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## **THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING BLACK IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACE**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this Master's Thesis on the Experiences of Being Black in the South African Workplace is my original and unassisted work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in Social and Psychological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for examination in any other university.

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29 July 2019

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## ABSTRACT

The psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position of black employees in the South African workplace remain unchanged in spite of the advent of democracy in 1994. The black employee's racial experience in the workplace is indicative of the normative experience of blackness in contemporary South African society that is in agreement with the everyday familiarity of socioeconomic disadvantage and psychosocial subjugation that affects the overall existential experience of blackness. As such, hostile racial interactions in the workplace reflect that the socioeconomic and psychosocial changes expected post-apartheid are materialising at seemingly substandard rates. The current investigation utilised a phenomenological approach to the broader critical psychology of race the interpretive research paradigm and semi-structured interviews to direct thematic data analysis techniques that informed the study conclusions. The participant group consisted of eight tertiary educated black employees, one male and seven females, with an age range of 21 to 27 years, with workplace experience ranging from two weeks to four years. The results of this investigation significantly shows the inefficiency of the democratic redress policy in the facilitation of workplace diversification, and its ineptitude in expediting psychosocial and socioeconomic inclusion, integration and participation such that the existential black employee's experience of racial identity in the post-apartheid South African workplace is not adversarial. The findings of this investigation suggest that the instances of on-going racism in the workplace are the result of an institutional socioeconomic investment in racial inequality that facilitates hostile racial interactions in the workplace.

*Key Words:* psychosocial, socioeconomic, existential, wellbeing, racialisation, interaction, identity, black, workplace, employees

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

The psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of black employees remain unchanged in spite of the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994. As such, the everyday familiarity of economic disadvantage and psychological subjugation persistently shapes the experiences of black employees. Morris (2001) and Yosso (2005) assert that the bearing of racialised social orientations present intersectional challenges which pervade all aspects of the black employee's experience. Therefore, in conjunction with Omi and Winant (2013) and Bartlett and Brayboy (2006), this study asserts that the prevalence of adverse black employee experiences in the workplace indicates that subjective identity formation, in relation to race, intersects with psychosocial and socioeconomic aspects. As such, hostile racial interactions in the workplace designate that the socioeconomic and psychosocial changes expected post the apartheid transferral are materialising at seemingly substandard rates. This, therefore, invalidates the implicit social agreements projected to aid inclusion and integration in the workplace post 1994 (Abrahams, 2017).

Reorganised institutional racist attitudes in the workplace promote the socioeconomic and psychosocial subjugation of blacks as exposed by possessive investments in systematic cultures that place blacks on a subordinate locus in the social hierarchy (Lipsitz, 1998; Rodat, 2007). Therefore, in spite of the democratic advent promising racial reform through its unequivocal anti-racism stance peddling the post-apartheid transition as favouring black employees, the practice of institutional racism preserves discriminatory concerns for blacks in the workplace (Seekings, 2003). As such, the demonstration of structural inequality indicates a lack of penitence, empathy and intent to transform the antisocial behaviours that plague black employees' South African workplace experiences.

Social media platforms have played a critical role in documenting increased reports of institutionalised racism experienced by black employees, which are not readily available, misrepresented and understated on conventional media networks (SAHRC, 2016). Therefore, the post-racial and colour-blind stance displayed in mainstream broadcasting presents a distorted reflection of the South African workplace that suggests that racism is a historic issue displaced in the present. Additionally, post-racial and colour-blind orientations depicted in mainstream media propagate the mass silencing of black employees concerning their workplace experiences of blackness encompassing socioeconomic exclusion and psychosocial

discrimination (Castagno, 2008). This confirms Ellison and de Wet's (2002) claim that racial impartiality in institutional cultures is an artificial construct, as evidenced by the psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of blackness in the South African workplace, being psychologically disempowering. As such, the contemporary experiences of blackness in the workplace demonstrate a need for psychosocial and socioeconomic transformation as equal participation drastically improves the overall historical conditions of blackness (Jeannotte, 2008). Equal participation, as hypothesised by Zimmerman (2000), is an integral component of the achievement of psychological empowerment. Therefore, a psychologically empowering workplace environment is one where black employees access sufficient socioeconomic opportunities to regulate decision-making processes influencing the everyday experiences of blackness. Given that the current racial experiences of black employees hinder psychological empowerment, attempts to facilitate diplomatic racial interactions in the South African workplace favour the sanction of racist institutional cultures that encourage passive compulsion in achieving social uniformity (Jeannotte, Stanley, Pendakur, Jamison, Williams & Aizlewood, 2002).

Given that the current study is concerned with interpreting meanings black employees ascribe to their psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of workplace blackness, relative to the broader politics of racial experience in contemporary South Africa, it is essential that researchers assess the psychological empowerment of black employees as the socio-politic history of the South African workplace affects the contemporary psychosocial and socioeconomic factors that challenge the overall wellbeing and existential experience of blackness (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Zimmerman, 1995). Psychological empowerment in the South African workplace context then refers to an intersectional social production allowing Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis of associations between the observed subjective competence of black employees, institutional workplace culture roles, and black employee proactivity towards the democratic redress policy (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Psychological empowerment in the black employee context comprises interactional processes in which black employees experience improved psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions, which, in turn, improve the overall wellbeing and existential experience of blackness (Orefield & Lee, 2006). Therefore, when black employees demonstrate a progressive awareness of individual control, positive existential alignment and critical thoughtfulness regarding the post-apartheid workplace, they have realised psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995).



Further committing to Zimmerman's (1995) frame of thought, psychological empowerment for black employees in the South African workplace involves black employees exerting efforts towards attaining their desired career advancement goals and accepting as true the achievability thereof. Additionally, psychological empowerment involves black employees being consciously aware of their access to knowledge networks and social connections that are influential aspects in the attainment of career advancement goals (Sadler, 2002; Zimmerman, 1995). Therefore, psychological empowerment is an on-going inclusionary and deliberate participatory action in which black employees experience their workplace environment as facilitating equal access to knowledge networks and social connections (Jeannotte, 2008; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). However, psychological empowerment, as an operant construct in the South African workplace, is contextually and relationally variant (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). Therefore, ensuring that black employees experience psychological empowerment in the South African workplace is important for facilitating black employee access to psychosocial and socioeconomic power, such that institutional workplace cultures no longer disadvantage the black employees' experiences of race (Foucault, 1980; Robertson, Delton, Klein, Cosmides & Tooby, 2014). Therefore, post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientations are a demonstration of institutionalised racial dominance and unequal power distribution. Consequently, the communicative use of language, among other factors, used to limit the availability of career advancement opportunities for black employees in the workplace, signifies the intentionality of structural inequality inhibiting psychologically empowering processes (Mumby, 1988).

Empowering processes in the context of the current study refer to interactional procedures in which black employees gain psychosocial and socioeconomic control over their work experiences of blackness, such that their existential wellbeing is unaffected. Moreover, a demonstration of progressive awareness in individual control, positive existential alignment and critical thoughtfulness regarding the post-apartheid workplace context are essential facets of empowering processes. Ensuring that black employees experience psychological empowerment in the South African workplace is important for facilitating black employee access to psychosocial and socioeconomic power so that institutional workplace cultures no longer disadvantage black employees' experiences of race (Foucault, 1980). Empowered black employees are those whose psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of blackness are unaffected by institutionally preserved privileges of whiteness. Given that post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientations are a demonstration of institutionalised white employee

dominance and power (Haney-López, 2010), the communicative use of language, among other factors, used to limit the availability of career advancement opportunities for black employees in the workplace signifies the intentionality of structural inequality (Léglise & Migge, 2008; Mumby, 1988).

The intrapersonal component of psychological empowerment in the South African workplace refers to the subjective observations black employees make concerning their existential experiences of blackness. There is an observed social control over a positive racial identity formation in which black employees overcome psychosocial and socioeconomic challenges of blackness subjecting them to post-apartheid workplace racialisation. A higher level of observed social control over a positive racial identity formation allows black employees to liberate themselves from workplace myths ascribing incompetence and laziness stereotypes to the experience of blackness (Flanagan, 2015). The interpersonal component of psychological empowerment involves the participation of black employees in transforming institutional workplace cultures that promote racial inequality, self-segregation and on-going racialisation (Zimmerman, 1995). The interpersonal component of psychological empowerment allows black employees to engage the workplace environment as shaped by South Africa's apartheid history. Therefore, the interpersonal component of psychological empowerment equips black employees with instruments of resistance against institutional cultures limiting career advancement. The behavioral component of psychological empowerment in the South African workplace refers to the subjective actions black employees' effect concerning their existential, psychosocial, socioeconomic and socio-politic experiences of blackness.

Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social psychology of intergroup relations suggests that intergroup relational effects on the individual habituate the psychosocial pressure experienced by black employees to conform and comply with discriminatory institutional authority in the workplace. This advocates the scrutiny of institutional structures that infringe on the pursuit of a definite and collective societal enthusiasm towards the achievement of experientially evident socioeconomic and psychosocial inclusion of black employees in the workplace. Considering the assumption that social environments shape individual and collective identities, the experience of antagonistic race relations in the workplace presents detrimental consequences to the overall psychosocial and socioeconomic wellbeing of black employees in South Africa. As such, ignorant racial attitudes in workplace cultures are products of circumvention and disinterest in the psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences that negatively affect the lives

of black employees. In addition to Thompson and Fretz (1991), Sherman, Giles and Williams-Green (1994) state that black employees struggle to adjust to white South African institutional cultures, given that psychosocial separation and socioeconomic exclusion in the workplace enable career advancement disparities between black and white employees. This confirms Ibarra's (1995) and Conway's (2001) assertions that access to efficient formal knowledge networks and informal social connections in the workplace are integral for career advancement which, more often than not, operate in conjunction with racial identification processes.

Insistent discriminatory workplace cultures are ostensibly biased towards the psychosocial and socioeconomic needs of white employees whose relative positions of privilege constantly depict cooperative social campaigns to restrict black employees' access to the social resources required to transform their psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position (Lipsitz, 1998; Policy Research Initiative, 2005). As a result, white employees invalidate recognisable institutional racial inequality with post-racial justifications and colour-blind claims that incur suspicion in the prospective achievement of socioeconomic and psychosocial inclusion for black employees in the workplace context (Haney-López, 2010). Therefore, inconsiderate post-racial and colour-blind orientations displayed by white employees come across as deliberate efforts to pressure black employees into embracing mediocre sentiments of reconciliation while socioeconomic and psychosocial inequality penetrate every sphere of the black employee's racial experience (Darby & Levy, 2016).

Soudien (2010) postulates that because of the post-apartheid turn, black employees in the South African workplace have gained access to the psychosocial and socioeconomic privileges possessed by their white counterparts. Benefactors of racist workplace structures are required to acknowledge that claims of racial neutrality and passive compliance regarding their position of privilege damage the psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of black employees. This affirms that institutionally endorsed white workplace privilege functions to reinstate and preserve the racial power perceived to be lost by white employees. As such, white employees interpret democratic redress policy as a process of post-apartheid reverse victimisation. The unapologetic attitude of self-importance displayed by white employees shows an inclination towards avoiding the invariable racial reality of the contemporary black employee's experience, and a disinclination to admit to the recognisably detrimental psychosocial and socioeconomic consequences of institutional racist actions to the overall existential wellbeing of black employees.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Aside from the overall black employee's experience of institutional prejudice, the accumulative racial diversification of the South African workplace presents it as a prospective environmental context for acculturation and assimilation processes that validate insincere sentiments of social inclusion (Berensevičiūtė, 2003). This is similar to Fanon (1986), Bulhan (1985) and Biko's (1996) suggestions that the South African workplace demonstrates a false integration, as black employees experience restrictive identity recognition by predominantly white institutional cultures, which undermine the psychosocial and socioeconomic development efforts of blacks to gain a progressive existential workplace experience. Therefore, sentiments of a false integration indicate an unequal investment in the pursuit of achieving social integration and cohesion in terms of collaborative efforts displayed by black employees in comparison to their white counterparts. Although it is credible to assert that black employees in the democratic era infiltrate occupational fields previously inaccessible during the apartheid era. The trivial reallocation of social resources and the country's current socioeconomic conditions provide ideal conditions for the assessment of the democratic redressive policy's impact in workplace environments. In addition, black and white employees in the South African workplace have access to separate knowledge networks where information and opportunity distribution selectively restrict the career advancement of black employees. This implies that either the democratic government has misarticulated the workplace redress policy or that black employees have misinterpreted reparation strategies aimed at achieving social inclusion and integration. Consequently, institutional workplace cultures, together with ineffective democratic redress strategies, energise the prevalence of on-going racialisation as a normative black employee workplace experience.

Maier (2002) postulates that the construction of intersectional identity is contingent on the individual's subjective interpretation of psychosocial and socioeconomic factors that contribute to their conceptualisation of self. Black employee racial identity in the South African workplace is a symptomatic marker of historic oppression and a signifier of psychosocial disadvantages that constantly affect the daily socioeconomic prospects of black employees (Lewis, 2003). Concurring with Gordon's (2006) theorisation on legislative variance, black employees in the South African workplace evade psychosocial and socioeconomic rejection from their white counterparts and report a higher level of psychosomatic complaints while reporting a lower level of psychological wellbeing (Echautegui-de-Jesùs, Hughes, Johnston & Oh, 2006). This indicates that the relational and interactional category of race remains an

everyday concern for black employees in the South African workplace. Therefore, this investigative study of documenting the experiences of black employees contributes to a knowledge economy centred on the theorisation of blacks in the present. In addition, the democratic redress policy's tactical theme of the current study facilitates theoretical determinations that inspire an appreciation for the subjective socioeconomic and psychosocial workplace experiences of black employees providing an opportunity for academic discussions that engage controversial social topics in the social sciences (Nkomo, 2011).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- What themes emerge when participants discuss their experiences of being black in the South African workplace?
- What do these themes reflect about the broader politics of racial experiences in the contemporary South African workplace?
- What do these themes reflect about the broader politics of racial experiences in the present-day South African society?

### **1.4 Chapter Organisation**

The subsequent study consists of five chapters, respectively, the introduction, the literature review, research methodologies, the analysis and the concluding chapter. The introduction provides a brief overview of black employee experiences in the workplace, the study rationale, the researcher's theoretical orientation and the research questions. The literature review segment discusses the experiences of being black in the South African workplace, in relation to workplace interactional and identity formation processes. This is followed by a description of the research methodology where the researcher explains the qualitative research design and interpretive research paradigm as crucial constituents in conducting semi-structured interviews and a thematic data analysis. Thereafter, an in-depth analysis of the data is presented, followed by a concluding overview of the findings, strengths and limitations, and finally, the directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Primary literature evaluated in the current study assesses the contextual psychosocial and socioeconomic structures of race and racism affecting the black employee workplace experience. This includes outlines of assessments and the impacts of multiculturalism, social integration, post-racialism and colour-blindness contributing to the socioeconomic position and psychosocial condition of black employees. This assessment of literature examines conceptual issues of black employees as racial subjects relative to structural inequality and provides a contextual reflection of the on-going racialisation of black employees in the South African workplace.

