law, his parents had not had the financial resources for him to do so. Solly was also unable to complete his education and was removed from school in Grade Six (then known as Standard Four). He explained:

> *I was in Standard 4 then. My mother took me out of school and I had to help my father work. As the family increased, I helped my father.*

It was evident that not only had the participants experienced difficulty in completing their education, but so, too, had some of their children. Both Solly and Jackie recounted their children's academic difficulties and shared their disappointment with the fact that, like them, their children had not matriculated.

4.6.1.6   Social integration

Three of the adults highlighted the difficulties that they had experienced in fitting into the community at some time during their lives. The idea of not fitting in was associated with factors including race, levels of 'civilisation' and financial status.

Jackie, who is coloured, spoke about her difficulties regarding her own race group. She stated:

> I don't like being called a coloured, because I am not coloured. To be a coloured is an insult because it's a 'no nation'. It's an insult. I would rather say I must be called black, you know. Although I'm not really black, I'm no nation. It is only the coloured that is sort of a in-between person.

Later, during the same interview, she expressed the following:

> I'm a white person with a black skin. I'm so sick of these people in this community. I'm civilised far above these people with whom I'm living with. I'm really ahead of them. It's very difficult, because, as I said, I am a white woman, civilised, with a black skin.

For Melanie, too, social integration into the community was related to race. In her words:

> My father was a black guy and mother is a coloured and my childhood we spent with a black family, with an African family. And when my mother and my father split, separated and then we were having to stay in this community and having to start our life all over again here, I really went through a bad patch. Not knowing … not knowing who I was and who I really want to be in all of this. I hated the fact that my father and mother had to marry and to have babies and to have people like us who at one stage have these problems, identity crisis.

While Brandon did not describe integration into his community in terms of race and skin colour, his description was based on class divisions and financial status. He explained that the community was divided into areas and, depending on where one

lived, one would be 'classified' as either 'posh', 'mixed', 'poor', 'average', 'comfortable', 'the poorest of the poor' or the 'illiterates'. Brandon explained that it was important for one to know which "comfort zone you fitted in" if one wanted to integrate easily into the community.

Culture was another aspect identified by participants as related to whether or not one fitted into one's environment. Two of the participants felt that they lacked a culture and were unsure as to whether they really fitted in anywhere, or had any type of cultural identity at all. Melanie had the following to say:

> *I don't think I do have a culture. It's a mixture of everything. You know*
> *like the Portuguese, you can see, you can say what they … and uhm*
> *the Germans but it's kind of difficult for a South African.*

4.6.2 Intrapersonal resources contributing to adults' experiences of resilience

The following themes were highlighted by the participants: future planning; religion; goals; sacrifices; vision; and a positive attitude. Other themes which emerged from the data analysis were those of discipline, learning from experience and staying healthy.

4.6.2.1 Future planning

The ability to plan effectively for one's future was another aspect of importance highlighted by three of the participants. Brandon was focused on providing the best education that he could for his children, and, as such, his future planning was geared towards, in a few years time, no longer having children at school. He said that his children would then be university students, and that

> *'whichever way they decide to go, you know, we need to have*
> *something in place to provide.'*

Solly reflected on his younger days, when he had not worried about his future or thought to plan for it in any way. At the time of the study, however, he stated that he was thinking about future planning in a different way, explaining that, as he grew older, he had begun to think about his future and plan for it better. He explained:

> *Look, like now. I've maybe got money in the bank and I know how much I use of that money. Tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, I can go and get money for my wife as she needs it.*

Jackie was of the opinion that future planning involved not only thinking about the future, but also using what one had in such an economic and frugal way that one was able to save. In this way, Jackie attempted to ensure that she had enough for her future.

> *I believe not to waste. To economise in other words, how to find ways and means how to save and get out of poverty. It's taking a long way, because I'm almost sixty and I'm trying to teach my son that if you want to earn a lot of money, you still have to learn how to save, so that you can have something in life. You can't have a smart house, a smart car and live recklessly. But a lot of our people don't know that. They're just wasting, wasting and wasting.*

4.6.2.2 Religion

The theme of religion was expressed as a means of providing the participants with the ability to cope, hope and survive in their community.

For Jackie, the situation was very clear.

> *What do I do when I come across difficult times? Well, the basics is just walk with God to help you survive in life.*

Religion aided, or, at least, encouraged, Solly to remain respectful in his dealings with others. Religion, for him, served as something which kept him away from becoming involved in negative activities. He explained:

> *Religion is like this for me. As I understand, it keeps you respectful towards other people. It keeps you away from wrong things, because there is an all- powerful Lord above us.*

Religion was cited as the reason for Solly's having changed his ways and given up smoking, drinking and taking drugs. He also explained that the day on which he had

accepted the Lord into his life was the day on which he had stopped staying away from work.

4.6.2.3   Goals and vision

The importance of having goals and a vision for one's life was highlighted by three of the participants. According to the participants, being focused on one's life goals and vision helped one to 'stay on track' and not become discouraged by surrounding adversity. Brandon was of the opinion that if one wanted to achieve in life, or to lift oneself above adversity, one needed to set goals for oneself.

Being clear on what her goals were was important to Melanie, as was:

> *Knowing where you're heading. That's what builds up, what builds you up. And that is what you can transfer to your family and say: "Look you must know where you are heading." I started saying, "I've got to know where I'm heading and I've got to stay focused and go forward."*

Jackie, too, deemed having a vision for one's life to be vital. She shared the following:

> *You need to have a vision. You need to have a vision where you are going. You set a goal for yourself, you are going into a direction to become successful. As I said, we have to use our will.*

Brandon was convinced that if one kept focused on one's goals, even during difficult times or adversity, one could reach one's goals and make a success of life. This belief is demonstrated in a talk with a young family friend who had fallen pregnant, in which Brandon had the following to say:

> *After the birth of the child, you can always achieve your goals. There are lots of air hostesses who are single parents. There are lots of teachers who are single parents. There are fantastic office girls who raise their own children and who make a success of their setbacks.*

4.6.2.4   Sacrifices

The idea that one needed to be willing to make sacrifices in order to reach one's goals and to make a success of one's life emerged as a strong theme from the study.

Almost all of the participants spoke about the sacrifices they were making in their own lives, or which they had had to make in the past, in order to achieve their goals. Brandon stated that, in order to reach his goals:

> *We just have to eat a little less and live without luxury. We've been eating sandwiches since last week, the week before last, without meat. When we reach our goals, we can look back at the sacrifices and say, "Now we are going to appreciate it, because we know what we sacrificed to get here."*

4.6.2.5   Positive attitude

Maintaining a positive attitude despite being surrounded by adversity is not easy. The power of a positive attitude, however, was highlighted by all the participants, who stated that, despite their surroundings, remaining positive was the way in which they coped.

Jackie explained:

> *I'm at a church that's reborn again and they like to motivate us to think positively, to use the power of positive thinking. We call it Faith. Faith stirs it up that we start to think positive and all these type of things you know and it isn't easy.*
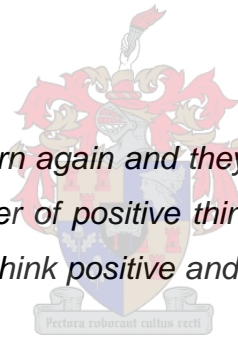
Brandon highlighted the importance of turning every negative into a positive, and echoed this when he stated:

> *I mean I'm not just positive. I am all optimistic and so, so full of … You know? Negativity do not exist in my vocabulary, in my movements, in my everyday life.*

Melanie stated that, in order to come out on top, she:

> *Tends to focus on the positive side of a situation. If it works out, if it doesn't work out, I would continue to think that uh something better might come out. I think it's mostly to, to stay positive and to focus on what is, what's uh … what can uh a solution to you. I won't just say I*

think, I KNOW I've come this far and I know I can make it and I know
there's plenty opportunities still there.

