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# Everyday narratives: exploring ‘born-free’ experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa

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# Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

**A research report submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters by Coursework and Research Report degree in the field of Psychology**

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**2020**

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**Plagiarism Declaration**

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this, or any other university. I am aware that plagiarism is unacceptable; and have followed the required conventions in referencing the intellectual property of others. I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if I have failed to acknowledge the sources of the ideas or words in my writing. I hereby confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own original work, except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise in the form of APA 7th edition referencing.

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## Abstract

This study is centred on the perspectives of race amongst 'born-free' youth in post-apartheid South Africa. Using an interpretivist research paradigm, the researcher is primarily interested in how these youth, as the first generation after the abolition of apartheid in 1994; make sense of race in South Africa today. The study is particularly interested in the experiences youth identifying with various racial groups between the age of nineteen and twenty-five, have of race in contemporary South African society and how these experiences have influenced their perspectives of race. Although there have been many studies in the area of race and racial relations in South Africa, many of these research studies have either largely relied on apartheid race classifications, if they have not been suppressed in favour of the concept of non-racialism. As a result, scholars have become increasingly concerned with how racial categories have been used or replaced in post-apartheid South Africa and how using classifications that were legally developed during apartheid consequently essentialize the experiences of people belonging to various racial identity groups, especially without understanding what it means to belong to a particular racial identity in democratic South Africa, and how individuals of various racial identities are affected by the continuation of these classifications. Thus, these definitions and how they continue to be used or replaced with conceptions of non-racialism have since highlighted many issues regarding the lack of transformation in South African society; which this study also reveals through the thematic narrative analysis of written narrative stories and follow up interviews with 10 participants identifying with various racial groups. Irrespective of the diversity within this cohort, similar sentiments reveal schools as sites for the conception of racial awareness and social spaces in democratic South Africa as spaces that are raced and continue to embody racialisation practices; thus prohibiting proper integration amongst this youth and reproducing common experiences of exclusion. Thus through a narrative research approach, what this research intended to investigate was what 'born free' youth have come to know and think about race in contemporary South Africa, how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others, as well as how the contrast between these self- constructed meanings and the pre-existing constructs of race in South Africa affect them at an intrinsic, interpersonal and intrapersonal level.



**Key words: narratives, racial identity, born-free youth, experience, perspectives**

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## Glossary

**#FeesMustFall -** Term referring to the wave of student protests across various South African university campuses which originated at the University of the Witwatersrand in October 2015 after the announcing of a tuition fee increment. It has since become a student led movement which blankets many groups protesting multiple issues within universities, including transformation of education, class, race and gender issues (Pillay, 2015).

**African -** Often used as a blanket term to group individuals that appear or identify within a wide array of cultural groups and / or ethnicities that are originally of African descent. 'African' is commonly interchanged with 'Black' (see definition below) in South Africa.

**Apartheid** - The era of White rule in South Africa from 1948 to the 1994 national elections, where South Africa was characterized by racial segregation and all groups who were not White were heavily oppressed and marginalized by the National Party imposed apartheid laws and policies. The apartheid state was pressured to disband due to both international and internal pressure (sanctions and resistance / liberation movements). It is only after 1994 when the African National Congress (ANC) won, dubbing Nelson Mandela (the then president of the ANC) the first Black president of South Africa, that South Africa having to renew its racist political status to a democratic system (Wolpe, 1995).

**Black** - A term used to describe people who appear to be of, or identify with African descent. This category is typically made up of people whose ancestry can be traced back to various cultural groups and ethnicities that are rooted in Africa. In South Africa Black cultural groups generally vary from ethnic groups such as Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele, Swati, Sotho, Tshwana, Pedi, Tsonga and Venda, although there are variations within these groups based on region (Letshufi, 2016).

**Born-free** - A colloquial term often used amongst older generations in South Africa, to refer to South African youth born post 1994 in the democratic South Africa (currently 25 or younger). This term is not embraced by most South African youth as it has not manifested in material changes and it highlights a conflict between the promises of democracy and the reality of South African society. (Maseti, 2018).

**Coconut** - A derogatory term colloquially used to refer to individuals that appear to be Black but are alleged to display 'White behaviour'. This term is essentialistic in nature as it assumes that there is one type or expression of Blackness as it is typically reserved for Black people who show a preference or ability to only speak English. This term is generally not endearing or embraced (Letshufi, 2016).

**Coloured** - A term used, in South Africa, to refer to people who appear to be of mixed race ancestry that can allegedly be traced back to relations between White people and either Khoi, Black, Indian or Asian people of various cultures and ethnicities. There are many conflicts however about this definition and naming in itself and many Coloured people and communities thus identify as Coloured despite these conflicts or rather identify as Black or as Qriqua although this group it is still not officially recognized.

**Indian** - Commonly used as a blanket term to group individuals that appear or identify within a wide array of cultural groups and / or ethnicities that are originally of Indian descent in South Africa.

**Mixed race** - Term commonly used to describe people who are biracial or multiracial by way of being born to parents of two or more different races as defined by the apartheid categories. Many mixed race people are often confused with Coloured people however this is often to their detriment because they do not identify with Coloured cultures or communities.

**Non-racialism** - A concept that regards race as a fallacious concept and thus promotes that politics proceed from this same sentiment, ultimately viewing all races as one or claiming not to recognize race at all, i.e. colour-blindness with respect to races (Vincent, 2008).

**People of colour** - A blanket term used to describe people of all races who were previously referred to as 'non-whites'. 'People of colour' is comprised of various racial identities, cultures and ethnicities typically excluding those that we know as White. The researcher uses this interchangeably with Biko's (1978) definition of a Black person; which describes anyone who by law was / is discriminated against and / or disadvantaged and resonates with the need to overcome race oppression. Using the term Black (i.e. people of colour) in this way also avoids the essentialist notions that come with racial categories; however because it encompasses a wide array of identities, it is important to consider the complexity of this

concept and not assume struggles within the group are homogenous, due to the hierarchy created by racial classifications (Biko 1978).

**Racialisation** – Racialisation is defined as the differing between one's self and an 'other' in colonial contexts which infers White superiority and Black inferiority, which are constantly juxtaposed to create an oppressor and the oppressed – (Bulhan, 1985). Stevens (2014) simplifies this by defining it as a combination of social and psychic processes that occur to make race meaningful within social contexts.

**Racism** – Racism is defined by Colman (2009, p.632) as, "beliefs that races are inherently different from one another and that people's capabilities and characteristics are determined largely by race. Such beliefs are usually accompanied by a belief in the intrinsic superiority of one particular race over another / others" - in the Oxford Dictionary of Psychology.

**White** - People who typically appear to be of European descent all over the world. This can generally refer to Afrikaans or, English speaking South Africans.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

With this study the researcher aimed to explore her interest in race and race relations amongst the 'born-free' youth by exploring what 'born free' youth have come to know and think about race in contemporary South Africa, how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others, as well as how the contrast between these self- constructed meanings and the pre-existing constructs of race in South Africa affect them at an intrinsic, interpersonal and intrapersonal level. It aimed to do this with a specific focus on the experiences various racial groups in the post-1994 generation have had with race and racial identity throughout the course of their lives in contemporary South African society. Thus the researcher was particularly interested in interpreting how these experiences have influenced the perspectives a cohort of youth; identifying with various racial groups hold - since growing up as the first generation after the abolition of apartheid in 1994. This cohort consists of youth that identified as Black, Coloured, Indian, Mixed race or White. Although the researcher is aware and acknowledges that these categories are problematic and that not all individuals may identify with these racial classifications, and more specifically their definitions due to the stigmas that were attached to them during apartheid; the definitions are presented in terms of the legal designated categorization in the South African context for ease of reference. A glossary (page 5) has been included to define these categories and terms commonly referred to (such as 'born-free') in South Africa for the purpose of this study.

As defined in the glossary, apartheid was the era of White supremacist rule in South Africa from 1948 until the 1994 national elections. During this time South Africa was characterized by racial segregation, marginalization and oppression of all groups who were not part of the White minority (Badat, 1999). This was often done through corrupt apartheid laws and discriminatory policies which created a hierarchy amongst White vs 'non-white' races (i.e. people of colour) (Badat, 1999). The apartheid state was pressured to disband due to both international and internal pressure such as sanctions and various resistance and liberation movements (Wolpe, 1995). It was only on April 27, 1994 when the African National Congress (ANC) won the elections, dubbing Nelson Mandela (the then president of the ANC) and the ANC; the first Black president and government of South Africa, pushing South Africa's racist political and social status to adopt a democratic system (Wolpe, 1995). Children who were born after these elections were subsequently referred to as 'born-frees', as

the general sentiment after these elections was that of triumph amongst people of colour (Black people in particular), and change, progress and equality amongst the general population of South Africa - especially for the futures of this alleged born-free generation (Maseti, 2018). In contemporary South African Society however this term is not often embraced by South African youth as it highlights a conflict between the promises of democracy and the reality of South African society (Maseti, 2018). Maseti (2018, p. 62) writes, "*The term 'born-free' does not describe a generation free from racial discrimination and chronic inequality. Rather it seems to be more of an aspirational term which separates the 'struggle generation' from those born once the struggle had purportedly ended...*" (Maseti, 2018, p.62).

**Research questions:**

1. What are 'born-free' youth's experiences of race in contemporary South Africa?
2. What are 'born-free' youth's perspectives of race and racial identity in South Africa?
3. How have these experiences influenced 'born-free' youth's perspectives of race and racial identity in South Africa?

**Research aims**

1. The study aimed to explore 'born-free' youth's *experiences* of race in post-apartheid South Africa.
2. The study aimed to explore 'born-free' youth's *perspectives* of race and racial identity in South Africa.
3. The study aimed to explore how these experiences have influenced their current perspectives of race and racial identity.

**Rationale & problem statement**

Although there have been many studies in the area of race and racial relations during this shift to democracy in South Africa e.g. Low, Akande and Hill (2005); Norns et al (2008); Thom and Coetzee (2008), plenty of research surrounding the topic of race has largely relied on apartheid race classifications if it has not been suppressed in favour of a fallacious concept of non-racialism. As a result, scholars have become increasingly concerned with how racial

categories have been used or replaced in post-apartheid South Africa and how using classifications that were legally developed during apartheid consequently essentialize the experiences of people belonging to various racial identity groups (Erasmus, 2010). Scholars such as Erasmus and Ellison (2008); Erasmus (2010); Posel (2001);Whitehead (2009), and Whitehead (2012) have rightfully accused these classifications of being essentialistic, which has gained more popularity especially since the theorization of the 'coconut' which has been expanded on by Kumbalonah (2013); Letshufi (2016); Matlwa (2007); Phiri (2010), and Ratele (2013) (see glossary) and has often coincided with the topic of 'born-free' youth. The literature surrounding 'coconuts' highlights how race has been posed as common sense, and this trend to pose race as common sense has been prolific under apartheid however we still witness its popularity today (Erasmus, 2010). Consequently, insight on the experiences that influence 'born-free' youth's perspectives of race within the current South African context has not always been fully explored across the various racial groups common to South Africa; especially without understanding what it means to belong to a particular racial identity in democratic South Africa and how individuals of various racial identities are affected by the continuation of these classifications. The experiences and psychology of the generation referred to as 'born-free' however has been a developing topic since 1994's shift to democracy and has further been gaining popularity following the onset of #FeesMustFall; which also highlighted many issues regarding the lack of transformation in the (tertiary) education system and ultimately in South African society (Pillay, 2015). The researcher refers to this event as the start of her thinking about the experiences and the perspectives of South African youth as it pertains to race, after witnessing the racialisation of this movement and how racial tension between mainly Black and White students swiftly became rife throughout university campuses and on social media (Pillay, 2015). Thus this report aimed to explore the different perspectives of race held by youth of democratic South Africa through investigating what 'born free' youth have come to know and think about race, and how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others by inquiring what experiences youth of various racial identities have had with race throughout the course of their live and how these experiences have influenced the (racial) identity formation within the post-apartheid youth. The study thus had a particular interest in this youth's experiences of growing up as the first generation after the abolition of apartheid in 1994 and the role these experiences have had in shaping current perspectives. Given that this study is centered on the perspectives of race amongst youth born in post-apartheid South Africa, the participants would have to be people between the age from 19 and 25 of various races.

By looking through the lens of this generations reflections regarding their upbringing, self-identity, and their sense of identification with the society surrounding them through using a narrative research approach, the study thus aimed to investigate if the experiences 'born-free' individuals belonging to varying racial identity groups have encountered, have not in fact perpetuated perspectives that reproduce racial tension amongst the younger generation in democratic South Africa. Thus the stories that this 'born-free' youth told about navigating the spaces that they frequently occupied throughout their lives (such as their homes, communities, schools, work places etc.) became the researchers site of interest as they presented a platform for her to analyse racial dynamics in contemporary South African society amongst this particular generation; and interpret if the highly racialized and politicized dynamics that were present pre-1994, have been adopted or rejected by this youth to determine how South Africa's transition into democracy has affected this youth and their narrative at both the inter-personal and intrapersonal level (Badat, 1999). Therefore the research ultimately aimed to highlight the role and influence that the individuals' experiences of growing up have in creating current perspectives of race, to determine how these experiences shapes the perspectives of racial identity young people currently hold today and if this influences how they interact with and think of one another; as well as their own identity through using a qualitative method of inquiry and an interpretivist paradigm. The study used a narrative research approach which allowed the researcher to trace the source of these perspectives through the participants' telling of their stories in a written narrative exercise, followed up by semi-structured interviews about the contents of the written narrative exercises which better enabled the researcher to make sense of the reported perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). These various sets of data were then analysed through a narrative analysis in order to identify common themes in each racial group's perspectives, accounts and experiences of their own race to ultimately determine whether similar understandings, perspectives and experiences exist amongst similar and diverse racial groups (Creswell, 2013).

## Chapter 2

## Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

Theorizing identity can often be a difficult task due to the complexities that are present within individuals and society, along with the array of identity theories which argue in which way identity should be analysed from (Scott & Marshall, 2009). A general consensus when it comes to identity theorists however is, to attempt to theorize identity without the consideration of context is almost redundant as it removes the aspect of relationality which is of critical importance in understanding individual's experiences of identity and identity formation (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Thus, although there is no clear concept of identity amongst scholars, the concept of identity bases itself on the categorisation of individuals in society through the intrinsic inheritance of characteristics that are ascribed to a group / groups by way of personal and political interest (Scott & Marshall, 2009). These groups are often constructed by way of socially constructed ideologies such as race that are reinforced through socialisation which is defined as the continuous process whereby individuals are taught how to become members of a particular society (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Therefore, identity is defined as the belief of the representation of one's self in relation to the broader social world (Scott & Marshall, 2009). That is to say that there is always an aspect of social influence that is attached to identity (Colman, 2009).

It is also important however to note that because identity is dichotomous in that it is simultaneously individual and social, dialectical thinking must always be exercised when analysing one or the other; and in doing this researchers theorizing identity must always create a conversation between the social and the individual and vis-à-vis (Ndlovu, 2012). Thus we understand that identity is not a unilateral thing for any individual, as it is always relational; as social, political, economic and ideological influences remain at play and often in competition psychically as one moves within the social world, causing conflicting identities to reside within an individual (Ndlovu, 2012). As a result depending on the appropriate social role according to socialisation and the setting in which individuals find themselves, individuals are often internally silencing and concealing multiple layers of their identity, whilst revealing what is required within a specific context (Ndlovu, 2012). An example of identity being treated as singular can be seen with #FeesMustFall where the movement was initially defined as student movement however it swiftly became a Black

student movement and furthermore broke down to a poor Black student movement as students' differences forced many to realize that they do not share a singular identity (Rasethaba, 2016). It is for this reason that this study aimed to focus on the individual experiences a cohort of participants identifying with various racial groups have had in order to collect and contrast their narratives against the singular context of democratic South Africa, with aim to better understand the 'born-free' identity group.

To simplify the conceptualisation of identity used throughout this study the researcher draws on Brubaker and Cooper (2000) who argue that this conceptualisation of identity more often than not simplifies (and ultimately reduces) the complex array of (aspects of) identities, as well as the competition and conflict between them. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) thus encourage us to think of identity as permeable, multiple and constructed; and additionally to understand it as 1) a category of practice, 2) as something apparent in everyday life and our social interactions, and 3) as a category of analysis in order to understand identity politics and organisation (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This theorization is referred to in the research through the investigation of the practices that this youth have been exposed to and thus engaged in in their growing up, through the investigation of how race appears in their everyday life experiences and through the overall intersectional thinking about the various identities of the South African youth. Considering that this research was concerned with the narratives of this 'born-free' youth, the researcher analyses identity from the narrative identity perspective.

## Narrative Identity

When we acknowledge the role narratives play in the construction of our identity, we accept how identity can be analysed through the stories which people share about their lives (Chase, 2005). These stories are almost always sequential in that they explain one's life from beginning to middle, to end and are often entangled in an overall plot (Chase 2005). This is the basis of narrative identity, which provides a platform to understand identity by focusing on the stories individuals tell about their experiences throughout the course of their lives (McAdams, 2001). That is to say that in understanding the 'born-free' youth we are concerned with in this study, the researcher needed to focus on the experiences they illustrate and how they integrate past experiences, present circumstances and future aspirations to explain their life stories across time (McAdams, 2001). Therefore focusing on these

narratives in conjunction with the time in which they are located was necessary in order to understand which way these experiences have influenced this groups (racial) identity formation within the context of post-apartheid South Africa (McAdams, 2001). Thus internal notions of identity happen simultaneously with external attributions of identity by virtue of embodying certain aspects of identity, for example, being considered and referred to as a born-free youth by virtue of being under the age of 25 in South Africa (which has been in a developing democracy since 1994) (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Thus because of the idea that narrative identity is developed over time and is informed, one could deduce that this group has grown up alongside South Africa's transitional period and that conflict could arise between what older generations think it means to be a 'born-free' versus what youth under the age of 25 think it means to be 'born-free' (McAdams, 2001). Therefore when it comes to narrative identity conflicting roles must always be considered to get the full picture of the factors that influence identity formation in order to understand present identities and the perspectives they hold as informed by recollected memories (McAdams (2001). Identity formation can thus be understood as the developmental process in which individuals make sense of their own identity based on the make-up of their unique characteristics in conjunction with the positive regard and feedback that they receive from their interpersonal relationships within their social environment (Jacobs & Collair, 2017). Thus although it is defined as an individual process of meaning making, social experiences are equally important and cannot be excluded in the shaping of a sense of identity, hence the researchers reliance on them throughout this research (Jacobs & Collair, 2017).

To further understand South African youth's perspectives of race the researcher has applied McAdams's (2001) narrative identity theorization to an Intersectional framework; which helped highlight which, and how different aspects of identity influence how individuals experience the world as a result of these various aspects and the roles and expectations they place on people (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As a result of these expectations people almost always have to perform identity at some point of their lives, if not in everyday life; often resulting in an identity crisis which Erikson (1968) describes as the point (typically in adolescence) where one either forms a secure identity or a sense of confusion about ones identity arises (McAdams, 2001). Erikson (1968, p. 96) refers to this point as a "crisis" because the meaning of who one is, where one come's from, and where one is going in life seems to be unclear to them (Jacobs & Collair, 2017). This could be a result of the conflicting roles within identity, which the researcher hereby argues can better be explored through

analysing identity through narratives (McAdams, 2001).

## Intersectionality

In further exploring these roles and how this youth is affected by the wider social world, as mentioned above the researcher turns to Intersectionality. Intersectionality is a theoretical framework coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) to analyse privilege and oppression on the basis of various components of identity. That is to say, intersectionality provided a lens for the researcher to think about the multi-layered complexities of the identities she was concerned with throughout this study (AWID, 2004). This framework was essential to this study as it has allowed the researcher to apply it for the purpose of locating the participants' social identities. AWID (2004) argues that it is imperative that a framework that embraces the multiplicity of identity is used for a study of this nature as Intersectionality aims at highlighting and addressing silent oppressions that invade the everyday experiences of particular individuals. With the foundation of thinking of 'double burden's' and 'triple modes of oppression' provided by Kimberly Crenshaw (1989), Patricia Hill-Collins (1990), bell hooks (1997), and Judith Lorber (1996) in their literature on particularly Black women's (gender and racial) oppression and the need for empowerment for marginalized groups as a result of intersectional thinking; the researcher extends on these arguments with newer pieces of literature that have further developed the way in which we think about Intersectionality, namely Blige (2013), Cole (2009) and Yuval-Davis (2006). Although these scholars raise diverse points regarding the pedagogy of Intersectionality, consensus that Intersectionality bases its focus on the legacy of exclusions remains amongst all Intersectional scholars; which proves the framework to be useful platform to understanding social identity and ultimately to better understanding narrative identity as well as for its universal applicability and transferability (Davis, 2008). Intersectionality has thus allowed for focus on both political (macro-level) and structural (micro-level) narratives in order to locate where particular identities (such as alleged born-free youth) stand within a particular society (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Thus through investigating macro axes of power such as an apartheid government and furthermore White monopoly capital (i.e. the weight of South Africa's economy being White owned), researchers using this framework can also locate who is subject to this power (such as Black people / people of colour and / or people who are poverty stricken) (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Locating individuals within their wider social environment then allows one to consider the multitude of social and state institutions that influence individuals (such as family,

schools and work) and additionally gives researchers a lens to investigate the inter-subjective and the intra-subjective experiences individuals and groups face as a result of this governance (Yuval- Davis, 2006). This expands on Crenshaw (2005) who emphasizes that it is essential to capture the multiplicity of identities, the interlocking of categories of identity and the context in which said identity is situated, because if these indicators are otherwise ignored, we risk further marginalizing already marginalized identities. In addition, because belonging to a particular group ascribes certain morals, values and ethics; whether from an emotional, political or cultural aspect, we need to consider how these in fact pressurize individuals within particular groups such as racial groups (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Expanding on identity and relating it to the South African context are Boonzaier and Mkhize (2018), Bradbury and Kiguwa (2013), and Kessi (2011) who use visual methodologies and Intersectional thinking to highlight how different intersections of identity within the South African context produce different experiences. In each of these studies dichotomies such as exclusion and inclusion; disadvantage and advantage, and repression and resistance are found when various constructs of identity such as race, gender, class and religion were considered. This indicates the complexity of identity, which can be displayed through exploring the experiences particular identity groups have as a result of the conflict between their social identity and sense of individual identity (Ndlovu, 2012). In attempt to follow the fashion displayed by the authors of these studies, the researcher referred to Cole (2009) who poses three pertinent questions that researchers must ask throughout their analyses of particular identity groups. Question one asking, who is included within this category? Question two asking, what role inequality plays regarding this group; and question three asking where the similarities are when comparing to other groups. Cole (2009) further elaborates on these inquiries by explaining that the first inquiry involves an investigation of the diversity within social categories whilst the second inquiry juxtaposes the social categories to historical contexts in order to determine who the hegemon is and where a group stands in the social hierarchy of that society through the analysis of overarching power dynamics and the respective groups' relationship with privilege. The third inquiry allows for the exploration of intragroup and intergroup similarities. This line of questioning proposed by Cole (2009) is what the researcher has applied throughout her analysis when investigating the different racial identities explored in this research report.