### **2.2 The Broader Critical Psychology of Race in the Workplace**

The critical psychology of race is a method to theorise the broader politics of racial experience in relation to the socio-politic, socioeconomic and psychosocial contexts of institutional inequality. The critical psychology of race draws on multiple theories in the social sciences to evaluate racial identity and experience as produced in social structures, while dismissing concepts that the experience of racialisation is individualistic. The critical psychology of race in the South African workplace refers to the theorisation of ostracised racial subjectivity positioned as institutional cultures and interactional processes demonstrating racial power relations. This extends to the racial nature of unequal power relations in the workplace, validating Van Dijk's (1990) assertions that institutional cultures encourage hierarchical interactional processes that maintain the position of white employee privilege threatened by the prospect of an effective democratic redress policy. Thus, racially biased subjectivities play active and calculated roles in maintaining racial inequality in institutional cultures (Adams & Salter, 2011).

Race as an established societal classification reassures historically informed insights, outlooks and actions towards individual group members (Loury, 2005). Thus, categorical blackness in the South African workplace initiates problematic suppositions around aptitude, lassitude and meritocracy. Although, being black often refers to the physical characteristic of darker pigmented skin, the meaning of blackness in this study comprises the social characteristic of being a home language speaker of a native South African language. According to Dixon and Durrheim (2004) race as a social category is a complex method of preserving seclusion by

regulating social identity. Thus, race in South Africa remains a complicated topic due to its psychosocial and socioeconomic impact on the past, present and future of the black identity and racial experience. This indicates the intentionality of racial difference as a cultural product aimed at propagating the belief that institutionalised racism is no longer a psychosocial and socioeconomic issue affecting the black employee workplace experience, or necessitating a democratic redress policy impact and evaluation focus in the social sciences. Salter and Adams (2016) highlight that the social constructions of the racial black employee identity bears traces of institutional philosophies that afford culturally experiential modes of blackness in the South African workplace. Thus, the critical psychology of race in the South African workplace appropriately explores ordinary racial interactions to ascertain the fundamental conceptualisations of the black employee's psychosocial and socioeconomic experience of holistic social freedom (Salter & Adams, 2013).

Similar to Foucault (1980) and Parker's (1994) theories, the critical psychology of race in the workplace demonstrates the intersectional nature of racialised power distribution, access to social recourses and the racialised meaning making thereof. In addition, the psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of blackness in the South African workplace demonstrate the contemporary effects of institutionalised racial inequality succeeding apartheid. Thus, the critical psychology of race in the South African workplace context utilised as an interdisciplinary tool that possesses the ability to facilitate democratic redress strategies, effectively prevent institutionalised restrictions that continuously influence the psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position of black employees. The critical psychology of race in the workplace privileges the contextualisation of institutionalised processes reflecting the disadvantageous psychosocial and socioeconomic schematics of blackness embedded in the workplace culture (Griffin, 2009). This uncovers the racial socioeconomic and psychosocial inequality as due to racialised ownership in the imbalanced use of social resources. As a result, the particular focus on the democratic redress policy's impact on the South African workplace context stems from a perceived lack of effectiveness in inclusionary and integrative processes since the 1994 advent of democracy.

The examination of the subjective workplace experiences of black employees, relative to racialised institutional cultures, is a particularly challenging task, given South Africa's racial socio-politic history (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). The critical psychology of race in the workplace negatively evaluates the collective social practices that assert that racialised black employee experiences are individualised biases, distinctively separate from institutional



cultures. This effectively posits the contemporary properties of the black employee experiences in reference to their socio-politic workplace history and its association with socioeconomic domination and psychosocial oppression. Moreover, the critical psychology of race focuses on the democratic redress transformative agenda, constituting the black employee's experience as a changing cultural construction whose meanings reflect the intentionality of racially institutionalised processes in the South African workplace context (Conley, 2009).

The critical psychology of race in the workplace operates as a decolonising tool for social scientists whose research interests are inspired by their own adverse contextualised experiences as members of social groups subject to the institutional processes of racial discrimination and othering (Oelofsen, 2012). Thus, in the expansion of the de-colonial moment and in efforts to achieve the psychosocial and socioeconomic empowerment of black employees in the post-apartheid South African workplace, the current study encourages a critical analysis of Eurocentric influences in the social sciences knowledge economy and their active role in shaping institutional realities affecting the everyday experiences of blackness in the workplace. The increasing prevalence of social scientists who identify with the racial, psychosocial and socioeconomic institutional disadvantages in the workplace promote self-reflexive information production exhibiting the black employee experience of race in the workplace. Desmond and Emirbayer (2009), assert that the continuation of the normative adverse experience of blackness in the South African workplace results from claims of racial objectivity and neutrality in the social sciences, which license knowledge production from the exclusive theoretical perspectives of racially dominant social groups. Thus, the critical psychology of race in the South African workplace context shows the racially predisposed psychosocial and socioeconomic experience of blackness. Furthermore, the psychology of race in the workplace context critically challenges the post-racial and colour-blind institutional and white employee claims alike, as these social orientations preserve the psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of blackness, facilitated by the repressive and advantaged social position of whiteness (Yosso, 2005).

A critical psychology of race in the workplace promotes black employee-centred storylines that aid the extraction of experiential realities. This is where the psychosocial and socioeconomic contexts of black employees articulate significant synergetic delegations in institutional reality (Salter & Adams, 2016). This depicts the role of an investment in structural inequality that legitimises illusory constructions of workplace integration and inclusion, perpetuating the continuation of racial inequality, psychosocial oppression and the socioeconomic disadvantage



of black employees. Possessive investments in racial inequality reflect impetuses from white employees to identify their comparatively advantaged position in the workplace as appropriate rather than as a display of deliberate institutional racial dominion. Therefore, the critical psychology of race in the South African workplace exposes social identity threats distinctly discernible in everyday social interactions, subjecting black employees to psychosocial and socioeconomic distress (Adams & Salter, 2011). The critical psychology of race offers an interdisciplinary theoretical approach by appropriately evaluating the manifestation of racial power relations in interactional workplace processes affecting the existential experience of blackness in the South African workplace. The critical psychology of race in the South African workplace effectively contextualises the intersectional nature of interactive processes as cultural products that convey the psychosocial and socioeconomic intentionality in unequal racial relations (Verloo, 2003).

The critical psychology of race considers the cultural product of race as a fluid relational construct intersecting with other psychosocial and socioeconomic forms of disadvantage that hinder the psychological empowerment and the impact of social justice to the experiential burdens of blackness in the South African workplace (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). The critical psychology of race, as an epistemological tool, uses the democratic emancipatory redress theme to evaluate workplace interactional processes, reflecting the impact of institutional culture on the overall psychosocial and socioeconomic wellbeing of black employees. The democratic emancipatory redress theme in this study attributes the negative experiences of intergroup dynamics embedded in everyday interactions as reflecting systematic inequalities that favour the psychosocial and socioeconomic disadvantaging of black employees in the South African workplace. As such, the current study interprets the interactional processes sustained by institutional cultures as subjecting black employees to the experience of on-going psychosocial and socioeconomic racialisation. In addition, interactional processes limiting black employees' access to the accrual and dissemination of occupational opportunities in the South African workplace are common (Ibarra, 1995). Therefore, the institutional South African workplace context normalising racial inequality and the experiences of racial incongruence in the workplace environment introduce elevated levels of existential anxiety for black employees.

The critical psychology of race in the workplace addresses multicultural misapprehensions, promoting everyday racial interactions that propagate social constructions, repudiating the role

of institutional cultures in maintaining the psychosocial conditions and socioeconomic positions of black employees. The critical psychology of race functions as a de-colonising tool to disrupt the broader psychosocial and socioeconomic social strategies that exclude black employees from the fair allocation of workplace social resources (Valdes, Harris & Culp, 2004). Thus, the role of institutional cultures that promote racial inequality in the workplace and which thrive on the psychosocial oppression and socioeconomic disadvantages of black employees, reproduce dynamic social contexts in which racial privilege exists in the general South African societal context. The reduction of institutional prejudice against black employees depends on positive intergroup interactional processes and encouraging communication and understanding as a means to stimulate integration and inclusion. Therefore, the consideration of everyday racial interaction as a systematic practice endorsing racial inequality and social exclusion in the South African workplace provides a platform for assessing the impact of the democratic redress policy in organisational cultures, practices and standards that shape the psychosocial and socioeconomic workplace experience of black employees (Acker, 2000).

The cultural hegemonies that characterise workplace interactional processes sustain the position of struggle and oppression embodied by black employees while colour-blind and post-racialist claims equally disguise practices of assimilation as developments of integration. The democratic emancipatory redress theme in the critical psychology of race in the workplace challenges the conventional position of colour-blind impartiality and claims of post-racial consciousness in reviewing everyday workplace interactive processes as discriminatory psychosocial and socioeconomic events relevant to the black employee experience (Adams & Salter, 2011). Thus, in the colour-blind and post-racialist institutional workplace, orientation strengthens the denial that the experience of racial discrimination in everyday interaction presents psychosocially injurious consequences for black employees, regardless of the intentionality, or the lack thereof, from the individual or institutional transgressors alike (Smith, 2001).

Scrutinising the subjective experiences of black employees in the workplace, relative to racialised institutional cultures, is a particularly challenging task because of South Africa's racial socio-politic history. To do so, this study broadly draws on Steve Biko's (1996) *Black consciousness and the quest for a true humanity* concept. His statement to the South African Students Organisation that, "black man you are on your own" is applicable to the workplace

context as black employees have restricted access to career advancement opportunities, in comparison to their white counterparts. This study asserts that the revolution of adversarial blackness in the workplace is contingent on the active involvement of black employees in assessing the impact of the democratic redress policy on their everyday racial experience. Thus, exploring the social identity threats manifesting in everyday racial interactions is crucial for achieving the psychosocial and socioeconomic empowerment of black employees in the workplace. The intersectional ties between systematic inequality, on-going racialisation and the preservation of racialised structural inequality validate perceptions that South Africa's everyday workplace culture and interactional processes mean that black employees coercively accept and internalise social levies associated with black taxation. Cultural productions of the racial identity of black employees in the South African workplace bear traces of institutionally induced philosophies that afford culturally unwavering experiential modes of blackness. Thus, the repressive utilisations of language in dictating normative workplace communicative processes and in restricting the career advancement of black employees indicates that institutional power is often deployed to preserve adverse experiential conditions of blackness.

### **2.3 The Racial Identity of Black Employees in the Workplace**

The racial identities of black employees in the South African workplace represent the contextual socioeconomic positions and psychosocial conditions of black employees that require constant assessment as efficient interactive organisations whose conceptual meanings are consistently debatable (Winant, 2000; Helms, Jernigan, & Mascher, 2005). Moreover, epistemological controversies establish the black employees' workplace racial identity as an interpersonal arrangement allied to racial philosophies, promoting racial dissimilarity in the comparative socioeconomic and psychosocial experience of black and white employees (Abrahams, 2017). Thus, the racial identifications of black employees reinforce the productions of a racially unjust transnational economy that establishes a historically recognisable pattern of global socioeconomic culture (Winant, 2000). Although there are no scholastically vacillating accords establishing the definite psychosocial and socioeconomic bearing of racial categories on the black employee experience, the social constructionist racial identity of black employees asserts an assured socioeconomic and psychosocial occurrence of racial interactional conflicts. This, therefore, illustrates the role of institutional structures and cultural products in contextualising the meanings of race in which the racial identities of black employees illustrate dynamic social variances distinctly affected by the observed history of socio-politic scuffles with racial equality in South Africa. The racial identities of black employees in the workplace

exemplify the socioeconomic and psychosocial consequences of a racialised socio-politic context, maintaining the contrasting echelon of assumption in the psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position of black and white employees. This indicates the unyielding hierarchical schematics of racial identity in the context of the post-apartheid South African workplace which demonstrate the conservation of institutional cultures that safeguard the socioeconomic position of privilege embodied by the contrasting racial workplace identities of white employees.

According to Omi and Winant (2013), institutional South African workplace cultures that propagate socioeconomic positions and psychosocial conditions as markers of racial workplace, identity significance and aptitude, problematizes the overall experiences of blackness. Thus, the contrasting psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position of black and white employee workplace identities prescriptively assign cultural productions of perceived racial group importance and competence. The social mechanisms of racial workplace identity reinforcing the recognition of difference prescriptively attribute institutional dictations of an adverse socioeconomic and psychosocial experience of blackness (Goldberg, 2000). As such, the institutionalised practices prescribing adverse socioeconomic positions and psychosocial conditions to the racial identity of black employees in the workplace undermine the possibility of accommodating anthropological prospects that embrace the physical, linguistic and cultural attributes of blackness. This demonstrates active and deliberate decision-making processes, connoting a conscious awareness of the socioeconomic and psychosocial significances resulting from prevalent and prescriptive workplace group-identification methods (Jenkins 1996). This indicates that institutional workplace cultures place contextual meanings on the racial workplace identities of black employees representing the inadequate effectiveness of the democratic workplace redress policy. As such, the role of workplace institutional cultures designate the racial interactional processes in which black employees perceive junctures amongst the psychosocial conditions and socioeconomic positions of black and white employees as emulating racial interactional conflict in the workplace (Booyesen, 2007; Pyke, 2010).

#### **2.4 The Black Employee Experience of Race in the Workplace**

The racial social experiences of black employees in the workplace are an institutional production of socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances that prescribe blackness in contrast to the normative psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of white employee

experiences (Stevens, 2017). The aggrieved black employees' social experiences of race result from the socioeconomic and psychosocial group identification methods of racial superiority-inferiority workplace typecasts that render the consistently negative black employees' social experiences of race invisible (Mapedzahma & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Therefore, the imposition of black employees as racial "others" in the South African workplace is an exclusive socioeconomic and psychosocial experiential racial benefit to white employees (Staszak, 2008). This considers black employees in the South African workplace as racial subjects inseparable from their apartheid past. The black employees' social experiences of race represent the contemporary effects of a socio-politic history that continues to create socioeconomic and psychosocial disadvantages. In addition, the demonstration of an adverse normative racial experience of blackness in the South African workplace indicates the inadequate effectiveness of the democratic redress policy. Given the anthropological ability of black employees to relate their lived experiences of race in relation to the racial experiences of white employees, black employees resist their racialised workplace experiences in order to restore a sense of ownership of their blackness in the post-apartheid workplace (Sullivan & Stevens, 2010). The resistant black employee orientation results from the socioeconomic and psychosocial racial experience of blackness, reflecting the South African institutional workplace culture that prescribes the hegemonic black employee workplace experience of inequality as tactically trivial.

The resistant black employees' narrative prescribed in the current study is a counter-hegemonic tactic that contrasts the production of normative white employees' experiences in the social sciences. This facilitated the review of institutional workplace practices promoting racist thought and action as contextually propagated by knowledge production in the social sciences (Buffel, 2017; Canham & Langa, 2017; Stevens, 2016). The resistant black employees' narrative prescribed in the current study serves to critique post-racial and colour-blind assertions in the social sciences as they hinder progressive turns in academia which possess the potential to effectively implement democratic redress policies within the social sciences knowledge economy (Adams & Salter, 2011; Dawkins, 2010). The researcher's resistive efforts in addressing tensions of racial power dynamics as they affect the black employees' experiences of race reflects both the researcher's and participants' ascribed meaning to their position of blackness within the context of the South African workplace, through interpreting conflicting racial relations and interactions (Abrahams, 2017) In addition, the resistant black employees' narrative described in the current study allows the researcher who identifies as a

black employee to echo the ordinary lived experiences of participants. Thus, this study is located within orientations of simultaneously constructed meanings of the researcher's own socioeconomic position and psychosocial condition in the South African workplace (Dixon & Durrheim, 2005).