4.6.2.6   Learning from past experiences

The importance of learning from past experiences was highlighted by two of the participants, who were of the opinion that every experience has a lesson to offer. Both participants explained that if one learnt from one's experiences, one would not make the same mistakes again, and that one would become a wiser, more knowledgeable person. Melanie mentioned a number of experiences which could possibly have dampened her spirit, had she allowed them to affect her negatively. Instead, she had harnessed the experiences and used them as learning experiences. Melanie explained:

> *My ability to solve problems grew through the experiences that you*
> *personally have or that you can transfer, transform in any situation.*
> *That you can also personally think what you have done in something*
> *like this and that is how you sort of give advice to somebody else.*
> *Although we do make mistakes, but you learn from mistakes. I always*
> *say that after every bad experience I've got to make decisions.*
> *Whether I'll remain at the same place or spot or you kind of move on.*
> *You've got to move on to something different, something better.*

4.6.2.7   Health

The significance of looking after one's health was highlighted by all of the participants. While physical health was important for some participants, others highlighted the value of spiritual and emotional health.

Solly deemed his physical health to be an important aspect of his life, saying:

> *I am 53 years old, but they (his family) don't do exercises like me. I do*
> *exercises for my age. For my age, I keep myself fit. I say: if you don't*
> *do exercise, then you get old quickly.*

Although Melanie was aware that one's physical health was "something that should be taken seriously", she stated that "at this stage I am not concentrating on it".

Mental, emotional and spiritual health was, however, a matter that concerned her. In order to achieve mental, emotional and spiritual health, Melanie said that:

Hm, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. I would always, I just stay healthy. I would associate myself with different kind, circle of people. I don't always reach myself to only one group or circle of people. But I would always I'm always mixing, or, ja, get myself involved with other people. So, and that's how you get advice to hear how this is done and kind of hear how other people think and you learn from them.

Jackie viewed health from the perspective of hygiene and spirituality:

To be healthy, uhm let me see, it's to be clean. That's it. To be healthy is to just live a hygienic life, you know. It's not only just to eat healthy, but just to be neat and tidy, even when you are poor. To stay healthy, again it comes down to a relationship with God to stay healthy spiritually. And then if you are spiritually stable, obviously it will come physically as well.

4.6.2.8   Determining one's own success

Three of the participants highlighted the idea that one is responsible for determining one's own success. In determining one's own success, participants highlighted the importance of being willing to take responsibility for one's own actions, and of not blaming others for their consequences. The strong theme of determining one's own success was evident throughout the interviews, and seemed to be one in which the participants strongly believed. Jackie expressed the following conviction which has, probably, been one of the beliefs which has supported her in her life. She stated:

If you want to get somewhere, do something, you know. If you want to get somewhere, do something.

This belief was echoed by Brandon, who said:

Success is what you think it must be. You determine your own success.

In the same vein, Melanie stated:

> *No matter what it takes you've got to put effort into it. No matter how …*
> *but in order to get something, you've got to put in something. You have*
> *a choice. You have control. Most of the time you've got to make your*
> *own choices. You've got to be independent. You need people to give*
> *you advice and guidance, but, at the end of the day, you still have to*
> *think about those points given to you and you've got to think if they*
> *would be the right points for you to take. You've got to come up with a*
> *decision for yourself.*

Brandon, Melanie and Jackie highlighted the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions and their consequences. Brandon was emphatic that one should not blame others for one's own actions or failures, stating:

> *I won't blame the state for my shortcomings. I also won't blame my*
> *parents. In fact, I will blame nobody.*

4.6.2.9   Success

Although each participant was focused on making a success out of his or her life, success meant different things for different participants. For Brandon, success was represented largely in terms of his children's achievements. He had the following to say:

> *What success means to me, firstly, is that my children complete school*
> *as healthy, educated children and mentally wise, physically wise, on*
> *top of that, spiritually wise, spiritually a good understanding. Secondly,*
> *that the success will be when they complete their courses and achieve*
> *the actual goals they are aiming for. There are lots of things which are*
> *already a success for me. I have an eldest son, Matthew, 20 years old.*
> *Because he's not on drugs, that's a success. That he's not involved in*
> *gangsterism, that's a success. Because he's not on the street and stuff*
> *… Because the police haven't ever knocked on my door and asked me,*
> *"Does Mark live here? We're looking for him for theft, attempt of*
> *murder."*

On the meaning of success, Melanie had the following to say:

Success means hard work to me. It means people that are accomplished their goals, what they really worked hard for. It means hard work. Goals, mission accomplished. Success stirs up something. I think knowing that if you set your mind on something and if so many people have achieved success, you can also achieve it, you can also obtain it in what you want, but that you need to put effort into it.

A successful person was viewed by Jackie as someone who:

stayed focused, despite the circumstances of the community, despite the circumstances of home. It's people who persevere, persevere when there's nothing but they still see the light. It's a person that's optimistic in the middle of the problems we're dealing with in our community. You can still say you know where you're on your way to.

Solly explained that, when someone in the community managed to succeed:

It is good. Then I will mix with them and keep company with them. One has a respect for such people.

4.6.3 Interpersonal resources contributing to adults' experiences of resilience

4.6.3.1 Parenting

The type of parenting that one receives, and which one provides for one's own children, was regarded by all participants as a means by which to develop resilience and support. The importance of the example set by parents was seen, by Brandon, to be an important part of parenting. Brandon was of the opinion that if parents set positive, healthy examples for their children, they would grow into successful and resilient adults.

He explained:

I, as the parent, must set the example first. To show them (the children): "Look, this is how I do it. Follow the example." To begin, these will be your basic principles.

Jackie, like Brandon, also highlighted the importance of the setting of positive examples for one's children. Both Brandon and Jackie stated that they had learnt from their parents examples and that they wanted their children to learn from theirs. On effective parenting and the raising of successful children, Jackie had the following advice to offer from her own experience:

> *I'm a single parent. I had to rear my child. I had to try and live such a life that he won't point a finger at me one day and for him to get good morals at home and to see how other children live. Talk to your children. You tell them. Don't let them learn on the street what's going on*

For Jackie, it was important that parents spoke honestly to their children about such things as drugs, gangsterism and sexuality, as she believed that doing so would prevent them from experimenting and from being harmed while doing so.

4.6.3.2 Discipline

Discipline surfaced as one of the areas that all participants felt very strongly about and identified as one of the most important factors in their upbringing and lives. Brandon stated that, although he was viewed as a strict parent, one needed to be so in his community, as it would otherwise be so easy for one's children to become involved in activities of a criminal, violent or harmful nature.

> *What I'm actually trying to do in my house is to establish standards. There are rules in the house. Not rules in the sense that you are a prisoner, but there are rules. Yes, there are rules. You must teach your child from a young age. No is no. Yes is yes. Wrong is wrong. Right is right. The sooner you can develop the child's mentality to know what is right and wrong, the easier it is going to be for you as parent to go further with the child.*

Jackie, too, felt strongly about discipline, viewing it from a religious viewpoint:

> *The word of God says 'Train a child in the way he should go and he will never depart from it.' So, a child that is disturbed despite of being reared morally, with good morals at home, he finds it difficult, but then*

he will turn again to what he has been taught during his first lessons between one and five or six. He will go back to that time to when he was trained morally.