## Erikson's Stages of Psycho-social Development

Erik Erikson's (1968) stages of psycho-social development gain relevance in this study as the theory demonstrates the succession of eight stages from the onset of one's life up until its end. More specifically Erikson (1968) points to the psycho-social crises that individuals are typically faced with at different parts of their life as they develop from infants to the elderly (foundational to structural stages). In his theorization Erikson (1968) displays that at each of these stages (which are differentiated by distinct age groupings) we have predominant preoccupations which are also influenced by our interactions in the social world through socialisation which as described above can be thought of as an ongoing process of 'etiquette training' as one interacts with their environment. Persell (1999) further describes this as a pervasive process whereby individuals consciously and subconsciously learn the norms and standards within society and furthermore internalize them. Persell (1999) describes this process as coercive as they argue that individuals are often only taught the accepted legal, social and cultural values within a particular context - which are often the values of social institutions such as the law, religion, school and the family, dubbing these institutions as authoritative (Persell, 1999). In applying this to Erik Erikson's (1968) theory of psycho-social development, one could interpret how individuals are socialized and educated in each developmental stage of their life thus; their attitudes and behaviours are influenced by both biological and social stimuli (Sameroff, 2010). Socialisation can thus be thought of as a social influence which is seen in the form of one having to confirm or comply with rules and regulations set within their small circles in their immediate environment, by communities to which they form part of or by wider society (Colman, 2009).

Thus as we are socialized into the different stages of our lives proposed by Erikson (1968), we witness how the social world gains more importance and shapes the individual to not only consider, but also act according to their context as they adopt a particular social identity in a particular context. With intersectional thinking one is able to integrate all the contradictory and conflicting roles that affect an individual, such as race. Hirshfeld (1996) further unpacks this as he demonstrates how we come to think about race in the foundational stages outlined by Erikson (1968). Hirshfeld (1996, p.7) begins his inquiry by questioning, "if people do not discern race, how is it that they come to think about it as they do?". The author further states that because humans typically have the capacity and ability to categorize and reason about others, creating distinctions between and amongst ourselves is not a far-fetched task for many, as psychological and scientific studies have revealed that as humans, we tend to classify objects that share apparent physical similarities (Hirshfeld, 1996). Thus when referring to humans; because factors like race and sex have such prominent and consistent

physical features which serve as areas of distinction, we tend see difference as obvious and natural and consequently create categories of distinction (Hirshfeld, 1996). We can thus understand race to be a rather unique belief, which Hirshfeld (1996, p.12) urges is "in significant measure unlike any other common-sense notion", as it is indicated that the idea of race as a complex of beliefs about physical appearance and intrinsic qualities does not derive purely from perceptual analysis. This indicates that racialized thinking is often a result of racial socialisation which Neblett, et al. (2009) demonstrate plays a critical role in the development of the meanings and the significance that individuals ascribe to race. This concept is of critical importance when considering identities as it highlights the internalised roles that individuals such as 'born-free' youth have adopted by virtue of belonging to particular racial group, which in turn indicates the intrinsic conflicts that shape their identity formation (Persell, 1999). Furthermore, utilizing Erikson's theory of psycho-social development in contrast with this allows us to understand what effect ones background and upbringing has in shaping their perspectives of race in their adult life, making this theory important to the researchers investigation of 'born-free' youth's perspectives and experiences of racial identity.

## Critical Race Theory

Scott and Marshall (2009) define race as a socially constructed ideology which requires the categorization of people with various (combinations of) phenotypical differences. This evolved and created a broad sense of cultural cohesiveness amongst individuals belonging to various racial groups and ethnicities around the world as this classification created a hierarchy between differing racial groups (Scott & Marshall, 2009). These individuals thus began to relate to each other's common experiences and grievances caused by this hierarchy which oppressed and marginalized people of colour; ultimately forming communities (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Regardless of the fact that it has been argued and confirmed that there are no significant biological differences between people of particular races, race still remains one of the most considered components of identity throughout the world due to its immense impact on influencing social division throughout the world at both a micro and a macro level (More, 2012). Regardless of its initial fallacious conceptualization which was based on the physical differences between people, information about people was manipulated by eugenics and pseudo-science in the Age of Enlightenment to create social divisions between European

settlers and the natives they came in to contact with during their expeditions of colonial conquest (Winant, 2015). In expanding this, Winant (2015) argues that ideas of Western civilisation did not have an influence on the people of Africa until the late nineteenth century when both civilisations began interacting with one another. He makes the argument that up to that point African culture was made up of African ideals and philosophies and it was only after Africans' interactions with the West that they abandoned them. Winant (2015) argues that following slavery, Europeans set their sights upon the African continent and colonised much of West, Eastern and Southern Africa. When the Europeans set their sights on these societies, natives were both directly and indirectly influenced in that Western economic structures, religion and education were adopted by Africans through force, by way of colonisation (Winant, 2015). Winant (2015) further more states that colonisation was merely a system to substitute slavery since the trading of slaves had become illegal.

We here witness that a purposive effort was thus put in place to divide the world into two opposing racial groups, namely: White and Black (Posel, 2001). These divisions were then used to oppress 'non-whites' (i.e. people of colour), by creating structural imbalances through institutions such as health care, education, legislation and religion, where those who were categorised as Black would be disadvantaged and consequently never treated as equals thus leaving consideration for Western countries to be more developed and forward thinking with regards to their ideals and ideologies when compared to Eastern and African countries (More, 2012). The most prominent of these ideologies is a capitalist system (More, 2012). In contemporary society, it has been argued by many critical race theorists including Winant (2015) that the structural residues of oppressive systems such as colonialism continues to exist presently (through systems such as capitalism) and continue to do so because the changes from these systems have only been made on a superficial level. As a result people of colour; mainly in African, Middle-Eastern and Asian countries are still the majority of people in the world that are oppressed by these systems. Westerners and Europeans on the contrary are the majority that have benefited from these structures as Winant (2015) along with an array of Critical Race Theorists (Appiah (1992), Crenshaw (1989), du Bois (1997), Fanon (1967, 1986), and Hill-Collins (1986, 1990 & 1998)) argue. As a result these structures and systems were kept in place and met with minimal change even in the period we know as post-colonialism (Winant, 2015) Young (2003) adds that post-colonialism has based itself under the false pretence that it recognises the ideals of equality and basic human rights for all, however after going through periods where slaves were sold as a commodity, the end of the

slave trade, colonisation's rise and fall, and post-colonialism; the amount of progress made in terms of race and class relations worldwide is highly questionable especially when one takes into consideration that little to no progress has been made as people who fall under 'non-white' categories and were previously disadvantaged, are still presently disadvantaged. Winant (2015) points out that the premise of post-colonialism has created the false implication and the expectation that it will rebuild and repair societies, which were negatively impacted and ultimately ruined by colonialism and imperialism. However regardless of the proclamations of human rights recognition and equal opportunity for all, this has proved not to be the reality as we continue to witness inequality that is mostly racial in nature since the construction of race by Europeans for the purpose of conquest - to present day (Winant, 2015).

This explains how racial hierarchies have thus been reproduced through ongoing systematic oppression, along with the continuous reproduction of class categories (Posel, 2001). It is thus without a doubt that race can be seen, currently and historically as a significant factor in determining one's social status beyond its biological conception as it has been argued over centuries (Hirschfeld, 1996). Constructs of the race that one belongs to referred not only to the way that people appeared; but also to social standing, how they lived and how they should be treated as a result (Hirschfeld, 1996) Race, class and poverty thus were social constructs which worked hand in hand to create an overall undesirable social identity (Hirschfeld, 1996). This being the theme throughout history, makes race an extremely important aspect of our identities as cultural groups, communities and the diverse assortment of distinctive ethnicities which were created as a result of the common experiences distinctive racial categories faced (Brewer, 2007). Thus race as an intersection of any identity cannot go ignored because of its deep entrenchment in history. Black feminist scholars such as Hill-Collins (1990) thus encourage people to evaluate pervasive systems of oppression such as race class and gender in order to see how they act as one overarching structure that interlocks the multiple oppressions on individuals according to the marginalized aspects of their identities. An example of the significance of race in the construction of identities is provided by Gqola (2015) who describes how the hegemons in our society (namely capitalistic, White supremacist, hetero-patriarchal structures) prey on the poor throughout society to remind them that they are inadequate, insignificant, inferior and ultimately are the subordinates in society in strategy to stigmatize and shame them for being poverty stricken. This strategy is played out in such a way that poverty stricken / socially

marginalized people continuously attempt to work 'harder' within the capitalist scheme of things in hopes that they will thereby gain societal acceptance, relative wealth, upgraded social status and consequently positive regard from those within the top of the hierarchy; however their movements remain restricted within the status ladder and many of them remain poor no matter how hard or how much work they actually do (Gqola, 2015). With this, the researcher hereby argues that this pattern is simulated throughout adjunctive categories of identity such as race, making it a significant category of identification.

More (2012) expands by stating that such structurally inflicted feelings of inadequacy can be traced back to slavery and colonial conquest for one to see that they have been achieved through the manipulating of legislation, economies and politics in order to maintain racial divisions and ideals that support these oppressive systems, ultimately deeming 'non-whites' as people who are discriminated against and excluded on every level of society; a clear example being apartheid South Africa. Fanon's (1967) account on the reproduction of continuous marginalizing race relations can be applied to the South African context to explain the significance of race in contemporary society even after the disbanding of apartheid (Fanon, 1967). When one looks at the complex history of South Africa, our context must always be referred to when dealing with issues surrounding racial identity (Posel, 2001). Appiah (1992) elaborates on this as he argues that we cannot make sense of any African identity without considering the pre-colonial context, as African experiences rely heavily on the fallacious concept of race. Thus given South Africa's history, it is critically important for our specific context to constantly be considered when working on topics related to racial identity. In expanding, when considering the South African context, the legacy of the apartheid is evident in the country's current socio-economic and political state, therefore analysing identities in this context cannot be done isolation from the fact that there are still structurally inflicted injustices that still affect majority of the population (Posel, 2001). As they argue against the assumption that race is a natural, Barot and Bird (2016) gain relevance in this study as they use the concept of racialisation to further detail how race is socially constructed. As mentioned in the glossary, racialisation is described by Bulhan (1985) as, the differing between one's self and an 'other' in colonial contexts which infers White superiority and Black inferiority, which are constantly juxtaposed to create an oppressor and the oppressed (Stevens, 2014). Stevens (2014) simplifies this by defining it as a combination of social and psychic processes that occur to make race meaningful within social contexts. Barot and Bird (2016) argue that sociological analyses of race shifted from analysing race

relations to identifying racism as an ideology and seeing racialisation as a process that ascribes bodily and behavioural differences to individuals and groups. Banton (1988) also adds to this argument by describing racialisation as the deployment of attitudes, prejudices and discriminatory practices as part of a broader mode of categories associated with colonialization and contact with the other (Stevens, 2014). Thus because of this close relationship between racialisation and race, the researcher hereby argues that racialisation is a signifier of race in itself. This can be justified by Spivak (1990) who argues that the process of racializing the world created a strategic essentialism whereby unique (collective)' experiences and the creation of 'us and them' / in-group out-group identities allow for the continued appropriation of a racialized oppression throughout history all the way to the present day (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012). In expanding this, racialisation can thus be thought of as the deployment of ideas of race to maintain existing structural margins in order to ensure racially constructed categories and groups remain in the periphery of power relations (Barot & Bird, 2016). The concept of racialisation explores racial relations within specific contexts with the aim to investigate the reproduction of power dynamics (Barot & Bird, 2016). Thus with the application of Critical Race Theory, we understand that the categorization of people is central to not only understanding the way in which social structures work to maintain the meanings attached to belonging to certain categories such as race; but, social categories like race are also central tools of analysis for understanding social identities such as racial identities (Whitehead, 2009). Furthermore when considering the stages of one's life as theorized by Erikson (1968), we learn that people tend to try make sense of their lives within each stage. Thus using this theory in conjunction with McAdam's (2001) conceptualization of narrative identity, we understand that each of these stages are characterized by their own unique story; which is what captures the essence of using narratives to explore the experiences 'born-free' youth of different racial identities have had throughout their upbringing to present time. In the following chapter the researcher expands on the topic of race in South Africa and before following with a section conceptualizing born-free youth in this context.

# Chapter 3

## Literature Review

In this chapter the researcher focuses further on the topics of 'born-free' youth and race within the South African context, to highlight the arguments which are relevant and fundamental for this research report. The researcher has thus partitioned the literature review into these two respective sections where in which the first section outlines how racial classifications in our context inform many of the identity issues South Africans still struggle with today. This section then ties to the overall social construct of race. The second section discusses the alleged 'born-free' generation by offering a critical analysis of the concept of a 'born-free', before demonstrating how race appears beyond the surface in the lives of alleged 'born-free' youth.

### 3.1 Race in South Africa

#### Categories of race in our context

Throughout this study, the context the researcher refers to is South Africa, as it is not only the context that the researcher writes from, but it is generally thought of as one of the most 'raced' nations in the world as racism remains a common occurrence that many experience (Posel, 2001). Rasmussen (2011) provides a genealogy of racism based on Michel Foucault which describes racism as the work of the bio-political government. Thus through the analysis of the discourses surrounding social wars; one can observe that modern racism has been produced by the government(s) (through racialisation) in attempt to manage and control their populations (Rasmussen, 2011). A clear example of this can be seen in apartheid South Africa where in which racial categories were heavily drawn on and deployed as instruments of segregation, surveillance and control by a state which wished to maintain White supremacy (and more specifically; Afrikaanerdom) (Posel, 2001). In explaining; racial categories were exploited along with the aid of already existing pseudo-science to create common sense notions of racial differences which served to further divide and entrench those already dehumanized on the basis of race whilst empowering those already in a position of privilege on the basis of race (Posel, 2001). Posel (2001) further argues that the architects of apartheid racial classification policies recognized explicitly that racial categories were constructs, rather than descriptions of true essences of racial difference, but through

legislation and the bureaucratization of race common sense, management and control over the South African population was achieved by the apartheid government to such an extent that the everyday lives of South African citizens were altered in such a way that the subjective experiences of race populations who are referred to as previously disadvantaged are still currently disadvantaged despite the denouncing of apartheid and the shift to democracy. This is shown in the 7up: South Africa series that followed several children from various racial backgrounds every seven years from the age of seven up until they were twenty eight years old in order to display how apartheid categories of race shaped the lives of individuals in almost all aspects of their lives by determining their circumstance and consequently predetermining their future circumstances (Gibson, 2016). Although the series by Gibson (2016) aimed to capture how times have changed for these children in these seven year intervals, it perfectly depicted how the apartheid state's racial designations reproduced and perpetuated hierarchies of class and status in society, so much so that once democracy in South Africa was 'achieved', class relations somewhat concealed race relations and replaced them as the main mode of maintaining marginalization for the hegemon of society which was still white-supremacist and patriarchal at heart (Gibson, 2016). The 7up: South Africa series started in 1992 and was aired by news channel Al Jazeera English in 2013 (Gibson, 2016).

Several years later the MTV documentary People Versus the Rainbow Nation was released by Rasethaba (2016). This documentary followed four university students in South Africa's most developed cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Cape Town) in order to discuss South Africa's current socio-political and economic climate from their perspectives. The People Versus The Rainbow Nation starts off with a quote that reads, "*We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both Black and White , will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity… Each of us is as intimately attached to the soil of this beautiful country as are the famous jacaranda trees of Pretoria and the mimosa trees of the bushveld – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world*" - Nelson Mandela, 1994 (Rasethaba, 2016). This quote expresses the sentiments then elected president Nelson Mandela had after the ANC (African National Congress) won the 1994 national elections: ultimately replacing the apartheid government and dubbing South Africa a democratic 'rainbow' nation (Wolpe, 1995). The political actuality is written by Pumolo Ngoma and directed by Lebogang Rasethaba (2016), and it uncovers the struggles that are still faced by South Africa's post-apartheid generation by going behind the scenes and addressing issues

that were voiced throughout the mass student-led protest movements which took place in the higher education sector between 2015 and 2016 under the blanket #FeesMustFall. In the film the same issues of democracy that were called out throughout the 7up: South Africa series were called out, regardless of the number of years that had passed since each film was produced. Rasetsaba (2016) thus provides a platform to inquire what happened to then President Nelson Mandela's Rainbow Nation and where South Africa stands in terms of racial transformation which allowed the study to better understand the context of the 'born-free' participants in this study (Mpondwana, 2016).

The concept of a 'rainbow nation' is described by Manzo (1996) who states that it was initially coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and then elaborated by then president Nelson Mandela to describe the aim and desire for an integrated post-apartheid South Africa. The term 'rainbow nation' was thus intended to reflect the coming-together of people from all walks of life into one multi-cultural, melting pot in a country that previously rejected racial and cultural integration (Ngoasheng & Gachago, 2016). Political and legal anthropologist Dr. Kelly Gillespie however states in the film that #FeesMustFall called out the fallacy of our rainbow nation (Rasethaba, 2016). In expanding on this, writer Milisuthando Bongela is also cited from the film as she states that "*Black South Africans have faced 181 years of slavery in SA, followed by 200 years of colonialism by the British thereafter, followed by another 48 years of apartheid; and were ultimately expected to "get over it' as 'it is in the past'*", as commonly expressed by White South Africans (Rasethaba, 2016). This sentiment has been enabled by the proposition of a rainbow nation by its implication that every citizen is suddenly on equal standing (Valji, 2003). The reality of it however, is that South Africans still experience and witness inequality that is inherently racial in nature (Posel, 2001). Talk Radio presenter Gugulethu Mhlungu explains in the film that "*when we talk about 1994 we talk about a moment where the White elite handed over reign to the Black elite, but we don't talk about how structures have stayed the same since that point*", indicating that institutions have not actually changed since the 1994 elections; Black people were simply included in existing institutions and were therefore expected to assimilate to White ideals (Rasethaba, 2016). Therefore in highlighting the rainbow nation's failure to rebuild and repair South African society, the film contrasts the scenery of the violence against students during #FeesMustFall against images of their everyday lives as people in the world, and students in particular who are affected by issues of White privilege, the fallacy of a rainbow nation, and White supremacy / Black inferiority which are the prominent themes in the film and overall

South African society (Rasethaba, 2016). This aids the study in that it moves us away from the belief that democratic South Africa is indeed a rainbow nation and reveals that believing this undermines the experiences, perspectives and narratives of the participants as 'born-free' youth as well as the possibilities for true transformation through the sharing of narratives to promote interpretation, inspire the decolonization, to promote real reconciliation, and to initiate conversations about racial integration in order to promote an authentic South Africa (Valji, 2003).

We witness however that the inclusion of Black people / people of colour in South African society has simply been mistaken for integration, leading many to prematurely believe that Tutu and Mandela's dream of a rainbow nation was realized. Vincent (2008) supports this in stating that although distinctive races came into closer contact with one another, after the announcement of democracy in 1994, this has not been indicative of greater racial integration. With the concealing of race relations as those which are still operationalized at the macro-level as was within apartheid; the agenda of racism in democratic South Africa has been to recreate racism as something which is seen to only operate at the micro-level with the aid of racialisation and the denial of racism through concepts such as non-racialism and multi-racialism (Vandeyer, 2010). Vincent (2008) states that these concepts appeared as radical or liberal alternative ideologies of race after the abolition of apartheid, pointing out that multi-racialism is said to promote the tolerance of races whilst non-racialism acknowledges the fallacious concept of race and promotes that acknowledgement as the point in which politics can proceed. Whitehead (2009) supports this by stating that non-racialism became an anti-apartheid buzzword which lacked content and clarity on its meaning which was often presented as multiple and therefore open to misinterpretation. As a result of this inconsistency and the contradictions that arose, confusion surrounds the topic of non-racialism which Whitehead (2009) points out has been a concept that has been prominent in South African politics even prior to democratic South Africa. Whitehead (2009) further points that that non-racialism was central and useful in uniting South African citizens against the apartheid state as freedom fighters identified with it as opposed to the classifications apartheid placed on them. Erasmus (2010) strengthens this by highlighting how apartheid freedom fighters denounced ideas of racial identification to achieve the goal of overthrowing the apartheid government. These authors illustrate how non-racialism is not as clear-cut as it seems in being presented either as the problem of our rainbow nation or a solution to the issue of racism within the rainbow nation.

As race remains a prominent category of identity in South Africa today, Vincent (2008) argues that the failure to address these issues regarding race in South Africa's 'rainbow nation' consequently leads us to merely make contact with one another instead of being a well-integrated society. Vincent (2008) furthermore states that contact occurs within the context of unequal power relations wherein which being Black continues to be positioned as inferior to whiteness. Contact generally overlooks blatantly racist systems, practices and overt racial conflict as a result of racialized patterns of reasoning (such as the continued belief in the inherent difference between races biologically, cognitively, culturally and socially). This belief thus continues to exist within societies such as South Africa, but often go unnoticed, unchallenged or denied by the array of denial strategies outlined by van Dijk, (1992) such as act-denial (through splitting or relativizing), control-denial (through dislocating), intention-denial (through trivializing), goal-denial (through reversing). Vincent (2008) thus insists that racial interaction within this society is described merely as contact because people's beliefs and perceptions about race still inform the relationships they wish to have with the other based on their judgements about people's abilities, personhood, worth, what they look like, where they come from, how they speak, what they eat etc. (Vincent, 2008). This also allows one to understand how contact is often reinforcing of Black people's expectations of continued White dominance; displaying how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the seemingly innocent spatiality of social everyday life on the basis of such racial positioning (Vincent, 2008).

## Considering the social construct of race

In this section we thus witness how racial categories remain one of the most prominent markers of identity as well as how class categories have been revealed to assist the construction of racial categories, as they act as social structures which organize people within societies according to their relationship with power in order to reinforce the racial divide between the oppressed and privileged through the ongoing formulation of social status; which continuously reproduces the discourses of hierarchy in the hegemons favour (Scott & Marshall, 2009). Mamdani (2012) simplifies this by stating that the hegemony's indirect rule has depended on democracy which has been illustrated as being filled with disillusion and the claims of (false) inclusion and equality. In order to avoid reducing issues relating to race to class, or the racism versus non-racialism argument presented; Erasmus (2010) offers Critical Race Theory as an alternative to race as common sense and the reduction of race into class. In following this, Critical Race Theory was used as a theoretical framework to understand race

and racial relations as it relates to this research. Scholars such as Erasmus (2010); More (2012); Posel (2001); Vincent (2008), and Whitehead (2009); were consulted to refine focus on the construction of racial identities in pre and post-apartheid in South Africa. These scholars extend the arguments made by many scholars who wrote about race relations in South Africa (Dolby (2005), Gaganakis (2004), Haney Lopez (1994), Matties (2012), Ndlovu (2015 Patman (2007), and Walker (2008). In concluding this section, Letshufi (2016) urges us to think of race as multiple, complex, shifting and something which cannot be pre-determined by the social construction of race; neither can it be simplified by ideals of racial purity. Thus critical understanding needs be applied to racial underpinnings, and therefore, the acknowledgement of past subjugated knowledge along with the recognition of present-day subjugations forms part of the reasoning behind the researcher's application of Intersectionality as a tool of analysing identity (Blige, 2013). Winant (2015) points out that failure to acknowledge past subjugated knowledge along with the recognition of present-day subjugations threatens the hope for adequate redress as it relates to race and power relations. Therefore in applying Intersectionality it becomes of critical importance to pay attention to histories in order to avoid essentializing experiences that are in fact structurally inflicted and can potentially subject groups to new forms of marginalization or impose on their agency, for example: if race is not considered or if it is denied when analysing one's identity, it removes the symbolic recognition of a group or individual's history by reducing the meaning attached to their race, and risks viewing them in a ethnocentric (i.e. from one's own cultural perspective) way (Blige, 2013). The researcher has thus used this section as a backdrop to explain the impact of South Africa's apartheid system on South African youth today by engaging with the topics of exclusion and stratification and concluding that identity should be understood as a product of history, as it is comprised of many intertwined concepts.