This investigation concurrently contributes to the social sciences' knowledge economy, with contextual perspectives that critically engage and analyse the psychosocial condition and the socioeconomic position under which resistant black narratives are constantly constructed (Canham & Langa, 2017). As such, they elucidate and replicate the socioeconomic and psychosocial realities that affect the overall black employees' social experiences of race in the workplace. The process of collaborative researcher-participant meaning-making through the resistant black employees' narratives illustrates the researcher's social orientation towards making context specific knowledge production contributions, which are applicable in the social sciences and in the corporate organisational context (Khalil & Keir, 2017). Therefore, the researcher's interpretation of the black employees' experiences of race as contingent on institutional holders of racial inequality, contributes to a racially conscious transdisciplinary epistemological orientation in the social sciences which values the experiences of black employees as institutionally racial subjects (Clair & Denis, 2015; Stevens, Sonn, Canham, Clennon & Bell, 2017; Verdugo, 2008).

The racial workplace experiences of black employees in the South African post-apartheid workplace context are due to institutional preferential perceptions of observing the social world. They promote the production of racist action as a normative workplace practice (Démuth, 2013; Salter, Adams & Perez, 2017). As such, the constituents of post-apartheid workplace racist actions against black employees' manifest institutional realities contained in the socioeconomic and psychosocial experiential realities of black employees. This indicates the tactically afforded repudiations of the impact of institutional racialised black employee experiences (Mueller, 2017). In addition, the racial workplace experiences of black employees, motivated by the social dialogues used by white employees, suggest a blatant disinterest in the institutional cultures that legitimise passive racist action against black employees though validating a racially unequal workplace culture exclusively beneficial to white employees (The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2004) thus donating a specific racial interactional dynamic amongst black and white employees in the workplace. In turn, this presents the social pressurisation of black employees to adhere to institutionalised racial norms

of discriminatory social practices cloaked as participatory cooperation aiding workplace integration.

The conditions that the racialised workplace environment facilitates inspire the complex nature of in-group-out-group identifications and the reinforcement of racialised social ranks in the South African workplace context. Consequently, the conditions increase the likelihood of intergroup conflicts amongst black and white employees (Hewstone, Lolliot, Myers, Al Ramaih, Swart, Voci & Cairns 2014). In addition, the increased diversification of the South African workplace context shows that racially motivated conflicts are likely to occur as racial identification is a prominent group identification method in the South African context (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). Therefore, the manner in which black and white employees make racial in-group-out-group associations and comparisons determines the types of racialised interactional conflicts in the workplace (Brown, 2000; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010). More often than not, when black and white employees attribute group importance, it is characterised by implicit in-group bias in which group members attribute desirable racial conceptualisations contingent on the perceived socioeconomic and psychosocial advantages not representative in other racial group identifications (DiTomaso, 2015; Turner, 2010). Therefore, perceived group importance contributes to hostile racial interactions influenced by the historic role of racial identifications in the workplace context.

The post-apartheid South African workplace context and its interactional processes consistently display anti-black characteristics that prompt black employees to self-subjugate. This indicates the prevalence of subordination composite that comes from existing in a racialist workplace culture that increases the likelihood of black employees experiencing estrangement and self-rejection (Biko, 1996; Goldstein, 2010). This displays the intentionality of the racial black employee workplace experience as a systematically entrenched artefact of institutional workplace cultures that maintain the socioeconomic and psychosocial disadvantages of black employees. The relational construct of racism remains a lived experience that infiltrates every aspect of the post-apartheid social context (Sullivan & Stevens, 2010). Moreover, the power of workplace racism is subject to the institutional reinforcing systems and cultural products that signify a bidirectional relationship between human experience and cultural tools (Salter & Adams, 2016). Racial diversity presents threats to social cohesion in the post-apartheid workplace context as it illustrates the propagation of socioeconomic and psychosocial



inequalities that demonstrate a racial divide in the South African society (Revell, Papoutsaki & Kolesova, 2014).

## **2.5 Black Employees in the Multicultural Workplace Context**

The advent of democracy in 1994 introduced socioeconomic and psychosocial opportunities that epitomise the social alliance of black and white employees' social attitudes in the workplace. The democratic redress policy focus, in terms of multiculturalism, describes the encouragement of an equal social appreciation for black and white employees' racial identities. Multiculturalism in the South African workplace context is the co-existence of racially variant employees whose methods of thinking, communicating and meaning-making processes differ. This gave way to expectations that the overall experience of race in the South African workplace would be an indication of equal transformative efforts in achieving equal appreciation for racially unique patterns of social experiences (Chu, 2005). This has resulted in the idealistic view of a multicultural workplace environment in which the successful implementation of the democratic redress policy is projected to aid a cooperative participation of embracing racial multiplicity and collective ethno-social awareness (Kymlicka, 2012).

The racialised social realism of the black employee workplace experience, relative to multiculturalism, depicts variances in the psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of race in which black employees exclusively experience social barriers that hinder their professional progression. In turn, this presents unavoidable prospects for racial interactional conflicts during processes of social engagement (Al-Jenaibi, 2011). The prospect of racialised interactional conflicts present a higher risk of adapting dysfunctional behaviours occurring in the workplace that undermine the psychosocial wellbeing of both black and white employees. This study particularly focuses on highlighting multicultural interactive processes in the workplace that promote the continuation of black employee racial discrimination and the coercive assimilative cultural norms regardless of the successfulness thereof (Martin, 2014). This study asserts that multicultural processes propagating the preservation of racial inequality among black and white employees expose institutionally endorsed uncertainties in abolishing social productions that affect the socioeconomic position and psychosocial condition of black employees (Buys, 2016; Manyakin, 2015; Modood, 2011). In this sense, the institutional endorsement of multiculturalism in the workplace serves to promote strategic and competitive racial advantages (DeLancey, 2013; Litchfield, Cooper, Hancock, & Watt, 2016; Jackson & Van de Vijver, 2018). This is opposed to encouraging multiculturalism as a means to



implement redressive workplace policies that stress the transformation of processes of interactions and hinder positive psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of social integration. Thus, social integration in the South African workplace context by definition is an inclusionary democratic redress policy objective to incorporate equal socioeconomic opportunities for black employees so that their psychosocial and existential life experiences drastically improve (UNRISD, 1994).

The socio-politic history of the South African workplace context, in which repressive political ideology prescribed an existentially unsustainable black employee experience, contextualises the continuing institutionally imposed psychosocial and socioeconomic experiential afflictions of black employees through multiculturalism (Berensnevičiūtė, 2003; Laor, 2013; Stanley, 2005). Therefore, to achieve the inclusionary democratic redress policy objective of social integration in the South African workplace, the black employee experience must display transformative traits of psychosocial tolerance and equal socioeconomic opportunity that indicate an institutional existentially sustainable workplace environment for black employees (Maliepaard & Phalet, 2012; Wieviorka, 2010). Facilitating reconciliation focused inclusionary democratic redress policy objectives that overturn artificial institutional attitudes in the workplace are necessary. Such facilitations are aimed at reducing institutional factors that promote notions of false social cohesion as they obscure the perceived prevalence of racialised psychosocial and socioeconomic inequality in the South African workplace (Bhebhe, 2013). The reconciliation, focused on inclusionary democratic redressive policy objectives of workplace social cohesion, makes provision for the promotion of equality and the prevention of the Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000. It prescribes a workplace environment that reflects the equal participation of individuals and institutions in redistributing social capital to make provisions for socioeconomic opportunities that aid the implementation of psychosocial tolerance and justice (Ferguson, 2008; Palmary, 2015).

The reconciliatory social integration approach increases black employees' access to socioeconomic opportunities characterised by interactive participatory interventions that facilitate the career progressions of black employees. Consequently, the reconciliation workplace focus is beneficial for black employees as it proposes the improvement of the overall existential and psychosocial workplace experience (Jeannotte, 2008; Laidlaw Foundation, 2002) while the reconciliatory democratic redress policy's inclusionary orientations moderate conflict and invoke institutional suppositions propagating the unsustainable process of

psychosocial uniformity and socioeconomic homogeneity in the workplace. For the purposes of this study, determinants of true social integration in the South African workplace demonstrate the obliteration of institutional norms affecting the overall socioeconomic position and psychosocial condition of black employees (Gracia & Herrero, 2004). Inclusionary workplace democratic redress policy objectives characteristically demonstrate equal participatory opportunities that offer the transformative redistribution of social resources and the promotion of social tolerance and cooperation that does not ignore the contemporary socioeconomic and psychosocial consequences of a racialised socio-politic workplace history.

## **2.6 Post-racialist and Colour-blind Workplace Orientations**

Institutional ignorance concerning the contemporary socioeconomic and psychosocial consequences of a racialised socio-politic workplace history exaggerate the prevalence of racial indifference to the socioeconomic and psychosocial opportunities presented to black employees in the South African workplace. Post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientations deny the post-apartheid socioeconomic and psychosocial manifestations of the racial differences in the workplace. Therefore, contemporary institutional cultures understate their contributions to the adverse racial identity experiences of black employees, not only in the workplace context, but also in the overall experience of blackness in South Africa (Neville & Awad, 2014). The rejection of the black employee workplace experience as yielding adversarial socioeconomic and psychosocial conditions encourages the discontinuance of the democratic redressive workplace policy's impact and assessment interventions. Moreover, it focuses on multicultural managerial strategies as a means to facilitate positive and beneficial racial interactions in the South African workplace as a result of such impact evaluations (Mazzocco, 2015).

The post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientation of white employees and institutional observers alike facilitates anti-black workplace sentiments that propagate racial bias in the acquisition of socioeconomic and psychosocial workplace resources. Therefore, post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientations increase the likelihood of interactional conflict amongst black and white employees in the workplace (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, & Casas, 2007). As such, institutional philosophies that ignore racialised psychosocial dynamics that restrict the socioeconomic progression of black employees in the workplace represent generalisable psychosocial configurations that conserve the bidirectional relationship between the black South African socioeconomic experiences and

incessant existential adversity (Revell, Papoutsaki & Kelesova, 2014). The subjection of post-racial and colour-blind workplace orientations exemplifies the routine workplace pragmatisms that facilitate aggressive racial interactions among black and white employees in the South African workplace (Oravecz, Hárđi & Lajtai, 2004). As such, the institutional facilitation of aggressive and racial interactional processes as normative endorses the distinctive psychosocial refutation of workplace cultures propagating the socioeconomic exploitation of black employees. Therefore, the ordinary workplace interactional experiences of black employees demonstrate a continuation of institutional cultural practices that facilitate overt, unapologetic racism, articulating degradations of the black employees' experiences of workplace identity.

The deliberate overuse of aversive racist political correctness and a purposeful estrangement of post-racialist, colour-blind claims deny the prevalence of workplace racism (Brondolo, Ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty & Contrada, 2009). As such, post-racialist and colour-blind workplace philosophies understate the psychosocial and socioeconomic significance of the everyday experiences of racialisation. This indicates that the democratic redress policy in the South African workplace inadequately implements transformative participatory actions that facilitate non-aggressive racial interactions (Cho, 2009; Dawson & Bobo, 2009; M'Baye, 2011). The portrayal of the black employees' workplace experiences as a post-racial and colour-blind endeavour rejects and invalidates the lived experiences of black employees as racialised others whose intergroup interactional processes illustrate instances of on-going racialisation in the workplace.

Therefore, post-racialist and colour-blind orientations in the workplace and in the social sciences context deny the contemporary effects of a socio-politic discriminatory history seemingly rewriting itself (Castagno, 2008; Stevens, Sonn, Canham, Clennon & Bell, 2017). Evading the present-day psychosocial and socioeconomic consequences for black employees to normative racialised interactional workplace processes propagates the mass silencing of black employees concerning their experiences of on-going racialisation (Gwele, 2009; Valji, 2004). As such, the tendency to silence black employees with post-racialist and colour-blind claims about their experiences of on-going racialisation results from conflicting social truths concerning institutionalised racial inequality. The mass silencing of black employees in the workplace illustrates a reluctance to redress racialised interactional processes (Michael & Bartoli, 2014; Williams, 2015) in the South African workplace that manifest organisational tokenistic practises that display successful black employees to facilitate the denial of workplace

processes that restrict black employee access to key career opportunities, in turn, demonstrating a false organisational compliance to democratic redress policies (Clair & Denis, 2015)

## **2.7 The On-going Racialisation of Black Employees**

The interpretation of ordinary racial interactions experienced by black employees in the workplace makes provisions for the implementation of effective democratic redress policy strategies that acknowledge the social production of race as evident in the co-construction of social realities in everyday interactions (Whitehead, 2011; 2012). Therefore, the ordinary racial interactions experienced by black employees in the workplace reflect the broader psychosocial and socioeconomic realities of the general experience of blackness in the post-apartheid South African society. The ordinary racial interactions of black employees in a workplace environment, a site of on-going racialisation, present existential challenges to the experiences of blackness given the psychosocial and socioeconomic consequences of racialisation. The prevalence of on-going racialisation in the workplace indicates that institutional workplace cultures still promote ordinary racial interactions that exploit the socioeconomic positions of black employees to preserve one-sided benefits of a structurally oppressive social system (Metz, 2011). Therefore, ordinary racial interactions in the South African workplace demonstrate a co-construction of psychosocial and socioeconomic reality between black and white employees with reference to each other's socioeconomic position and psychosocial condition in either talk or action that is explicitly or implicitly about each racial group's workplace racial identity and its significance (Durrheim, Greener & Whitehead, 2014).

Ordinary racial interactions remain a psychosocial and socioeconomic concern for black employees in the workplace indicating the inadequacy of the democratic redress policy in challenging racial interactional processes that recreate and reinforce processes of racialisation (Nkomo, 2011; Oluremi, Neal & Karen, 2009). The on-going racialisation of black employees, in everyday racial interactions in the workplace, reflect contemporary social models of race that relationally construct the psychosocial and socioeconomic meanings of blackness in the general social South African context. Thus, the black employees' workplace experiences of on-going racialisation are a component of institutional cultures that enforce racial normalised social ideologies (Van Dijk, 1992). This indicates that processes of on-going racialisation, observable in ordinary racial interactions, are institutional and cultural products, unrestricted by interpersonal properties (Bryd, 2014; Chang, Astin & Kim, 2004; Mueller, Dirks, & Picca, 2007).

The on-going racialisation of black employees in the workplace stems from the socio-political workplace history of the South African context prescribing workplace institutional cultures that structurally benefit the psychosocial condition, and the socioeconomic position of white employees (Ashe & Nazroo, 2015). Black employees still experience socioeconomic and psychosocial pressures to comply with the overt and subtle practises of recognisable institutional racial discrimination. As such, black employees in the South African workplace make use of cautionary tactics for job retention, as difficulties in accessing same race mentors and in dealing with their treatment as representatives for the entire black population present occupational threats for black employees (Roscigno, Williams, & Byron, 2012). Therefore, black employees evade questioning the effectiveness of the democratic redress policy in fear of jeopardising the partial career advancement opportunities they access. The on-going racialisation of black employees in the workplace extends as far as the occurrence of everyday racial interactional conflicts over social space threats (Azad, Ruiz, Vogel, Hancock, & Lank, 2012; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Seekings & Natrass, 2005). Therefore, the psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of the black employee experience of on-going racialisation indicate a lack of overall social integration and inclusion in various spheres of the South African workplace's social life (Sturm, 2009).