4.6.3.3 Education

Receiving an education was seen by all participants as a way by means of which to cope with, or to escape, the adversities of the community. Having an education gave one a greater opportunity to be employed and to earn a better salary. Brandon shared his gratitude and relief at having an education which had led to his self-employment:

I am actually privileged, because I'm an electrician by trade, so I can quickly do something, or someone gives me a house to do, then I do it quickly. I am just grateful that my wife and I can write and understand well.

Melanie had the following to say regarding the importance of being educated:

When you are finish with matric, then at least you can say that you can look out for something else and you've got options.

4.6.4 External resources available to adults in the community

All the participants highlighted the importance of making use of any resources available to them. The resources which, according to the participants, were of use to them were religious organisations, parents, family members, friends, colleagues and state resources.

4.6.4.1 Religious organisations as a resource

Each of the participants highlighted the role that religion, and especially their churches, played as a resource. The support, comfort, protection, financial assistance and hope which participants gained from their churches were evident throughout all the interviews.

Melanie had the following to say when discussing the role of religious organisations in the community:

Ok, in general I would say most people depend on religious groups. They depend on them to be a supportive base. I'll say, yes, the religious group do play an important role in our society, in our community. And personally, yes, they do. Maybe that's how we were brought up. I think our parents making us know that the church is there for you. It's at least a support base where you can always see, you can always go for assistance, you can go for help, you can go for guidance. Yes, it's always been taught to us.

Jackie regarded the church as a resource and expressed the view that it was a source of financial support for her in times of need:

Luckily we've got a good bishop, Dr XX. He does voluntary work here, but he tries and gives us something, some money out of his own, out of his goodness.

Although Jackie was the only participant to mention the church as a financial resource, all the other participants stated that, given the number of adversities which they faced, the church provided them with a source of hope and comfort. The participants are confronted with crime, violence and gangsterism on a daily basis, and are not always able to protect themselves from being hurt or affected by it. In order to cope, the participants seem to place their trust and belief in a higher power, one which could protect them from adversity and keep them safe. Whilst discussing the dangers of living in the community, Brandon expressed his hope and trust in the fact that God would look after his children and himself:

You know, so I trust God that He will keep my children safe. That he will keep me safe to provide for their needs.

Brandon's sentiments were similar to those which all of the participants voiced during their interviews. Solly, when discussing the advent of a negative occurrence, stated:

When bad things happen … All that we can do, sister, is to open the Bible and trust the Lord. That's all.

The church also functioned to introduce participants to other members of the congregation, thus resulting in the making of friends and increasing the participants' support systems and networks. Melanie explained:

> *You don't join a church to be there on Sundays, but you get to know the people over the years. That's how they become friends with you. They become more than friends. You can talk. You can open up. You stand together. You support each other and give each other advice. That's why I say religion plays the most important role in our community.*

4.6.4.2   Parents and family members as resources

Parents and other family members were identified by all the participants as resources within their community. All four participants mentioned a parent or family member who supported them in various ways. Brandon, especially, highlighted the important role that parents play as resources and support systems for their children. Brandon refers specifically to spiritual and material support when he explains:

> *But as a parent you must play a supporting role. Firstly, spiritually, I mean the material. You must have the food for the child. You must have the clothing and the money for the "I need to go to the library now. Give me ten rand. You know you must have that in place, otherwise you will discourage the child, because then the child will say, "Why must I still ask?"*

Other family members can also act as support systems and resources. Jackie related the importance of her relationship with her godchild, who does not live with her, but who had helped her in times of financial need. Jackie had the following to say:

> *My godchild, she was so sweet. I struggled, you know. She put up a fence, a vibragate in front.*

4.6.4.3   Friends and colleagues as resources

Friends and work colleagues were identified as valuable resources by all of the participants.

Participants mentioned that friends and colleagues provided advice, support, assistance and encouragement to them. This was, according to the participants, especially important in the face of the adversities that faced them. Melanie claimed:

> *There is a certain circle of friends that I can depend on. I think of my friends, I think of my family, uhm a couple of my colleagues, yes. I have significant people in my life that support me. There are people.*

Solly, who had been a heavy drinker in the past and who had often previously stayed away from work without notice, mentioned the role that a colleague had played in convincing him to change his ways and to attend work on a regular basis. The colleague acted as both a 'watcher' and a 'carer' for him, and became someone whom he did not want to disappoint. In the words of Solly:

> *It makes a difference when you take notice of each other, helping each other and things like that. It does make a world of difference. All these things helps you and enables you to build you up.*

4.6.4.4   State resources

State resources were also identified by the participants. Solly was encouraged by the visibility of the 'city police' in the community, as he was of the opinion that they helped to decrease the high levels of crime in the community. Solly had the following to say regarding the city police:

> *They (the gangsters) are very scared of the city police. They are scared of those people, because those people come during the day. They just walk through the place.*

Jackie highlighted the role that the day clinic played in supporting her when either she or her son fell ill. Brandon explained that certain state resources provided needy community members with food, clothing and other material assistance.

4.6.4.5   Community unity as a resource

The importance of community unity and support was highlighted by all participants, who felt that, if only community members were to stand together, the community would be able to uplift itself and to overcome the adversities affecting its members. Participants highlighted their experiences of community support of which they were aware, and others illustrated examples of their own involvement in community support and the standing together of community members. An example of how individuals affected by poverty stood together to support one another and to make things easier was provided by Jackie. She explained:

> *There is a place where the mothers put their odds together and buy tripe. They buy sheep heads and cattle heads and they make community pots. Community pots are pots of food that feed a row of seven to nine houses.*

4.7   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the processes of data collection and data organisation were discussed. The biographical details of each participant were presented in order to give the reader contextual insight and understanding into the themes which emerged during the data analysis. The data analysis was performed by way of open, axial and selective coding, and the themes which emerged were presented according to three core categories. A discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The participants in this study were confronted by a number of adversities in their community. The nature of these adversities are discussed in the following section, but, while three sets of attributes were identified as having supported participants' experiences of resilience despite exposure to adversity, it should, nevertheless, be borne in mind that they are not discrete concepts, but rather represent certain person–environment interactions. The first set of attributes relate to intrapersonal resources that the participants themselves possess; the second to interpersonal resources, such as the support of family, friends and colleagues; and the third to external resources.

The focus of this chapter is on the discussion of the findings which have emerged from this study. A summary of the study is presented, followed by limitations which may have affected the study and recommendations for future research.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
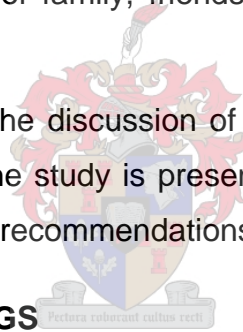
5.2.1 The adversities confronting participants

As the findings of this study indicate, the participants are confronted by many adversities within their own community. The participants highlighted their negative experiences and contact with violence, gangsterism and alcohol and drug abuse during their adulthood. All were faced with adversity on a daily level. Many of the above adversities have impacted on the community for many years, and have played a role in the adults' emotional, social, economic and moral development, as well as in their self-perceived consequent attainment of success.