## 3.2 The 'born-free' generation

### Born in freedom or born in a façade?

With these contexts being expanded on with respect to race in South Africa, this section shifts the focus to 'born-free' youth for the purpose of painting the picture that helps us understand this youth's narratives in this study. As defined in the glossary, 'born-free' is a colloquial term often used amongst older generations in South Africa, to refer to South African youth born post 1994, in a democratic South Africa (currently 25 or younger)

(Maseti, 2018). In her article *#DontCallMeABornFree: Lived experiences of a Black umXhosa woman in post-apartheid South Africa*. Maseti (2018) probes into how 'born-free' is defined before expanding on the topic of the alleged 'born-free' youth. She begins by writing, "*the term born-frees' is often used to refer to those who are enjoying the fruits of the liberation of South Africa, who are free from racial discrimination and benefiting from social transformation*", Maseti (2018, p.62). She then points out that this definition however contradicts the current reality of youth in South Africa as they face continuing (and growing) racial, gender and class inequalities thus rendering this definition for this group of youth rather premature and fallacious. Maseti (2018) therefore urges that the use of the term 'born-free' be considered and understood as an ideology as opposed to being interpreted as the reality of this generation of youth typically by older generations who fought the apartheid government for the (relative) freedom of this generation. In making this distinction Maseti (2018) argues that it would allow for us to recognize this term as aspirational instead of factual, which would then provide a platform for this youth to exercise their freedom of speech and sharing their narratives of growing up in democratic South Africa instead of having their voices overpowered by the older generations' narratives of struggle, hope, hard work and sacrifice to provide the freedom in question. Because the concept of 'born-free' has failed to actually consult this generation of youth on their experiences; this groups exclamations of frustration with democratic South Africa is generally diminished, dismissed, ignored or individualized, often causing internal conflict for this youth and furthermore between these two generations regarding their definitions of freedom as the older assume political freedom as the sole revolutionary struggle, thus undermining the effects of apartheid on those born and living in the land of its continued legacy when it is concealed (Maseti, 2018).

Regardless of this disjuncture the focus on the notion of a 'born-free' generation has been a growing phenomenon since the shift to democracy in South Africa and has gained popularity particularly within the media (Ratele & Duncan (2003); Redelinghuys (2013); Smith (2014) (Maseti, 2018). As a result of the terms repression of reality however, it is not embraced by most South African youth born post-1994 nor is it considered accurate as it has not manifested in material changes; highlighting a conflict between the promises of democracy and the reality of South Africa's political sphere and legislation not being met with much action or legitimate practice (Maseti, 2018). Thus because minimal changes and solutions have been offered whilst this generation continues to face social ills concerning

their identity (such as racism), Maseti (2018) argues that a disregard for their future and true freedom as youth, students, activists, employees and future leaders continues to be exposed by this lack of transformation within South African society. She therefore concludes stating that this regarding of South African youth as 'born-free' is disingenuous and destructive, no matter how subtly it may be displayed in referring to non-racialism which silences issues surrounding race and age in democratic South Africa (Maseti, 2018). Although Maseti (2018) included individuals born from 1990 forward in her conceptualization of born-free youth, the researcher differs by remaining focus on generation born after the first democratic elections in 1994 as opposed to when Nelson Mandela and a cohort of prominent political freedom fighters were released from prison (Maseti, 2018). Regardless, Maseti's (2018) auto-ethnography detailing experiences and narratives of rejection, exclusion and internal struggles with identity that occur in conjunction with (external) economic struggles was found useful in this study as the researcher can confirm the relevance of these themes from her own experiences as an alleged born free youth, as well as the experiences of cohort of participants in this study.

## Defining a born-free generation in the state of democratic South Africa

Thus considering this alongside Maseti's (2018) writing as the foundation to think of 'born-free' as an ideology that South African leaders should aspire to implement for the next generation; the current cohort of youth would thus remain undefined. The researcher hereby suggests that we re-conceptualize this group of youth commonly referred to as 'born-free' by referring to Eva Hoffman's (2004) theorization of the hinge generation (Hirsch, 2008). The hinge generation is described as the generation of post-memory, which is defined as the effect that the generation birthed after a generation that has experienced severe trauma experience (Hirsh, 2008). Hoffman (2004) dissects this in her writing of *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* while referring to the Jewish holocaust and dubbing the term 'The hinge generation' to the generation born to holocaust survivors. She further elaborates by detailing how the knowledge of traumatic events such as the holocaust was transferred to inform the identities of the following generation through a deep internalization of this unfamiliar past. Hoffman (2004) argues that the experiences faced during the holocaust were so powerful that they impacted the memory of this following generation regardless of the fact that these experiences preceded their births. Hirsch (2008) suggests that this indicates of how indirect knowledge still has the ability to haunts generations born post

formative events such as the holocaust.

In considering this as a hinge generation the researcher now directs the reader to exercise intersectional thinking with respect to this generation as although they can be thought of in terms of age in relation to time and context, there are many other factors that influence differences within and amongst this generation (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In discussing this difference the researcher expands on Michele Fine (1994) who highlights the importance of speaking about differences in her rejection of using the term 'other' to refer to different individuals. Fine (1994) similar to Hirsh (2008) argues that history changes people's conception of themselves and thus states when it comes to identity this conception can also be altered by the relationship between oneself and who they see as an 'other' (Fine, 1994). This was used when considering the difference present within and amongst the racial identities present in this study as Fine (1994, p.72) further states that the construction of the 'other' is always conscious, as 'selves' are always politically situated on the opposite side of the perceived 'other' - that is to say that we are only ourselves (as a particular racial identity) when an 'other' racial identity is present. This can be explained through the tensions witnessed amongst students when race issues emerged from what was initially considered student (age) issues which then shifted to class issues (Rasetsaba 2016). Thus with this example we see that although students related to each other by virtue of appearing to be of similar age groups the race issues that were displayed within universities and on social media during #FeesMustFall indicate a working of hyphens. This 'working of the hyphen' as Fine (1994, p.72) puts it, affords certain groups privileges (i.e. White privilege and class privilege) that are overlooked when we only analyse these groups as one and the 'other'. Thus the tendency to constantly investigate individuals in relation to their context but not in relation to each other conceals the multiplicity of differences within identity and therefore thinking of ourselves and others as 'hyphenated selves' avoids concealing and protecting these privileges alternating through encouraging us to consider the hyphens that describe the many aspects of our identity (Fine, 1994). That is to say that with regards to the historical and political situation of our selves - this 'born-free' generation of youth; although potentially experiencing the same identity crisis, are at opposing views because of the ideologies that inform the various aspects of their identities (Fine, 1994). Fine's (1994) conceptualization of hyphenated selves can be thought of in terms of intersectionality as Yuval-Davis (2006) similarly argues that when thinking about or working with diverse social categories, it is essential to consider that although certain social groups may have characteristics in common

and may be constructed alongside one another, they cannot be collapsed into one group. Yuval-Davis (2006) also adds that when we consider categories of identity in addition to an array of existing categories, it assists us in not thinking of one category as more important than another, as this typically creates conflict surrounding which social categories should be included in an intersectional analysis, instead of considering that the list may be limitless and can be thought of in conjunction with one another (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Thus through taking focus on this generation of youth born in "*quite literally another country*", as professed by Bradbury and Clark (2012, p. 176), intersections or hyphens of identity are considered by these authors when working with young people in this new South Africa. These authors highlight the relationship between age and other intersections of identity such as race and class within our context in *Echoes of the Past in imaginings of the future: the problems and possibilities of working with young people in South Africa.* They state that although young people have hybrid (i.e. actively alternating) identities, these youth have not been able to distance themselves from the past as it is inscribed in their everyday lives through the echoes of the past (i.e. the residue of apartheid that remains in social structures and institutions) which continuously reinsert rigid ways of thinking about categories of identity such as race, in the way it is used in South Africa. Thus without this consideration and the persistence to believe that this group of youth is born-free, Bradbury and Clark, (2012) argue that we continue to be disillusioned with the euphoria that came from political reform in 1994 and eventually erase even this very youths concerns about the legitimacy of claims that their lives have improved so much so that they can be seen as symbols of hope and economic investments by older generations particularly in Black communities (for the reasons detailed in the previous section of this chapter). As a result of their experiences of growing up however, the authors point out that young people found contradictions in the narratives of the new South Africa and the experiences that they faced in their everyday life. Thus what older generations have interpreted as freedom as a result of the restrictions and abuse they experienced as youth in a rather different (apartheid) South Africa, does not feel like freedom to the current youth; as similarly expressed by Maseti (2018) in her auto-ethnography (Bradbury & Clark , 2012). These authors thus confirm that this is a result of the democratic politics which persistently push narratives of non-racialism and a rainbow nation with the aim to persuade both generations that the new South African society is integrated.

**Reflections of growing up in a rainbow nation**

Bray et al (2010) similarly reveals the falsity of South Africa being a rainbow nation in their study of teenage youth from different racial groups and different class backgrounds. They similarly found this trend to be true by confirming that the exposure that this diverse group of youth has had to each other does not entirely reflect a new generation that is integrated. Vandeyer (2010) also highlights this about the new South Africa in his study which aimed to investigate the degree to which South Africa has transformed through the analysis of racial integration in schools, considering the shift to democracy came with pressure particularly on former 'model c' schools; referring to schools that were predominantly (or only) open to White learners during apartheid, as it immediately became increasingly important to include children of various races that teachers typically were not exposed to during apartheid as a result of segregation, leaving little to no room for racial diversity within classrooms settings (Vandeyer, 2010). In this study Vandeyer (2010) found that following the transition to democracy and the announcement of a rainbow nation, many teachers (much like a number of White South Africans) maintained racial bias, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination which prohibited them from embracing diversity. This is supported by Phatlane (2007) who states that although Black children were now accepted to enrol into these schools, various stakeholders within the schooling system made continuous attempts to ensure that Black children remain excluded, mostly through school policies and codes of conduct which problematized them. She adds that within schools, stakeholders beliefs about Black children's appearance, personhood, circumstances, background and capabilities are all combined to determine how these children are treated in these schools, stating that according to their degree of assimilation the types of disciplinary actions they are subjected to varies (Phatlane, 2007). Phatlane (2007) also points out that even in cases where offences may be the same or worse, disciplinary action in schools is much more lenient to White children. Consequently a White privilege continues to be extended to White children whilst their peers of colour's expectations of subjugation remain reinforced and become a reality for most while this reality is treated as an individual issue that no historical, structural and /or systematic significance (van Dijk, 1992).

Considering these studies in conjunction would bring one to believe that the experiences 'children of colour' face in school are racist in nature. To expand on the issue of non-racialism and how it affects youth groups in South Africa, Vandeyer (2010) adds that

these reformed 'model c' schools still engage students from an emic perspective i.e. White cultural norms whilst calling themselves 'colour blind'. This in turn ignores the differences between pupils and conceals racism towards Black children in their reliance on the backdrop of democracy insisting that all races (and therefore all children) are all equal. Black / children of colour thus adopt the ethos of their respective schools as a means of surviving (i.e. assimilating), excelling and being seen as an equal amongst their White counter parts (Vandeyer, 2010). Phatlane (2007) adds that the dynamic between White educators and Black pupils displays how power works within South African society as it provides insight on how imbalanced power dynamics are; indicating that being Black continues to be positioned as the subordinate to whiteness even in a rainbow nation. As a result, inter-racial interactions are often intimidating for all parties, as White teachers in this scenario are conflicted with diversity and the cultural need to assert their dominance whilst Black pupils expectations of continued White dominance ensue (Vincent, 2008). These interactions display the dangers of the idea of non-racialism as it promotes racial contact as opposed to integration and true transformation in its ability to conceal blatantly racist practices and micro-aggressions and reduces them to individual 'incidents', even when they are overt. Vincent (2008) furthermore states that this permits racialized patterns of reasoning to remain in educational settings, as issues of diversity were not adequately challenged or addressed within environments such as schools (Vincent, 2008).

These authors each display how relations of discipline and power as theorized by Foucault are inscribed into the spatiality of everyday life in acts as innocent as children and adolescents attending school (Vincent, 2008). It is for these reasons that the study asked questions surrounding experiences of racial identity in early schooling, high school and tertiary level in the interview questions. The significance of schooling in relation to time, age and context is outlined by Wyness (2018) who provides context regarding schools as grounds for grooming, educating and guiding children to (eventually) become economically and socially valuable according White supremacist patriarchal ideals. Thus the emphasis is placed on school codes of conduct and classroom rules are placed in order to set the standards that children must be socialized into and abide by (Wyness, 2018). Regardless of the various aspects of youth identity or variations in context, these youth are regulated according to White norms that Burman, (2017) highlights were set between the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century when schooling became a popular practice within Western societies that were becoming more future orientated. Thus Burman (2017) argues that school policies that

encapsulate these codes of conduct do not only maintain structures of White supremacy within societies, but that these policies also strengthen them through various methods of routine discipline. Socialisation then remains a central component of schooling as schools administrative and management divisions consistently remain concerned with the uniformity and control of children and adolescents to ensure that they fit into the ideals of acceptable childhood according to these standardized Western conceptions (Wyness, 2018). Within the South African context however, Phatlane (2007) points out because we are said to live in a 'post-racial' society (which assumes South Africa has transcended issues of racism and no longer has race-related issues), it is essential for schools to premise themselves as all-inclusive and race neutral (i.e. colour-blind). These 'colour-blind' policies however leave children of colour in the rainbow nation susceptible to the belief that they are violators and thus need to be more controlled in schools, ultimately treating them as though they are invaders within school and specifically in classroom settings (Phatlane, 2007).

Letshufi (2016) and Vandeyer (2010) thus highlight how schools are sites that are influential especially in stimulating identity formation as they are spaces where our sense of the self is developed often in relation to others. They argue that within South African society particularly, experiences within educational settings influence perspectives of race, race relations and racial identity as schools replicate and perpetuate race determined subjectivities because they reflect society's norms. Schools are a thus site for socializing the young (along with family), and when considering South Africa's context, they thus circulate White cultural ethos in schools that children of colour (and particularly Black children) have to adopt and assimilate to in order to be accepted. Therefore because schools act as sites of identity formation in that individuals occupy this space for majority part of adolescents, they can often be seen as sites of contestation (e.g #StopRacismAtPretoriaGirlsHigh i.e. issues surrounding natural Black hairstyles such as afros or dreadlocks; which occur commonly throughout the country and globally e.g. Crenshaw, Ocen & Nanda (2015); Hines-Datiri & Carter-Andrews (2017); King, (2017); Ricks (2007); Salisbury & Connelly (2018) and The Con Mag (2016)). Bradbury and Miller (2010) add that adolescence is particularly important when exploring narrative identity as this period is said to hold the prominent memories and experiences that shape individuals from that point well into their adult lives. McAdams (2001) supports this by stating that there are several reasons why this period is significant in the development and construction of identity. He then names exploration and experimentation as two prominent themes that prevail during this period, explaining that a search for

coherence between social roles and personal beliefs and desires takes place, which exposes the adolescent to an array of ideals and positions them accordingly. It is up to the adolescent to then make a choice (and ultimately a commitment) about the personal ideology they identify with. McAdams (2001) then points out prior to adolescence, although one might have an idea about their self in isolation, no solid identity is formed, or sense of self in relation to the wider social world. Thus individuals view themselves as isolated from the world around them as children but once adolescence is reached, we gain an aspect of relationality which creates the need to construct a positive identity (McAdams, 2001). This stage marks a search for coherence in adolescence and the point where individuals engage more abstract and complex cognitive processes. It is for these reasons that this period is significant in the process of identity construction (Howard, 2016). Thus through the interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships formed within schools along with school practices which reinforce race as meaningful category of identity, adolescents reach a point where they recognize race and can think about it in more complex ways (Phatlane, 2007).

**Adjusting to how race appears in everyday life**

We therefore see how apartheid's violence permeates through schools through these White supremacist ethos that remain pervasive in even a 'new' democratic South Africa. We also see how youth are affected by it from childhood through to adolescence by virtue of the space that they take up in social institutions (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). In Ratele and Duncan's (2003) book *Social Psychology: Identities and relationships* authors Stevens and Lockhart take further focus on Black adolescents in post-apartheid South Africa in order to understand this groups experience after "literally going from young lions to young entrepreneurs" (p.142) in explaining how pre-apartheid youth was highly political and were active agents in the fight for freedom thus contrasting that youth with post-apartheid youth who have been de-radicalized and instead have had to become occupied with assimilating themselves with western ideological symbols as a means of not being socially sanctioned. By using Erikson's (1968) conceptualization of the 'identity crisis' described in the beginning of this chapter, the authors state that this youth experiences this because they have to continuously and instantaneously adjust according to their context in Democratic South Africa. This continuous adjusting also leaves this youth facing many contradictions regarding their identity resulting in role confusion (which can be understood as the initial stage of an identity crisis) (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). The authors argue that people focusing on this

group of youth typically tend to theorize them either as resilient or damaged (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). Patterson (2017) however gains relevance to this study in their promotion of dichotomous thinking when concerned with African children and youth, as they describe them as both the makers and breakers of society in that they hold a significant position in the process of shaping society; although they are still fundamentally shaped by society. This shows this group of youth to be having "an emerging influence" whilst they are simultaneously "submerged by power" (Patterson, 2017, p.4).

In describing what Stevens and Lockhart refer to as 'coca cola culture' we are able to understand this youth as dynamic (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). These authors gain relevance in this study as their literature contrasts adolescents against the backdrop of democracy beyond the context of the school (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). They use the term Coca-Cola culture considering Coca-Cola represents one of the most popular brands which is consumed worldwide, as well as represents western ideals of individualism, success and culture; which reflects the local and international trend that societies have increasingly been adopting in attempt to become more competitive on a global scale (i.e. globalization). Stevens and Lockhart argue that this culture entails extracurricular activities, language and accents as well as pop culture in the form of film music clothes et cetera; which Bourdieu (1977) theorizes as 'taste' (Kiguwa, 2014). Growing up within this Coca-Cola culture which circulates a vast array of options to Black adolescent youth, brings them to adopt certain interests as coping mechanisms to adjust to the pressures of constantly performing identity (i.e. assimilating) along with adjusting to the increasing individualism which simultaneously alienates them (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). This culture additionally is said to them a scapegoat from facing their social realities and allows youth from all walks of life to relate to each other (Ratele & Duncan, 2003). This concept of coca-cola culture has thus been explored through the narratives and perspectives expressed by participants on the topic of their own racial identity and how they relate to that of others. This has provided a point of analysis to see how race relations in post-apartheid South Africa have influenced this 'born-free' group of youth's experiences and perspectives about racial identity in present day South Africa.

Letshufi (2016) adds that friendships within and amongst various racial identity groups are formed across as a result of similarity in interests within what we understand as Coca-Cola culture in order to belong a collective identity. These interests' shared by youth of various racial identities are not however indicative of intrinsic identity, understanding,

solidarity or of what it means to belong to a particular racial group. Letshufi (2016) furthermore states that as this youth grows and starts thinking more abstractly about race as outlined by Phatlane (2007), interests tend to become more political and youth of different identity groups tend to engage more profoundly with people of their same racial (and class) makeup. This is also revealed in a narrative study Vincent (2008) conducted which investigated racial attitudes amongst a demographically diverse group of South African undergraduate university students. Vincent (2008) found that segregation remains a pervasive aspect of South African society as people who share membership in institutional settings such as universities or the workplace; do not experience much meaningful contact with one another beyond surface level interactions, if any. This was similarly indicated in *The People Versus The Rainbow Nation* which much like this research, aimed to highlights the problems of South Africa through discussing its history and dissecting the present power relations in attempt to help current and future generations navigate and engage such issues with a lot more clarity (Rasethaba, 2016). Thus in this section we witness the complexities present with being young in South Africa as well the importance of giving youth a platform to raise their voices to be heard. A narrative research approach has proven to be useful when working with youth as illustrated by the authors throughout this section. In addition it has ultimately been revealed through the use of stories about race that there exists a multitude of informal mechanisms that order and define social relations (Vincent, 2008). Cornell and Kessi's (2017) *Black students' experience of transformation at a previously "white only" South African university* and Kiguwa's (2014) *Telling stories of race: A study of radicalized subjectivity in the post-apartheid academy* confirm this in their studies through the focus on story-telling. In concluding this chapter, the study refers to Bradbury and Miller (2010) who point out that theorizing the lives of others through using narratives highlights to us that identity is indeed dynamic and therefore it is open to creative interpretation as the researcher aimed to do in this study.

# Chapter 4
# Methodology

## Research design

Due to the explorative nature of this research, the researcher approached this research from a qualitative approach. Qualitative research positions itself on studying social sciences from an emic perspective (Creswell, 2013). This allows qualitative researchers to explore topics more broadly by enabling them to apply more true-to-life methods of data collection such as interviews in order to gain depth and a better understanding of the topic through interpersonal interaction (Creswell, 2013). This is important because the epistemological nature of qualitative research sees reality as multiple, allowing researchers to see and interpret individuals' experiences as real for them (Creswell, 2013). Thus in using qualitative research, it was in the researcher's duty to collect subjective evidence from participants as an attempt to describe and understand the context / social world, as opposed to the measuring and predictive nature of quantitative research which tends to isolate and control data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This aligned itself with the study's aim to explore the perspectives of 'born-free' youth and resonated with the researcher's choice to adopt this approach in conducting this study, as qualitative research enables sense-making through the study of human expression, which is used to gain understanding of experiences; allowing the researcher to apply that understanding to the context in question (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

The researcher thus used an interpretivist paradigm and a narrative research method to conduct this research. The interpretive paradigm uses interpretation as a tool to understand meaning (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In conducting this report, the study took a particular interest in what meaning race has for the 'born-free' youth in South Africa. The ontology of the study in this particular paradigm allows for fluidity within these meanings as they are created based on individual's experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Neuman, 2010). Thus there were no right and wrong stories in relation to the participant's perspectives, as each meaning is subjective and is understood to be connected to ongoing interaction amongst individuals who are constantly making sense of their social world (Creswell, 2013). In the interpretivist paradigm generating this meaning is done through the analysis of language, much like within a social constructivist paradigm (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In this paradigm however, language is a tool of analysis to understand meaning and is not seen as the reality (Neuman,

2010). Using this paradigm thus granted the researcher a platform to interpret each individual's experiences through collaborative interaction with them (Neuman, 2010). This interaction was very important as it enabled the researcher to become the instrument of interpretation and to participate in reflective reporting (Neuman, 2010).

## Method

As mentioned above, the study used a narrative research method for this report. Narrative research can be both a method and the phenomenon of study. As a method, it bases itself on the stories that individuals express as their own lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). It is described by Czarniawska (2004, p. 17) as a specific type of qualitative method in which "narrative is understood through spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected". Narrative research as a method emphasizes story telling through the sharing of individual lived experiences expressed through narrative accounts (Creswell, 2013). This approach requires the story telling of the individual in their own words which the researcher believed was essential for this study as it explores narratives regarding the past, present and future. Additionally, using this method ultimately enables these narratives to serve as evaluative tools for the researcher as well as the participants whose stories are re-presented to them through this study, allowing the researcher to make meaning of these experiences in our context, and individuals to make sense of their perspective of the wider social world (McAdams, 2001). In order to implement this method, the researcher gathered data through the collection of stories. Some narrative researchers then order the experiences expressed in the stories in the setting of life course stages and report these individual experiences, their meanings however because this research was more experience centred, this was not of particular importance (Creswell, 2013).

With the experience centred approach Squire (2008) argues that there are more analytic benefits when examining stories as experiences as opposed to as mere events. In this argument she highlights how an experience centred approach helps the participant as a narrator construct their own life story to the audience being the researcher and ultimately the readers (Squire, 2008). Squire (2008) adds that this narration thus serves as a representation of the narrator which is read according to the audience, along with the time and the setting in which the story is being told. That is to say that the audience always remains relevant to this

research method whether they are real or imagined (Squire, 2008). Therefore, to implement and conduct this research the following five stages described below needed to be followed:

1. Firstly, the researcher had to determine whether the research problem and question/s best fit the narrative research approach. The researcher believes narrative research was best suited to answer these questions as it premises itself on capturing the detailed stories or the life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2013). The research thus investigated youth perceptions of race by using a narrative research approach to inquire:
   a) What early memories / racialized experiences these groups have of race?
   b) What they recollect about their elders in relation to their beliefs and practices in relation to race?
   c) What is the relation between these childhood memories and their current thinking about and experience of race?