Patel's (2014) investigative efforts to ascertain employee engagement, in relation to race in a multicultural South African retail group, found that democratic redress policies ineffectively increase the job satisfaction scores of black employees due to the continuation of the normative black employees' experiences of on-going workplace racialisation. Sadler's (2002) analysis of black chartered accountant career profiles in the South African workplace context revealed that the tendency of South African accounting firms to employ and train a significantly smaller portion of black candidates results in decreased levels of self-confidence, perceived competence and ability to adapt to the predominantly non-black workplace culture. Furthermore, the Law Society of South Africa (2015) claims the South African legal occupational field reflects a lack of effective inclusionary democratic redress policy impacts, as over 80% of all practising attorneys are white. Canham's (2014) critical review of employment equity discourses and practices of empowerment and identity in South African banks stated that the black employees' workplace experiences in the South African workplace reflect processes of on-going racialisation and the mutability of the black employee racial identity. Cunningham (2009), states that empirical studies provide evidence that those institutional cultures, which encourage psychosocial integration and socioeconomic inclusion,

are the greatest benefit to organisational performance. The South African workplace, as a site of on-going racialisation, indicates that this is not yet the case for the majority of organisations in South Africa. Therefore, the contemporary state of the South African workplace environment demands the constant theorisation of racialised processes that affect the black employee workplace identity. Ascertaining everyday racial interactions in the workplace provides a preliminary analysis of the psychology of race in the general contemporary South African social context. Therefore, the establishment of perceived instances of on-going racialisation is an important factor for addressing the injunction of silence regarding the ineffectiveness of democratic redress policy (Bezuidenhout, 2005; Von Holdt, 2005). Thus, under the broader critical psychology of race this study assumes a phenomenological approach to race, wherein black employees adopt a subjective paradigm in describing everyday racial interaction in the workplace (Ornek, 2008). As such, this study admits an empathetic and contextual interpretation of the black employee racial experience that describes rather than explains what race means for blacks in the South African workplace (Davidson, 2013). The phenomenological approach to race requires that the researcher be free from former presumptions on racial experience in the workplace. Although the researcher may attempt to remain reflexive, the researcher is never free from preceding bias given the researchers' self-identification as a black middle class employee in the South African workplace. However, it is noteworthy that both the researcher's and participants' description of everyday racial interaction are based on historically situated modes of being in the social world where neither the researcher nor the participant can detach themselves from their unconscious understandings and conditionings of race, racial experience and racial identity (Safstrom & Hartig, 2013).

## **2.9 Conclusions**

The review of the literature presented reflects the researcher's contextual understanding of theoretical constructs utilised to understand the overall experience of blackness in the South African workplace context. Given that, racially biased subjectivities play active and calculated roles in maintaining racial inequality in institutional cultures (Adams & Salter, 2011). Race as a social category in South Africa remains a complicated topic of inquiry due to its evolving but constant psychosocial and socioeconomic impact on the black identity and racial experience. Moreover, institutionalised practices prescribing adverse socioeconomic positions and psychosocial conditions to the racial identity of black employees in the workplace undermine the possibility of accommodating anthropological prospects that embrace the physical, linguistic and cultural attributes of social blackness. Although, the ordinary workplace

interactional experiences of black employees demonstrate a continuation of institutional cultural practices that facilitate overt, unapologetic racism, articulating degradations of the black employees' experiences of workplace identity. The tendency to silence black employees with post-racialist and colour-blind claims about their experiences of on-going racialisation results from conflicting social truths concerning institutionalised racial inequality. Therefore, the psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of the black employee experience of on-going racialisation indicate a lack of overall social integration and inclusion in various spheres of the South African workplace's social life (Sturm, 2009).

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The following chapter describes the research methodology, processes and procedures followed in conceptualising this study. It discusses the qualitative research design and the interpretive research paradigm and provides a second appearance of the research questions. Moreover, the research methodology section includes a discussion of the semi-structured interview, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method, the ethical considerations and a brief self-reflexive segment.

### **3.2 Qualitative Research Design**

The current study utilised a qualitative research design to review the experiences of being a black employee in the South African workplace. A qualitative research design provides the researcher with a data-set rich in detail that permits the capturing of idiosyncratic intricacies and experiential complexities characterising the workplace experience of blackness unattainable through a quantitative research design (Vallacher, Strawinska & Wiese, 2010; Zainal, 2007). Furthermore, the interpretive nature of the present study demands a research design proficient in appropriately enabling the ascription of subjective interpretation to black employee workplace experiences, which are context-specific truths devoid of objective applicability (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Therefore, a qualitative research design benefits a participant- focused appreciation for understanding the subjective and contextual meaning-making processes that black employees engage in to make sense of their psychosocial and socioeconomic realities (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In addition to a qualitative research design demonstrating an appreciation for a participant-focused research process, it further allows the researcher to make meaning of the data in relation to her own subjective realities and experiences. Thus, a qualitative research design is appropriate for this study as it allows both the researcher and participants to engage in collaborative efforts to make meaning of a social world in which they bear psychosocial and socioeconomic similarities. Given that the meanings that black employees draw from their experiences of blackness in the workplace are contextual, a qualitative research design allows participants to reflect on meanings they ascribe to their ever-changing psychosocial and socioeconomic environment (Krauss, 2005). As such, it provides the study with data specified to engage, appreciate and discover ordinary racial interactional processes and what the experiences of on-going racialisation mean to black employees in the South African workplace.



Additionally, a qualitative research design uncovers complex psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of blackness where the critical psychology of race in the workplace demonstrates the equivalent existence of various racial truths. Therefore, it appropriately evaluates racial truths relative to the consideration of the researcher's own biases, which hold no theoretical significance in a quantitative research design.

### **3.3 The Interpretive Paradigm**

The interpretive research paradigm originates from theoretical conceptions, which claim subjective reality to be a product of interactional processes between experience and the social environment. The interpretive research paradigm is a context-specific approach to ascribing meaning to the psychosocial and socioeconomic products of the subjective black employees' experiences. It considers the impossibility of black employees detaching themselves from their psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences or the impracticality of disengaging the meanings and understandings they ascribe to the experiences of racial workplace identity. Subjective black employee experiences present ideal conditions for the collection, interpretation and analysis of data, which represent the cultural productions of meaning-making ascribed to the racial workplace experiences and the identity of black employees as fluid, persistently shaped and informed by the psychosocial and socioeconomic institutional realities (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the meanings that black employees ascribe to their racial workplace identity and experiences are inter/intra-subjectively created by institutional prescriptions that contextualise the relational psychosocial and socioeconomic products of the social world (Angen, 2000).

The interpretive research paradigm appropriately explores the psychosocial subtleties and socioeconomic complexities of racial identity and experience that are unattainable with a traditional positivistic research design (Vallacher, Strawinska & Wiese, 2010, Zainal, 2007). It facilitates the exploration of black employee identity and workplace experiences through a temporal, democratic redress policy tactic. This interprets the psychosocial and socioeconomic products of race as interactive representations of institutional realities, constantly negotiated through continuous conversation and dialogue (Mucha, 2015). The interpretive research paradigm effectively assesses the progress of psychosocial and socioeconomic integrative processes utilised in the contemporary workplace. The interpretive research paradigm enables social scientists to contribute critical information to the knowledge economy reasoning beyond epistemological restriction. Therefore, the interpretive research paradigm contextualises the sematic significance of the institutional workplace dispositions by influencing the overall

wellbeing of black employees in the workplace (Thompson, 2005). Interpretive researchers must demonstrate critically self-reflexive research capacities that allow a consciousness of constraints potentially influencing their elucidations of the psychosocial and socioeconomic products contextualising the black employees' workplace identities and experiences. Interpretive researchers make knowledge claims as they acknowledge their memberships in the psychosocial and socioeconomic world, meaning they lack the ability to take on a neutral stance (Kvale, 1996; Phonthongsunan, 2010). Thus, the researcher's own experiences of being black in the world account for the contextually-biased study orientation that provides the subjective meaning-making of black employee workplace experiences as processes influenced by the researcher's own relational position as an institutionalised other in the psychosocial and socioeconomic world.

The interpretive research paradigm's theoretical relevance extends to the promotion of perceptual shifts in the social creations of variable black employees' identities and experiences (Adams & Salter, 2011; Rose, 1988). Given the complex nature of theorising the subjective black employees' experiences, the researcher makes no claims of demonstrating objective truths, as the interpretation of qualitative participant accounts reflect the researcher's contextual understandings of the psychosocial significance and socioeconomic relevance of participant experiences (Metzinger, 2004; Willig, 2017). Therefore, due to interactional processes in place between institutional cultures, the psychosocial well-being and the socioeconomic complaint of black employees, the researcher interprets the data-set as bearing in mind that black employees recognise themselves in relation, comparison and divergence from others (Davies & Davies, 2007; Mitchell, 2010)

### **3.4 Research Questions**

- What themes emerge when participants discuss their experiences of being black in the South African workplace?
- What do these themes reflect about the broader politics of racial experiences in the contemporary South African workplace?
- What do these themes reflect about the broader politics of racial experiences in the present-day South African society?

### 3.5 Participants

#### Demographic Participant Information

Label	Gender	Age	Highest Qualification Held	Current Position	Employer Type	Length of Work Experience
P1	F	27	Postgraduate University Degree	Bookkeeper	Private Accounting Firm	10 Months
P2	F	21	NSC Matric Certificate	Call Centre Agent	Private Telemarketing Company	$\frac{1}{2}$ Month
P3	M	24	Technical Diploma	Security Operations Manager	Local Security Company	24 Months
P4	F	25	Undergraduate University Degree	Radiographer	Private Hospital	36 Months
P5	F	25	Undergraduate University Degree	Pharmacist	Pharmaceutical Company	32 Months
P6	F	23	Postgraduate University Degree	Personal Assistant	Public Bank	4 Months
P7	F	24	Postgraduate University Degree	Talent Recruitment Officer	Corporate Medical Insurance Company	13 Months
P8	F	25	Postgraduate University Degree	Sales Specialist	Private Cosmetics Company	11 Months

The snowballing and convenience recruitment strategy utilised in the current study comprised using WhatsApp messenger to send the researcher's family members and close friends a brief invitation for potential participation in the study. The researcher consciously sought out potential participants either in possession of or in pursuit of a higher education qualification. In addition to an increase in the number of black female employees in various educational and occupational fields, the researcher's access to members of her own gender identification category exceeded her social access to males (Ruiz-Cantera, Vives-Cases, Artazcoz, Deldgado, Calvente, Miqueo, Mentero, Ortiz, Ronda, Ruiz & Valls, 2007; Toossi & Joyner, 2018). This is evidenced by the 1:7 male to female ratio characterising the gender dynamics of this study's participant group. The researcher's orientation toward these particular candidates stems from the researcher's perceptions of the potential participants within the researcher's own age group.

Moreover, gender identification and the educational categories demonstrate psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of blackness contextually invariant to the researcher's experiences of blackness in various institutional settings. In addition, the researcher's preferential recruitment orientation stems from the researcher's desire to engage the researcher's peers on general issues affecting the existential wellbeing of first language-vernacular speaking blacks in post-apartheid South Africa.

Upon the researcher's receipt of the study's potential participants the researcher called and then emailed the study information sheet to potential participants. Thereafter, the researcher communicated all interview related information with the confirmed participants, setting and confirming ten interview dates and times in either Johannesburg or Vryheid. However, two confirmed participants withdrew from the study leaving the researcher with eight enthusiastic participants. Because six out of the eight participants originate from Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal, there are implicit geopolitical consequences polarising the data set to represent specific linguistic and interactional dynamics. In addition, the eligibility criteria for participation in this research project included that participants personally identify themselves as black. Participants were required to possess between one day and 23 years' work experience to corroborate the democratic redress policy theme. Given the impossibility of black employees detaching themselves from the institutionally prescribed psychosocial and socioeconomic products of blackness, Safstrom and Hartig (2013) suggest that one-day of work experience provides sufficient eligibility to participate in this study. The work experience of this study's participants ranged from two weeks to four years. The researcher's attempt to access a participant group from different occupational sectors resulted in a candidate pool comprising a bookkeeper, a security operations manager, a call centre agent, a radiographer, a pharmacist, a personal assistant, a talent recruiter and a sales specialist. Additionally, the researcher initially projected that the participants would range from 23 years to 65 years given that the official retirement age is 65 years while the normative tertiary exit age is an average of 22 years for South Africans. Therefore, the researcher's consequential access to participants within her own age range resulted in a participant group with an age range of 21 to 27 years.

### **3.6 Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews**

In an attempt to understand and recognise meanings ascribed by participants to their psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of race in the workplace, the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews to gather black employee perceptions (Stokoe & Edwards, 2006).

Although, the traditional semi-structured interview sufficiently facilitates an information rich data set, the researcher integrated a story-telling approach in the interview process in order to present analytic conditions in which the data set reflects an emphasis on subjective human experience. Moreover, the semi-structured interview method utilised for data collection referred to a democratic redress policy cognisance and its interpretive open-ended nature, which permitted the researcher to conduct semi-directed conversational exchanges (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Blandford, 2013; Gubrium & Holstein, 1995). In addition, the semi-structured interview method exceeds the focus group data collection method in relevance due to the study's individualistic objectives which reflect the eccentric social properties of race, context and time. This focuses on the subjective racial experience as opposed to generating a consensus in the intergroup dynamic which justifies the preferential use of the semi-structured interview as opposed to focus groups. The researcher's emphasis on collecting post-apartheid workplace experiences of blackness is a deliberate act intended to reflect the intentionality of institutional practices in creating a specific racial power dynamic in the workplace (Goldberg, 2009). To conduct these semi-structured interviews, the researcher began each interview appointment with an informal discussion regarding general life topics to ease participants into a discussion orientation. Upon the researcher's detailed re-explanation of the purpose of the study and the conditions of participation, participants signed both the participation and audio recording consent forms. In initiating the interview process, the researcher requested participants to give a brief personal background before asking questions about their workplace experiences of blackness. The researcher conducted these semi-structured interviews in each participant's home to facilitate the most comfortable surroundings for him/her. During the interview process, all study participants demonstrated an enthusiastic and collaborative participatory attitude which facilitated an intriguing pleasantly amusing data collection process for the researcher.

### **3.7 Data Analysis: Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis**

In the examination of the semi-structured interview data collected, the researcher applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) analytic procedures to identify, categorise and scrutinise subjectively interpretable experiential patterns in the data set. This thematic exploration method ensures consistent relational content in the data, devoid of explicit theoretical prescriptions that are limited to specific epistemological assumptions. As such, the thematic analytic technique appropriately configures the participants' accounts to demonstrate the mutual psychosocial and socioeconomic associations black employees attribute to their racial identities and experiences of blackness in the contemporary South African workplace. The thematic analytic method

coincides with the interpretive research paradigm and the democratic redressive policy theme. This serves as a de-colonial tool that challenges prevailing institutional philosophies that prescribe the normative psychosocial and socioeconomic condition of black employees in the present (Salter & Adams, 2016).