While none of the participants was unemployed, all participants cited unemployment as an adversity that affected the lives of their family, friends and community members. This was evident in observation of the number of individuals of all ages who could be seen loitering around on the streets and in the doorways of their

homes. Unemployment is a visible and potent hazard for families and children, because it threatens poverty, with its associated dangers. The linking of unemployment to other adversities translates into unemployment being an even greater potential hazard. According to Pianta and Walsh (1996), paternal unemployment has, in the past, been associated with incidents of child abuse, family violence, depression and psychiatric disturbance. Unemployment is also implicated in intergenerational cycles of poverty, poor education, and poor work skills and, as such, is a major factor in the healthy development of individuals of all ages.

In addition to unemployment, poverty was cited as another adversity which confronts the participants. Poverty in South Africa is widespread and, in 2000, it was estimated that 28,5 per cent of households in South Africa earned less than a 'poverty line' of R800 per month (SAIRR, 2001). Such poverty became evident to the current researcher during her observations and regular contact with the participants. Poverty was reported by participants as being a major stressor that affected all aspects of their lives. Basic resources, such as clothes, food or medicine, were not readily available to the participants or their families due to a lack of finances. Jackie reported that she and her son were surviving on just one meal a day. Homes in the community were run down and needed maintenance; barefoot children playing in the streets were not always appropriately dressed to contend with the prevailing weather conditions; and scrawny pets were to be seen wandering the streets, scavenging for food. Additionally, poverty has been shown (Pianta & Walsh, 1996) to place undue stress on both caretakers and households, with adults who are poor being more vulnerable to a wide range of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety disorders.

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002), individuals who experience poverty are more prone to the health and safety risks associated with malnutrition, disease, infection and injury than those who are not poor. Research (McLloyd in McWhirter *et al.*, 1993) indicates that adults are exposed to a large number of additional life hazards as a consequence of poverty, and that they also respond less adaptively to hazards as a function of cumulative hazard exposure. Because of the fact that many other life adversities are associated with poverty, poverty status induces a generalised decline in adaptive capacities (Pianta & Egeland in Pianta & Walsh, 1996). Other adversities which are often related to poverty include

inadequate housing, access to health care and poor educational attainment. Despite the influences of poverty, however, the participants spoke with hope regarding both their own, and their children's, futures. The scourge of poverty had not dampened participants' displays of resilient behaviour or diminished their positive attitudes towards the future.

Dropping out of school is cited by Donald and others (2002) as posing a major problem in South Africa, and was also highlighted by the participants in this study. While "the reasons for dropping out of school are complex and should not be oversimplified" (Trueba in Donald *et al.*, 2002) the participants linked the difficulties that they experienced in completing their education, and in educating their children, to unemployment and poverty. Without enough money to pay school fees or to buy school uniforms, books and school lunches, many of the participants in the study were forced to leave school before they had matriculated. Additionally, it is worth noting that during the time the participants were attending school, the structure of schooling and the curriculum were determined by the apartheid government. The curriculum and how it was taught could have been experienced as both racially biased and limited in its usefulness (Donald *et al.*, 2002) and have impacted on the participants', or their parents', decision to withdraw them from formal schooling. The disheartening fact, however, is that without an education finding adequate employment was made difficult for the participants, and, similarly, without adequate employment, one's financial position is inevitably compromised. Many of the participants seemed so 'stuck' in this downward cycle that they were having difficulty in extricating their children from it. Participants and their children were, then, confronted with the risks associated with leaving school prematurely, which highlight the importance and value of education for individuals living in high-risk environments.

Poverty, unemployment and school failure were also linked to the involvement of adults and youth in negative, often criminal activities. Without employment, adults found themselves with much time on their hands and in need of money. The use of drugs and alcohol offered adults an escape from their poverty-stricken realities and not only provided adults with an escape into oblivion, but was also linked to increasing acts of verbal and physical abuse. Participants spoke from past personal experience and explained how they had became so intoxicated or high that rational

thought was no longer possible. The result of such drinking or drugging binges was often the verbal and physical abuse of family members. One participant went into much detail about how, before he had overcome his alcohol and drug addiction, he used to beat his wife until her body was purple from bruises. Deterioration in interpersonal relationships is inevitable when substances are being abused, and often results in impaired inhibition and social judgement. The male participants spoke mostly about their use of violence and abuse as coping strategies to help them deal with their frustrations.

The findings of this study indicate that gangsterism lured many adults in the community into its web, as it was a means of earning money to buy more drugs, and of gaining possession of material goods, such as (stolen) cellphones, car radios or other household equipment. While interviewing Brandon in his home, he spoke of his past involvement in gangsterism, which had led to his arrest and consequent imprisonment. While Brandon does not condone gangsterism, he spoke in an almost boastful way of how it had forced him to commit many criminal and violent acts. Brandon spent approximately seven years in jails, such as Polsmoor, for a number of violent murders. Pinnock (in Donald *et al.*, 2002) confirms that gangsterism in poor urban areas is a disturbing social problem in South Africa. Findings of this study show that gangsterism instils fear into the lives of many of the participants, forcing them into their homes early in the evening and keeping them from interacting with neighbours or other people in their street.

The fact that raising children amidst poverty, crime, and the abuse of drugs and alcohol is not an easy task was highlighted by this study. Doing so as a single mother, in particular, is even more challenging. Raising a child in a single-parent family can often mean a downward drift in terms of occupational and social status, decreased social support and income for women. The conditions associated with raising a child alone put significant strain on personal, financial and emotional resources and "the hazards of single parenthood can become even worse when combined with poverty or insularity" (Pianta & Walsh, 1996:131). The only single-parent participant highlighted the difficulties associated with being a single parent, and identified poverty, social integration and crime and violence as adversities with which she was confronted. The occurrence of single-parent, especially single-

mother, headed households is a common occurrence in the community involved in the study.

According to Rutter (in Pianta & Walsh, 1996) exposure to one adversity generally entails exposure to a number of adversities, which, taken together, frequently have an impact above and beyond the sum of their individual impacts. "The likelihood of serious maladjustment for adults increases exponentially with increasing numbers of socio-demographic risks" (Luther & Cicchetti, 2000). Adversities are known to interact, with their cumulative effect being magnified when they co-occur, so that the overall effect is greater than the sum of its parts. According to Samerof (in Pianta & Walsh, 1996), it is the number of adversities to which individuals are exposed, rather than the type of adversity, that is important. Schorr and Schorr (in Pianta & Walsh, 1996) argue that risk factors interact, causing their effects to multiply. These findings are especially relevant for the participants in this study, who are confronted on a daily basis by a number of interacting, compounding adversities, such as poverty, unemployment, gangsterism, crime, violence, alcohol and substance abuse. Despite these adversities, however, the participants were perceived to be resilient by both themselves and by other community members. As stated earlier, adversities cannot be regarded as static concepts, as there is a dynamic quality to the relationship between risk and protective factors. In an attempt to explore participants' experiences of resilience, intra- and interpersonal resources, as well as external resources contributing to their resilience, will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 Attributes of resilience

Intrapersonal resources refer to those resources *within* individuals themselves that function as resilient attributes and protective factors in the face of adversity. Such attributes as self-efficacy, empathy and humour, for example, are amongst the attributes cited by Norman (2000) which enable individuals confronted by adversity to maintain competence and control in their lives. The findings of this study highlight similar examples of intrapersonal resources, or attributes, which supported participants' experiences of resilience. These will be discussed individually, but again, it is important to remember that they function in interaction with one another.