2. The second stage in using a narrative research approach requires the researcher to select at least one individual who has life experience expertise on the topic at hand in the form of a story. Thus the researcher needs to spend a reasonable amount of time with them gathering their stories through multiple forms of information as narrative research situates individual's stories within the individuals' personal experiences. For this research the researcher aimed to use ten participants to which nine of the ten participants proceeded with the study (see cohort of participants) (Creswell, 2013).

3. The third stage in conducting narrative research is in the collection of information about the context of these stories. In this specific research report this refers to participant's racial and ethnic cultures, and their historical contexts. The participants may also record their stories in written narrative accounts (Creswell, 2013).

4. Fourth, the participant's stories then needed to be analysed and then a process of "re-storying" them into a framework that is best suited needed to happen. Narratives may be guided by a theoretical lens or perspective (In this case, intersectionality theory), and studies may have a specific contextual focus, such as contemporary South African society in this study. Re-storying required the reorganizing of the stories into this overarching intersectional framework and context (Creswell, 2013).

5. Lastly collaboration with participants by actively involving them throughout the research process is imperative as the epitome of a narrative study is to tell the story of individuals in unfolding in a chronology of their experiences, set within their personal, social, and historical context, and in their own words.

Within the following subsections, it is further explained how the researcher implemented these foundations of narrative research (Creswell, 2013).

## Cohort of participants

The cohort of participants for this study consisted of ten individuals who identified with various racial groups (namely Black, Coloured, Indian, Mixed Race and White) in South Africa who were born in or after 1994, when apartheid was abolished and democracy was deemed the country's new social and political system. This required the group to be no older than 25 in 2019. The researcher also chose not to interview participants younger than 19 years old for the purpose of ensuring all participants were of legal age to consent to this study on their own. All the participants approached for this study were thus:

a) South African students, interns or employees between this age that frequented Braamfontein / Johannesburg - for ease of convenience.

b) Persons between these ages that have only lived as South African citizens for the entire duration of their lives.

c) And persons between these ages who have grown up within a family structure in South Africa and have parents / guardians that were also South African citizens during the apartheid period.

The sample selection strategy that was used to conduct this research was a non-probability purposive sampling strategy in order to enable the researcher to reach the necessary sample base for this research (Neuman, 2010). Purposive sampling was used with consideration that the sample criteria was specific; being that the study is about race relations amongst 'born-free' youth in South Africa, deeming the nationality and the age of the participants as critical aspects of the study (Neuman, 2010). In order to allow for a more inclusive, representative and explorative study; sexual orientation and religious intersections did not form part of the selection criteria. The participant register containing the participants' relevant biographical information is detailed below.

Table 1.1 Participant register with biographical information

| **Participant** | **Name** | **Age** | **Identifies as** | **Occupation** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Thalia | 20 | White | Student |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Tamlyn | 24 | Coloured | Employer |
| 3 | Unathi | 24 | Black | Full-time employee |
| 4 | Leigh-anne | 20 | White | Student |
| 5 | Shari | 19 | Black | Student |
| 6 | Dineo | 24 | Black | Student and part-time employee |
| 7 | Zahraa | 19 | Indian | Student |
| 8 | Stefan | 24 | White | Student |
| 9 | Thabang | 25 | Black | Full-time employee |
| 10 | Sarita | 20 | Indian | Student |

**Site and access**

Prior to approaching this cohort the researcher first approached the necessary chair members at the University of the Witwatersrand with a letter (see appendix A) requesting permission to conduct this research as this was one of the desired sites that the researcher utilized. This only occurred once this report was approved and ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-medical) on the university campus (see appendix B). The researcher then approached approximately ten potential participants by circulating outdoor communal spaces within the university campus and local public areas in Braamfontein (second site of interest to obtain participants who are not students) off campus inquiring if they would be interested to participate in a research study surrounding the topic of race in South Africa. Because participation in this research was purely on a voluntary basis only individuals that indicated an interest were asked to enter their particulars on the participant register above, after they were briefed about nature of the research and the purpose their participation. From this register the researcher filtered the individuals that fit the criteria on the basis of nationality, and age to create a shortlist of four potential

participants (between the ages of 19 to 25) of various racial identities as stated in the sample section. In recruiting the remaining six participants the researcher had created a blurb which was distributed to the university's first year psychology students through the help of her supervisor and the administrative assistants of the Psychology department. From this blurb a plethora of students responded positively and six were shortlisted on the basis that they met all the requirements. The potential participants were then contacted via e-mail to officially inform them that they have been selected to participate in the study with an attached participant information sheet (see appendix C) and communication proceeded from that point.

## Data collection instruments

Because narrative research requires the collection of narrative accounts in order to be conducted; as stated in the methods section, the data collection instruments the researcher used for this research were:

1. A Microsoft Word document with an opening statement to introduce the topic to the participants for them to share their stories. The researcher sent this document to each participant via e-mail for them to provide a written narrative in response to a short statement. The opening statement read: "Think back on a moment where you had your first encounter with race and the influence your family had in this experience, detail how this made you aware of race and how it shaped you to think about race in your growing up", in which the participants then responded in an open ended manner with a story of their experiences.
2. Semi-structured follow up interviews. These interviews were conducted individually in the Masters Research Room on the university campus (for participants that were Wits students) or in a quiet room in the homes of participants (for participants who were not Wits university students).

These two data collection instruments thus created a platform for collaboration between the researcher and the participants to co-create the stories together, which reflects the very nature of narrative research (Berg, 2004).

## Procedure

As stated in the 'Site and access' section, the participants who were selected to

participate in the study were contacted via email with the attached participant information sheet (see appendix C). In this email they were also given the informed consent form, informed written narrative consent form and the informed audio consent form, D, E & F) to fill in and return on or before their respective interview dates. In this email they were asked to confirm that they understand and consent to this study within a week, and were provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study which were answered by the researcher. This also helped build rapport between the researcher and the potential participants before commencing with the written narrative exercises and the face to face interviews.

The written narrative exercises were sent to participants via email in the beginning of August. Each participant was given a timeline of two weeks to return the document with their response via e-mail. The researcher also found that collecting the data electronically was convenient for both the participants and for the researcher as it helped save time on transcription, allowed participants to write freely without feeling intimated or vulnerable, was convenient to send and receive on both ends, and were easy to print and refer to in the interviews. Considering that this exercise relied on early memory, the researcher expected that participants would detail this experience in an essay format of a story with beginning, middle and end, to which majority of them did. Once participants had sent their written narratives back to the researcher via e-mail, the follow up interview was scheduled for any weekday within the next two weeks from that (submission) date.

The interviews were individually scheduled on an appointment basis and were approximately fourty-five minutes per interview. During the interviews the researcher asked twelve questions that allowed for open-ended answers (see appendix G) in the interviews as they prompted the participant to tell more of their own story and allowed the researcher to gather more information on the participants perspectives, identify the commonalities amongst the participants' experiences and understand the context where they came from to answer the research question (Maxwell, 1998). This also enabled better understanding as it allowed the researcher to apply context to similar stories, as well as enabling constant elaboration and interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

## Ethical considerations

In light of the fact that ethical practice is of critical importance in psychology; it was in the researcher's best interest to mitigate the problems were potentially to arise during the duration of this research appropriately. Thus the researcher referred to the Professional Board

for Psychology's Ethical Code of Professional Conduct along with the Health Professions Council of South Africa's guidelines for good practice (2008, Booklet 1) for the ethical guidance regarding this research report. Each of these ethical guides have been put in place to promote and regulate the protection of research participants in psychological studies (HPCSA, 2008). To maintain confidentiality all data collected through the narrative exercise and the interviews were safely kept stored in a hidden folder on a password protected personal computer. In transcribing the written journals and the interview responses the researcher also ensured that all personal information was excluded from the transcripts and all personal details such as names would be carefully coded through pseudonyms in the case that participants wished to participate anonymously. None of the participants however chose the option of participating anonymously. In addition, considering that participation in this study was based purely on a voluntary basis, participants were not obliged to participate and there was no reward for participating in the research. Participants were also granted the option of aborting their participation in this study at any given point, to which one of the ten participants dropped out after submitting the written narrative and before participating in the interview.

Bearing in mind that this research was concerned with race; which is often a sensitive topic within the South African context - the researcher aimed to be attentive to each participant's triggers and sensitivities in order to avoid offending, intimidating or ill-treating them throughout the research process (HPSCA, 2008). Although the predicted risks for participating in this study were slim to none, the researcher had prepared to refer any and all participants to professional counselling psychologist services from the university's Counselling & Career Development Unit (CCDU), should the participants have ended up negatively affected from their participation in this research. This ensured that each participant would be assisted in the case that any triggers of trauma was experienced by participants that were students at the university. Alternatively a free counselling service at a Lifeline near the homes of the participants who were not Wits students was made available. None of the participants however required counselling for their participation. Over and above this, racial groups referred to in this study have not been defined according to their legal and colloquial definitions in South Africa considering that these terms can often be rejected because of their problematic historical positioning and how they may carry connotations that people do not wish to identify with. Thus in this research report, the researcher made an effort not to label or categorize particular individuals according to these definitions and rather refers to them

according to what they identified themselves as with in attempt to acknowledge that not all individuals may identify with the racial categorizations or definitions that are typically used in South Africa. In addition, considering that psychology is a professional field that aims at facilitating social transformation; theorization needs to be thorough and written responsibly which the researcher aimed to do throughout this study by clarifying meanings with each participant to avoid reinforcing problematic behaviors and statements from both the researcher and the participants throughout this study (Naidoo et al, 2007). With that in consideration, another ethical consideration the researcher aimed to ensure was that participants were aware that although the researcher is interested in the phenomena of race, the negative stereotypes, biases or prejudices that may be present in some participant's accounts, do not reflect the researcher's personal values, nor does the research support or endorses any such by addressing any tensions that arise within the collaborative relationship and reflecting on the researcher's own positionality and projections.

## Trustworthiness

This section addresses the limitations listed above in an engagement of how they were mitigated in this study. In addressing the first concern regarding the challenging nature of narrative research, throughout the research process the researcher committed to continuously broadening her understanding of concepts; on both an academic and at a personal level. In addressing the second concern regarding possible retrieval failures in the reflective exercises conflicting with the narrative trajectory of ordering stories in chronological order; as mentioned, this is not of particular importance to all narrative research methods, and specifically to this study as it is more concerned with the experience-centred approach of narrative research. That is to say that if and when participant's struggled to re-tell or present stories in (chronological) order of events, this was not a major concern because the researcher had more interested in the content of the narratives than their sequence. In addition to this, because part of a narrative researcher's duty is to provide a causal link among ideas during the process of re-storying, the researcher accounted for this in her method of structuring the interview questions (Creswell, 2013). These questions were ordered in sequence of early life, adolescent life, and current life to restructure written stories that may have been written without a particular order.

With regards to the wide-ranging data and information that was collected from the diverse group of ten participants, the researcher believes that having such a diverse group was in fact an advantage as the diversification of this research allowed for a broader understanding of youth perspectives of race in contemporary South Africa and allowed for comparison between racial groups, their racial identification and their perspectives. In addition to this, as stated in the ethical considerations section, it was in the researcher's best interest to avoid reinforcing problematic statements, racial bias, prejudice and / or stereotypes throughout this study in the case that they had arisen. In these few instances, the researcher thus intervened by enlightening participants on problematic concepts that they were unsure of in their written narrative exercises in order to guide them towards expressing their stories, perspectives and experiences without appropriating or promoting racial prejudices and / or stereotypes throughout their interviews. Considering that this interaction was collaborative and ongoing, it ultimately brought insight on how true transformation into democracy in contemporary South African society has been. In addition, utilizing a narrative research style attended to majority of the concerns listed in the limitations section above, as it gave the researcher the advantage of creating a platform where the understanding of subject positioning, racialisation and intersectional thinking can be exercised; and information can be transferred accordingly through to the rest of society (Creswell, 2013).

## Data analysis

One approach to narrative research is to sort and differentiate diverse types of narrative research by using the analytic strategies used by authors. Polkinghorne (1995, p.12) refers to this approach as the distinguishing between an "analysis of narratives", and using paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories (Creswell, 2013). Polkinghorne (1995, p.12) further states that researchers may use a paramount of paradigmatic reasons for conducting narrative study, including how individuals are enabled and constrained by social resources, socially situated in interactive performances, and how narrators develop interpretations. In this study the researcher used an Intersectional framework to highlight the complexity of South African youth identities in the context of the history of apartheid and transition to democracy. The second approach is to accentuate the assortment of forms found in narrative research approaches such as autobiographies, biographical studies, life histories and oral histories. This research is more inclined with an

oral history as it consisted of gathering personal reflections of events and their causes and effects from one individual or several individuals and it is thus in accordance with an experience-centred narrative approach (Creswell, 2013).

The data analytic technique that the researcher thus deployed was a narrative analysis. A narrative analysis can be used to generate understanding of the unique experiences expressed by participants, and to identify common patterns and themes within the stories they tell; which is fitting for an interpretive and narrative study (Phoenix, 2008). Common patterns, themes and descriptors of the experiences are revealed through their re-occurrence across the stories, much like in a thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is done through a methodical analysis of the data, allowing the researcher to identify, interpret, describe and report various aspects of the research. This is what Braun and Clark (2006) refer to as a thematic analysis - which they describe as a method of data analysis that can be applied to almost all qualitative research approaches for the purpose of identifying themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher then analysed both sets of data on one level. That is to say that written narrative stories were analysed in conjunction with interview transcripts for each participants overall story. The sequence of this analysis takes place in six steps outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), namely:

Step one - familiarization and engagement

Step two - generating initial codes

Step three - searching for themes

Step four - reviewing themes;

Step five - naming and defining themes

Step six - reporting the results

Using these steps to conduct a narrative thematic analysis required the researcher to apply the steps of a thematic analysis to the transcribed written narrative stories and interviews. In doing so, carrying out the first step of the (narrative) thematic analysis required the researcher to immerse herself in the transcripts and read them repeatedly in order to familiarize and engage with the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following the second step required the researcher to find common patterns within the stories told and generate initial codes by identifying potential themes through the identification of reoccurring

words and topics across the participant's responses and stories shared whilst answering each interview question. In writing up the analysis the narrative exercise was represented by the abbreviated WN (written narrative), whilst interview questions were represented by numbers 1 to 12 in the full table exampled in table 2.1 below (Braun & Clarke, 2006) Considering there were twelve questions in the interview scale (see Appendix G), categories were created accordingly. The questions were thus collated into five categories, namely, Racial Identity, Experiences, Perspectives, Reflections and Democracy. These categories were inducted as potential themes that emerged from the nature of inquiry of each interview question and thus appeared according to relevance in the second column of table 2.1. The third step required the researcher to search for sub-themes contained within the transcripts; followed by the fourth step which required the researcher to review these themes, (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is evidenced in the third column where the researcher has identified various sub-themes derived from the contents of the narratives. As advised by Braun and Clarke (2006) sub-themes have been selected by virtue of similarity and repetition amongst the participants in order to systematically identify patterns and ensure consistency across the data. Themes and sub-themes have been substantiated by the excerpts taken from participant responses in the fourth column of table 2.1. The table is coded as follows:

P – Participant

Q – Question

WN - Written Narrative

PINS - Particular Incident Narratives

Table 2.1 Demonstrating a sample of the data analytic technique

| **Q** | **Question theme** | **Emerging themes / sub-themes** | **Narrative excerpt** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WN** | Racial Identity<br>Reflections | First encounters with racial awareness in schools<br>Racially diverse schools | P5: "*my first encounter with race was when I was in primary school. I attended a primary school where I was one of very few other White learners, but as I said, race didn't concern me, that was until I reached grade 4. I remember one experience in particular when I was sitting around a group of friends and I started to talk* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Confusing encounters with other races<br>Rejection and exclusion on the basis of appearance / language and accent<br>Targeting and discrimination<br>Parents explaining race to their children often after encounters | *about my grandmother. All of a sudden, that whole group of children (being mainly Coloured students) began to mock and make fun of the way I said "granny" As soon as I would step into the school my accent would change, and the same for when I arrived home… Of course, my older relatives, such as my grandparents, still had a tendency to talk about their past experiences during the apartheid era*" - Leigh-Anne<br><br>P10: "*…my first encounter with race which occurred in the play area of my classroom. It was my first day of school and I was determined to become friends with all of my class mates. During the break time, I sat on the carpet and looked around my classroom, taking in the excitement of being at school when I noticed a pattern in the way my fellow class mates were sitting and behaving. The White children kept to themselves and rejected any children of colour from joining their group. At first, I was confused as to why anyone would act that way and then I remembered the stories that my parents had told me about how the whole country was divided by race*." - Sarita |

This table demonstrates an example of how the analysis described above was executed.

The example displays how similarities were found through the analysis of each participant's response when reflecting in their written narrative exercise. This way of searching has thus been followed throughout the analysis of each participant's response when

answering the same question, throughout the twelve interview questions in order to compare participant narratives and find similarities in them as it relates to a potential theme. As mentioned above, the potential themes that were listed prior to tabulation related to Racial Identity, Experiences, Perspectives, Reflections and Democracy. Whilst conducting the narrative thematic analysis the researcher however found that reflections are present in most categories of inquiry (considering the nature of this research is narrative). In addition, through the analysis of these reflections it was found that influences such as school and family were reoccurring topics and thus Influence was inducted as a basis for a major theme in which these two themes appear as sub-themes. In addition, as a result of the themes that emerged when engaging questions regarding Racial Identity, this theme simply has been renamed simply as 'Identity' so that the themes that emerged and intersections thereof can be explored within this broad category. Lastly, because the study has more of an interest in the participant's experiences within democratic South Africa and their perspectives of it; democracy has been collapsed into a sub-theme, thus rendering Perspectives as a main theme. In addition executing an experiential approach to narrative analysis Squire (2008) points out to Wengraf's (2006) 'Particular Incident Narratives' (PINS). PINS are explained as micro narratives within the macro narrative (whole story) and are described as incidental because initially, they are not a part of the main story but they begin to emerge as memories or emotions as the narration takes place (Squire, 2008). This then directed the researcher to specific themes within the themes that may have otherwise gone ignored or been considered irrelevant and enabled the researcher to make better sense of the experiences that are attached to certain aspects of particular intersectional identities (Squire, 2008).

The major themes for this study have thus been grouped as follows:

1. Reflections on early encounters with race
2. Experiences of exclusion and their influence on issues of integration
3. Politics of privilege, identity and its intersections
4. Perspectives of race and the problem of classification in South Africa

In the table below the final review of themes are found on the right and are accompanied by the respective sub-themes and PINS that were inferred from the participants excerpts demonstrated in table 2.1

Table 3.1 showing adapted themes and sub-themes of data

| Themes | Sub-themes & PINS |
|---|---|
| **Reflections on early encounters with race** | **1. School as an emerging site**<br>➢ First encounters of race in early schooling / Primary school<br>➢ Racially diverse schools (public and private),<br>➢ Multi-cultural group of friends,<br>➢ Did not notice race<br>➢ Census checks in school as the start of confusion<br>➢ Not feeling included,<br>➢ Teasing based on colourism / appearance, language or accent,<br>➢ Awareness of race and race relations in High school<br>➢ Racial stereotyping and discrimination,<br>➢ Racism from teachers / adults in school,<br>➢ Differential treatment<br>1. Similar sentiments from high school kept in current time<br>**2. The function of the family**<br>➢ Apartheid comparisons,<br>➢ Older generations of colour sharing stories of apartheid with youth<br>➢ Youth of colour (particularly Black and Couloured) warned about trusting White people by elders<br>➢ White participants mention racist elders |
| **Experiences of exclusion and their influence on issues of integration** | 1. **Being 'born-free' before and during adolescence**<br>➢ No early memory of blatant racism<br>➢ Several moments made them think of race |

| | |
|---|---|
| | in retrospect<br>➢ Memories of rejection<br>➢ Emotional responses resulting from experiences of exclusion, confusion, conflict and belonging<br>➢ Nervousness / anxiety<br>➢ Negative school experiences<br>➢ Feelings of honesty<br>➢ Racism, discrimination and stereotyping in interactions<br>➢ Differential treatment in school and work settings<br>➢ Pressure from expectations<br><br>2. **Navigating being 'born-free' as a young adult**<br>➢ Rainbow nation<br>➢ Lack of social change<br>➢ Voicing out things that aren't so open<br>➢ Suppressed expression<br>➢ Racial tension<br>➢ Privileged<br>➢ Do not feel free<br>➢ Feelings of difficulty<br>➢ Frustration as a born-free youth in SA<br>➢ Targeting as a result of racial identity<br>➢ Conforming and assimilation<br>➢ Gravitating towards own identity groups<br>➢ Operating double consciousness<br>➢ Remaining guarded as a result of constant hierarchy<br>➢ Positive perception of self |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Politics of privilege, identity and its intersections** | **1. Social spaces as the preservers of privilege**<br>➢ Social spaces being raced spaces<br>➢ spaces of exclusion<br>➢ spaces of inclusion<br>➢ Spatial planning<br>➢ Feelings of intimidation for participants of colour<br>➢ Feelings of shame for White participants<br>➢ Unconsciously gravitating towards own race / sexuality/ stigma<br>➢ White Privilege<br>➢ Double Standards<br>➢ Institutionalized racism<br>➢ Stereotype (loud)<br>➢ Racism and intimidation<br>➢ Exclusion (discrimination)<br>➢ Race in the workplace<br>➢ Being held back or undermined because you're black,<br><br>**2. Challenges, contradictions and conflicts**<br>➢ Race<br>➢ Culture<br>➢ Religion<br>➢ Class<br>➢ Language and accent<br>➢ Gender<br>➢ Sexuality<br>➢ Age (Born-free) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ➢ Appearance (Hair and skin)<br>➢ Acceptance vs Rejection<br>➢ In-group Stereotyping<br>➢ Perceptions vs reality<br>➢ Self-consciousness as a result of constant with ideal identities<br>➢ Influence and Expectations<br>➢ Expectations of racism vs positive regard |
| **Perspectives of race and the problem of classification in South Africa** | **1. Racial classification as a cause for continued skewed race relations**<br>➢ Limiting<br>➢ Attach negative perceptions to race<br>➢ Pro-renouncing race and identifying by nationality as opposed to race<br>➢ Assumptions about race/ identity from appearance, language and accent<br>➢ Racial Purity and confusion in cases where one is mixed<br><br>**2. Deeming democracy problematic**<br>➢ Structures of oppression<br>➢ Patriarchy<br>➢ Hierarchy<br>➢ Categories of hierarchy (classism and racism)<br>➢ Emphasis on classifications<br>➢ Failure to transform<br>➢ Equality not achieved (sceptic about the possibility)<br>➢ Systematic racism remains<br>➢ Rainbow nation as a façade |

| | |
|---|---|
| | ➢ Emphasis on class status (wealth, elitism) yet economic disparity continues<br>➢ Black people remain disadvantaged<br>➢ Disadvantage on the basis of race<br>➢ Racial oppression towards Black people<br>➢ White privilege<br>➢ Need for conversation |

Up to this point, the first five steps of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis have been followed in the processes described throughout this section. Through conducting this type of thematic analysis a long with Wengraf's (2006) experimental approach to a narrative analysis; themes, sub-themes and PINS were identified through the ten narrative exercises and the nine interview transcripts through a systematic search for similarities and ultimately differences within the data, allowing for comparison and the collation of common themes. The benefits of conducting a thematic narrative analysis are thus that it aids interpretation as it has allowed the researcher to locate and contextualize similar configurations of meaning whilst giving insight to attitudes, experiences and perceptions; enabling the researcher to be reflexive, and ultimately creating room for flexibility within the research as displayed in this section (Berg, 2004). This table thus briefly illustrates the connections between the social constructs this study is concerned with, and the concepts that the participants contributed through the sharing of their narratives. That is to say that the social constructs that were conveyed through this analysis were captured through the collaboration that took place between the researcher and the participants as advised by Squire (2008) who states that this allows true meaning to be transmitted during this process. This meaning which has been retained through the themes which have been named and defined are described and expanded on in the following chapter. This is the final step of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis which requires the researcher to report the results. This will take place in Chapter 6, following the next chapter which explores the themes that are to be and interpreted in relation to the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings detailed in chapter two and three..