As asserted by Smith and Noble (2014), themes selected by the researcher reflect personal bias, as the identification and defining of thematic patterns in the data set corroborate with the researcher's directional purpose for the study regardless of the richness and diversity of the data depository. Despite efforts to prescribe to no specific epistemological assumptions, the researcher's theoretical alignments in psychology influence the manner in which the researcher selects and creates significant themes and links in the data set. In addition, significant themes identified in the data depository represent a subjective, self-reflexive and context-specific representation of the institutionally prescribed psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of the black employees' experiences. As such, the themes are accentuated and demarcated as appearing recurrently and relatively reflecting the researcher's personal perception and interpretation of her own relational position as a black employee in the social world (Hendricks, 2018). Thus, the analysis of the racial identity and experience of black employees in the South African workplace indicates a portrayal of the significant institutional processes that shape the researcher's own psychosocial and socioeconomic identification as a black female in the social world (Eide & Khan, 2008).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for conducting a thematic analysis include "familiarizing yourself with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes, and producing the report". Although, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of conducting a thematic analysis are prescriptively straightforward, the process of analysing the workplace experiences of black employees required repeatedly going back and forth in the six steps until the researcher was satisfied with the relevance of the final themes identified. In order to establish a theme, the researcher deployed what Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as a contextual thematic framework which, by definition, permits the researcher to interpret the meanings black employees ascribe to their experiences of blackness in the workplace, in relation to the broader politics of racial experience in contemporary South African society. In addition, the thematic analysis abstracting the current investigation follows an inductive diagnostic technique where the data itself initiates the interpretation of black employees' workplace experiences, as opposed to coercing the analysis to an explicit

dependency on an existing conceptual framework (Thomas, 2006). Although the inductive thematic approach adhered to by the researcher in the analytic processes followed a “data-driven” interpretive technique, some scholars argue that the idiosyncratic epistemological location of the researcher affects the analysis despite the avoidant efforts thereof (Patton, 1990). Further analytic techniques advising a data engagement that supposes the idiosyncratic experience of black employees as temporally, relationally and institutionally dependent on their psychosocial and socioeconomic contexts are latent in nature.

The researcher’s instigation of analytic processes in this investigation began with transcription procedures including only verbatim participant declarations, demanding the researcher’s conscious orientation to preliminary interpreting data contents (Loubere, 2017). In the process of the researcher familiarising herself with the data, the researcher engaged in an intensive interpretive interaction with the data, which required the researcher to note initial patterns, potential meanings and possible data interpretations during the processes of transcription (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). In the process of generating initial codes, in relation to the researcher’s perceived relevance to ascertaining the broader politics of racial experience in the contemporary South African workplace and society, the researcher categorised the data into meaningful segments (Tuckett, 2005). These refer to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) analytic procedures, as initial code generation permitted the categorisation of the data into significant, specific and patterned assemblages, which demonstrated latent associations and relationships, and consequently created the foundation for potential themes. In the process of searching for themes, the researcher organised the data into potential themes as the researcher was constantly rearranging data so that clear data clusters, distinct from contradictory, ambiguous and inconsistent segmentations, were set aside for further refinement as opposed to the latter requiring reassessment. Furthermore, the researcher’s review and critical interpretation of themes involved evaluating the logic and applicability of potential themes to establish the broader politics of racial experiences in the contemporary South African workplace and society. Consequently, adhering to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six steps of conducting a thematic analysis, the researcher systematically organised potential themes into evidence-based, context-specific and applicable consistent themes, which were named and defined in further alignment with the study’s research questions. Finally, the researcher’s production of the final report is a brief interpretation of information extracted from the data. Therefore, the final themes identified and presented in the study’s analysis section are contextually relevant



extracts from the evidence and validate the researcher's claims and overall conceptual argument (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Irrespective of the study's limited potential risks to the categorically non-sensitive participant population, the researcher strictly adhered to ethical protocols prescribed by the University of the Witwatersrand Humanities Ethics Committee as declared in the ethics clearance certificate, protocol number, MASPR/17/003/IH. As per ethical obligations, recruited participants received emails containing the participant information sheet, the interview schedule, and an interview and audio recording consent form clarifying study participation as a voluntary action without any ramification given due to the participant's withdrawal. In addition, the researcher ensured that participants endured no physical, psychosocial and socioeconomic harm during and after the data collection processes (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014). Given South Africa's apartheid history, and the possibility of confronting traumatic racial workplace experiences, the researcher faced the challenge of being consciously aware of potential conflict provoking triggers during interview procedures (Kwate, Valdimarsdottir, Guevarra & Bovbjerg, 2003; Orb, Einsenhauer & Wynaden, 2000).

The researcher attempted to facilitate dialogue conditions which encouraged mutual respect, compassion, understanding and professionalism to safeguard the physical, psychosocial and socioeconomic condition of the participants, during and after the study (Jelsma & Clows, 2005). The convenience and snowballing sample strategy, using friends and family as a basis for participant referral, posed a unique ethical challenge in terms of the researcher-participant interactional dynamics. Additionally, a self-reflexive attitude during the interview process allowed the researcher to exercise a conscious awareness of potential collusive predispositions (DePoy & Gitlin, 1994). Furthermore, the use of direct extracts in the study presented implausible conditions to assure confidentiality, and characterised limited anonymity, given that the researcher recognised personal participant identities (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015; Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2006). The researcher ensured that there is no personal identification information in the research report and, where applicable, pseudonyms protect participants' identities (Lehman, Rodriguez, Moses, Griffin, Mendoza & Yacuob, 2015). Additionally, soft copies of transcribed data in this study are stored in a password-protected computer for future reference, and for potential use in other studies, while the audio recordings are stored in a digital voice recorder belonging to the researcher.



### **3.9 Reflexivity**

In an attempt to encourage the qualitative validity and reliability of the study, the researcher reflected on the researcher's own expectations and biases as these undoubtedly affect the study. The researcher's location as a black middle-class female situates the researcher in a position of having a shared common identity with the research participant group. The researcher integrated elements of her own small psychosocial and socioeconomic experiential aspects in interpreting and representing participant perceptions. In the selection and refining of this research topic, the researcher constantly confronted her own meanings and perceptions of racial interactions in the South African workplace. However, with the exception of the one male participant, whose interview process was least contextually informative, the researcher became cognisant of the impact of gender dissimilarity in relational communication. In addition, the researcher's experience of blackness in multicultural contexts has acclimatised her to the certainty that the institutional practices in the post-apartheid South African workplace context preserve the psychosocial condition and socioeconomic position of black employees. Being reflexive in this particular study required the researcher to constantly engage her perceived relatability with participants. The meanings and interpretations the researcher ascribes to the participants' accounts of blackness in the workplace reflect a biased cognisance in the researcher-participant's common psychosocial condition, socioeconomic position and geographical locality.

Although, the researcher's own experiences of blackness are subjective, the researcher believes that her shared attribute of categorical blackness with the majority of the study participants affords her the exclusive consideration of introspective reflexivity. The workplace environment, as a perceived site of on-going racialisation for both researcher and participants, locates the study within a racialised interactive system. As such, the study conclusions made by the researcher reflect the researcher's experiential modification of self, demonstrated by the common attempt of middle-class black females to adapt to the specifically adverse psychosocial demands of any multicultural social context to preserve socioeconomic stability. Therefore, the study findings demonstrate the researcher's locality in the infinite cycle of institutionalised racial inequality that locates both the researcher and the participants in a black personhood narrative of continuous struggle and resistance (Eide & Khan, 2008; Hendricks, 2018). The researcher accepts that her own narratives of resistance inevitably contribute to black stereotypes, white employees, and institutional observers alike, being prescribed as facilitators of her 'exceptional', 'non-threatening', 'okay' black middle class female status.

### **3.10 Conclusions**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the qualitative research design in relation to the interpretive research paradigm, followed by the reappearance of the research questions. Subsequently, the researcher outlined the convenience and snowballing sampling strategy, as well as Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of conducting a thematic analysis. To conclude, the researcher presented ethical considerations, succeeded by a brief introspective reflexivity segment.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

The researcher's interpretations of themes emergent in the data set represents a contextual demonstration of participant-researcher negotiations in ascribing meaning to the experiences of black employees in the South African workplace. As such, the themes informing the conclusions of the current investigation are not definite, accurate or comprehensive conceptualisations on the subject matter.

### 4.2 A Workplace at Odds: The Psychosocial Manifestations of Blackness in the Workplace

#### 4.2.1 Stigmatisation in the Workplace

The racial stigmatisation of black employees in the South African workplace demonstrates the continuation of evolving psychosocial and socioeconomic processes in which black employees are subject to occupational deterrents that affect their overall well-being. Loury (2005) asserts that, more often than not, the occupational restrictions arising from the racial stigmatisation of black employees are justified by post-racial and colour-blind claims from those who are unaffected or benefiting from its continuation. In addition, workplace stigmatisation processes reinforce negative stereotypes that undermine the competence and occupational capacities of black employees. Thus, efforts to transform negative racial identity formations resulting from stigmatisation are required to safeguard the well-being of black employees in the workplace. In line with Biko's (1996) suppositions on processes of self-subjugation, P2F, 428 demonstrates that the consequence of normative workplace stigmatisation is the internalisation of an inferiority complex, which negatively affects the individual's perception of self and social identity. Drapalski, Lucksted, Perrin, Aakre, Brown, DeForge and Boyd (2013) make claims that, when black employees internalise workplace stigmatisation, they develop lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, which results in a negative workplace identity formation. Similar to these claims the participant quoted in P2F, 428 suggests that in her own experiences of racial stigmatization in the workplace she found herself succumbing to the psychological pressure that arises from the social reinforcement of a negative black identity.

I feel like, also, when you go through certain situations and experiences, it messes up your mind. Then in actual fact, you might start to see yourself as what they say. You are lazy and you good for nothing [...] Incompetent [...] you start producing that because that is what your mind says [...] Yeah you personify it.

Wood and Runger’s (2015) claim that internalised racial stigmatisation resulting from South Africa’s socio-politic history continuously prescribes negative racial identity formation habits to black employees. Thus, safeguarding the overall well-being of black employees in the workplace requires a progressive awareness of individual control and a critical thoughtfulness regarding the comparative experience of blackness in the apartheid versus the post-apartheid South African context for black employees. The participant quoted in P5F, 457 demonstrates awareness to the cross-temporal effects of racial stigmatization. The participant’s observations regarding her parent’s racial interactions with their white counterparts over time have shaped her experiences of blackness in the workplace. Although, this particular participant may have never been subject to racial stigmatization by virtue of her parents experiences of racial stigmatization she perceives herself as inferior to her white counterparts in the workplace. In addition, the participant illustrates that there is superiority and inferiority interactional dynamic between black and whites in the workplace, as she suggests that her feeling comfortable amongst other black employees in the workplace is partially due to their shared social experience of inferiority.

The thing is about black people, we just have this thing, neh<sup>1</sup>, of just being inferior you know. [...] You just feel inferior [...] you doubt yourself, and you doubt the information that you know for some reason when you are around white people [...] maybe it happens with me, that I think maybe they know better, you know. So when you are around your own people, it’s just like we are all on the same level. We are all here to do what we need to do. No one is better than anyone [...] it’s something we even had in high school. I think it goes back to when you grow up and [...] you see the way your parents act also around white people.

(P5F, 457)

Yoo, Kim and Lee (2018) noted that the process of internalised stigmatisation is related to institutional discriminatory workplace cultures that perpetuate the preferential observation of white employees as demonstrating superior occupational competencies in comparison to their black employee counterparts. P8F, 214 illustrates Foucault (1980), and Robertson, Delton, Klein, Cosmides and Tooby’s (2014) suggestions that the internalized inferiority complex experienced by black employees in the South African workplace is a product of the institutionalised dominative power white employees inherited from the apartheid era. This

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<sup>1</sup> Neh: an isiZulu slang word for “right”.

means that despite South Africa's democratic status the discrimination of black employees continuously reoccurs suggesting that processes endorsed by the apartheid system remain ingrained in South Africa's social fabric. Although, these processes may or may not occur unconsciously the effects thereof remain damaging to the individual's self-esteem and positive identity formation.

If you are white [...] they will actually take you and pick you first [...] if you are black, you have to work to actually prove that you are competent, that you actually deserve to be placed in any position. So automatically, [...] if you are black, you have to work harder, if you are white they give you that benefit that he already knows.

(P8F, 214)

Lee (2016) and Dolby (2000) align institutionalised racial inequality and discrimination as a preemptive means to assert workplace appointment procedures that exclusively restrict the career advancement of black employees and complicate their identity formation by preserving white employee license over the well-being of black employees. P1F, 460 and P2F, 418 shows that black employees indeed perceive institutionalised racial inequality and discrimination as a tactical strategy to invalidate the psychosocial and socioeconomic burdens associated with blackness in the post-apartheid South African workplace context. In addition, P1F, 460 and P2F, 418 respectively highlight Buys' (2016) suspicion that multicultural organisations hesitate in committing to a reconciliatory democratic redress orientation. Moreover, white employees and institutional observers alike evasively deny and refuse to acknowledge how they deploy their socio-historic power to maintain and justify discriminatory action against black employees even in the democratic era.

It is like a black person always has an excuse, a black person always must be felt sorry for black [...] that is why we don't hire black people, black people are lazy.

(P1F, 460)

Black people have that stigma of being lazy, they won't even look at the potential that you carry. They don't know how hard it was for you to graduate in the first place and then not even going to look at the experiences that you encounter while you are trying to graduate, maybe from the character that is going to be good enough for the workplace that you are trying to get into.

(P2F, 418)

Bednarska-Wnuk and Syper-Jędrezejak (2015) postulate that processes facilitating the workplace discrimination of black employees threatens their employability and solidifies the socioeconomic confines contributing to an adverse psychosocial and overall existential experience of blackness. The specific “dumb black” stigmatisation, recurrently identified and perceived as a common workplace familiarity, undoubtedly shapes the psychosocial, socioeconomic and overall existential experience of blackness in adverse ways. As evidenced in P2F, 677, P2F, 560 and P1F, 406, which illustrate three different participant accounts in which black employees perceived these specific interactional processes as racialised due to regarding these interactions as imposing variant forms of the “dumb black” stigmatisation on them.

When I had my interview to go into the call center agency, the lady asked me if I speak Afrikaans, and I said yes, but I choose not to speak it, and she asked me why and I said it's just a personal thing. Then she said, and then what are you doing in an Afrikaans school? [...] I felt like at that moment she placed me as a dumb black.

(P2F, 677)

He was in an incident that he was called a monkey, a dumb monkey that needs to shut his mouth [...] then he encouraged me to speak out because I had three instances where I was attacked racially and because I am black, I am stupid.

(P2F, 560)

They think that this person is still backward. They are not the clever blacks as they would put it [...] They would say, but you guys keep voting for the people who keep doing this and this. You not educated enough or you not smart enough. You should not still be voting for 'those people' and they would classify you. If you agree with them, you would be associated with them and be classified as the clever black person, but if you are not, then you are associated as 'you people' and 'your party' or 'your government'.