5.2.2.1 Intrapersonal resources

The importance of being **goal orientated** and of having goals and a **vision for one's life** emerged from this study, and is supported by similar findings from research conducted by Beardslee (1989) and Danziger and Farber (1990 in Norman, 2000). **Being willing to make sacrifices** in order to achieve one's goals and constantly reflecting on one's goals seemed to be a propelling factor in the participants' experiences of resilience. Despite living in conditions of adversity, the participants kept their visions and goals clear, working hard to achieve them. This also functioned to 'lift' them above adversity and created hope for a better future. While the participants were focused on their futures, however, they did not discount their realities. The hope that things would improve was ever present, but so was the gratitude for what they already had. Despite the fact that the participants lived in poverty, they all expressed an intense gratitude for the little that they did own. Appreciating what they had seemed to keep the participants from sinking into despair.

In addition to goal-orientated behaviour and being willing to make sacrifices in order to achieve them, the importance of **taking responsibility for one's own actions** and their consequences was evident. Related to accepting responsibility for one's deeds was the notion of not placing blame on others for one's own failures or inadequacies. Being able to take responsibility for oneself and one's own actions, whether positive or negative, is a way by which participants can interact with their surroundings and reflects the idea that one is responsible for determining one's own success or future. Believing that **one is responsible for determining one's own future** seemed to give the participants a sense of control over their future, and motivated them to always do the best that they could. It was evident that the participants' abilities to plan for their future, focus on their goals, to exert willingness to make sacrifices to achieve them and to take responsibility for their own actions played an important role in the development and support of their resilience. It was evident that the participants in this study were goal orientated, exhibited initiative, were motivated, and experienced the self as possessing a measure of agency. They took responsibility for the direction of their lives and for the choices that they made, exemplifying self-efficacy and internal locus of control. According to Norman (2000), the "single most important personality characteristic associated with resilience is a

sense of self-efficacy". Self-efficacy can be defined in various ways, but generally refers to the belief that one's internal and external world is predictable and that one has some control over one's self, the current environment and one's future destiny (Werner, 1995).

The **ability to learn from one's mistakes** was highlighted in this study. Learning from one's mistakes is a process that takes much reflection and honesty, but, by doing so, adults were able to avoid making the same mistakes again. Related to this important finding is the idea that, when reflecting on their past experiences, participants were able to turn negative experiences into positive learning ones. When one expects and has confidence in the idea that the responses one makes to life challenges can have meaningful effects, one is said to have good self-efficacy. People with strong feelings of self-efficacy face life challenges with energy and persistence (Kleinke, 1999), which is precisely what the resilient participants illustrated during the interviews and observations undertaken for this study.

Faith in a higher power emerged as a means of giving meaning to participants' lives and of providing comfort in times of adversity. The belief in a higher power gave the participants the courage they needed in order to cope with conditions of adversity, as they relied on a higher power to protect them from crime, violence and gangsterism within the community. The strict adherence to religious beliefs and practises also functioned to keep participants on their chosen life paths, and to protect them from the temptation of becoming involved in practices such as violence or drug abuse. This finding is confirmed by studies conducted by Masten and others (1990), in which faith in a higher power is reported to function as a protective factor in high-risk situations. Pargament (in Masten *et al.*, 1990) describes the functions of religion in terms of coping processes that depend on the individual's beliefs, the nature of the event, and the context in which it occurs. Pargament also notes, however, that deeper spiritual commitments or closeness to a church community or the seeking of religious support may develop from adverse life experiences. Spirituality gives people a sense of connectedness to the self and others (Williams, 2002) and "an ability to see a larger meaning or purpose to the events of their lives" (Shuler, Gelberg & Brown in Williams, 2002:205). Spirituality and faith in a higher power also provide protection and ways in which to cope with adversity, and, in some instances, allows for the possibility of viewing adversity as an opportunity for

personal growth and development. This was evident in the findings of this study, as participants highlighted the idea that everything (no matter whether positive or negative) happened for a reason. This belief was tied to the ability to be hopeful and to find reassurance in the face of adversity.

5.2.2.2   *Interpersonal resources*

The adages 'no one lives in a vacuum' and 'no man is an island' are nowhere more true than in a high-risk environment, such as the setting of this study. Various interacting interpersonal resources were attributed to the participants' experiences of resilience. Norman (2000:8) clearly states that "the single most important factor promoting resilience is having a positive, caring relationship with another person". The importance and value of relationships was highlighted by all participants as contributing to their resilience and belief in the future. Having a close, caring and trusting relationship with either a family member, friend or work colleague provided adults with a space in which they could be themselves without fear of judgement. Such relationships also provided the adults with the belief that they were important, loved and cherished. Participants reflected on the fact that they always tried their best not to disappoint significant others, as they knew that these individuals had high expectations and hopes for them. The ability to foster supportive friendships itself is a feature of good adjustment and resilience. That is, "those individuals with superior social skills tend to have more and better peer relationships" (Smith & Carlson, 1997:240).

Having social contact with those outside one's own household also serves as a critical factor in the development of resilient adults. Engaging in, and maintaining, nurturing and supportive social contacts has been linked to numerous positive outcomes. Friends and colleagues were found to play an additional role in providing advice and support for participants, and knowing that someone else was going through, or had experienced, the same difficulty as they were experiencing, enabled participants to reach out and support each other. According to Garbarino (in Pianta and Walsh, 1996:32), support is defined as "connections that occur whenever individuals or systems have ongoing contact with each other that is organised around concern for their welfare and are those interpersonal transactions involving mutual aid and affirmation" (Gitterman & Shulman in Greene, 2002). Social support,

particularly from family members and close friends, can also be of great importance to older adults and may be instrumental in preventing depression (Greene, 2002).

Parental discipline and example-setting played an important role in the support of resilience in this study. Participants remarked on their own parents' discipline of them as children, and reflected on their discipline of their own children. According to Smith and Carlson (1997:239), "there is a substantial link between positive outcomes and parental management, such as establishing consistent expectations, rules, and consequences for behaviour". Participants highlighted the fact that, despite challenges to exercising parental discipline, they tried to implement discipline in their own homes and to instil self-discipline in their children at all times.

5.2.2.3   *External resources*

In order to cope with surrounding conditions of adversity, individuals have to rely not only on themselves and on their significant others, but also on external resources. Thus, the environment beyond the family should also provide opportunities for growth and development. In this study, it was clear that participants' access to external resources also impacted on their experience of resilience. While schools, day clinics, the police and rehabilitation centres were named as resources accessed by participants, they also made it clear that not all the resources that they needed were available to them. The inability of the community to access sufficient resources seemed to make community members turn to one another in an attempt to support one another, in this way compensating for the lack of resources. The need for resources continued to be voiced by the community members concerned, though, in their absence, resilient adults look for appropriate alternatives. Some resources that the state provides to the community are not regarded as necessary by community members, and thus result in a waste of valuable time, money and effort. An audit of the resources available to adults in high-risk communities should be conducted, as findings of this study highlight the important role of not only intra- and interpersonal resources, but also of external resources, in supporting resilience.

5.3   CONCLUSION

Given the fact that participants were not only exposed to one or two of the above-mentioned adversities, but rather to a string of interacting, compounding adversities, the current researcher was taken aback by the participants' courage, hope and

defiantly positive attitudes. The resilience of these participants was linked to the fact that, despite being confronted with a number of adversities on a daily basis, they were all, nevertheless, managing to survive and to make a success of their lives. They had managed to overcome years of alcoholism and drug addiction; to leave a history of gang involvement behind; to support and uplift their children by financing their education; to cope with the mental health problems of immediate family members; and to plan for their futures. Given that these participants had, additionally, grown up in a time of oppression and racism, during which they had been subject to the ongoing abuse of their human rights, made their achievements even more remarkable. The findings of this study mirror some of those made by Masten and others (1990), according to which resilience can be said to consist of a combination of the interaction of risk factors and the presence of personal, familial, and community protective factors that buffer, moderate, and protect the participants from their vulnerabilities. According to Smith and Carlson (1997), then, "protective factors come into play once risk is established and moderate the likelihood of developing problems or symptoms".