Section 1: Narratives of the event that evoked racial awareness

1. Reflections on Early Encounters with Race with sub themes;
    i. School as an Emerging Site
    ii. The Function of the Family

Section 2: Narratives of experience, identity and perspectives of race in everyday life.

2. Experiences of exclusion and their influence on issues of integration with sub themes;
    i. Being ‘Born-free’ Before and During Adolescence
    ii. Navigating Being ‘Born-free’ as a Young Adult

3. Politics of Privilege, Identity and its Intersections with sub-themes;
    i. Social Spaces as the Preservers of Privilege
    ii. Challenges, Conflicts and Contradictions

4. Perspectives of Race and the Problem of classification in South Africa with sub-themes;
    i. Racial Classification as a Cause for Continued Skewed Race Relations
    ii. Deeming Democracy Problematic

Because the first theme encompasses the event where in which racial awareness was evoked and the following three themes explore the themes that emerged from the experiences, identity and perspectives of the participants in this study, these themes are sectioned accordingly.

# Chapter 5
## Data Presentation

In this section the researcher reports the results derived from the narrative analysis demonstrated above by providing a presentation of the data which will further be discussed in the following chapter. In following a narrative form which, as outlined by Creswell (2013) emphasises the importance of structuring stories in the sequence of life course stages, this chapter presents the narratives retrospectively from early memories of race to their manifestations in current life; the sequence in which they will be discussed. Because these early memories surround the event of participant's first encounter that made them aware of race; whilst their manifestations involve the experiences the participants have since been faced with, this chapter has been divided into two fundamental sections; namely Narratives of the event that evoked racial awareness, and, Narratives of experience, identity and perspectives of race in everyday life. Doing so also allows the researcher to report on the dual modes of data collection embarked on (as detailed in the data collection section) for the purpose of differentiating between stories as events and stories as experience as Squire (2008) emphasizes is of critical importance in narrative research. In showing respect to the selected research approach as outlined by Creswell (2013), Squire (2008) and the participants who contributed their stories; this chapter therefore depicts the extracts of the data collected, in order to provide a platform for participants own voices to be heard and not be obscured by that of the researcher. The first section thus details the findings from the reflections of the written narratives the participants shared surrounding their first encounter with race; which is re-called as a defining event in the lives of the participants as it relates to race. The second section details the experiences the participants have had of race and ultimately uncovers how they have come to understand these experiences and this event; to detail how they have shaped their current perspectives.

### Section One: Narratives of the Event that Evoked Racial Awareness

#### *1.1 Reflections on Early Encounters with Race*

As the starting point of the data collection in this study, this section relies on the participant's written narrative exercises which participants attended to in their own space and

time to reflect on their early encounters with race. When the follow up individual interviews commenced, the participants were then asked to reflect on how they felt when writing these reflections down and revelling their stories.

Many in the cohort reported that they were trying to be as honest as possible:

> *"I tried to be as honest as possible cause I think people often hide what they feel about it when it comes to race as it is such a sensitive topic, considering the history of the country."*- Thalia (twenty-year-old White female).

In the theme of being honest and transparent, as all participants of colour revealed feelings of frustration and difficulty as they reflected on their experiences during this time.

> *"I found it a bit hard at first because, I feel like I have a decent understanding of race relations and racism and whatnot. And like knowing how to identify it, and in terms of people around and whatnot. But then, for me looking back, like, I, I found it hard because I realized that I wasn't sure that it was only later that like, when I was growing up that I felt like, okay"* – Dineo (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

In similar fashion many Black participants revealed that they have always felt their expression about these experiences was suppressed as discussing race was never done openly especially in their younger years They thus report how they felt challenged as they only realized this in retrospect.

> *"I felt… I felt as if I was challenged to explain how I grew up, which I never really was given an opportunity to express. So, it really was enlightening, because when I typed it down, and I read it, I was like, wow, this is how I really felt. And it's how it really is, it's how I grew up."* – Thabang (twenty-five-year-old Black male).

Another participant added that as she wrote her story, she became quite emotional as her first encounters with race were often filled with feelings of rejection.

> *"Writing the exercise was difficult because I wrote it at work. So, when I was typing it, I got like really emotional, because even though you may feel like, I'm in a place now in my adult life where I'm accepted because you're able to voice out the things you don't like, but when I was young, I couldn't. So, I never fully felt*

*accepted. You know, so that made me emotional"* – Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

Similarly, another participant adds that voicing experiences that she has never voiced before also made her feel nervous.

*"I felt nervous because I've never openly written about the experience of me not learning my home language. So, that was the first time in life that I had typed that and had to send it to someone. I felt nervous because I know the shame that comes with that."* – Shari (nineteen-year-old Black female).

Whilst participants of colour recall negative memories, White participants revealed that they did not think much about race and had not had a particular experience that came to mind thus reporting not being affected by race.

*"I don't know, I felt fine I don't know how to explain it, it doesn't really affect me as much as it probably would have affected other people, because race hasn't really been such a big deal in my life you know. Even my family members that are from older generations they don't try to pass on those beliefs. I just live my life and do what I want to do."* - Leigh-Anne (twenty-year-old White female).

*"Uhm, it was quite straight forward, like it was easy… there weren't any challenges, it's just like a life experience. So, you basically just wrote about when you first experienced becoming aware of your race and was just giving the basics and that was not difficult at all…"* Stefan (twenty-four-year-old White male).

As the participants reflect on their experiences following this moment which they are referring to in the excerpts above, a pattern which one can already observe regarding these reflections is the difference in emotions (and ultimately experiences) between White participants and participants of colour.

**School as an Emerging site.** For a brief synopsis before further detailing these experiences, one half of the cohort in this study attended racially diverse schools from primary school through to high school. The other half of the participants had varying experiences as Thalia and Leigh-Anne who are both White participants, recall being a minority in their schools, as Thalia went to a school with predominantly Black learners and Leigh-Anne went to a school with predominantly Coloured learners. As a result, although as

they do not recall any prominent early memories of a racial experience and reveal that they did not think much of the differences between then and the other learners; they still reveal that they experienced some form of exclusion often on the basis of language and accent which is explored in the following section. Thabang relates to the experience of exclusion as he recalls memories of being a minority in a predominantly Indian and White primary school which he reveals his parents placed him in attempt to give him a better education than that which is believed to be offered in public schools. He recalls being taught polytheism and being taught in Sanskrit, which he shares confused him, but he did not bring this to anyone's attention because he did not want to '*step on peoples toes'*. Thabang later attended a public high school (the same which Dineo attended) which had predominantly Black learners and White teachers. Stefan on the other hand, differs from all participants in that he attended a primary school and a high school that had predominantly White (Afrikaans) pupils and teachers. He therefore did not recall any experiences that made him aware of race until university.

> *"I'm from an Afrikaans family so; I went to an Afrikaans primary school and high school, which is majority white. And so basically there is not a big thing about race because most students are white, they're Afrikaans, their families are white, their friends are white, we all White we all speak Afrikaans there was not really a race thing. In the school, there was a couple of non-white* [children], *but they were easily accepted into friend groups, because they grew up with you. So, you were all friends regardless if you non-white, it doesn't matter."*- Stefan (twenty-four-year-old White male).

The rest of the participants, who found themselves in primary schools which were racially diverse or were dominated by a particular race that differed from their own, expressed how the exposure to difference made them notice and experience dynamics which were new and confusing to them.

> *"…my first encounter with race which occurred in the play area of my classroom. It was my first day of school and I was determined to become friends with all of my class mates. During the break time, I sat on the carpet and looked around my classroom, taking in the excitement of being at school when I noticed a pattern in the way my fellow class mates were sitting and behaving. The White children kept to themselves and rejected any children of colour from joining their*

*group At first, I was confused as to why anyone would act that way and then I remembered the stories that my parents had told me about how the whole country was divided by race."* – Sarita (twenty-year-old Indian female).

Here Sarita shares her feelings following being rejected by a group of White children after an attempt to play with them on her first day of school. Zahraa, a participant who also identifies as Indian although she shares that her mother is mixed race (Indian and White); shares how she felt following being told by an Indian friend that she was not a 'pure Indian' after learning about her White grandmother.

*"It never occurred to me before this point that it was not normal to have a White grandmother. I didn't really consider my grandmother to be different… so I went home and told my mom what happened. My mom had to explain some things to me and this is when I started to form ideas of race and racism. My mom phoned the teacher and had the teacher explain to the class that discriminating against others is not okay…Within my home, my dad has never really discussed race with me…"* – Zahraa (nineteen-year-old Indian female).

As Zahraa similarly describes her experience as one that was particularly confusing as it came from *"…another girl who was also an Indian and Muslim like me."*, it becomes evident that children within school ages do not only begin to classify children with identifiable differences, but they also begin to discriminate against them even in cases where they share racial identification. This is further demonstrated in Tamlyn's first encounter with race as she shares that she was mistaken as a person of another race (White) because as a Coloured person she is light-skinned with straight hair.

*"Somewhat understanding the inaccuracies of the situation, I went to my father that night and told him what happened. His face immediately inhabited a look of fury and shock. The very next day he pitched to my school to speak to my teacher.... she explained politely and with a sincerity that changed my dad's face from anger to understanding. I, on the other hand, was still left confused but quickly forgot about the situation".* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year-old Coloured female).

**The Function of the Family.** A common pattern which is displayed in these last three excerpts is the fact that upon facing this event, the participants report consulting their parents

about the confusion they had about these first encounters at school. Beside the stories featured in this section, if the family was not mentioned at all, participants revealed "*My family never really spoke about race a lot"*- (Leigh-Anne). The participants, who did detail their family's involvement where issues of race were concerned, indicated that their caregivers only had conversations about race once a racial experience (at the school) had occurred.

> *"When I informed my mother of how we were being treated in school, she then opened up to me about such inequalities that exist in our society. My mom; due to her experiences in the workplace, she advised me against associating with opposite races, especially White* [people]*"* - Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

For participants like Stefan who only experienced such an event in university (considering he attended predominantly, White Afrikaans schools up to this point), he similarly reveals his family's mediation of his first-hand experience with race which made him become aware or race.

> "*I asked my parents coming home why is this so, because it was weird for me, and my mom explained it more to me. After an explain from her I understood that because of the past that SA [South Africa] has people are very hesitant to answer just [any] questions, because they still think and feel that the power structure have not completely been restored to a more equal level*." – Stefan (twenty-four-year-old White male).

## Section Two: Narratives of Experience, Identity and Perspectives of Race in everyday life

### 2.1 *Experiences of Exclusion and their Influence on Issues of Integration*

**Being 'Born-free' Before and During Adolescence.** As mentioned above, the topic of exclusion begins to emerge in the school age and is shown to gain more and more significance in shaping the participants experiences as racialized subjects within the school

(and furthermore into adulthood). Here, two participants recall realizing the constraints of ideas of racial purity after a series of moments in which their racial identity was interrogated:

> *"I believe my first encounter with race was never an "ah ha!" moment; it was a series of "ah", "oh?", "oh wow…" and "hmm," moments…When I was in grade 1, our teacher, a White Afrikaans lady, took a poll of the various race groups in the class. This was a governmental requirement at the time. She told each racial group to stand up one by one. When she instructed all the White kids to stand, I remained seated. I am, after all, not white. I am coloured. So, of course, all the White kids stood up. I heard little voices behind and beside me all say, "Tammy, stand up, you need to stand up," as they gestured for me to stand. Confused by what was happening, I took their word for it and stood up, knowing somehow that this could certainly not be correct"* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year-old Coloured female).

> *"If I had to be honest, there was never a one time that made me aware of my race, there were several moments I experienced that made me aware… I didn't feel it until I was in grade three, because I remember in grade three, we had to do that stupid thing of like, where the school has its check where they checked which races are in the school and so forth. So, we did that in grade three, and I was speaking to one of the White teachers, because she was doing the administration for that. And she asked me, you know, "Shari, what's your race?" and I said, I'm black. and then she said, "What's your home language?" And I said English. And she kind of looked at me like, "other than English, what do you speak", and I said, I mostly just speak English at home. And she shouted at me, this White teacher shouted at me. And she kind of shamed me for not speaking my home language."* – Shari (nineteen-year-old Black female).

Shari goes on to disclose her experience of the challenges of not fitting in with Black girls at school that she faced as a result of not being proficient in an African language

> *"In high school, it got worse…I took Zulu as my first additional language and the thing about that was that, um, I was really bad at learning Zulu... So, I think, in high school, it got a lot more… persistent… There was also this group of girls in my grade that were like, "the Black girls", whatever that means… And they could speak Vernacular, and they came from the townships and, you know… they were*

*like that ideal Black girl image. And I never felt like I could belong to that group. Especially in high school, because I had this persistent shame in me of not being Black enough. But then at the same time when it came to specific things like beauty, I was reminded how too Black I am."* - Shari (nineteen-year-old Black female).

Furthermore, beyond issues with proficiency in an African language, she highlights how she was not labelled as beautiful amongst both Black and Coloured girls at school because of her skin tone. Tamlyn and Zahraa who are also somewhat mixed race, and much lighter in skin tone recall experiences of being fetishized because of their skin tone instead.

*"This one boy had a thing for me, you know, feelings you know but kind of like of a fetishize because of my appearance… The boy was White couldn't pick up what race I was. He said, Oh, yes, your Spanish or Arabic and saw it as like a thing and I just thought "you just being a bit offensive" –* Zahraa (nineteen-year-old Idian female).

*"I had one of these boys approach me and when he approached me he did so thinking I was Portuguese. I told him I'm not and even if I was I'm not interested so I kind of pushed it away. The very same person started hanging out with me a bit, until the end of high school he became a very good friend, he knew me eventually. However, whilst sitting with these people, something that really upset me is them saying "Oh at least you not like the other Coloured girls"* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year old Coloured female).

Tamlyn revealed how she was treated, and considered to be better because she differed from the stereotypes her peers had of Coloured girls. Upon witnessing how people were treated differently because of their skin tone and ultimately race in high school, Unathi expressed:

*"I was like no if they're doing this, then I don't want to be associated. Yeah, you know, because you also start to realize that you don't want to be friends with someone if you're in the same class, that's going to be treated differently to you. Because my thing is that they're not going to understand as friends we should be able to communicate that this was being done to me, but if it's not being done to the next person that I'm going to be able to understand so not that I consciously made the decision not to have White friends. I think I just gravitated towards people I had more in common with, which happens to be Black people".* - Unathi

Here Unathi recalls her response after realizing that White pupils were treated better by teachers in high school. Dineo and Thalia expressed similar sentiments as they revealed how things which are typically considered trivial such as hair, highlighted racism for them in school:

> *"There was like, I think, a moment where race was brought up as an underlying thing like at our school when we had the whole thing with hair, and like, the principal, cutting someone's braids off, because she thought that that was a violation of the school uniform. And the more we'd have conversations around that, there'd obviously be that comparison to the treatment that the White girls get. There was a school rule that we cannot dye our hair and whatnot, but they would be allowed to dye their hair freely and it would never be cut. So, they were conversations that led to the whole race thing that actually, as much as maybe it's a superficial thing to look at it as it's just all based on hair but that's when we started talking about race actually also being an underlying thing here… But at the end of the day our high school was mostly Black* [pupils] *as well. So, I guess we were all equally discriminated against"* – Dineo (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

Although Thalia is White and did not experience this herself, she confirms that the theme of discrimination and stereotyping towards Black girls was a common experience in high school with the statement below

> "*I remember this one teacher, she taught Afrikaans and no one liked her. It was around the time of the debate about afros and Black girls hair and she called all the girls in and said "you act like you are from the township" and that Black girls should have their hair a certain way and that us White girls should stop acting as though we are from the township too… Looking back that's when it became clearer like what are you saying to us? What do you mean? I remember saying "you can't say that to us or tell us to stop acting a certain way, we're kids you know, back off a little"*- Thalia (twenty year old White female).

**<u>Navigating Being 'Born-free' as a Young Adult.</u>** As the participants detailed how race formed part of their everyday lives in present time; it became more apparent that the dynamics described above persisted in the bigger spaces and institutions they occupy.

*"In varsity I only had Black friends because basically the same thing I mentioned earlier. There were these White girl twins at Res* [residence] *in varsity and we weren't allowed to date seniors. But one was dating, and her boyfriend was a senior and she could see him and could go to the male Res. But if you just get caught with a boy even your age, then you're contributing to the universities bad image because, you were a "potential pregnancy stat", or could "catch HIV" but apparently the White girls, they couldn't do that. It's only us Black girls… then they put up excuses of "we just taking care of you, and we are teaching you about risky behaviour", but it's only applicable to Black girls. Yeah. So everywhere I went, I think I just realized that this thing White people, it hurts…* - Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

*"I've been told that like if you're going to follow something in rugby, and you don't even know how to speak Afrikaans you are already excluded. The people that work within that industry conduct the interviews in Afrikaans so if you don't know that, you're really screwed. And you're Black so, that just puts you at the bottom."* - Dineo (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

Dineo feels she is perceived differently in this space and questions her survival in that industry as a result. As Tamlyn reflects on an experience where she received a contract from a company she had been in correspondence with, she reveals she was rejected after they realized that she was not White:

*"…It was post varsity when I went into the workforce that I started applying for jobs and I thought what if they don't accept me cause they think my name is White probably? But when they meet me, I'm not… That's when I really started putting a lot of thought to it and that for me was the moment I started to reflect back like… "do I see this better?". So definitely now when I meet someone and going from place to place I would go as far as saying it was intimidating. It's intimidating walking in a room and thinking "how will I be judged" and that was very frustrating. So, I've gained a lot of perspective.* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year-old Coloured female).

Below Thabang shares a similar sentiment of being held back whilst Unathi shares sentiments of being undermined on the basis of race.

*"When I started working, that's when I realized the… not necessarily the importance, but the role that race plays within the workplace. It's very crucial. The person that employed me was a White guy. As I worked my way up what I noticed was that this White guy, sees potential in me, but at the same time, he doesn't want to fully expose me to the potential that I can give. I find myself limited when I hear him saying, "Okay, this is what you can do in this one… I'll give you this one" …* - Thabang (twenty-five-year-old Black male - referring to work roles and responsibilities).

*"There will be times when you're in corporate and I'll go to the bathroom and think to myself, "these people are taking me for a ride". You never get the acknowledgment as much as a White person, White people will be hailed for the smallest thing and you'll be breaking your back, putting in the hours, doing the work, and you just probably get one clap you know… So, it hurts more in the workplace. It hurts, especially when you start to compare the standards of living in the office. So, like where I work, the entire operations team is Black and that's where they pull the most work, then in management everyone is white. In my company, only one Black female has a vehicle. Every time when we get our increase letters, there will be someone from the opposite* [referring to White] *race, who will come with a vehicle upgrade or who would have just bought a vehicle… In fact, I'm lying, all the White people in my office have vehicles, and out of the Black guys, none of them have vehicles. Only that one Black female has a vehicle... That just shows you the scale."* – Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

As Stefan shares his experiences of navigating young adulthood in democratic South Africa, he shares feelings of intimidation when it comes to interacting with other races:

*"It exposes you to a lot of different kinds of people, which is, why I've basically decided to come and study at Wits because I could have gone to Tuks or to Potch, which would have been more of the typical thing for an Afrikaans boy to do... I find it more difficult cause I find you have this, like pre-existing ideas or stereotypes that's placed upon you from a young age and that you've also learned and although I'm White and Afrikaans, I'm not the typical boer Afrikaans guy like the one who has the bakkie… I don't even like a bakkie let alone drive a bakkie*

*and I don't like farms or hunting but when a person, a Afrikaans White person starts speaking Afrikaans, then there's a divide like… because the Black person is now immediately jumping back to the past where Afrikaans was the oppressors and then immediately, you can see the Black person is not only uncomfortable, but you're also not in your comfort zone. And also if, say, like Black people would speak in an African language then you immediately get excluded out of the conversation. I find it to be a bit easier* [to start conversations] *with Indian people and White people than Black people because it's not emotionally charged. They still have some barriers that are found because the White people and Black people have placed them between each other but it's because of the past in South Africa. It's easier just to speak to people that are studying the same degree with you, because you have something in common so it's an easy way to access starting a conversation"* - Stefan (twenty-four-year-old White male).

Amodio and Hamilton (2012) add that there are often feelings of anxiety on the side of the White actor, who is afraid of offending or revealing racial bias within these interactions. Leigh-Anne maintains that she has been "*quite oblivious to race*" throughout her life thus far and shared that her experiences of race, *"don't affect anything at all"*; which Thalia, points out is an experience she believes is common amongst White people, as expressed by the sentiments youth in the *The People Versus the Rainbow Nation* and 'born-free' youth of colour in this study share.

*"When I think about being White and White privilege I don't think many White people, have much discomfort about navigating as White people. I have it cause my mum has pointed out to me my whole life, she said "you guys, your generation cannot make the same mistakes previous generations made" she has always pointed that out for me."* -Thalia (twenty-year-old White female).

This reveals the theme that spaces within South Africa are seen as the preservers of White privilege in particular, which is expanded on by Spivak (1990) who argues that this is a result of the continued appropriation of in-group out-groups, with the agenda further racialize the world and maintain racialized oppression throughout history all the way to the present day

## ***2.2 Politics of privilege, identity and its intersections***

### **Social Spaces as the Preservers of Privilege.**

> *"There's always spaces where you feel like you don't belong, South Africa is a very interesting place. In general, there are places in White communities that I can go to where I won't be accepted but at the same time I know there's places in the hood* [township], *that I could go to that I know I wouldn't be accepted in, because of the way that I am, the way that I grew up and the way I speak. So, I know that there are places I can go in a Black community where I won't be accepted, I know there are Coloured communities, where I won't be accepted, then I know that there are Indian communities where I won't be accepted. So being accepting that you won't be accepted is the best thing that you could do to see yourself as a modern South African, because this whole notion of rainbow nation, 'we has to be cool with everybody' is a pipe dream. You know, it's literally a pipe dream"* – Thabang (twenty-five-year-old Black male).

With this, Thabang brings us beyond issues of integration and intergroup dynamics to detail issues of intragroup dynamics.

**Challenges, Conflicts and Contradictions.** When telling stories about his identity as a South African youth in democratic South Africa, Thabang states:

> *"It's a tricky time… for the whole world, essentially, but in South Africa, especially. So essentially, what I'm trying to say is, identification is our biggest issue right now. Identifying ourselves with, who we are what we are. Because there's so many aspects, its traditional, its cultural, its social, its religious pressures, you know, and all we need to do is just sit down with ourselves, have a conversation with ourselves because we are trying to identify as worldly people, but we don't know how to communicate to each other locally. It's an issue, because essentially, it's hard to answer two questions at the same time. You know… and that's what we're trying to do right now. We're trying to answer five, six questions in one answer as South African people.* – Thabang (twenty-five-year-old Black male).

## *2.3 Perspectives of Race and the Problem of Classification in South Africa*

### Racial Classification as a Cause for Continued Skewed Race Relations.

As the topic of racial classification arose, the study found that the participants feel constrained by racial classifications as many of them believed that institutions that request documentation where racial classifications are required often do so to discriminate them.

> *"I think I don't notice as much as a Black person ticking it off and I think that in itself is a privilege… That's a White privilege that White people take for advantage, you know the fact that you will be respected as a White person going into a job interview and be thought to be educated which is not always the case… In that way I am aware when I tick off that White box it comes with a whole lot of privileges that I did not ask for and shouldn't be given to me. It feels like this dirty thing that has been given to me that I don't particularly want if it means that other people are not getting it. It feels like getting an inheritance of blood money or mob-boss money or something. I don't want that privilege if it means walking around knowing that lives were taken or cost to get it. It's something that one can't even fathom that, that's the history of this country."* – Thalia (twenty-year-old White female).