(P1F, 406)

Similar to Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, (2007) claim that microaggressions manifest in various aspects of everyday racial interactions in the workplace, the “dumb black” stigmatization indicates that race is a meaningful theoretical construct that shapes social experience and identity. The brief interactive encounters illustrated in quotes P2F, 677; P2F, 560 and P1F, 406, demonstrate verbal and behavioral actions that communicate derogatory racial representations of black employees. In addition, the above-mentioned black employee accounts illustrate how white employees deploy psychologically disempowering tactics when they perceive a loss of their structurally maintained power. White employees

tactically use the “dumb black” stigmatisation, and the variants thereof, to ascribe a measure of competence, which allows them to maintain a sense of perceived control in contributing to efforts that preserve apartheid-like power dynamics in the workplace. As such, the interactional processes in which white employees deploy the variant “dumb black” stigmatisation demonstrate an impending and threatening perpetual power shift, in which white employees take all the necessary measures to ensure the preservation of their perceived fleeting control and dominion over black employees. Furthermore, the “dumb black” stigmatization in P1F, 406 appears as a mechanism to disapprove the perceptions of black employees in relation to their social experience of racialisation in the workplace and broader social context.

#### **4.2.2 Post-Racial Silence in the Workplace**

In addition to the adversarial experience of racial stereotyping and stigmatisation, black employee workplace experiences in post-apartheid South Africa encompass distinctive post-racial silencing characteristics. Mass-silencing processes conceal false sentiments of a reconciliatory social attitude as collaborative efforts to facilitate transformative workplace action against racialization. Such processes consequently encourage the barefaced denial of intentionality in post-racialist and colour-blind workplace orientations that continue oppressive interactional processes (Valji, 2004; Van Dijk, 1992). In addition, the over-emphasis of the “resilient black personhood” that white employees and institutional observers alike deploy to divert black employees from the abnormality of their workplace experiences of blackness contradict post-racialist and colour-blind orientations. Furthermore, the “resilient black personhood” appears as an effort by white employees to regard racialisation as a historic issue displaced in the present by imposing coercive silencing. Interestingly, black employees recognise these strategically racialised orientations illustrated in P8F, 195; P1F, 630 and P1F, 437 demonstrating that black employees are engaged in critical thoughtfulness regarding their experiences of blackness in the post-apartheid workplace context.

Being heard as a black person, it’s very hard for you to actually voice yourself and be taken seriously.

(P8F, 195)

When it was time for certain topics to come along, as a black person you had to reserve your comments in order not to offend some people [...] you are not supposed to be bringing things up and we way over that, we are not supposed to talk about it.

(P1F, 630)

Black people would shy away from talking about such topics as it would bring some sort of, and I did mention the word, hatred or animosity [...] Now you are trying to probe into a space where they don't want to understand where I am coming from, but I must move on from the experiences I faced. The experiences that my parents faced, which limited me from reaching a certain career by a certain age, you know.

(P1F, 437)

In conjunction with Biko (1996), as well as Sewell and Heise's (2010) racial dissimilarity in workplace sentiments, P2F, 577; P4F, 625, and P2F, 624 confirm that the post-racialist silencing of black employees in the workplace facilitates anti-black workplace sentiments that propagate the racial bias, continuing the endless cycle of institutionalised racial discrimination and structural inequality.

I experienced what it was like to be silenced, [...] because I am black and I won't have much support [...] I think as a black person, it's very difficult for us to speak up without being quickly opposed [...] It's like its taboo to speak about it [...] It's like you are free now what else do you want.

(P2F, 577)

So long as people are not willing to change and accept the fact that it is an issue [...] We have to deal with it directly by actually finding ways to actually not make it so hard for blacks [...] It's so evident that it's undeniable that this is a race thing.

(P4F, 625)

I was too afraid to speak out on it so I think I had to go through that rejection, and being silenced, for me to realize the severity of this whole thing. I have thought about what I would say because if you think about it, race is not that big of an issue [...] It's really, it's a huge deal, don't get me wrong, but it's not the issue.

(P2F, 624)

This is in contradiction to Richeson and Nussbaum (2004), as well as Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson and Casas's (2007) postulations on the socioeconomic, psychosocial and existential consequences of post-racial silencing in the South African workplace increasing the likelihood of racialised interactional conflicts between black and white employees. Black employee responses to white employee and institutional observer denials of racially oppressive speech and behavior suggests that post-racial silencing sentiments still result in self-sustaining processes of interactional avoidance as theorised by Lund (2006). This, therefore, suggests that black employees become reluctant to address their experiences of racialisation in the workplace due to the fear of further stigmatisation and rejection as illustrated by P2F, 577; P4F, 625, and P2F, 624.



I feel like that's the only way we can fight the whole inequality racist thing is if people who are given advancements knowing that they don't deserve it [...] I always ask if you were to see that no I don't deserve this. There is someone else who deserves this more than me. Would you do that?

(P8F, 509)

In addition, P8F, 509 illustrates that those unaffected by racist workplace structures are required to acknowledge the claims of racial neutrality and passive compliance regarding their position of privilege as it worsens the psychosocial and socioeconomic black employee experience. The unwillingness of white employees and institutional observer cultures to acknowledge the actuality of a racialised black employee experience of race in the workplace is indicative that the implementation of the democratic redress policy has thus far failed to transform the condition of blackness. .

#### **4.2.3 Perceptions of Diversity and Social Inclusion in the Workplace**

Although democratic redress policy has successfully facilitated post-apartheid workplace diversification to some degree, participant accounts indicate that racialised interactional processes affect the overall well-being of black employees in diversified workplace contexts. Post-racialist silencing and black employee stigmatisation facilitates ideal psychosocial conditions for hostile intergroup conflict in everyday racial interactions (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson & Casas's 2007). The experiences of black employees in the South African workplace undeniably confirm Chamber, Preston, Topakas, de Saille, Salway, Booth, Dawson and Wilsdon's (2017) claim that the processes of workplace diversification are not interchangeable with processes of psychosocial and socioeconomic inclusion. Moreover, black employees confirm that the diversified South African workplace context demonstrates unequal collaborative exertions in black and white employee commitment to achieving psychosocial inclusion and socioeconomic equality. This validates what Nkomo (2011) claims to be a practical diversity inefficiently redressing the workplace conditions resulting from South Africa's apartheid past. Moreover, there are no cooperative efforts from white employees and institutional observers alike to afford black employees reconciliatory opportunities as highlighted in P6F, 352.

You have the segregation coming in without looking at including people. They are not even going to have a chance. I think there are many factors besides just getting the job that could affect this whole inclusion thing. Just looking at the social structure itself, how are we then going to say we have equal soil for

inclusion and all of that? I think, in that sense, we will look at it like that because there are many factors not just race.

(P6F, 352)

As evidenced in P4F, 146 and P2F, 86 below, black employees experience the diversified South African workplace environment as what Taylor and Moghaddam (1994) describe as deceptive interaction, where workplace diversification expedites interracial contact but fails to disband separation.

I think it still exists that when you are black you feel that you are black, not necessarily about how they treat us or how they talk to us, but the environment energies.

(P4F, 146)

I could tell that I am black. It is not that I haven't noticed but immediately you walk in you know you are different.

(P2F, 86)

Similarly, P1F, 89 and P1F, 399 below illustrate that black employees in the diversified South African workplace also deploy race as an operant process of self-segregation, not only as a marker of difference, but also as a determinant of perceived empathy and reliability regarding their conditions of blackness (Koen & Durrheim, 2010). Furthermore, participant accounts confirm Dixon and Durrheim's (2004) findings on interracial group contact, as black employees position race as a tool to establish defensive social blocks in order to avoid racial interactional conflict.

Race, it is really something that we have to work on together as people in general, not only in the workplace, but also in the educational space as well, because this thing starts from high school, not only in the workplace. It is from high school and varsity. You just associate better with people who had better understand you, your views, culturally.

(P1F, 89)

It's good to create a social relationship with people who understand you and to have boundaries between your work and your personal space.

(P1F, 399)

In contrast to P1F, 89 and P1F, 399; P8F, 94 and P8F, 105 below demonstrate that black employees associate racial integrative processes in the workplace with adversarial experiences of psychosocial and existential of blackness.

It is just blacks only, the way that they treat each other. So it's like everyone there is free and comfortable. You can see that these people actually get along. They understand each other. Whereas the minute there is like race, integration

[...] there is a certain standard that you have to keep. You have to act in a certain way. You have to do this in a certain way, just to impresses this person.

(P8F, 94)

It is different with a black company. It seems like everyone is comfortable with each other. The way they treat each other, the way they are used to each other. They get along very quickly. If there is integration, there is that little bit of separation.

(P8F, 105)

Moreover, P8F, 94 and P8F, 105, provide evidence that racial integration in the workplace aligns with coercive expectations from white employees and institutional observers alike for black employees to adopt their descriptions of a utopian black identity. As such, when black employees refuse to comply to such expectations their white counterparts perceive this as hostile acts that represent resistance to workplace integration and structurally beneficial post-racial utopian ideal of black workplace identity. In addition, P7F, 105 and P1F, 495 below suggests that participants perceive a definite institutional function in processes of racialization that serve the interests of white males in the South African workplace.

The diversity is there but the inclusion is not there, in that black people are in the very low positions as compared to our fellow South Africans who are white. The company supposedly has 10 000 employees, 80 % of which must represent the black population [...] Almost 7000 black people work at my current company, 6 500 of them are sitting at the staff level, the lower jobs. Maybe 500 are junior managers and senior managers. The white people represent the 28 % of the population but then it is quite devastating that [...] 28% maybe 25% are executive directors and are in the executive positions in the company. The senior positions, and the executive directors and your company partners are mostly white and male.

(P7F, 105)

I feel, as black women, we need to work harder than our male counter parts [...] you have to prove yourself that you know what you are talking about, that you are as smart as your male counterparts. Even though, maybe you are a reserved person, where people would not take you seriously because you are more reserved and you are quiet but you are knowledgeable.

(P1F, 495)

Race and gender intersect to demonstrate a perceived lack of social control over a positive racial and gendered identity formation. . Although these intersectional dynamics evidently lead to adversarial self-perceptions of black womanhood, P7F, 105 and P1F, 495 substantiate Flanagan (2015) and Ramphele's (2008) suggestions that, if black female employees desire an

existentially progressive experience of workplace blackness, they must liberate themselves from workplace myths prescribing negative identity formations. Given that claiming all white employees in the South African workplace display a disinclination to transform their racial attitudes to demonstrate mutual interests in achieving the psychosocial and socioeconomic manifestations of true inclusion and integration is invalid (Plaut, Buffardi, Garnett & Sanchez-Burks, 2011). P4F, 129 and P2F, 94 below align with Bonam, Tylor and Yantis' (2017) theorisation of the racial designation of social spaces, wherein false integrative processes facilitate the deployment of racialised classification in the hierarchical negotiation of social spaces.

Management, you would see them at the coffee shop and the cafeteria would be your secretaries [...] your typists. You wouldn't find an HOD or sister in charge at the cafeteria, it's just us students, the black people, the people that are in maintenance, all the sisters and [...] of lower levels management.

(P4F, 129)

Closer to the windows would be the white ladies and towards the toilets were the black ladies [...] only the Afrikaans speaking blacks were placed closer to the whites to make it look like it is integrated but in fact, it was not.

(P2F, 94)

### **4.3 A Workplace Where History Rewrites Itself: The Recurrence of Racialised Interactional Processes in the Workplace**

#### **4.3.1 Linguistic Processes of Communication in the Workplace**

The linguistic processes of workplace communication are deeply racialised as evidenced by the operant role that language assumes in the hierarchical designation of social spaces (Bonam, Tylor & Yantis, 2017; Murray & Fujishima, 2016; Musgrave & Bradshaw, 2014). Black employees do not commit to a colour-blind social orientation in accepting post-racial utopian ideals as linguistic processes of communication in both intra- and inter-group interaction demonstrate implicit power negotiations (Mumby, 1988). Therefore, racialised interactional conflicts occur because communicative processes operationalise language as an inclusionary social tool to establish the collective and individual racial identity of employees in the workplace. P1F, 355; P1F, 333 and P1F, 125 below demonstrate a communicative power struggle to achieve social dominance when white employees deploy the loud blacks" stereotype. The linguistic mechanisms utilized during interracial workplace interactions illustrate desperate attempt from white employees and institutional observers alike to maintain

an apartheid-like interactional workplace dynamic in which communicative normalcy is relativized to white culture.

The one lady from Zimbabwe and the guy so they were disagreeing about something [...] I'd say their voices got loud, they weren't fighting [...] the lady from Romania she ran to them [...] she was like stop fighting! She did not understand that they were not fighting [...] we are just having a disagreement in a friendly way but our voices got loud [...] they did not recognise that their voices got loud. [...] It is easier working with people who understand. [...] When you are speaking that it is more about your tone, not how loud you are [...] we express ourselves in different ways.

(P1F, 355)

Social spaces would have to become you know a greet only zone [...] because [...] you are going to laugh or you make a joke or you tend to have a small disagreement, and then it's like, okay, now these people are fighting again, or here we go, they are loud.

(P1F, 333)

The black people, when they take their lunch, they take it at a certain time. They want to speak their own language cause no one is going to tell you that you loud or anything.

(P1F, 125)

Similarly, P2F, 706 and P1F, 269 below further demonstrate the operant use of language, its associations, and the institutionalised power struggles between black and white employees. In line with Augoustinos and Every's (2007) language of liberal-practical politics, the use of language and its associations in the workplace portrays an institutional inclination to stigmatise blackness and render it abnormal. P2F, 706 particularly aligns with Léglise and Migge's (2008) language and colonialism theorisations of the enforcement of the English language as an institutionalised prescription that presents complex psychosocial dynamics for power and liberation in the existential experience of blackness given the socio-historical aspects of colonialism and the use of language during apartheid.

As a black person, you must know I am speaking a white man's language as it is. When we look back into our history, we did not even have a word for English. Now in our languages there is a word for English [...] isiNgisi<sup>2</sup>, seGuwa<sup>3</sup>.

(P2F, 706)

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<sup>2</sup> isiNgisi: the isiZulu translation of the word "English".

<sup>3</sup> seGuwa: the seTswana translation for the word "English".

In the office, there is a rule that we all have to speak English because everyone understands English. [...] Then when it came to a certain group, it was okay for them to use their language because they were the majority and we were not. [...] when you started speaking your language it is as if you are not following the rules and the procedures [...] you are defying the workplace rules.

(P1F, 269)

P2F, 706 and P1F, 269 portray the presence of an interrelationship between race, language and power that facilitates integrative workplace processes allowing institutions and white employees to deploy language, and the culturally variant communicative processes thereof, as negative stigmatisations illustrating the abnormality of blackness (Wigboldus, Semin & Spears, 2000). In conjunction with Eastman's (1985) postulation on the deployment of linguistic processes of communication to inform a racial identity formation, P1F, 79 and P6F, 69 below illustrate that black employees operationalise language to affect culturally definite, contextual and shared communicative understandings of race.

Speaking English the whole day, it is not comfortable [...] it is better for you to be with people who understand you and who get you. Where you do not have to explain every sentence that you want to talk about. You know, when you are saying a joke, then you have to say it in another language.

(P1F, 79)

My boss [...] speaks sePedi-seTswana [...] we just speak in our own home language [...] when I go sit with Yolanda<sup>4</sup> [...] we communicate in English. Sometimes you just want speak in a language you are comfortable in. If I want to speak in English and they want to speak in Afrikaans [...] we have to find a medium. It is just too much. Sometimes you just want to speak your home language.