This study serves to make clear that resilient adults are those who make use of various skills, coping strategies and resources when confronted with adversities, problems and challenges. The resilient adults in this study made use of active coping strategies when confronted with difficulties, the use of such strategies being reflected in such statements as "I make a plan of action" and "I always try to find a solution to the problem, and then do what I have to do." Seeking social support was an additional strategy utilised by the participants, while positive reinterpretation and continual personal growth were evident in such statements as "I learn something from the experience" and "I always try to see the good in what is happening." Resilience was further related to such personal factors as the ability to plan for one's future, to be goal oriented, to take responsibility for one's actions and to refrain from blaming others for one's own failures.

Furthermore, the importance of relationships, the belief that one is responsible for determining one's own success and a commitment to one's religious beliefs were all factors that functioned to uplift, empower and motivate the participants to overcome the profuse number of adversities to which they were exposed. According to Kleinke (1991), the following coping responses are correlated with the development of

healthy personal factors: active coping, planning; positive reinterpretation and growth; and acceptance. While gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, violence, poverty and unemployment serve to characterise the lives of many individuals, resilient adults are those who rely on personal coping strategies, who reach out to others for support, who are dedicated to their religious beliefs and practises, and who, finally, make use of any available state or community resources. Despite living under conditions of intense adversity, resilient adults, nevertheless, still remain hopeful.

Although the factors that contribute to resilience were discussed separately, such discussion was undertaken with the understanding that these factors, in fact, always occur interactively. Additionally, no one set of resources discussed above is deemed more important than another. All the resources discussed above functioned together to enhance resilience, in a process that is neither static nor linear. Protective factors are known to interact with adversity or risk factors, and, as such, resources need to be deployed in order to disassociate risk factors from outcomes in order to lower the probabilities of negative outcomes. To the extent that sufficient resources exist within the individual, family and community systems, there is evidence that experiencing certain types of adversity is not harmful for individuals (Pianta & Walsh, 1996). This study has served to demonstrate that resilient individuals are those who harness those resources that exist within themselves, their families and their communities, enabling them to cope despite any adversity that they encounter.

The intense feelings of hope and the positive attitudes demonstrated by participants, astounded the current researcher. Each interview conducted served only to deepen the researcher's awareness of the hope that participants had for their futures and the enthusiasm with which they shared their dreams. While conducting interviews amongst homes crying out for repair, with children in need of food, clothing and other necessities and parents trying hard to make ends meet, dreams were heard of one day being able to send children to university, to buy cars and to live in larger, more elaborately furnished homes. Ample evidence was provided that, despite the assumed impact of past apartheid-generated deprivations, violence, poverty and unemployment, participants were still able to report positive feelings of hope and enthusiasm for the future. Hope "provides comfort while enduring life's threats and

personal challenges" (Morse & Doberneck in Riley, 2002) and acted to support the participants' experiences of resilience in the face of numerous adversities.

5.4   SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The summary of this study is presented in the following sequence: aims and objectives of the study, research design, methodology, data analysis and findings.

5.4.1   Aims and objectives of the study

The primary goal of this study was to explore adults' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community. Two research questions were posed relating to, firstly, the nature of the adversities to which adults were exposed and, secondly, to adult's experiences of resilience and the nature of the resources available to adults in their community.

5.4.2   Research design and methodology

Chapter Three presented the reader with a detailed explanation of the research methodology and design utilised for this study. The researcher utilised a qualitative, interpretive research approach that made use of individual and focus group interviews, as well as of observations, in order to gain insight into participants' experiences of resilience within a high-risk community. The study sample was selected by means of snow-ball sampling, and comprised the study of four adults who perceived themselves, and were perceived by others, as resilient to adversity. Due to the nature of the research questions and the aim of the study, the setting that was chosen was one in which a number of adversities and challenges were present.

5.4.3   Data analysis and research findings

Chapter Four described how the need to be accountable in reporting was taken into consideration at all times during the process of data collection. The procedure followed in the analysis of data was presented, and examples of the data coding were provided in Table 4.2, Appendix A and Appendix B. The core categories to emerge from the data analysis were related to the research questions, the literature surrounding the concept of resilience and the raw data. The core categories consisted of:

- the nature of adversity to which participants in the study were exposed; and

- the participants' experiences of resilience and the resources that served to support their resilience.

The research findings clearly showed that adults were exposed to a number of extreme adversities in their community. Adversities such as poverty, unemployment, gangsterism, crime, violence, and alcohol and drug abuse were common. Furthermore, the incidence of mental health problems amongst immediate family members was high, as was the use of illegal substances. Despite being confronted by the above interacting adversities, the participants in the sample were, nevertheless, making successes of their lives. Their resilience was linked to the utilisation of resources, which acted as protective factors, in the following three areas: firstly, intrapersonal resources, secondly, interpersonal resources and thirdly, external resources. Examples of such resources include:

- future planning and having goals and a vision for one's life;

- a willingness to make enormous sacrifices to achieve one's goals;

- an ability to take responsibility for one's life and actions, as well as their consequences;

- the capacity to learn from one's past experiences and to turn negative experiences into positive ones;

- the steadfast maintenance of a relationship with a higher power and involvement in a religious organisation;

- the possession of a close relationship with at least one other person; and

- the ability to make use of resources available in the community.

5.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current research is confined to a study of resilient adults living in a high-risk community on the Cape Flats. The fact that it is a community with its own inherent culture and subcultures could have had an influence on the findings. Conducting interviews with the participants' children may have contributed additional information relevant to this study. Furthermore, the fact that all participants were from the same race group may also have limited the said findings.

5.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

Community members should be consulted regarding the community's need for particular types of resources. Additionally, community members should be made aware of all the resources available to them, as well as of the different types of resource and their primary aims. Many participants expressed their frustration at not knowing who to approach regarding various issues.

As schools can also make an important and beneficial difference in the lives of children and adults, programmes should be implemented in schools in the community aimed at supporting the development of resilience amongst the community's youth and adult populations. School resources, such as halls and classrooms, could be utilised after hours to provide adults with needed resources. Resilient adults, for example, could volunteer to facilitate support groups or sessions held with adults in the community. In this way, resilient adults could act as mentors or role models for other adults or adolescents in the community.

Opportunities for community involvement and upliftment should also be generated in order to foster feelings of community togetherness and responsibility. Group activities and involvement could also create opportunities for community members to come to know one another, to be able to identify resources amongst themselves and to create supportive networks. A sense of belonging, and respect for one another, might also be nurtured, thus creating a more positive attitude towards the community and one's fellow citizens.

5.7   FURTHER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

A study comparing those who are identified as resilient in a particular community with those who are not so successful might provide further knowledge regarding the nature of resilience.

A longitudinal study that interviews participants at, for example, five-yearly intervals, and which continues to assess how participants maintain their resiliency would help to reduce the knowledge gap regarding South African adults' experiences of resilience within high-risk communities.

A study exploring single women's resilience in the face of adversity is sorely needed. Women's, and especially single women's, courage and resilience are often

overlooked. Given South Africa's history of racial oppression and traditional patriarchal outlook, the resilience, power and leadership abilities of women in many communities still require recognition.