This was more so a belief amongst Black participants revealed that instead of losing this classification completely, they would rather want to identify as African.

> *"I think if having this 'one human race' would mean that there's no difference in terms of social standing and if it puts us on all one equal playing field I think I could do it… not this thing of this one has likely a better chance of progressing job opportunities or this one has a better chance of pay. But like, it wouldn't change who I am and what I've gone through and what I've enjoyed about my blackness and at the end of the day out, I still get to keep that. It's like because there's a ranking where its White people, Coloured people then maybe somewhere towards the end you get Black people. So, me being on like the third level, I've never really felt like I'm in a position to look down on anybody else. So, I'd imagine a White person having a harder time to relinquish that luxury, that privilege of being able to look down on other races. Whereas for me it will be like, Okay, well, I was already here like this. I guess you know, we're all treating each other with respect and we're all on the same field… I think that would be the challenge for them…"* – Dineo (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

The remainder of participants of colour in the study were similarly in favour of finding other sources of identification such as nationality, culture, or religion.

**Deeming Democracy Problematic.** When analysing the perspectives this cohort have of race in present day South Africa, the study found that all the participants shared similar views regarding issues of transformation.

> *"I understand the social constructs that our country lives in right now cause we're only 25 years into our democracy. That's very young. That's my age… I'm as old as this country's democracy so transformation currently is a tricky situation, because there's different forms of transformation, there is racial transformation, there is gender transformation but there's no agenda transformation"* – Thabang (twenty-five-year-old Black male).

> *"I don't think there has been much [change]… Yes, cool the laws have changed, now we can sit next to someone and hold hands and be friendly with one another and whatever, and I can have a White employee instead of a White employer but so what?? If the ideas are still the same"* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year-old Coloured female).

A few of the White participants in the study revealed that they often have feelings of guilt upon this realization.

> *"It makes me feel uncomfortable… it just doesn't feel right…I also feel very uncomfortable walking on campus past the cleaners… or car guards like, why are all these low paying jobs only available to Black people? I mean I know why, it just makes me feel very uncomfortable so in instances like that I notice it a lot. I just want to switch it around, yes you can't but it shouldn't be like that and we all know that, so, yea I happen to notice that. Seems like a nice problem to have because it's in a seat of privilege but I always comprehend 'people who look like me have made it like that'"* - Thalia (twenty-year-old White female).

Leigh-Anne further emphasizes that this feeling of guilt comes from the fact that the majority of wealth is in in hands of the minority (White people), thus supporting all other participants sentiments that race is the primary cause of this.

> *"I think we all know the problems but don't know how to solve them. I'm pretty sure majority of the country's wealth belongs to White people… and like, I think*

*even BEE it's not doing much it's more like you have to fill in a quota of how many Black people you will hire when opening a business, but you don't really reach the quota or if you do its more of fantastic we got our numbers we can move on now, it's not focusing on peoples qualifications they just hire within the company or just give them bad jobs, like even if all the Black people are hired as janitors. It's more of we've given them jobs we've filled our quota but it's not doing anything substantial, it's not helping much at all"* - Leigh-Anne (twenty-year-old White female).

*"I don't think democracy is working in this country. I think that we have gotten to a time where, how many years has it been, like, 25 years later, you know, like, White people still own majority of the wealth in this country, White people still own the majority of the land in this country, and on top of that, the people in power that are oppressing people are also black… It's the wealthy Black elites now that have been included in this wealth that aren't contributing to the growth."* - Shari (nineteen-year-old Black female).

*"We've managed to change the face of the system, but not the system, you know… I think the only thing that that New democracy brought was different classes of blackness. You know, so you have your elites, you have your professional, you have your middle class or whatever. And then you have your poor people. And I think year by year, that gap is widening. So, that's not transformation. And the fact that we can't even dictate how our own economies sways. That's not transformation. I don't feel like that's transformation, the fact that you still have companies like, Eskom who have the same executives from back in the day* [apartheid], *making the decisions with no input."* – Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

In this section it becomes increasingly evident that the alleged 'born-free' cohort shared similar perspectives about democracy being problematic. When discussing how they believe change can be achieved, some of the participants shared that this has to be done by both our generation and the generations to come.

*"I think there are specific groups within our generation that are not having these conversations. And I think it's the most privileged groups. Like a lot of the White*

*people I've come across aren't having these conversations, a lot of Indian people are not having these conversations. And I think it's mostly in Black spaces. I've been having these conversations, obviously. But I definitely have noticed a separation in terms of politics, and I've noticed how a lot of people tread lightly around politics or avoid politics in general."* - Shari (nineteen-year-old Black female).

*"It's very tricky in South Africa because you can't isolate a generation, you can't say you as a generation make a change, because there's influence. So, for us to speed it* [true integration] *forward I think the best thing to do is to give a chance and then try pass it down from generation to generation."* – Tamlyn (twenty-four-year old Coloured female).

*"I think that if you're born free, and you're able to reason, then you can look at things for what they are… It's not information that is being passed on as secret knowledge… I also think that as the born-frees, we've been very lucky because growing up, we've went seeing that it's not only the political climate, but the social climate. So, you evolve, and then you start to realize it's not an exclusive thing. It's just that, like with any of your thoughts, you mature, you able to see things differently. You know, and unfortunately, our parents do also influence how we view the world and therefore, you start to see other people that have that thing of being ignorant. Actuall,y I can't say someone else's ignorant because I don't know their background but, I can only tell you my story with my own background…"* – Unathi (twenty-four-year-old Black female).

These excerpts will further be discussed in the following chapter.

# Chapter 6

## Discussion

This chapter discusses the themes found in the previous chapter through the theoretical engagement with the narratives shared by the cohort of participants that this study is centred on. As demonstrated with the findings, this chapter has like wisely been divided into two sections which respectively detail the narratives of the event that evoked racial awareness in the participants; and the narratives of their experiences and perspectives of race in their everyday life thereafter. These narratives are thus contrasted with the core concepts detailed by the scholars consulted in the theoretical framework available in chapter two, to fulfil the aims of this study; which explores how this youth have come to know and think about race in contemporary South Africa, how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others, as well as how the contrast between these self- constructed meanings and the pre-existing constructs of race in South Africa affect them at an intrinsic, interpersonal and intrapersonal level. Thus although these chapters are divided into two sections, the whole chapter displays the narrative trajectory of the participant's lives and life stories by reporting the participants' reflections on their early encounters with race to their experiences as 'born-free' youth at the dawn of democracy in chronological order (Creswell, 2013). This is followed by reporting on this cohorts' perspectives of race in present day South Africa as a result of their experiences and the issues they face throughout their identity formation period up to this point. The chapter then finally reports on the many intersections that reproduce race as a source of conflict for this 'born-free' cohort'.

## Section One: Narratives of the Event that Evoked Racial Awareness

### *1.1 Reflections on Early Encounters with Race*

In analysing many of the participants reflections about the moment where in which they first became aware of race, it became apparent that majority of the cohort experienced the event being referred to (in the excerpts below) in the pre-school and early primary school period; suggesting that the participants were children between the ages of four and eight when this first moment of awareness occurred. In detailing this event in a narrative sequence, the study refers to Hirshfeld (1996) who points out that before children become aware of

race, they think about it in a rather simplified way and have no grasp of the actual concept. This is perhaps because prior to entering school ages where in which children can make comparisons between a wide variety of individuals, children are typically bound to their homes, which are thus the primary site where they develop conceptions about the world they are later exposed to as they learn about their environment (Hirshfeld 1996). Thus because children typically view themselves and their family members to be homogenous regardless of potentially apparent differences in appearance such as skin and hair (even in cases where their parents or primary caregivers are of different races), this aids the thinking that children between these ages (four and eight) have of differences purely being physical (Hirshfeld, 1996).

That is to say that in the early stages of Erikson's (1968) conceptualisation of psycho-social development, children simply see these types of differences at the surface level and do not make much of them or account them to race. Hirshfeld (1996) futher points out that this is because children are not informed on the biological principles behind these differences, thus rendering them unable to grasp the essence of race as a concept which remains impervious regardless of changes the environment, space or time. In separate studies on children's understanding of race Aboud (1988), Keil (1989) and Ramsey (1987) similarly reveal that children, like the participants where at that point in time; do not understand the constancy of racial identity, and identity as whole in the way that adults do (Hirshfeld, 1996). They thus do not realize that racial identity as a permanent fixture which is immutable and cannot be changed or influenced. Because of this they fail to understand these surface appearances as factors that are determined by biology as opposed to environmental conditions such as tanning from the sun or superficial factors such as hairstyling and make-up (Hirshfeld, 1996). Hirshfeld (1996) thus argues that consequently, children within this early childhood and pre-school phase are unable to participate in racial thinking, unless racial socialization takes place within this period. When analysing the excerpts, the researcher found no indications or descriptors of racial socialization having taken place within this period Hirshfeld (1996). This is evident in the excerpts where the participants detail the emotions that emerged when reflecting on this event in which they became aware of race and ultimately their upbringing as the first generation to be born in democratic South Africa, as Manzo (1996) and Rasethaba (2016) point out, was said to be a new South Africa where apartheid is abolished and sentiments of equality are embraced.

Throughout the analysis it became more evident that White participants reported completing the task with relative ease, whilst participants of colour shared a range of unfavourable emotions that were invoked upon reflecting on this event, ultimately supporting More (2012) in stating that racial subjectivity in South Africa seems reserved for people of colour. This is perhaps indicative of the multiple forms of capital (as theorized by Bourdieu, (1977). White people in South Africa embody, leaving them less susceptible to racial subjectivity within social contexts such as the school in this case (Kiguwa, 2014). 'Capital' in this sense is described by Bourdieu (1977) as the accumulation of a particular asset/s which serve as an assistant to help particular individuals or groups achieve higher status and ascend on society's structure of hierarchy. It can thus be economic, cultural, social or symbolic and because of its ability to reproduce relations of power through these spheres; it can ultimately influence how people experience racial subjectivity as exhibited in the analysis of the participant's experiences of race throughout (Kiguwa, 2014). With this put forth, it becomes easy to interpret why participants like Stefan as well as Leigh-Anne (who displays idealized cultural capital in South African society by virtue of being White) describe such ease when recalling their childhood experiences. It is thus of critical importance to consider the South African context in this analysis because once this is done, race becomes an apparent reason as to why they display an overall positive school experience whilst participants of colour detail their negative emotions as a result of not having such a rewarding experience within this space (Kiguwa, 2014).

These particular participants also revealed that they are only realizing in their adult lives the effect this event had on them and their experiences thereafter, attesting to Hirshfeld (1996) who writes that individuals do not recognize race the way they do as adults, when they are children. This also supports Bradbury and Miller (2010), Creswell (2013), and Squire (2008) who point this out as one of the benefits of narrative research as it results not only in researchers capturing the plot of their participants' stories; but it also allows participants to analyse their experiences sequentially in order to gain perspective on how events such as 'the moment they first became aware of race' have affected them from the onset of this event through to their present life. The participants also display this in their narratives as they reflect on their perceptions at that point in time whilst sharing similar sentiments, stating that they had not reflected on the details of this event prior to their participation in this study. This remained true for the participants even when they started attending school and became aware of race, perhaps because of the normalized silencing and ignoring of race with South Africa's

democratic context. Although it is evident from the excerpts that the participants had different experiences when reflecting on how race featured in their childhood, it is important to again note that all participants were at school going age when they experienced this event, thus producing the school as an emerging site where racial awareness was birthed.

**School as an Emerging site**

As detailed by Vandeyer (2010) many schools within working and middle class South Africa saw the shift from racial segregation to being racially inclusive with the shift from apartheid to democracy. At the forefront of these schools were schools that were classified as 'model c' schools during apartheid as they were White only schools during this period as outlined by Phatlane (2007). Given the inclusion of 'non-white' pupils as they were previously referred, these schools are now commonly referred to as 'former model c' schools and are the schools that were commonly attended amongst the participants in this study. At school-going age they therefore found themselves in an environment where they had more range than when their world was confined to their homes and their exposure to difference was limited to their families. As Hirshfeld (1996) detailed, at the pre-school stage, children are too young to make sense of racial difference and have their own way of reasoning which is not centered around their parents input and ultimately informs their representations of the world. As they progress from early childhood and pre-school to school ages as outlined by Erikson (1968), they outgrow more simplified ideas of their surroundings as they become intrigued by a wider range of stimuli such as (racial) difference within their environment. Hirshfeld (1996) details this shift by stating that the wide ranging differences that become more apparent during this period begin to serve as perceptual cues in which children start to classify people into different categories such as racial categories. Hirshfeld (1996) describes this as a result of our human predisposition to construct categories in the presence of objects with obvious identifiable differences. It is thus in this way that children in the school age develop racial thinking and start to acknowledge that skin color is relevant to racial identity (Hirshfeld, 1996). This displays the ease in which racial thinking is acquired and indicates that although school age children typically begin to exercise racial thinking, they still do not have the full grasp of race as a concept as they do not understand its essence as yet (Hirshfeld, 1996). This shift simply indicates that within school age, children begin recognizing racial constancy as they observe people with the same 'differences' as well as resemblance between their peers and their families in most cases.

Racial consistency and coherence thus becomes a feature during the school age and children like the participants at this point, become prone to the awareness of race. Although the participants shared general sentiments of interacting with peers of different races without noticing any difference between them prior to school age; or making anything of the differences they did notice during school age, this period marks a shift from children not linking the phenotypic differences between them and their peers to race, to them starting to evaluate and classify people into culturally appropriate racial categories, thus deeming them as able to determine racial-category membership (Hirshfeld, 1996). This shift captures the transition from children from being racially oblivious in early childhood and preschool age, to them being able to recognize race at school age. Hirshfeld (1996) further points out that this feature is what provides a platform for racial thinking to thrive and therefore, for racist thinking to emerge as it creates the potential to discriminate between whole 'types of people' i.e. people belonging to specific racial groups, as evidenced in the participants reflections of their early school experiences where it becomes more evident that children within school ages do not only begin to classify and / or discriminate against children with identifiable differences, but they also maintain the same strategy to create in-group and out-groups as detailed by Amodio and Hamilton (2012). This is similarly the case when children are presented with conventions of race that they do not understand as evidenced by Zahraa and Tamlyn's experiences of exclusion because they appeared to be different from what is typically expected for a person of their race. Hirshfeld (1996) thus urges us to remember that the variation we witness between races is small compared to the variation that is present within racial categories; which is shown to be taken for granted in South Africa. This is because the way in which we determine racial membership; as children or as adults, is simplistic in nature as it based on assumption.

**The Function of the Family**

As the participants detail how they consulted their caregivers following the confusion that came as a consequence of their first encounters with race, we witness a shift from them not being aware of race to not identifying with it, to instantly becoming racial subjects at a point where they are already faced with the industry versus inferiority psycho-social conflict which Erikson (1968) describes is a point in childhood where children are concerned with competence and the way in which they appear amongst and alongside their peers. Hirshfeld (1996) details this concern and confusion as one that demonstrates that race is a construct

which children do attend, despite the popular belief that children are unaware of race until adolescence or adulthood. The confusion also suggests that race was not something that family members initiated conversations about or was addressed or discussed until the participants had shared their experiences of their first (often negative) encounters with race with their family members. Despite race not explicitly being discussed during childhood, Sarita and Tamlyn's excerpts above display that the family members did intervene in cases where race related incidents such as this event occurred. In their study of race socialization in African American families, Hughes and Chen (1997) support this as they demonstrate the role families play in providing a protective barrier against prejudice and racial discrimination of their children. Hughes and Chen (1997) point out that this occurs particularly within families of colour as the adults within those families typically understand racial subjectivity and feel they have to defend their children the experiences of subjectivity they themselves have had in social institutions such as schools. In her study *'Telling stories of race: A study of racialized subjectivity in the post-apartheid academy*", Kiguwa (2014, p. 244) refers to a participant who details the silencing of race as their parents' attempt not to place or project their own experiences of racial trauma onto their children. The researcher hereby suggests this as a possible reason for why the family does not feature in many of the participant's narratives despite the opening statement to the narrative exercise reading, "Think back on a moment where you had your first encounter with race and the influence your family had in this experience…". Thus this displays the family as having minimal influence in stimulating racial awareness and racially socialising (although not blatantly) this cohort as compared to the school. This fact that the participants first became aware of race in school environments brings us to Phatlane (2007) and Vandeyer's (2010) argument stating that schools are often sites for racial subjectivity. This is supported especially by the participants of colour in the study who detail stories of racial discrimination not only by their peers, but by their teachers as well.

As Unathi detailed her mother's input following her experience of this kind, Hughes and Chen's (1997) argument that families of colour typically tend to take a protective stance when they hear of their children being subject to racial discrimination such as the differential treatment Unathi described her (White) teachers giving to her and fellow Black learners., This dynamic is detailed by Vandeyer (2010) who found that even after the dawn of democracy White teachers maintained racial bias which prohibited many of them from engaging in fair classroom practice. This is explored further in the following section as it

because more of a reality for the participants during adolescence. In maintaining focus on the function of the family, Kiguwa (2014) highlights how either the sharing of stories or the silencing or ignoring of race within the family both inform the process of racial subject formation that takes place; especially within social institutions such as schools within this context. Thus whether or not family explicitly features within participants‘ narratives of race, Kiguwa (2014) argues that the family background an individual often plays a significant role due to its ability to influence the economic, cultural, social and/ or symbolic experiences individuals have (like the children captured at this point of the study) by way of capital. This is because parental and family capital also typically becomes accrual and becomes embodied capital which children possess, and it informs the way in which they are received by and navigate within the social world (Kiguwa, 2014). Kiguwa (2014) thus describes embodied capital as something that cannot be viewed as separate from an individual as it is cultivated through family cultural values and becomes an integral part of the individual possessing it. An example of family capital is evident in the review of schools that the participants attended as some participants attended private schools as a result of their parents desire to give them what is perceived to be a better education whilst those who attended public schools, were in suburban public schools. This opens us up to understand family capital and ultimately the family influence even though it has not been blatantly expressed by the remainder of the cohort.

Another interesting thing to point out in the previous excerpt is Unathi's choice of word when referring to White people as the 'opposite' race. This captures not only the racial socialization which took place in her home, but it also captures how the in-group out-group dynamic's outlined by Amodio and Hamilton (2012) and Vincent (2008) are reproduced. It becomes more apparent as this individual narrative unfolds that it is stable in that Unathi maintains this disposition up until adulthood, confirming Vincent's (2008) argument that in-group out-group dynamics reinforce Black people's expectations of continued White dominance. This dynamic informs racial judgements on both sides which that in turn inform practices such as racism or racial distancing; deeming race a meaningful category of identity even centuries down the line as we witness how ideas of race permeate from history into the micro-level everyday life through the interpersonal interactions and intra-personal experiences (Vincent, 2008). This is evidenced by Stefan, who details a time where he was conducting group work in university and the group they were working with being reluctant to engage with him as the only White male in the group. Stefan recalls how the group only

opened up to his Black (and female) group members, thus also displaying the intergroup anxiety as theorized by Vincent (2008) and can also be understood through Amodio and Hamilton's (2012) description of in-group out-group dynamics referred to above. In the following section, the researcher explores this dynamic further as it becomes a more prominent experience for participants who detail common experiences of exclusion following their first encounter with race.

## Section Two: Narratives of Experience, Identity and Perspectives of Race in everyday life

### 2.1 *Experiences of Exclusion and their Influence on Issues of Integration*

#### Being 'Born-free' Before and During Adolescence

As the topic of exclusion begins to emerge we witness another shift that occurs where participants transcend from being aware of race to where they start witnessing and experiencing the structural consequences of it and how it is attached to other aspects of their identity such as appearance and language (Hirshfeld, 1996). As the participants share their stories of being excluded, they come to realize that although their early experiences of racial identity were not directly and noticeably racial, they were the result of expectations or roles as McAdam (2001) exhibits. These roles were placed on them by virtue of them appearing to be from a particular racial group, leaving them vulnerable to being discriminated against on the basis of any other aspect of their identity (McAdam, 2001). This speaks to the idea of racial purity and highlights how ideas of homogeneity within racial identities constrain individuals who do not fit the conventional standard as expressed by Zahraa, Tamlyn and Shari who share stories of their racial identity constantly being interrogated because of their appearance and / or language capabilities. As Ndlovu (2012) points out, because identity is not a unilateral thing for any individual, such conflicts are bound as the result of the various and alternating influences that remain a constant in individuals lives as they navigate in relation to cultural, social, political, economic and ideological contexts which influence them; often simultaneously.

Thus although Shari, Leigh-Anne and Thalia all detail experiencing exclusion on the basis of language and accent, Shari's experience differs because she is darker skinned and is mixed race (Black and Coloured). Because she identifies as Black however, the expectation is for her to know an African language as evidenced in the experience she details during a census check in primary school. This points to Letshufi (2016) who examines how assumptions of homogeneity within racial groups are essentialist in nature through her criticism of the concept of a 'coconut'. 'Coconut' is a derogatory term commonly used in Black communities to label individuals with these communities who do not fit the general ideal of the community such as showing proficiency in a home language which for a Black person in South Africa, is assumed to be an African language. Erasmus (2010) highlights that

this is a consequence of the use of race in the rigid ways racial categories were defined during apartheid. Erasmus (2010) elaborates this by stating that racial classifications are what have enabled the marginalization of young South Africans like Shari who don't fit general descriptions and the expectations that come with appearing like people of a particular category of race. This disjuncture between 'appearance' and 'social habits' is where terms like 'coconut' stemmed from, as people who are perceived to be Black yet do not model 'black' behaviour (from a cultural aspect, food or lifestyle choice, language and accent, etc) are side-lined and rejected by an alleged Black community which is treated as a cohesive group typical (Erasmus 2010). The focus on appearance and social habits in attempt to determine race are the two criteria that informed the apartheid government's judgments when classifying people (Erasmus, 2010). Letshufi (2016) details that what this label does is shame these individuals and consequently socially sanctions them within these communities. The subject of shame and self-conciousness can be understood through Gqola (2015) and More (2012) who argue that there exists a structurally inflicted feelings of inadequacy within the subconscious of Black people as a result the residue of colonial conquest which is still present in contemporary society. In this case, we witness it in schools; which Letshufi (2016) points out are sites for identity formation as they are spaces where individuals like Shari develop a sense of self-identity by virtue of relating to their peers. Shari also points out to her appearance being a factor that is imposing within this setting, which the study found to be a prominent sub-theme in investigating this cohort's experiences of identity in high school.

The study thus found that being discriminated against on the basis of varying aspects of one's overall identity became increasingly common as the cohort continued to progress into high school; ultimately overshadowing the feelings that they had of not noticing difference and being equals. It is from this point that participants revealed experiences of shame and self-consciousness as they were constantly compared to their peers who were regularly seen as the ideal. During this period we thus witness that as the participants become more aware of and exposed to race, they begin understanding it as both hidden and material as pointed out by Hirshfeld (1996). Up to this point the shift from common experiences of racial oblivion to a series of confusing early encounters with race, to racial awareness; which then became more frequent until participants had a clear understanding of race and race relations in South Africa. As Vandeyer (2010) argues that experiences within educational settings influence perspectives of race, race relations and racial identity, we witness how schools replicate and perpetuate race determined subjectivities through the participant's experiences of identity

within school. As Ratele and Duncan (2003) point out, as the cohort ages and progresses through Erikson's (1968) psycho-social stages of development to the point of adolescence, they began to think about race more complexly as they found that various aspects of their identity that society tends to closely linked with race such as appearance, language and accent, were bases for stereotyping discrimination and differential treatment from peers and particularly from teachers, which Vandeyer (2010) exhibits in his study investigating transformation within South African schools before revealing that teachers engage Black / children of colour in such a way that they ignore all differing aspects of their identity and measure them according to their own standards as White teachers and the schools White ethos, which requires Black children to assimilate to White standards in attempt to not be socially sanctioned in these settings. Family influence and capital are usually determinants of if children and adolescents possess, accept or reject the requirements of assimilation within the school phase (Kiguwa, 2014).