(P1F, 69)

P1F, 79 and P6F, 69 validate Swain's (2013) inseparability of cognitive processes and emotional consequences in the use of English as an institutional medium of communication for black employees in the South African workplace. Furthermore, the everyday use of the English language, as opposed to the use of vernacular home languages for black employees, as an institutional medium of communication, bears undesirable psychosocial and existential dynamics for the black employee experiences of racial identity. As such, the co-construction of cultural productions in exclusionary linguistic workplace processes that black employees

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<sup>4</sup> Yolanda: a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the person mentioned.

deploy further substantiate Robertson, Delton, Klein, Cosmides and Tooby's (2014) claim that social exclusion is a learned evolutionary tactic of human existence.

I do not know all the African, South African languages so the minute people they use a different language obviously there is loss of communication and all of a sudden, you do not understand that other person. So the minute they switch into a different tongue, you do not know what to expect, in that you do not know what to think, you do not know what they are talking about. [...] People really do [...] take that advantage of using a different language that somebody else does not [...] either to say something which is about that person or something offensive.

(P8F, 386)

The one lady made a comment and she was speaking in sePedi [...] she made a comment where she was generally [...] not nice about Ashley<sup>5</sup>. So in that sense, I felt like she did that intentionally. She was sly and she did it in a way that she would not understand.

(P6F, 88)

P8F, 386 and P6F, 88 suggest that language is equally operant as a tool of psychosocial exclusion in the ordinary interactive processes of black employees where tribal, intra- and inter-group associations co-construct cultural productions demonstrating intentionality and cognisance in all communicative workplace processes. Furthermore, P8F, 386 and P6F, 88 indicate that linguistic processes of communication in the South African workplace display psychosocial complexities in both intra and interracial interactions.

#### **4.3.2 Black Employee Perceptions of the Afrikaans Language in the Workplace**

Black employees in the South African workplace perceive the use of the Afrikaans language, in particular, as an operant tool of power and dominance. These postulations support the perceived obstructive utilisation thereof as a competitive disadvantage in the acquisition of career advancement opportunities available to black employees (Haney-López, 2010). Moreover,, the preferential use of the Afrikaans language as a components in occupational eligibility displays intentionality in institutional cultures preserving white employee privilege and systemised racial inequality as theorised by Foucault (1980) and Mumby (1988). P1F, 238 and P6F, 399 below demonstrate the multiple levels in which the use of the Afrikaans language in affecting the overall experiences of blackness.

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<sup>5</sup> Ashley: a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the person mentioned.



In my office, we had a Zulu girl which was me, a Xhosa girl, we had a lady from Romania, who spoke Romanian and English. She also didn't understand Afrikaans, she is white, and then we had three Afrikaans speaking ladies. [...] the lady from Romania, she could understand the language but she could not communicate back in their language and then [...] the Xhosa lady, she did not understand at all and at the age that she was, it was hard for her to start learning how to speak the language. [...] she was like, okay, these people are excluding me. I am going to start speaking in Xhosa. I understood everyone, so everyone would speak to me in his or her language, except the Romanian lady obviously, she would speak in English. So when the lady who spoke Xhosa started speaking in Xhosa it became a problem, [...] it was like she was excluding everyone else or trying to talk about someone in the room who did not understand her, but when everyone else was speaking another language, she would feel left out. She had to keep quiet [...] I felt like her personal views were not respected in a way [...] I also do not understand you, Why do you not speak English, but when we speak our language, it is not okay. You guys should understand us because it's also one of the languages which are most popular in South Africa. [...] in the workspace that we are in, its either you know English or Afrikaans even when you apply for a job they tell you must [...] be fluent in both languages.

(P1F, 238)

I noticed is that in many adverts they want Afrikaans speakers fluent in Portuguese and so forth, like seriously? Where am I going to learn Portuguese in a rural village in Limpopo? Where am I going to learn how to be fluent in Afrikaans in a rural village in Limpopo? It is always some international or Afrikaans language that you didn't even know exists. I think that is a hurdle most black people face in terms of becoming employed and going into the workplace.

(P6F, 399)

In addition to the Afrikaans language hindering the overall well-being of black employees through its restrictions over progressive career opportunities, black employees perceive the use of the Afrikaans language as an institutional attempt to limit the perceived individual control and critical thoughtfulness of black employees regarding their post-apartheid linguistic workplace context. As demonstrated by P4F, 152 and P2F, 122 below, black employees perceive the contemporary use of the Afrikaans language in the workplace as expressing similar socio-historic interactional processes between blacks and Afrikaners in the workplace. Thus, P4F, 152 and P2F, 122 essentially portray that black employees perceive the inability to display proficiency in the Afrikaans language as implicitly producing a black employee's experience marked by a second-class workplace citizenship.

In the radiographer's lounge, it is just Afrikaans. So if you do not know Afrikaans, you are screwed. If you speak in English, they are just going to



answer, whatever, then they are done with you. They will just talk in Afrikaans. You definitely feel that my culture or myself are not recognised here you know. (P4F, 152)

I actually saw that the problem was in the language in itself, because you don't speak Afrikaans we are not going to interact with you. (P2F, 122)

Comparing P6F, 399 and P4F, 152 to P2F, 122, participant accounts reveal that interactional processes in which the Afrikaans language is a tool of social exclusion propagates adverse psychosocial and existential consequences for the black employee experience of race in the workplace. Moreover, institutional cultures promote a deeply racial discriminatory linguistic double standard as portrayed by both white employees and institutional observers alike in implementing implicitly promoting biased workplace rules of racialised interaction. The use of the Afrikaans language in P1F, 213 below illustrates the intersectional nature of racial interaction and further validates Bonam, Tylor and Yantis's (2017) that in diversified workplace cultures hierarchical designation and racialisation of social spaces occurs.

The white people, since most of them, not generalising ,but most of them, they smoked and I do not smoke so when they'd take smoke breaks, they go together and in small groups, and they'd speak a certain language, so like, they speak Afrikaans. (P1F, 213)

Furthermore, the participant accounts illustrated in P1F, 213 and P2F, 700 below suggest that black employees are reluctant to reveal their proficiency in Afrikaans perhaps due to what Le Cordeur (2015) refers to as the consequence of the socio-politic and historical stigma attached to the Afrikaans language as the language of the oppressor (Le Cordeur, 2015).

I remember [...] the first time my colleagues [...] found out that I understood Afrikaans. [...] I did not mean to eavesdrop but the conversation was interesting so I just laughed, and I'm like, you guys can't say that about someone. What if they walk in and find you guys talking about them? Oh, and then they are like, oh, you are so sly, you don't tell us you can speak Afrikaans. (P1F, 213)

That lady asked me if I speak Afrikaans and I said yes but I choose not to speak it. [...] I can even answer in Afrikaans. I just do not want to because of the stigma behind that language. (P2F, 700)

Given South Africa's apartheid history, the perceived oppressive use of the Afrikaans language in the workplace creates the daunting presence of blurred lines in the level of professionalism black employees are expected to display when experiencing what they perceive to be instances of on-going racism. The participants quoted in P4F, 159; P4F, 179 and P4F, 191 below respectively identify what Satzewich and Shaffir (2007) argue to be the claims and counter claims of the racism versus professionalism debate.

I feel like it is known that I am an Afrikaner I want you to address me in Afrikaans. [...] They will firstly correct you that I am Afrikaans, you do not pronounce it like this, you pronounce it like this. [...] Then you have to explain to them, can we speak in English because I do not know Afrikaans. [...] They just want you to know that I am Afrikaans, and you will address me in Afrikaans but now I always ask myself. If I say hi, my name is who, and who I am, Zulu and you will address me in Zulu. The whole company is going to be bashed. They will be like, oh your employees are unfriendly, they are disrespectful and inconsiderate.

(P4F, 159)

The patient said I do not speak another language except Afrikaans. Can you please get somebody that will speak to me in Afrikaans? So we had to get the patient an Afrikaans speaking person. Obviously, a black person was helping that patient. I do not know if that was him being racist or if he really couldn't speak English.

(P4F, 179)

I feel like its inconsiderate and with the whole language thing, obviously my mind is going to be as if you are being racist right now even if you are not being racist.

(P4F, 191)

Essentially, an ordinary racial process of interaction, wherein the Afrikaans language is deployed in the contemporary South African workplace, continues to evoke adverse emotional reactions in which the psychosocial and existential experiences of blackness are affected.

### **4.3.3 Contemporary Racism in the Workplace**

The experiences of employees in the South African workplace indicate that black employees perceive the occurrence of on-going racialisation as central to the psychosocial and socioeconomic conditions of blackness. In line with Campbell (2014), black employees perceive contemporary workplace racism as an implicit institutional tendency to endorse the undermining of black employee competence and occupational ability. Moreover, the emotive language deployed in the black employee narrative of workplace racialisation demonstrates the

existential intensity of a racialised workplace experience (Bužeková, 2018). As such, P6F, 538 below illustrates a theatrical manifestation of black employee racialisation in which the relation category of blackness is deployed as a marker of occupational incompetence that appears without a seemingly justifiable explanation.

Our branch manager is black and she is a woman [...] she was talking to the man but he was still shouting. Then we called the supporters administration. She was a white female. So as soon as the white lady entered the office he stopped talking to the black lady and just spoke to the white lady and said can you assist me, and she is like, with what? So he explained and she said no I do not work in banking, you have to speak to her. She is the manager referring to the black lady, so he came at us and just started shouting. But when he was speaking to her, he was so nice, kind, and understanding. When he was interacting with us, he was already on level 10 [...] that is why I assumed it was racism because we did nothing to provoke that behavior.

(P6F, 538)

The racial perpetrator in P6F, 538 demonstrated racist behaviour because of a dual loss of power, first in the political sense and second in relation to gender. The white male adult in P6F, 538 deployed racism as a volatile response to his perceived loss of power which, during the apartheid era, granted him a revered socially dominating status. As such, the idea of a perpetual power shift in which he has to refer to black women for assistance triggers his perceived loss of his normative white masculinity status in the workplace. Furthermore, the racialised black employee response in introducing a white female to the interactional conflict illustrates an attempt to dampen the white man's perceived loss of psychosocial dominance. Therefore, the prevalence of on-going racialisation indicates a generally white inclination to preserve racialised and gendered power dynamics, as the loss of racialised power equals a loss in the biased socioeconomic benefits of a racist psychosocial culture. P6F, 538 above, and P5F, 129 and P1F, 693 additionally demonstrate the same type of deeply racial power struggles of dominance.

The black guy was trying to explain to the white guy that I can't help you right because I am busy with another patient, so stand in the queue. He got so angry, it just escalated. The white guy [...] ended up calling him a Kaffer<sup>6</sup>. It was so bad. He was obviously calling him all these black names and stuff and the colleague got angry and pushed him.

(P5F, 129)

My boss is white [...] the wife is also white so I felt the way she approached me. I felt like it was because of my race. So it was in front of everyone and it

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<sup>6</sup> Kaffer: a racial slur used by Afrikaners to insult and dehumanise black people

was as if I had done something wrong for being paid that amount [...] in front of everyone, she was, like, why did my husband pay you? [...] It was in front of my colleagues as well. I felt like I did not know how to answer that. I felt that had it been [...] I just told her ukuthi<sup>7</sup> everyone got raises, I did not, and he forgot to pay me. [...] I could see that she got uncomfortable when I phrased it like that [...] I should have been respected and asked in private as a member of the firm.

(P1F, 693)

The white man in Extract P5F, 129, attempts to utilise his institutionally prescribed power of white male dominance to coerce the black man into violating his professionalism, consequently demonstrating his subservience to the white male. However, when the black man utilises his occupational power and follows proper workplace procedure, the white man deploys a racial slur to regain his position of power. Similarly, the black man retaliates and uses physical force to regain his position of power in the interaction. In concurrence with P5F, 129; Extract P1F, 693 represents the same deeply racial and gendered power struggle between the white and black females in which both the white and the black females utilise verbal attacks and counter attacks to negotiate power and dominance. Therefore, the instances of on-going racialisation in the South African workplace illustrate socio-historically predisposed power struggles. Moreover, P5F, 129 and P1F, 693 validate Roberts, Innes, Williams, Tregidga and Gadd's (2013) claims that racial offenders display frustrations when black employees demonstrate an unwillingness to participate in the preservation of oppressive institutional cultures that habitually favour the selective benefit of whites in the South African society.

You know, when someone is just racist towards you, you don't even know how to respond [...] I remember feeling that this lady is being unreasonable [...] yeah, so I was just like so puzzled and she just like threw her script at me and she was, like, do this and this and that. [...] Then one of my white colleagues was, like, no, she is like that, she just shouts at black people for no reason [...] I remember now the white lady that was supposed to help her. She was, like, please don't take it seriously, I don't think she meant it. I was just like defeated, dude, because when you see it you can believe it, like dude, you just hang your mouth, like, what the hell?

(P5F, 623)

Furthermore, P5F, 623 above illustrates that the general workplace experience of black employees is indicative of racial inequality and discrimination in the general South African societal context and represents what Powell (2010) describes as a static attribute preserved by

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<sup>7</sup> Ukuthi: the isiZulu translation of "that"

institutional observers and white employees alike to undermine the psychosocial and existential effects of a racialised workplace experience. Likewise, Mueller's (2017) claims represented in P1F, 693 illustrate the white colleague's efforts to defend the fellow white instigator, and to normalise the experience of racialisation by attempting to define discriminatory behaviour as an individualistic personality trait, as opposed to assisting their black colleagues to manoeuvre around this particular racialised interaction.

#### **4.4 A Workplace That Never Loved Us: The Socioeconomic Implications of Blackness in the Workplace**

##### **4.4.1 Social Levies Associated with Black Taxation in the Workplace**

According to Reyna (2000), relative to the white employee and institutional observer, socioeconomic levies on black taxation in the workplace illustrate the stereotypical tendencies of black employees to exploit South Africa's apartheid past to justify their psychosocial and socioeconomic inadequacies. As such, P1F, 473 illustrates that the normative socioeconomic status of black employees in South Africa subjects them to unique challenges of blackness, affecting their overall workplace enthusiasm. Due to the normative psychosocial and socioeconomic condition of blackness in the workplace presenting physical and mental circadian rhythm challenges, white employees and institutional observers confirm such outcomes as stereotypical black behavior. When white employees and institutional observers engage in attributing the socioeconomic manifestations of blackness to stereotypical behaviour, they contradict their race neutral, colour-blind and post-racial denial of the contemporary South African workplace yielding a racially restricted occupational experience for black employees. Social levies associated with black taxation in the workplace, due to their physical and psychological impact on black employees, consequently resultant in a lack of productivity, performance and overall enthusiasm regarding career ideals. As such, P1F, 473 demonstrates that black employees demonstrate a critical thoughtfulness regarding the general post-apartheid South African context and its adversarial consequences to blackness.

White people are closer. They come to work six in the morning. They make their coffee, start working at seven. You woke up at five or four o' clock in the morning. You are only going to get to work at eight. You make tea, you start working, by ten you are already exhausted from the trip you took to work. So you would need a break from that, and then you come, then there is lunch. The you would find your white people are going home by half past three.

(P1F, 473)

In addition, to P1F, 473, extract P5F, 286, P1F, 464 and P8F, 128 all illustrate that race still functions as a marker of socioeconomic status. These extracts are all representative of different participant accounts in which black employees demonstrate that the socioeconomic familiarity of utilising public transport is explicitly associated with blackness. The normalcy of this phenomenon in the contemporary South African society demonstrates a general disinterest from white employees and institutional observers alike in the socio-politically predisposed condition of South African blackness. Thus, in comparison to their white counterparts, black employees are generally still members of the socioeconomically disadvantaged group. This validates Metz' (2011) assertions that racialised structural inequality, in both the workplace and in the general South African context, exploit the socioeconomic position of black employees to preserve the socioeconomic positions and benefits of white employees and institutional observers alike.