5.8   CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter contained a discussion of the findings that emerged from this study. The discussion centred on the adversities that confront participants in their community and the resources that support participants' experiences of resilience *despite* exposure to such adversities. The resources which were found to act in support of, and promote, resilience were related to participants' personal attributes, such as goal-oriented behaviour and faith in a higher power; interpersonal attributes, such as the support of family members and friends; and external resources, such as day clinics and rehabilitation centres. A discussion of the research findings was followed by a concluding summary of the study and a discussion regarding potential limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research opportunities were also discussed.

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EXAMPLE OF
OPEN-CODING

94	I:	Has this always been an important thing for you? To know this is where I'm	
95		going and this is what I want.	
96	R:	Ok it has always been important to me. Uhm my family, ok I have three	- need to use
97		brothers ok uhm two of them never made this and they had the	opportun. avail.
98		opportunities and they, they they had it all and uhm it's just it was just for	
99		them to make use of it and they didn't make use of it. When I sort of was in	
100		high school and I started noticing their strengths and I had a mind shift,	
101		whatever.	
102	I:	Ja	
103	R:	And that is where when I started saying "I've got to know where I'm heading	- vision
104		and I've got to stay focused and go forward."	- goals
105	I:	And if you think about your future now, if you look at the next five years or	
106		the next ten years, do you feel positive about your future?	
107	R:	Yes most definitely. Uhm ja I won't just say I think, I know I've come this far	- belief in self
108		and I know I can make it and I know there's plenty opportunities still there.	- positive re future
109	I:	Ok so you're motivated.	
110	R:	Yes I know.	
111	I:	What's it like when people that you know around you achieve success.	
112		What does that do to you?	
113	R:	To me it means hard work, it means people that are accomplished they're	- success = goals,
114		goals, what they really worked hard for. It means hard work. Uhm it means	hard work
115		ja, Success means so much things. Goals, mission accomplished.	
116	I:	And so what does that do for you? When let say your friend achieve	
117		something successful?	
118	R:	It stirs up something I think uh knowing that uhm if you set your mind on	- success breeds
119		something and if so many people have achieved success, you can also	success,
120		achieve it, you can also obtain it in what you want but that you need to put	motivation - hard
121		effort into it.	work
122	I:	So it motivate you almost.	
123	R:	Ja	
124	I:	Uhm do you identify with you culture in any way or can you describe your	

THE ELDER INTERVIEW GUIDE
(to be piloted in a group format)

- "What would I need to know to grow up well here?"
  - o Probing Questions:
    1. What role do religious organizations play in your life now? Has this changed over time?
    2. What do other members of your family think about the way you live your life, your beliefs (such as regarding gender roles, etc.)? What did they think about these things when you were growing up?
    3. How do you handle change, both at an individual level, and the changes taking place for everyone in your community? Are you now better or worse than when you were a child?
    4. How did you contribute to your community when younger? How do you contribute now?
    5. What is it like for you when people around you succeed?
    6. Do you have a life philosophy and if you feel comfortable sharing it, can you tell me what it is?
    7. Do you identify in any way(s) with your culture. Can you describe your culture? Can you describe (or show me) day to day activities that are part of your culture and the way things are done in this community? Have these things changed since you were young?
- "How do you describe people who grow up well here despite the many problems they face? What word(s) do you use?"
- "What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?"
  - o Probing Questions:
    1. Can you tell me what some of these bad things are?
    2. What do people do to cope?
    3. What do they say about these things when they happen?
    4. Who talks about them most? Least? And who is most likely to come up with the solution to problems when they occur?
    5. What do other people think of these solutions? Can you give me examples?
- "What kinds of things are most challenging for you growing up here?"
  - o Probing Questions:
    1. Did you have opportunities for age-appropriate work while growing up?

2. Are you or people you know exposed to violence now or earlier in your life? How do you avoid this in your family, community, and when with peers?

3. How does the government play a role in providing for your safety, your recreation needs, housing, and jobs? Has this role changed over time?

4. Did you have opportunities to experience meaningful "rites of passage"? What were these? Did they present you with an amount of risk that you could handle?

5. How tolerant is your community of problem behaviours among young people? What are some of these behaviours?

6. Do you feel safe and secure here? How did others protect you while you were growing up?

7. Do you feel equal to others? Are there others you do not feel equal to? How do these others make you feel? What do they do that makes you feel this way? Has any of this changed for you since you were young?

8. Did you have access to school and education and any other information you needed to grow up well? How do you get this access? Who provided it to you?

- "What do you do when you face difficulties in your life? Has this changed as you got older?"

- "What does being healthy mean to you and others in your family and community now and when you were younger?"
  - o Probing Questions:
    1. Could you describe the way your parents or caregivers looked after you?

    2. How did your family express themselves and how did you know what they thought of you?

    3. How did your family monitor you, keep track of what you are doing?

    4. How did you know how to act with other people? How well did you do socially? Are you thought of well by others, popular, liked? Has this changed over time?

    5. Did you have someone you considered a mentor or role model? Can you describe them?

    6. Did you have other meaningful relationships with people at school, home, or in your community?

- "What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?"
  - o Probing Questions:
    1. Are you assertive? How do you show this?

    2. Can you describe your ability to problem-solve? Are you better or worse than others? How do you know this?

3. Do you have a sense of control over your world? How does this affect your life?

4. How much uncertainty are you able to live with? Has this changed over time?

5. Do you value self-awareness, insight? How does this affect your life and what you do day to day?

6. Would you describe yourself as optimistic or pessimistic about life?

7. Do you have personal goals and aspirations? What are these?

8. How much can you be independent and how much do you have to rely on others in your life for your survival?

9. How much do you use substances like alcohol and drugs? What do others around you think about this?

10. What role does humor play in your life?

- "Can you share with me a story about a child who grew up well in this community despite facing many challenges?"

- "Can you share a story about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, or outside your home in your community?"
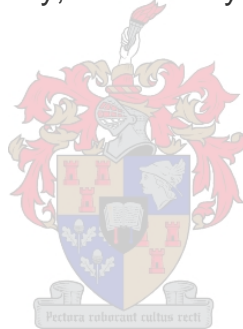
DATA ANALYSIS: CATEGORISATION

CATEGORY	CODES	P1	P2	P3	P4
SOCIAL INTEGRATION	Knowing the environment	X		X	
	Class divisions	X			
	Lack of culture			X	X
	Difficulty fitting in	X		X	X
STATE RESOURCES	Community resources	X			X
	Police as resources		X		
RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS AS RESOURCES	Religious support			X	
	Church: ss	X	X	X	X
	Church: serving others	X			
FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES AS RESOURCES	Colleagues			X	
	Friends	X	X	X	X
COMMUNITY UNITY	Upliftment				X
	Helping others	X			
	Standing together	X	X	X	X
PARENTS & FAMILY MEMBERS AS RESOURCES	Support base			X	X
	Role of extended family	X			
	Regular contact with family members	X	X	X	
	Parental support	X			
EDUCATION	Importance of education	X		X	X

	Goals for children: education	X	X		
	Education	X		X	X
	Always do better=education	X			
PARENTING	Parental example setting	X			X
	Successful parenting	X			
	Put children first	X			
	Talk/teach children				X
	Single parenthood: morals				X
	Parental values passed down	X		X	
FUTURE PLANNING	Financial resources to cope	X			
	Future planning	X	X	X	X
RELIGION	Religion: protection	X			X
	Religion=trust	X	X		X
	Church: ss	X	X	X	X
	Religion: life changes	X	X		
	Role of religion	X	X	X	X
	Losing friends Finding new friends		X		
	Family relief		X		
	Attempt to share beliefs w family		X		X
	Religion: coping	X	X	X	X
	Religion: coming together		X	X	
	Religion: youth ignore, crime		X		

	Role model		X		
	Religious tolerance				X
	Religion: health				X
	Religion & will				X
	Religion: meet children's yearnings				X
DISCIPLINE	Parental boundaries (strict)	X			
	Keeping old rules alive	X			
	Children aware of rules	X			
	Distinguishing right from wrong	X			
	Children making wrong choices	X	X		
	Parents ignored by children	X	X		
	Past: children knew rules & abided	X			
POSITIVE ATTITUDE	Thinking positively	X		X	X
	Turn – into +	X		X	
	Staying optimistic and positive	X	X	X	
	Hope for the future	X	X	X	
HEALTH	Health = Tolerance, acceptance				X
	Health: diversity			X	
	Leisure time		X	X	
	Health	X	X	X	X
SACRIFICES	Sacrifices to succeed	X		X	X
GOALS AND VISION	Goals despite adversity	X			
	Achieving goals	X			

	Will & vision	X		X	X
	Find solutions			X	
DETERMINING ONE'S OWN SUCCESS	To get somewhere, do something	X		X	X
	Mix w diversity			X	
	Success	X	X	X	
	Responsible for own deeds	X			
UNEMPLOYMENT	Unemployment	X	X	X	X
	Employment instability		X		
	Higher qualifications to be employed	X			
	More employment opportunities in past	X			
POVERTY	Poverty	X	X		X
	Low pay				X
	Financial position unstable	X	X		
LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE	Learning from past experiences	X		X	
ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE	Alcohol & drug abuse	X	X	X	
	Own involvement with drugs, alcohol and/or gangsterism	X	X		
CRIME, VIOLENCE & GANGSTERISM	Gangsterism	X	X	X	
	Crime & violence	X	X	X	X
DIFFICULTY COMPLETING ONE'S EDUCATION	Difficulties in completing education	X	X	X	X
	Lack of education	X	X	X	X
	Lack of financial aid to study	X	X		

DATA ANALYSIS: OPEN CODING

CODES	INDIVIDUAL & FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS				REFERENCES			
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P1	P2	P3	P4
Difficulty fitting in	X		X	X	2:32		16:469; 17:510	4:100; 5:143; 7:190; 8:237
Knowing the environment	X		X		1:14; FG 2:46		FG 2:39	
Class divisions	X				1:18			
Lack of culture			X	X			5:132	4:103; 4:119
Resources	X			X	3:74			3:87
Support systems	X	X	X	X	28:857	8:241; 12:359	1:29; 15:446; 18:533	6:163
Church: ss	X	X	X	X	29:872	10:287	18:531	3:85
Importance of education	X		X	X	2:36		5:150	3:63
Lack of education	X	X	X	X	3:65	2:54; 11:331	5:145; 5:150; 6:182	3:73
Goals for children: education	X	X			2:39; 3:70; 5:137	2:39		
Education	X		X	X	2; 6:166		5:150	2:62
Always do better=education	X				2:145; 5:141			
Parental example setting	X			X	6:179; FG 20:566			17:520; FG (2) 3:68
Parental support	X				5:153			
Successful parenting	X				2:50			
Put children first	X				16:492			
Talk/teach children				X				20:593; FG

								11:295
Single parenthood: morals			X					20:612
Parental values passed down	X		X		26:798		3:66	
Financial resources to cope	X				3:72			
Future planning	X	X	X	X	4:124; 8:233	14:417	3:81	9:254; 11:322
Religion: protection	X			X	8:231			14:423
Religion: Life changes	X	X			3:89; 4:95; 5:130	3:73; 10:297; 16:470		
Religion=trust	X	X		X	8:230	7:188; 14:424		FG (2) 3:72
Role of religion	X	X	X	X	8:223	1:15	2:35; FG 5:107	6:176
Religion: meet children's yearnings			X					21:640
Keeping old rules alive	X				26:798			
Religion & will			X					17:517
Religion: health			X					17:504
Religion: coping	X	X	X	X	FG (2) 2:47	7:197	FG 5:110; FG(2) 1:22	10:300
Religion: Coming together		X	X			7:210	FG 5 106	
Religion: youth ignore		X				1:25; FG 3:41		
Losing & finding friends		X				3:89; 4:108		
Family Relief		X				5:138		
Share beliefs with family		X		X		2:38; 5:146; 18:552		FG 11:295
Role model		X				14:405		
Religious tolerance			X					12:364
Responsible for own deeds	X				8:223; 27:808			

Parental boundaries (strict)	X				9:258; 11:311;26:780			
Children aware of rules	X				9:260; 25:766; 27:818			
Distinguishing right from wrong	X				28:839			
Children making wrong choices	X	X			24:742	17:522		
Parents ignored by children	X	X			24:727	17:515; FG 12:328		
Past: children knew rules & abided	X				25:765			
Helping others	X				11:330; 11:338			
Serve others=church	X				14:427; FG 15:414			
Standing together	X	X	X	X	11:330	7:200	15:445	8:241
Gangsterism	X	X	X		2:48; 30:913	17:498	5:148	
Alcohol and drug abuse	X	X	X		2:49; 19:577; 30:907; FG 2:55	6:172; FG 2:38	5:148; 9:250;	
Crime and violence	X	X	X	X	FG 2:58	11:340; 13:379	16:487	14:407
Thinking positively	X		X	X	20:603		8:233	6:176
Hope for future	X	X	X		3:80; 14:407; 20:598	14:424	4:107	
Turn – into +	X		X		17:526		8:237; 18:535	
Staying optimistic and positive	X	X	X		20:595	14:421	1:17	
Sacrifices to succeed	X		X	X	2:43;		FG	9:266

					3:78; 20:604		17:468	
Will & Vision	X		X	X	14:411		3:81; 4:103; 4:113; 18:548	2:59
Find solutions			X				12:345	
Goals despite adversity	X				17:520			
Achieving goals	X				9:271			
Unemployment	X	X	X	X	FG 2:64	2:42; 13:376; FG 12:323	6:183	3:69; FG 10:253
Higher qualifications to be employed	X				10:288			
More opportunities in past	X				10:290			
Low pay			X					FG 10:254
Lack of financial aid to study	X	X			2:67	11:331		
Poverty	X	X		X	20:600; 30:903	11:334		3:70; 3:82;6:171; FG 6:154
Learning from past experiences	X		X		4:124		8:220; 12:354	
Success	X	X	X		9:251FG 9:279; 14:389; 430	6:162	FG 17:466	
Financial position-unstable	X	X			15:448	2:57		
Role of extended family	X				19:564			
To get somewhere do something	X		X	X	4:104; 18:530		8:228	13:387
Mix with diversity			X				2:55	
Employment instability		X				2:57		
Health	X	X	X	X	FG (2) 4:96	13:387; FG (2)	10:301; FG (2)	17:504

						5:130	4:117	
Health: diversity			X				10:309; FG (2) 4:109	
Health: tolerance				X				18:551
Own involvement in drug use, gangsterism, crime	X	X			8:221	3:73; 14:407; 15:438		
Leisure time		X	X			19:569	11:318	
Difficulty in completing education	X	X	X	X	3:68	2:54	5:145	3:81
Upliftment				X				8:241
Religious support			X				2:35	
Family = support base			X				1:27	
Colleagues	X		X		11:338		1:30	
Friends	X	X	X	X		4:120	1:29	5:147
Regular contact with family members	X	X	X		6:175	5:143		