**Navigating Being 'Born-free' as a Young Adult**

As the participants moved from reflecting about their earlier encounters with race before and during adolescence, to thinking about how race formed part of their everyday lives in present time; the study found that these racialized experiences have only persisted since high school and continue to remain a fact about their experiences as they navigate through South Africa as young adults. This demonstrates how these high school experiences became the basis of this youth's thinking about race as many of them reveal the same sentiments of being stereotyped and discriminated against because of the assumptions made about ones race. All narratives become stable from this point as participants discuss this part of their lives as the point in which they begin to understand the depth and significance of race in Democratic South Africa. In doing this, they point out the double standards that afford White people privilege; in a more nuanced way as they discuss how they realize, navigate and resist race in the workplace. This is evidenced in Dineo's excerpt where she recalls the conversations she has had with fellow people of colour that are affiliated in her field of interest; whom she described have assimilated to this standard, which can be understood through Vandeyer's (2010) explanation of how spaces that were previously 'Whites only' continue to engage Black individuals from an emic perspective (i.e. White cultural norms) but are able to conceal generally discriminative practices through the proclamation of colour blindness which often conceals and enables exclusionary practices by placing the

responsibility on individuals to assimilate as a means of excelling and being seen as an equal amongst their White counter parts. Thus because she does not embody the required cultural capital to succeed in this space, by way of assimilation; she experiences role confusion as described by Ratele and Duncan (2003) who argue that youth in democratic South Africa remain challenged with this as they constantly and almost instantly have to redefine their identity according to the setting.

The stories that the participants share reveal how exclusion is a typical experience for born-free youth of colour in democratic South Africa as they reveal how they've continued to be discriminated against from adolescence up until their young adulthood. This refers us to Winant (2015) and Rasetshaba (2016) who paint the picture of how social institutions are spaces that were initially created for the sole function and comfort of White people and how regardless of the denouncing of slavery, announcing of decolonization and the shifting from apartheid dynamics to democracy; institutions like the education sector and workforce still manage to treat Black individuals as intruders in those spaces even though they have been included in them and exclaimed to be elevated to equal status in these spaces as a result of the ideology of a'rainbow nation' (Winant, 2015). Rasetshaba (2016) further exposes this in his film *The People Versus the Rainbow Nation*, as it displays how White youth in the 'rainbow nation' have not been met with the expectations to adjust or assimilate to anything, and remain in a position of privilege whilst Black youth have been left to challenge the structural residue of apartheid that disadvantages them to such an extent that their everyday circumstances as young Black South African citizens are noticeably a result of apartheid policies and the production of class categories that are directly correlated with race as shown in the film (Posel, 2001). As these participants of colour in the cohort share how the realization of White privilege affect them they also reveal how these experiences have hindered how they interact with people of different races as a result of these constant encounters of rejection, inferiority and subordination in their lives as young adults. Consequently, the majority of this group reveals that although they do not do it consciously, they find themselves gravitating towards people of their own racial identity because it is easier to relate to them, supporting Scott and Marshall's (2009) definition of race which Amodio and Hamilton (2012) expand to display how the unique collective experiences that are exclusive to people of particular racial identities create in-group out-group categories as a by-product of social identity and socialization. Subsequently 'us and them' reinforcements create tension amongst (and within when intersections are considered) different (racial)

groups. This is evidenced by Vincent's (2008) study of a demographically diverse group of South African university students who revealed that they did not integrate or experience meaningful interactions with one another regardless of sharing membership in an institutional setting. Stefan, who had not been exposed to racial diversity until attending university, also reveals that although he enjoys this exposure he often also feels excluded as he expresses that there are expectations of racism placed on him by his peers of colour within the institution, because he is White and Afrikaans. Amodio and Hamilton (2012) contribute this to intergroup anxiety which they state comes to play once the realization that the realities of the in-group are not identical to those of the out-group and thus there is barely any common ground for the inter-racial actors to base their interaction on (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012). Stefan thus supports Amodio and Hamilton's claim that (2012) there are often feelings of anxiety on the side of the White actor, who is afraid of offending or revealing racial bias within these interactions. Thus while some White participants such as Leigh-Anne maintain that they are "*quite oblivious to race*" and believe that their experiences *"don't affect anything at all"* as she shares; others such as Thalia and the many youth in *The People Versus the Rainbow Nation* points out that being obvious to race is a privilege that is only afforded to White people as they aren't subject to discrimination and discomfort as they navigate various spaces throughout South Africa. Spivak (1990) argues that this is a result of the continued appropriation of in-group out-groups, with the agenda further racialize the world and maintain racialized oppression throughout history all the way to the present day.

## ***2.2 Politics of privilege, identity and its intersections***

### **Social Spaces as the Preservers of Privilege**

To expand on the issue of White privilege, Rasethaba (2016), much like Phatlane (2007); Vandeyer (2010), and Letshufi (2016) display how the inclusion of Black people within social spaces and institutions after the abolition of apartheid give the illusion of social harmony and equality between distinctive races however it is indicated through *The People Versus The Rainbow Nation* that Black people and Black youth in particular have been rejecting this falsehood since #FeesMustFall as they created a platform that came together and believe that they possess the power to interrogate the amount of progress made in terms of race and class relations; ultimately challenging the legitimacy of South Africa as a rainbow nation (Rasethaba, 2016). The film thus points out that the mere fact that racial categories

remain one of the most prominent markers of identity and still manage to subject allegedly born-free Black youth to experiences that are for the most part unique to their racial group, illustrates the significance of race and its ability to shape the lives of individuals in South African society; even in within the 'rainbow nation'. A White individual (Mia) within the film unpacks her privilege and relates it to the issue of space by describing that her student residence and her university are spaces that were designed during apartheid and thus they were initially intended for White students as it was not imagined that Black individuals would or could ever attend them as a result of 'race common sense' (Posel, 2001; Whitehead, 2009; Erasmus, 2010). This inferred that Black people were not intelligent or intellectual enough to able to be admitted into a such spaces at the time (Posel 2001). Mia then demonstrates that the 'back stain' of the legacy of White supremacy is covered all over the walls of South African institutions and she expresses how she as a White person entered the space of a university believing in the colour-blind notions. Phatlane (2007) along with the many scholars consulted in Chapter two, criticize democracy for enabling a façade of equality. Mia then elaborates how upon realizing this; university has become a volatile space to be in as she describes how she went from ignorantly believing racism has been abolished along with apartheid, to suddenly hearing the voices of her Black peers that she had gone to school with all her life but had never heard before (Rasethaba, 2016). These spaces then become volatile not only for Black individuals, but for everyone in them as Stefan (and Mia) reveal. The experiences that the participants share thus display social institutions (as well as spaces of recreation) to be spaces that appear to be neutral, however, reveal that racial subjugation is still inscribed in everyday life (Fanon, 1967). Kiguwa (2014) supports this as she exhibits how the intersections of space and race result in the individuals occupying these spaces feeling the effects of racialisation as they navigate between 'neutral spaces' and what the participants of colour perceive as 'White' spaces given the lack of inclusion and transformation within those spaces.

These spaces are thus raced often filled with feelings of anxiety as a by-product of in-group out-group reinforcements (Amodio & Hamilton, 2012). Amodio & Hamilton (2012) argue that often times there are feelings of anxiety on the side of the White actor during this contact, whilst Du Bois' (1997) conception of double consciousness described in *The Souls of Black Folk* can be used as a reference to understanding cognitive process on the side of the Black actor; who is shown to be seen as the subordinate in these spaces as displayed through the participants narratives. Du Bois (1997) however reveals that because of their

experiences of subjugation, the Black actor is gifted with this awareness in these spaces and thus knows how to navigate accordingly. Black actors such as the participants of colour who describe the spaces they often occupy; thus operate a double consciousness in which they operate second sight how they are being viewed by an 'other' (i.e. White people). This is exhibited in Thabang's and Unathi's narratives as they discuss navigating as a Black minority in the work space. This brings us to the point of understanding racial embodiment which Fanon (1967) points out is a result of racialisation being at play within particular spaces such as school and work institutions. Fanon (1967) expands by stating that because both the in-groups and the racial 'outliers' in these space are aware the fact that racialisation is at play in these interactions, the 'outlier' (i.e. Black people) typically internalizes this interaction and the ideas of race that have been projected on them by way of experience and socialization. This can be further understood through Blumer (1969), who writes on symbolic interactionism as a theory that allows us to interpret human interaction (and the formation of racial subjects) at the interpersonal and societal level. This approach bases itself on three premises, 1) that human beings act according to the perceptions they have of things, 2) that seeking the source of the meaning is of utmost importance in studying symbolic interactionism, and 3) that the meaning acquired from this source is then interpreted by the individual after an interaction and is then internalized (Blumer, 1969). This allows us to understand Fanon's (1967) psychoanalysis of race and account of the production of racial subjectivity.

Using these theories to think about identity and privilege allows one to understand the experiences of racial subjectivity the participants describe as born-free youth in South Africa. This privilege is displayed by the fact that racialisation is embedded in power relations which continuously use racial categorization to reproduce Black subjects that are intended to remain inferior and under the gaze of White actors which Thalia points out is a privilege in itself (Fanon, 1967). Thus as Rasmussen, (2011) displays, the idea of White privilege can be understood through using Foucault theorization of bio-power as a genealogy of racism which can describe race relations within contemporary South Africa race as product of apartheid structures which Posel (2001) demonstrates to have exploited categories of race to disadvantage people of colour in favour of giving a privilege to White people. Thus when we analyse race, both currently and historically, we can observe that it is a significant factor in determining one's social status and quality of life; thus transcending beyond its biological definition as mere phenotypical differences as defined by Scott and Marshall (2009). As a result constructs ascribed to various racial

identities are also deployed to impose ideas about their social standing / status, such as where they should be, how they should live and how they should be treated as a result (Hirschfeld, 1996). With the consideration of intragroup dynamics however, we witness many more challenges that are presented in the participants excerpts.

**Challenges, Conflicts and Contradictions**

The challenges that participants such as Thabang shared, detailed the issue of navigating a world where dynamics differ according to context; often leaving them accepted in some spaces and rejected in others. The researcher hereby argues that we can come to understand these varying experiences through applying Intersectional thinking, which was found to be another significant theme in the study. As the participants continued to share their stories, the study found that that the experiences they shared were often not in isolation as there were multiple aspects of identity participants revealed were a source of struggle. These aspects were often revealed to surround class, gender, sexual orientation, culture and/ or religion. Because some of these categories of identity were equally defining of participants, they often revealed 'small stories' (within the narratives) of facing simultaneous experiences of being stereotyped or having certain expectations imposed on them. An example of this is displayed by Shari who expresses how many of her experiences related to race and culture because although she identifies as Black, she was not fully immersed in both her mother's Coloured culture and her father's Sotho culture; and was not proficient in either seSotho or Afrikaans as a result. Through analysing how her stories regarding race have had a lot to with language (because of the expectation for Black people to speak an African language), she thus often described how her experiences of race thus often had an internal (intragroup) and an external (intergroup) element that often left her feeling conflicted. Thabang and Tamlyn's stories display the same dynamic on the basis of race and culture, whilst Zahraa's story is shown to often be enmeshed with similar experiences, however with her religion. The cohort thus revealed the challenges they face in their everyday lives as born-free youth who have been trying to explore and find themselves whilst facing different pressures from these aspects of their identity.

These experiences indicate the fluidity of identity and presents it as a challenge within the South African context because of how the human tendency to categorize people creates conflict in that when we categorize people based on our assumptions about their racial membership, we also make more assumptions about other categories of their identity to try

and make then fit the mould society has for them, if not our general assumptions about their racial identity group (Hirshfeld, 1996). These type of projections in turn force people who are not fundamentally alike to behave or act in the way society believes they are or should be, by way of interpellation. Interpellation is defined by Scott and Marshall (2009, p. 369) as "the process in which individuals acquire self-awareness as subjects" thus referring to the identification of others through ascribing certain attributes to their (perceived) identity. This is described to inhibit the participants' individualism as people and is displayed throughout their narratives of navigating spaces as alleged born-free youth. This is supported by Crenshaw (2005) who uses an Intersectional approach to argue that race cannot be used as a primary indicator of identity as individuals such as the participants are complex beings with different backgrounds and facets of their identity that inform them, alongside race. This is displayed by the participants who display the interwoven nature of intersectional identity as the question about race easily extends to gender, sexuality, class and religion. Thus we see the how of racialisation gains relevance on all aspects of identity as participants detail how race affects all other aspects of their identity alongside it (Kiguwa, 2014).

Thus when we consider racialisation is rooted not only in symbolic representations such as the flags (e.g the apartheid flag); but also in discursive and social practices such as interpellation through not only interpersonal interactions but also through the media, policies and socialization; we witness how intrapsychic processes such as abjection, racial melancholia, racial dissociation and racial affective economies are created and reproduced through these representations of people that inform their subjectivity not only as raced subjects, but also along the lines of the intertwining aspects of identity highlighted by the participants (Barot and Bird, 2016). This speaks to the many Intersectional scholars consulted in this study (Crenshaw (1989); Yuval-Davis (2006); Cole (2009), and Blige(2013)) who emphasize that when we view individuals and only acknowledge one aspect of their identity, we tend to make identity appear to be singular (AWID (2004). Through their study exploring multiplicity in the typically singular narratives of blackness Ndlovu (2012) argues that analysing one aspect alone cannot be sufficient to define an individual or a group. The cohort thus revealed general themes of compromising and assimilating within certain spaces in order to adjust to expectations that were being placed on them in a particular setting. As a result, majority of the participants expressed that during this period they did not have a sense of belonging in many spaces as, they typically tended

to feel that they are misunderstood outside of their own private spaces or amongst 'other' in-groups or out-groups (Vincent, 2008).

Using Erving Goffman's dramaturgical model of analysing social interaction, the researcher hereby suggests that inter-racial and intra-racial social interactions should be perceived through thinking theatrically (Goffman, 1959). In *The Presentation of self in everyday life* Goffman (1959) argues that all social interactions are performative in nature as the primary impulse of individuals is to make a positive impression of themselves to those they come into contact with. Thus Goffman (1959, p.13) argues that the individual who is attempting to make a positive impression is the actor whilst those who he / she is interacting with the audience. Goffman (1959) further states that the audience in this contact is often concerned with the actor's social identity, personal attitudes, status, ability, agency and their competence. This is because the audience often almost instinctually seeks to categorise the actor by attentively observing them and acquiring this information in order to make a judgement about the actor and interact with them accordingly (Goffman, 1959). This makes the actor and the audience equally calculating as they each have the desire for positive regard and acceptance (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959, p. 15) states that the actor thus wishes to express himself in such a manner that the audience will respect him and that the audience will feel respected by him. With this, the researcher hereby argues that this is the nature of the racial interactions not only between Black and White actors however between both Black and White in-groups as well, pointing back to how racial categories essentialize the experiences of individuals often to their detriment as described by most of the participants in this study.

## ***2.3 Perspectives of Race and the Problem of Classification in South Africa***

### **Racial Classification as a Cause for Continued Skewed Race Relations**

When using the experiences the participants detailed in their stories from childhood to current time as basis to inquire about the perspectives the cohort have of race in contemporary society, the study found that this group feels constrained by racial classifications and consequently despise democracy because of its slow progress in reforming its agenda as it relates to race relations in South Africa. When asked what their sentiments are regarding racial classifications, and if their classification as person of their race matters to

them; the study found that the participants perceived racial classification to be a cause for continued skewed race relations in South Africa as exhibited by Erasmus (2010); Posel (2001) and Whitehead (2009), who aver that apartheid race categories remain necessary to the South African government which requires information on apartheid race classifications to monitor and implement redress to previously disadvantaged populations (Erasmus, 2010). The cohort thus revealed that although they do find classifications necessary for redress, they often question the purpose of having to indicate their race on documents, applications or forms where they believe it to be irrelevant (e.g. bank/ loan applications). Erasmus (2010) similarly inquires whether we truly need apartheid race categories for the purposes of redress, and if we could not rather create indicators that capture the essence behind these categories to ensure redress while disbanding both apartheid's common sense use of race outlined by Posel (2001) and its overall objective for people to be permanently defined by these categories as argued by Whitehead (2009). Showing similar sentiments of scepticism, majority of the participants revealed that they feel that classifications are put in place to limit Black people in particular and protect the interest of those who have 'race and class privilege' (i.e. White people). They ultimately feel it that disadvantages people the moment their race is revealed or seen as their primary source of identification, due to discrimination.

Although Black participants in the cohort also mention that they would experience a discomfort with suddenly not being acknowledged as Black people, if classifications were done away with, they reveal that to mitigate this, they would rather want to identify as African because they've grown to have pride and see their blackness positively regardless of how they are viewed by other races. The remainder of the cohort were also pro-renouncing racial classifications and were in favour of finding other sources of identification such as nationality, culture, or religion. Erasmus (2010) expands by stating that when people are expected to classify themselves by the categories that were exploited by apartheid's Population Registration Act of 1950, the apartheid objective to have these categories remain relevant is strengthened; even in the case that they are used for the purpose of redress as it requires the repetition and ultimately the normalization of race classification even in a supposed new South Africa as we witness it today. Hirshfeld (1996) points out that this is a result of racist thinking which thrives of conceptions of racialist thinking and informs these racial classifications which Erasmus (2010) and Posel (2001) have criticized for appropriating racialism and essentializing experiences of race through racism. These scholars thus argue that although the categorization of human beings into apparently biological sub-groups can seemingly be an innocent act, as social categories such as race (and gender) are

significant in our interests in other humans, as humans; it is important to consider that racialist thinking tends to easily birth racist thinking which is clearly displayed to be dependent on racial difference for the deployment of prejudice, bias and stereotypes to infer popular belief about the value of 'different' racial groups which in turn inform their experiences as exhibited by the participants (Hirshfeld, 1996). Thus because racial membership is inherent, this creates an ongoing cycle of discrimination which is passed from generation to generation, which has drawn the interest of social scientists like the authors consulted throughout this study and the researcher herself in her probe concerning democratic South Africa. This ongoing cycle is detailed in the participants' criticism of democracy in South Africa in the following sub-section.

**Deeming Democracy Problematic**

Although all participants noted that there is a level of change in democratic South Africa, they criticize the level of continuity from apartheid that still remains reckoning that changes have been minimal regardless of the better degree of freedom they have. The study thus found that the participants felt that race relations in democratic South Africa have not turned around and found problems particularly at a macro-level as Black people still remain disadvantaged as majority remain in poverty, indicating that equality has not been achieved as evidenced in the *7up: South Africa* series and *The People Versus the Rainbow Nation.* This born-free cohort thus criticizes the promises of the rainbow nation, as well as colour-blind notions as they similarly point out the contradictions between South Africa's aims during the shift to democracy and the reality twenty-six years later. The participants recall witnessing this disparity during their travels to the institutions that they are affiliated with, from the neighbourhoods they reside in (and vis-a-vis), especially as they've matured and become more attentive to the ways of the world. They thus extend their sentiments beyond the issues they highlighted regarding interactions between distinctive races, to the fact that even if in the face of incentives such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action, Black people still remain limited in the progress they can make. The participants thus argue that this is because apartheid systems still remain a pervasive part of democratic South Africa although South Africa has had a Black government in power since the implementation of democracy which has only continued to uphold apartheid agendas as the poverty gap continues widen on the basis of race and class, consequently ensuring that social and economic disparity remains. This argument was similarly made by the students Rasetshaba

(2016) followed in *The People Versus The Rainbow Nation* who shared sentiments that democratic South Africa is not only a failure, but a facade that is concealed by that class categories; ultimately supporting the arguments of the Critical Race and Intersectional Scholars referred to in Chapter three.

The born-free cohort were thus all passionate in emphasizing the need for social and structural change within this period, as they were all adamant that these matters need to be addressed and that conversation must be initiated between this alleged born-free generation and their predecessors; as well as amongst this generation itself, in order to educate and enlighten those who continuously contribute to the persisting segregation of South African society. When discussing issues of exclusion however, all White participants in this study revealed that the often feel discomfort during conversations regarding race in South Africa, often stating feelings of guilt and awkwardness. Thus although this cohort of 'born-free' youth are aware of the issues surrounding race, race relations and racism in South Africa; their varying experiences with race have hindered them from relating to each other and from attempting to address these issues as Rasetshaba (2016) points out by focusing on how Intersections prohibit alleged born-free youth from coming together and challenging such issues as one 'born-free' generation. Thus in concluding this cohorts' perspectives of race in South Africa, the researcher refers to a participant who relates issues of the past to problems in the present, and presents a point which supports Hoffman (2004) and Hirsh's (2008) conceptualization of thinking of this born-free youth as a hinge generation. The quote reads:

> *"I think there's a lot of room for improvement, and growth. And I don't know if I don't know when, like, the past will ever actually be undone. Because like I said, you know, we're like a born free generation, but we are still being raised by people who weren't born-free and views things like this, and passes it from generation to generation, to generations. So, there's a long way to go. And I actually don't know if it can, I think less and less, you know, further, more generations, I think, within our generation, it's still too soon, to want to experience the full rainbow nation, idea and whatnot. But I think for our generation, in a way, it's a good start... It's a good start."* - Dineo

Up to this point we witness the potential recalling on our lives retrospectively can give us narrative structure as Bradbury and Miller (2010) point out, does not automatically assume narrative form. Through the reflecting of experiences which are constructed as stories,

however we gain perspective about individuals and groups such as 'born-free' youth for the purpose of exploring and understanding their identity which Ndlovu (2012) describes as ever-changing and context dependent Considering our context in South Africa, the researcher hereby suggests that Hoffman's (2004) and Hirsh's (2008) theorization of the generation of post-memory be used in attempt to understand and re-define this post-apartheid generation of youth in South Africa by accepting Maseti's (2018) proposition to think of a 'born-free' generation as an aspirational term. In doing so, the researcher encourages readers to think of the holocaust in Hirsh's (2008) writing as exchangeable with apartheid considering that both events were traumatic and directly altered the identity of the generation following these events. Therefore thinking about apartheid in this way allows us to acknowledge how the collective and cultural trauma created by apartheid (and is still revealed to remain in contemporary South African society), makes a significant contribution to the complexities in identity as it surrounds race, age and socio-political climate as a consequence of traumatic recall, which Hirsh (2008) describes as the recalling of the memories of trauma endured by ones preceding generation although the succeeding generation did not primarily experience the events inflicting this trauma, in this case being the born-free generation. Thus in re-conceptualizing born-free youth as a hinge generation, we could understand that they are essentially bridging the gap between the 'struggle' generation as Maseti (2018) refers and an actual born-free generation.

## Chapter 7

## Conclusion

Thus in investigating how born-free youth come to think of racial identity in democratic, the study has revealed how registers of race are not as simple as they seem and often cause an ongoing spiral of identity confusion for some, whilst restricting others as a result of systematic oppression and racism which remains a relevant fact of life for alleged 'born-free' youth regardless of democracy and its laments to improve the lives of 'previously' (and currently) disadvantaged South African's by rectifying the injustices placed on them and their families from apartheid up to this point. Thus as a nation, we've kept apartheid categories through registers of race with the hope of adequate redress and have thus been forced to hold onto the legacy of our oppressions; requiring constant recognition and acknowledgement of the role race has played in shaping our lives and the lives of those around us. The study thus reveals the fact South Africa is still racial at its core and that this permeates through everyday life and the narratives of people such as the participants of this study. Thus when investigating racial identity in any context it is suggested that special attention be paid to both cognition as it relates to race as well as historical contributions which indicate affective and ideological investments in racial identity; in order to understand race in contemporary society. Analysing race without employing a psycho-social approach results in a failure to understand the complexity of racial thinking and prohibits us from answering what Hirshfeld (1996, p.11) states is a fundamental question about racial thought; the question probing "why is it that people so readily move from visual categories to inner nature?". Hirshfeld (1996) furthermore points out that using one approach at a time does not capture the essence of race as a concept that has 1) been widely wielded to create unequal power relations and, 2) as a concept that is deep-rooted in the psychological processes highlighted by the Critical Race Scholars consulted throughout the study.

Therefore Scott and Marshall's (2009) definition of race as a socially constructed ideology is supported by the theorists who detail this throughout the study, in conjunction with the participants of this study who demonstrate the real life restrictions race places on them because of the complexities and constraints attached their racial identity and race remaining a relevant aspect of everyday life, even in what appears to be the most innocent of spaces; as well as how they navigate and / or resist them. Hirshfeld (1996, p.3) thus presents race as a concept which allows for "an ideological analysis of social relationships" as

opposed to simplifying it as a mere category of the biological world. Because of how race has been used throughout history, Hirshfeld (1996) makes the suggestion that race then be considered as an artefact of human culture as doing this will allow us to exercise more thought when dealing with the concept, and will also encourage us not to render the it as a mere reading of the 'natural' environment. Hirshfeld (1996) expands this by stating that the allegedly natural environment does not provide reliable evidence for the ideological analysis that is ascribed to race, as similarly pointed out by Appiah (1992) and Winant (2015) who strongly criticize the naturalization of racial differences which they argue is a result of the manipulation and management of these differences to ultimately create groups that are deemed superior whilst others are inferior; which remains the a fact even for post-apartheid South Africa as explored through the participants' narratives of their experiences as alleged born-free youth.

In concluding this research report, the study was thus centred on the perspectives of race amongst youth that are colloquially referred to as 'born-free' in post-apartheid South Africa. The study was primarily interested in how these youth, as the first generation after the abolition of apartheid in 1994; make sense of race in South Africa today. Thus an interpretivist research paradigm was used along with narrative research approach to investigate the experiences youth identifying with various racial groups between the age of 19 and 25, have of race in contemporary South African society and how these experiences have influenced their perspectives of race. Through the thematic narrative analysis of ten written narrative stories and nine follow up interviews with the cohort of ten participants identifying with the various racial groups outlined in the glossary; the study found that schools were sites where concepts of race were exploited and racial awareness was initiated as a result of the experiences of exclusion participants faced. The study also revealed how these early experiences have affected integration within and amongst this youth who report that social spaces such as those described, in democratic South Africa are spaces that are raced and continue to reproduce racial subjectivity (particularly on people of colour), thus causing issues with personal and social identity and interaction with 'other' (hyphenated) identities; prohibiting true transformation within our context. Through Critical Race Theory, Erikson's theory of psycho-social development and an Intersectional framework, this research found what 'born free' youth have come to know and think about race in contemporary South Africa, how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others, and how these remaining hierarchies and classifications of race affect this youth at an intrinsic,

interpersonal and intrapersonal level. As highlighted in the first chapter of this study; although there have been many studies in the area of race and a racial relation in South Africa, many of this research has either largely relied on apartheid race classifications, if it has not been suppressed in favour of the concept of non-racialism. As a result, and evidenced in this study's theoretical framework, Critical Race Scholars have become increasingly concerned with how racial categories have been used or replaced with contradictory sentiments non-racialism in post-apartheid South Africa and how using classifications that were legally developed during apartheid consequently essentialize the experiences of people belonging to various racial identity groups, especially without understanding what it means to belong to a particular racial identity in democratic South Africa as well as focusing on how individuals of various racial identities are affected by the continuation of these classifications. These social psychological concepts were thus contrasted with the constructs of race in South Africa as well as the conceptions of race that the participants of this study have grown to have. Thus using the narratives of 'born-free' youth as the backbone of this study reveals why South African youth strongly believe that the country has not truly transformed in its twenty-six years of democracy and furthermore how they believe they are not in fact born-free, as it delves into the social issues faced by South Africa's youth as it relates to race, identity and experience. Thus categories and classifications of race and how they continue to be used or replaced with conceptions of non-racialism have since highlighted many issues regarding the lack of transformation in South African society, which is supported by the sentiments shared by the alleged 'born-free' youth who participated in this study.

**Reflexivity**

Considering that the axiology of the interpretivist paradigm requires researchers to recognize the values within specific contexts, along with certain biases within the research, I attended to this by inquiring what values are ascribed to each respective race the participants identify with and each of their narratives in relation to this (Creswell, 2013). This aided the inquiry concerning what it means to be a young person of a particular racial group in contemporary South Africa. Furthermore considering that narrative researchers need to re-story participant's narratives, active collaboration with the participants was essential and I needed to remain reflective about my own personal and political background, preferences, prejudices and biases, which if I had not, may have shaped how I "re-write" the narratives of participants' throughout (Creswell, 2013). It was therefore in my best interest as a researcher

to remain reflective in attempt to avoid and / or mitigate these potential tensions that may have arisen during discussions and interviews with the participants by consistently reflecting on my own positionality as a young Black woman born during the same period as the participants when it comes to issues surrounding the topic of racial identity.

Although being within the same generation of youth was an advantage throughout this study as it allowed me to exercise understanding and relate when considering the theoretical framework, as well as allowed interviews to take place as though they were conversations between two peers; when it came to participants with a similar identity make-up to mine; it was also important for me to constantly listen without inserting myself based on my own experiences and perspectives. Thus the theoretical framework of the study was stimulating as I got to continuously engage with literature that allowed me to analyse this research from different angles, which made the data collection process one that was enlightening. In addition I constantly had to bear in mind the historical and cultural context of concepts used throughout to in order to conduct the study discursively and avoid projecting my own personal sentiments and perspectives onto participants of different gender and racial make-up, as well as those with different perspectives altogether regardless of racial grouping. I thus continuously reflected through an Intersectional framework when thinking about identities throughout this study by constantly considering the various aspects of the participant's identities and the power dynamics that exist between them, as well as in relation to my identity as a young Black heterosexual woman. I therefore found narrative research as a methodology incredibly insightful and as an interesting way to continue the conversation from my theoretical foundations into the everyday life experiences of this group of youth. It has allowed me to explore the concepts I was concerned with in this study in a creative way.

Contextually, I found conducting this research rather interesting because although mine and my participants' backgrounds sometimes varied, there were many points of similarity in mine and the participant's stories and / or sentiments. I found there was a certain level in which I could relate when speaking to Black and particular Black women participants which allowed me to understand certain concepts without too much clarification. In my experience with some of the White participants, it felt as though there was a carefulness to express themselves regarding their own and their families perspectives of race; almost in a sense that there is a discomfort to speak. In these instances it felt as though race was a barrier during the data collection phase however this was addressed by referring back to the race

related stories they wrote in the written narrative exercise almost as an ice-breaker and reminding participants that there is no right and wrong answers and re-assuring them that the study is about their life story. This created a more comfortable environment in which they then felt free to speak more openly. Upon experiencing this reluctance however I found there was a certain level in which I could understand the discomfort of participants that are from different racial backgrounds than myself, as a result of remaining immersed in, and constantly referring back to the literature. Throughout my interactions with the participants, regardless of our upbringing we often came upon the realization that school played a pivotal role in exposing us to racism if not subjecting us to it. Therefore as a researcher and in my personal capacity as an alleged born-free youth, I found this to be an overall enriching experience.

## Limitations and Future Considerations

With this section the researcher would like to point out a few issues that were potential concerns throughout the process of conducting this research. Firstly, considering the characteristics of narrative research and the procedures put in place in order to conduct narrative research, it can often be a challenging approach to use especially if understanding is not exercised by researchers and misinterpretation occurs. Secondly, being that this research is qualitative in nature and it relied heavily on the reflective abilities of the participants, narrative research remains at the risk of not reflecting the narrative trajectory of the stories in chronological order, which is typically of importance in certain types of narrative research (Creswell, 2013). This has to do with how participants recall events which can often result in retrieval failures that affect participant's recognition of reality and how they remember certain instances when they re-tell past stories (Creswell, 2013). Consequently, they then do not present them in the order of events, however considering that this research report was interested more in the content of the narratives than the sequence of them, this concern was minimal. Another potential limitation of this research stemmed from the point that the researcher needed to collect wide-ranging information about all ten participants, along with having a clear perspective of the context of each individual's story presented in their written narrative exercise and audio interview recordings / interview transcripts as outlined by Creswell (2013). Beyond this being rather time consuming, the diversity in racial categories in the sample size may be considered a potential limitation on the angle that the research is not centered or focused on one particular racial group's experiences and therefore may be

considered too general as Edel (1984) comments on the significance of revealing the "figure under the carpet", that explains the complex context of a life (Creswell, 2013). This posed threat to the very aim of the research to investigate people's personal and collective experiences of racial identity and perspectives of race. Finally, considering that the researcher conducted a narrative analysis as the data analytic technique, limitations include the fact that the range and the depth of the data had the potential to obscure the report if the researcher remained confused about a particular issue due to a lack of clarification which ultimately could cause one to derail from the research topic, aims and questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Reflecting on the study and as a future consideration the researcher aims continue to exploring the experiences and perspectives of alleged born-free youth in contemporary South Africa, however by taking specific focus on the youth of this generation that have not been exposed to formal education and have therefore potentially not been equipped with the theories that have helped them understand certain complexities about society and identity; and ultimately express themselves in the way the demographic of participants present in this study have been able to. In doing this, class categories would be considered in the sample criteria for the purpose of investigating the experiences and perspectives of youth in democratic South Africa who only have their own experience of their communities and their identity to rely on. The researcher believes that expanding on this study in this way would be helpful to not only highlight the effects of being disadvantaged on both the basis of race and class but also to provide a platform in which the stories and perspectives of further disadvantaged born-free youth can be explored, compared and shared, allowing the rest of society who are in more privileged positions to understand the depth of impact of the issue of transformation, and not just the impact as we witness it around us in our everyday surroundings in and around Johannesburg. Using this specific context however will allow the researcher (and future researchers) to investigate this' youth's experience within the context of them making their way around the workplace, raising families of their own; defying social conventions and ultimately reshaping the way South African society thinks about this youth in this time; using the background of these experiences, in present and future South Africa.

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**Appendix A**

**Permission Letter**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Development

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fa

30 July 2019

**Masters of Psychology by Research Report & Coursework**

Permission letter to conduct research on the University of Witwatersrand's main campus

Dear Mx Carol Crossley

With this letter I would like to formally request permission to conduct surveys, facilitate written narrative exercises and conduct interviews at the university in partial fulfilment of the Masters in Psychology (by coursework and research report) programme. The research that I am proposing to conduct is titled: *Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa;* - a qualitative study on how the experiences various racial identities in the post-1994 generation have influenced current perspectives of race amongst youth in contemporary South African society. With this study I aim to explore this using narrative research as a methodology considering that his research is embedded in critical social psychology as it concerns itself with the experiences of race, racial identity, racial dynamics and youth culture in democratic South Africa. I am thus interested in interpreting the experiences various racial groups in South Africa have of race; growing up as the first generation after the abolition of apartheid in 1994 and require ten participants that are between the age of nineteen and twenty-five. I therefore ask that I may conduct this research on the main university campus throughout August on the consideration that it does not affect or impose on any student's academic obligations and well-being, and that my

proposal has been approved for ethical clearance by the university's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-medical). I am specifically requiring to interview my participants in the Master's Research Psychology room in Umthombo building. To allow for a more representative, inclusive, and explorative study; sexual orientation and religious categories will not form part of the selection criteria.

Please find additional information as it pertains to the study below:

**What are the benefits of this research?**

Because participation in this research is purely on a voluntary basis, there is no reward for participating in this research, nor is there a penalty for not participating. Participation is purely based the participants own interest in the research and the research topic. Once the project is complete they will be contacted by the researcher and asked if they would like to receive a copy of the report. They will also potentially be invited to a briefing session with all other research participants, where the research findings and results will be presented and discussed, depending on the number of participants who are interested. The participants will also be welcome to consult the researcher about the results in their own personal capacity. If they do not wish to meet however; they may still receive the report itself (to be arranged at a later stage). The only presented personal benefit of this research is thus the expansion of knowledge on the topic at hand and brief experience in research participation.

**Would participation in this research be kept confidential?**

All data collected through the written narrative exercise and the interviews will be kept confidential. In transcribing the written journals and the interview responses the researcher will ensure that the participants' personal information is excluded from the transcripts and all personal details such names will be carefully coded. In the case that potential participants choose the option of participating anonymously, names will be completely void in the transcripts and the research. Along with this all raw data and transcripts will be kept safe and stored in a hidden folder on a password protected personal computer. The physical copies of the written narratives will be kept in a locked safe during transcription and will be discarded through shredding, after transcription.

**What are the risks of this research?**

It is in my best interest to ensure that the interview and this research will not pose any risks for the institution, faculty, department , any participant and anyone belonging to a particular identity (be it on the basis of race, age, sex, gender, etc.). Neither is it in my best interest to violate any ethical code or local law. I have also provided participants with an information sheet detailing the same information and I have provided my personal contact details along with that of my supervisor (Professor Peace Kiguwa) should participants have any concerns regarding the contents of this research or require any additional information (details provided below).

**Is any assistance available if anyone is negatively affected by participating in this study?**

Although the predicted risks for participating in this study are slim to none, should the participants end up negatively affected by their participation in this research, the researcher will refer them to a professional counselling psychologist at the university's Counselling & Career Development Unit (CCDU) on campus (for Wits students) or a Lifeline counselling centre (for participants who are not Wits students) who will be able to assist them with any triggers of trauma they may experience. I have also added however that the University of Witwatersrand cannot be held accountable for any other loss, damage or physical injuries that may occur during the data collection process and thus the institution cannot legally be held liable.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the contents of this letter.

Kind regards

*N.Ngwenya*

**Masters of Arts Psychology candidate**

**Email:** Noma.li.Ngwenya@gmail.com

Nomagugu Ngwenya, (864134)

**Supervisor: Prof. Peace Kiguwa** (Senior Lecturer)

**Email: Peace.Kiguwa@wits.ac.za**

Department of Psychology,

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

# Appendix B

## Ethical Clearance Certificate

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG**

**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | **PROTOCOL NUMBER: MPSYC/19/006 IH** |
| **PROJECT TITLE:** | Everyday narratives: exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa |
| **INVESTIGATORS** | Ngwenya Nomagugu |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Psychology |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 12/06/19 |
| **DECISION OF COMMITTEE*** | Approved |

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

**DATE: 12 June 2019**

**CHAIRPERSON**
**(Dr Peace Kiguwa)**

cc Supervisor: Dr Peace Kiguwa
Psychology

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)**

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th 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 2021**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

**Appendix C**

**Information Sheet**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Development

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011) 717 4500 Fax

Dear Ms / Miss / Mrs / Mr / Mx,

You are formally being invited to participate in the following Masters Research Report to be conducted by myself, Nomagugu Ngwenya.

**Project Title:** Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

**What is this study about?**

This study is centred on the perspectives of race amongst the post 1994 generation of youth. The researcher is interested in exploring how this group of youth have come to think of and know about race; and how they construct it as meaningful in their lives and the lives of others. Thus the researcher is interested in the perspectives of youth belonging to various racial identities' experiences of growing up as the first generation in a democratic South Africa, and the role these experiences have had in influencing these perspectives. This study is for the purpose of the researchers Masters Research Report programme at the University of Witwatersrand and your participation would allow the researcher to fulfil the requirements of the MA Psychology by Research Report & Coursework.

**What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

Should you agree to participate in this research you will be required to share your experiences surrounding race within your early family life through a written narrative exercise where the researcher will provide a Microsoft word document with an opening statement, in which every participant will have to freely write a response to and send back to the researcher on or by Sunday the 11th of August, 2019. This will be followed up by a semi-structured interview of approximately one hour which will be scheduled in an area near you between the 15th and the 25th of August, 2019 ( location details will be communicated individually in due time). The selection procedure for each of the ten potential participants will be on the basis of age (nineteen- twenty-five) and the (South African) citizenship of participants and their parents / guardians.

**What are the benefits of this research?**

Because participation in this research is purely on a voluntary basis, there is no reward for participating in this research, nor is there a penalty for not participating. Participation is purely out of your own interest in the research and the research topic. Once the project is complete you will be contacted by the researcher and asked whether you would like to receive a copy of the report. You will also potentially be invited to a briefing session with all other research participants where the research findings and results will be presented and discussed, depending on the amount of participants who are interested. You are however also welcome to consult the researcher about the results in your own personal capacity. If you do not wish to meet however; you may still receive the report itself (to be arranged at a later stage). The only presented personal benefit of this research is thus the expansion of knowledge on the topic at hand and brief experience in research participation.

**Would my participation in this research be kept confidential?**

All data collected through the written narrative exercise and the interviews will be kept confidential. In transcribing the written narratives and the interview responses, the researcher will ensure that your personal information is excluded from the transcripts and all personal details like names will be carefully coded. In the case that potential participants choose the option of participating anonymously, names will be completely void in the transcripts and the research paper. Along with this all raw data and transcripts will be kept safe and stored in a hidden folder on a password protected personal computer. The physical copies of the written journals will be kept in a locked safe during transcription and will be discarded through shredding after transcription.

**What are the risks of this research?**

It is in my best interest that the interview process and this research will not pose any risks for you and any other participant, or anyone belonging to a particular identity (be it on the basis of race, age, sex, gender, etc.). Neither is it in my interest to violate any ethical code or local law; however, if you feel that you have any concerns regarding the contents of this research, or if you require any additional information, please contact the researcher via the email addresses provided below so that we can discuss your concerns.

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

Although the predicted risks for participating in this study are slim to none, should you end up negatively affected by your participation in this research, the researcher will refer you to a professional counselling psychologist at the university's Counselling & Career Development Unit (CCDU) on campus (for Wits students) or a free counselling service at a Lifeline near you (if you are not a Wits student), who will be able to assist you with any triggers of trauma you may have experienced. The University of the Witwatersrand and the researcher however cannot be held accountable for any other loss, damage or physical injuries that occur during the data collection process and thus cannot legally be held liable.

**Do I have to participate in this research and can I stop participating at any point?**

Should you volunteer to participate in this study you will not be obliged to commit to the study if a conflict of interest becomes present. You therefore have the option to terminate your participation in this research at any point should you wish. In this event please kindly inform the researcher of this decision to stop participating.in due time.

**What if I have questions?**

Should you feel that not all the above mentioned criteria were met or you need any clarity regarding this research, please contact the researcher via the details provided below.

If you have any further inquiries or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the research, please contact the research supervisor with the details provided below.

Should you have any questions you will be able to personally inquire with the researcher during the interview session and should you have questions prior to, and after the interview

you will be able to contact the researcher at Noma.li.Ngwenya@gmail.com or contact the research supervisor at the email addresses provided below.

**Supervisor: Prof Peace Kiguwa** (Senior Lecturer)

**Email: Peace.Kiguwa@wits.ac.za**

Department of Psychology,

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Kind regards

*N.Ngwenya*

**Masters of Arts Psychology candidate**

**Appendix D**

**Informed Consent Form**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Developme

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011) 717 4500

Dear Potential Participant,

Should you agree to participate in the following Masters Research Report,

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of Research** | Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. |

you will need to ensure that all the following checklist criteria are all applicable:

(Please only fill this form in once you have read the information sheet)

☐ The purpose of the research has been described to me in language that I understand.

☐ I freely and voluntarily agree to participate.

☐ My questions about the study have been answered.

☐ I understand that my identity will not be compromised and that I may participate anonymously.

☐ I understand that I can withdraw from participating in this study at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Participant's Name** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **(optional)** | |
| **Participant's signature** | |
| **Date** | |

Should you feel that not all the above mentioned criteria were met or you need any clarity regarding this research, please contact the researcher with the details provided below.

If you have any further inquiries or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the research, please contact the research supervisor with the details provided below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Researchers Name** | Nomagugu Ngwenya |
| Cell phone number | +27837125041 |
| Email address | **Noma.li.Ngwenya@gmail.com** |
| **Research Supervisors Name** | Prof. Peace Kiguwa |
| Telephone number | +27 11 717 4537 |

**Appendix E**

**Informed Written Consent Form**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Development

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011) 717 4500 F

Dear potential participant,

Should you agree to participate in this research you will be required to share your experiences surrounding race life through a written narrative exercise. The researcher hereby requires your consent to participate in the written narrative exercise for the following Masters Research Report:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of Research** | Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. |

As stated in the Information Sheet, the researcher will provide you and every participant with a document for you to freely write in response to a short statement. The opening statement will read: "Think back on a moment where you had your first encounter with race and the influence your family had in this experience", you are thus expected to detail this experience and how it made you aware of race / how it shaped you to think about race in your growing up. The document will be provided to you on via e-mail and you will be allocated between one or two weeks to complete the exercise and return the document to the researcher.

Please only fill this form in once you have read the information sheet and you consent to the following:

☐ The purpose of the written narrative exercise has been described to me in language that I understand.

☐ I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in the written narrative exercise.

☐ I have read and understand the confidentiality section of the participant information sheet as it pertains to the written narrative exercise.

☐ I have been informed and am aware that the notebooks may be accessed by other academic staff and professionals such as the research supervisor and any potential translator / transcriber and or academic editor.

☐ I understand that I can still however participate in the written narrative exercise anonymously.

Please only sign below once you have checked all boxes above:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Participant's Name (optional)** | |
| **Participant's signature** | |
| **Date** | |

**Appendix F**

**Informed Audio Consent Form**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Development

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

Tel: (011) 717 4500 F

Dear potential participant,

Should you agree to participate in this study you will also be required to share your experiences surrounding race through a semi-structured interview. The researcher hereby requires your consent to participate in the interview process for the following Masters Research Report:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of Research** | Everyday Narratives: Exploring 'born-free' experiences of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa. |

The interview will consist of twelve questions and will take approximately one hour. It will be conducted only by the researcher on the Wits university main campus (for Wits students) or at a local venue nearby you (for participants who are not Wits students) and thus will be a one on one interaction (date, time slots and venue to be announced).

Please only fill this form in once you have read the information sheet and you consent to the following:

☐ The purpose of the interview has been described to me in language that I understand.

☐ I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in the interview process.

☐ I have been informed that the interview will be recorded for research purposes.

☐ I am aware that the interviews may be accessed by other academic staff and professionals such as the research supervisor and any potential translator / transcriber and or academic editor.

☐ I understand that I can proceed with the interview process and participate anonymously

☐ I have read and understand the confidentiality section of the participant information sheet as it pertains to the interview process.

Please only sign below once you have checked all the boxes above:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Participant's Name (optional)** | |
| **Participant's signature** | |
| **Date** | |

**Appendix G**

**Interview Questions**

Psychology department

School of Human & Community Development

**University of the Witwatersrand**

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050

500 F

1. How did you feel about writing the narrative exercise?
2. Tell me about your early schooling, what were your most memorable encounters with race in your schooling life?
3. Tell me about your high school, what were your most memorable encounters with race in your schooling life?
4. Tell me about your current life as a person of your race. What is it like navigating social spaces as a young adult in terms of your race group?
5. How have these (above) influenced how you have perceived and interacted with people of other races throughout your life?
6. Are there spaces you feel you do not belong because of your race? Do you think these are exclusive to people of your race?
7. What is your perception of race in South Africa today?
8. Does your racial classification as a person of your race matter to you? In what ways?
9. Do you think racial classifications are necessary or that they should be done away with?
10. What are your thoughts on South Africa's democratic transformation thus far, do you think equality amongst races has been achieved? How so or how has it not been achieved?
11. How do you think race is different for you as compared to your parents or older generations today?
12. How do you think it is the same?