If you go to the gym at a certain time, like in the afternoon, you just find a lot of us, like black people. But if you go to the gym five-thirty in the mornings, you find a lot of white people. You use public transport to work, where your gym is, so I can't imagine you coming to work at five-thirty.

(P5F, 286)

I cannot be leaving the office at seven. I am still going to be taking taxis, walk a distance home. Some of us take trains to work and things like that, but there isn't that mutual respect and understanding of the recourses that I am using.

(P1F, 464)

If I can come in the morning and I would complain about taxis, and how they made me late. So I am talking to someone who has never been in a taxi. Someone who had a car ever since they have known how to drive.

(P8F, 128)

In addition, black employees perceive that their delayed career outcomes, as facilitated by structural inequality and perpetuating the problematic ongoing stigmatisation of black employees in the South African workplace. Moreover, P1F, 636 and P6F, 468 illustrate that, due to these institutionalised socioeconomic conditions of blackness, black employees perceive lower levels of observed social control over a positive racial identity formation which is theorised by Flanagan (2015) as a liberal tool for invalidating incompetence and laziness stereotypes that black employees embody.

Some white people you just go to school, you just study what you study, come back to work in the very sector that you want to work in, in the same industry. The same time you get to a certain age, you are already like a manger or whatever. But I am 27 and it's like, where have you been like? What have you

been doing with your time? You are 27 and you are only being an intern now but you had to go through something first. You had to get some sort of income for you to get that education and then get into the sector you want to get into.  
(P1F, 636)

How do you get to 22 years old and get to be a regional manager? [...] I mean most black people, we start working at 25 and 26 you know, where you are hustling, you are grinding to get that job. So now, here is a kid who is 23 and they are driving a Mercedes with your dream job.  
(P6F, 468)

Thus, in addition to the delayed career outcomes experienced by black employees in the South African workplace indicating that being black is disadvantageous even in a democratic social context. P7F, 281 and P6F, 460, in conjunction with Western and Pettit's (2005) findings, illustrate that the career advancement opportunities available to blacks in the South African workplace are restrictive even in earning potential and this further results in black employees demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm in terms of job satisfaction and career advancement goals.

Interestingly, P7F, 281 and P6F, 460 demonstrate that when black employees become aware of racialised dissimilarities in earning potential between them and their white counterparts. As such, they continue to embody their historic narratives of resistance to aid their failure to conform to evolved socioeconomic conditions of oppression.

The company is struggling to retain black talent [...] A lot of black people are leaving. The company is really struggling to retain black talent because, you know, cause you find that your skin tone also determines how much you earn.  
(P7F, 281)

I mean, we were working for a white man. He is very nice, but I mean, obviously he was also for his people in terms of pay [...] The pay that she was getting at that pharmacy for a normal post, basic pay there was probably like R10000 difference. You know R10000 might be exaggerating but definitely R8000 [...] It was a significant difference that she even had to move. She decided to leave the pharmacy and go to somewhere which is very far from her hometown. She is now like 400 km from her hometown.  
(P5F, 240)

#### **4.4.2. Knowledge Networks and Social Connections in the Workplace**

Participant accounts represented in P1F, 584, P1F, 611 and P6F, 183 below confirm that black employee perceptions of their employability are based on the racialised access of individuals to knowledge networks and social connections. In P1F, 584, the participant indicates that, in order to gain greater access to career advancement opportunities, both black and white employees are required to have the right of entry to valid knowledge networks and social



connections. Here, the participant illustrates how the apartheid and the contemporary workplace contexts yield similar occupational experiences for both black and white employees alike. This particular participant believes that both black and white employees, although possessing the necessary higher education qualifications, are unlikely to advance their careers without this type of social assistance.

If I had those connections, I wouldn't only have 10 months working experience [...] but I am working on getting connections because, you know, but I don't know if you know this saying "No man is an island". So you do need people. In Zulu, we say *umuntu ngu muntu nga bantu*<sup>8</sup>. So if you want to get somewhere, it's best to have connections, make as much connections as you can. It's going to help you in the long run.

(PIF, 584)

Thus, instead of the South African workplace environment demonstrating what Clair and Denis (2015) describe as tokenistic practises that display successful black employees to facilitate the denial of workplace processes that restrict black employee access to key career opportunities. Extract PIF, 584 demonstrates that black employees perceive the South African workplace as an occupational environment wherein both the concept of tokenism and meritocracy are rarely applicable. Furthermore, PIF, 584 clearly indicates that neither the increased diversification nor the current socio-politic context of the South African workplace guarantees both black and white employees equal opportunities to access occupational sectors of their choice. This confirms that the experiences of all employees in the general South African workplace context to some extent display various characteristics of psychosocial and socioeconomic exclusion as postulated by Chamber, Preston, Topakas, de Saille, Salway, Booth, Dawson and Wilsdon (2017).

If you want to work for the government, you have to know a black person who knows another black person who is in politics, who knows another black person who knows a minister or whatever. If you want to go to the private sector, you associate yourself with not only black people, but also try to mix and associate yourself with all racial divisions. Then that way you can have a better chance of succeeding [...] When I am looking to forming connections, I look at people in the same field of study. I personally don't want to work for government. I feel that it's more limiting myself to a certain sector which is the public sector and I'd be excluding myself from private companies.

(PIF, 611)

Although, PIF, 584 demonstrates that unfair processes of occupational allocation continue in the South African workplace for all employees, race remains a salient tool in operationalising the type of knowledge networks and social connections racially dissimilar individuals' access.

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<sup>8</sup> *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*: relating to the isiZulu translation of "I am, because you are".



As illustrated by P1F, 611, black employees note that when it comes to career advancement opportunities, race functions as a sector specific tool of inclusion as they explicitly report that black South Africans have access to knowledge networks and social connections within the public sector, while white employees have access to the private sector. This illustrates that positive racial interactions between black and white employees can yield equally beneficial socioeconomic opportunities as these interactions diversify and broaden the spectrum of the knowledge networks and social connections that remain segregated according to race. Although knowledge networks and social connections in the workplace are being segregated according to race, P6F, 183 illustrates that black employees perceive social connections as operating based on an overall structural inequality and individual occupational power.

For a connection to be a factor in anything, I would think if you are connected to somebody in a higher position, somebody who had the authority or the power to influence the people you are working with [...] I did have a connection in that my grandmother worked with the same person who hired me but not in the same division as him, at all/ She was in business, he was in financial planning. I got there. I did not have any position of consequence at all.

(P6F, 183)

#### **4.5 Conclusions**

The thematic data analysis presented evidence that the psychosocial and socioeconomic experiences of black employees remains unchanged in spite of the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994. This indicates that the democratic redress policy must be integrated with the theory of psychosocial empowerment in the impact assessment thereof.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

The contemporary experience of blackness in the workplace demonstrates that racialised interactive processes in the general South African societal context perpetuate the preferential observation of whites as signifying superior psychosocial and socioeconomic competencies in comparison to their black counterparts (Yoo, Kim & Lee, 2018). Thus, historically established social roles and categories are continuously entrenched into the South African society through a repetitive cycle of unsustainable interactional dynamics between black and whites South Africans. As such, interactional processes in which white South Africans deploy the variant “dumb black” stigmatisation demonstrate an impending and threatening perpetual power shift, in which white South Africans attempt to preserve their perceived fleeting psychosocial control and socioeconomic dominion. This demonstrates that racialisation in the workplace is an ongoing phenomenon and thus, contradicts post-racialist and non-racialist claims that the contemporary social culture in South Africa has evolved. Thus, the general racial experience in South Africa is indicative of contemporary social cultures that deploy mass-silencing tactics to blatantly deny the intentionality of post-racialist and colour-blind social orientations that continue oppressive interactional processes (Valji, 2004; Van Dijk, 1992). The preservation of a racialised social culture sustains a specific power dynamic in both the psychosocial and socioeconomic spaces wherein unspoken social rules and expectations determine power dynamics in interactional processes. As such, the collective denial of racially oppressive behaviour in the South African society suggests that post-racial silencing sentiments still result in self-sustaining processes of interactional avoidance (Lund, 2006).

Linguistic processes of workplace communication indicate a deeply racialised operant role that language assumes in the hierarchical designation of social spaces (Bonam, Tylor & Yantis, 2017; Murray & Fujishima, 2016; Musgrave & Bradshaw, 2014). Language particularly plays an important role in how individuals think about race and racialisation. Thus, when linguistic processes designate the use of social spaces in a multicultural society it is reflective that racial territorialisation is significant and definitive trait of the South African society. Therefore, racialised interactional conflicts in the contemporary South African society occur because both black and white South Africans utilise communicative processes to operationalise language as an inclusionary social tool to establish the collective and individual racial identity. Thus, the language of liberal-practical politics in the post-apartheid South African society illustrates a

general inclination to stigmatise abnormal black employee communicative processes (Augoustinos & Every, 2007). As such, the preferential use of the Afrikaans language in occupational eligibility displays intentionality in institutional cultures, preserving the power of white privilege and systemised racial inequality (Foucault, 1980; Mumby, 1988).

Ordinary racial processes of interaction, wherein the Afrikaans language is deployed in the contemporary South African society, continue to evoke adverse emotional reactions in which the psychosocial and existential experiences of blackness are affected. Therefore, racial inequality and discrimination in the general South African societal context represents a static attribute to undermine the psychosocial and existential effects of a normative racialised experience. Thus, positive racial interactions between black and white South Africans are required to yield equally beneficial socioeconomic opportunities that broaden the spectrum of the knowledge networks and social connections that remain segregated according to race. Moreover, the normative black South African racial experience reflects that democratic South African institutional cultures and interactional processes propagate racial discrimination and inequality to protect the institutional socioeconomic investment of normative whiteness, in turn, bearing psychosocial consequences for the overall existential experience of blackness. Thus, black South African experiences of racial identity are subject to existential incongruence as institutional prescriptions of social group importance and competence that locates black and white South Africans on contrasting positions in the post-apartheid social hierarchy as evidenced by the social mechanisms that reinforce the designation and promotion of the recognition of socioeconomic dissimilarities between black and white South Africans. As such, the ordinary racial interactions black South Africans experience reflect that the adverse experience of existential blackness that is subject to contemporary social models of race that relationally construct psychosocial and socioeconomic meanings of blackness as components of post-apartheid institutional cultures enforce racial normalised social ideologies.

## **5.2 Strengths and Limitations**

The findings of this investigation and the researcher's reflexive position contribute a theoretical and practical recommendation to the social sciences knowledge economy. This is the design and implementation of antiracism assessment and intervention strategies for communications and human resources departments in corporate organisations interested in achieving inclusion, integration and participation in the South African workplace context. However, the gender ratio

and the polarised black-white specific focus of the study limit the generalisability of the study findings.

### **5.3 Recommendations Directions for future research**

The researcher suggests that conducting similar studies encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research properties will be beneficial for communications and Human Resources departments in South African corporate companies and equally beneficial for designers and implementers of racial advocacy initiatives concerned with achieving social inclusion, integration, transformation and participation.

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## APPENDIXES

### A. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Greetings,

My name is Nokulunga Magubane; this letter serves as a formal invitation to participate in a social research study about the experiences of being black in the workplace. This research study is to be submitted to the Department of Psychology, at the University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Social and Psychological Research.

The problem explored in this study is that the current South African workplace does not cater for the psychosocial wellbeing of black employees. Notwithstanding the pervasiveness of depression within the black community in the South African society and in the employment realm, there are limited psychosocial correctional initiatives to ensure that the mental health of black people is uncompromised in the workplace. It is necessary to investigate the psychosocial conditions faced by black people in the workplace in order to ascertain the susceptibility of black employees, so that the provision of appropriate social intervention recommendations can be a possibility. Your participation in this study will contribute to the theorization of the psychosocial wellbeing of black employees in the present.

The primary objectives of this study are to:

- Identify the individual and social workplace identity of black employees in the present.
- Ascertain “ordinary” racial interactions black employees’ experience in post-apartheid South Africa.
- Establish if black employees perceive instances of on-going racialization in the workplace.

The participant is required to take part in a one-hour long interview, which will be audio recorded. Participants are further required to sign a consent form for participating in the study and for the recording of the interview. Participants should be aware that participation in this study is voluntary; participants may refuse to answer, any question(s) that make them uncomfortable in any way; participants may withdraw from the study at any time; no information that may identify participants will be included in the study.

Thank You.

## B. AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT FORM



I \_\_\_\_\_ give consent to my interview with Nokulunga Magubane to be audio recorded, for the purposes of her Social and Psychological Research Master's degree thesis on The Experiences of Being Black in the Workplace.

I hereby confirm that I understand that:

- Any person other than the researcher (Nokulunga Magubane) and her supervisor (Prof Garth Stevens) will not access the audio clips and transcripts.
- All audio recordings will be kept in a password protected computer and file after the research is complete.
- There will be no information that identifies the participant in the transcripts or the final research report.
- There will be exact quotations used in the final write up of the study.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### C. INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



I \_\_\_\_\_ give consent to be interviewed by Nokulunga Magubane, for the purposes of her Social and Psychological Research Master's degree thesis on The Experiences of Being Black in the Workplace.

I hereby confirm that I understand that:

- Participation in this interview and study is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer, any question(s) that make me uncomfortable in any way.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the study.
- My responses will remain confidential.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## D. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



1. How would you describe the job you are qualified to do?
  - a. How much work experience do you have?
  - b. How did you decide on this career path?
2. What are your views on race and integration in the workplace?
3. What type of experiences have you had working with racially diverse people?
  - a. How would you describe social relationships in terms of race in the workplace?
  - b. How do you create meaningful friendships in the workplace?
  - c. What are your experiences working with people who are black vs those who are not black?
    - i. What would you say is the most distinctive difference with working with people who are black vs those who are not black? For example, how is working with white people different from working with black people? Is there a difference?
4. What unique challenges would you say black people encounter in the workplace?
  - a. Would you say that these experiences are inclusive to both men and women?
  - b. In your opinion how is being a black female employee different from being a black employee?



5. Taking into consideration the dominant social belief that there is a relationship between race and career advancement, how would you describe this relationship between race and career advancement?
  - a. How do you acquire knowledge about career opportunities?
  - b. Do you think race influences the rate of career development in any way?
    - i. How so?
    - ii. Why do you think that is?
6. What do you think about black employees engaging in expressive conversations with their peers regarding their perspectives on social and economic inequalities in the workplace?
7. Can you tell me about a time you contributed to the development of racial diversity and inclusion in the workplace?
8. If you were to think of a time, you experienced racism in the workplace as a story with a beginning, middle and an end. How would you describe your most memorable experience of racism at work as a story?

## E. ETHICS CERTIFICATE REFERENCE

### UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

### HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT)

#### CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: MASPR/17/003 IH

#### PROJECT TITLE:

The experiences of being black in the workplace

#### INVESTIGATORS

Magubane Nokulunga

#### DEPARTMENT

Psychology

#### DATE CONSIDERED

28/06/17

#### DECISION OF COMMITTEE\*

Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 28 June 2017

CHAIRPERSON   
(Prof. Gillian Finchilescu)

cc Supervisor:

Prof. Garth Stevens  
Psychology

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#### DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10<sup>th</sup> floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

**This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2019**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES