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A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO WHITE STUDENT IDENTITY IN RELATION TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENT OF 2015 AND BEYOND

RESEARCH REPORT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG, IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN PSYCHOLOGY

January 2018

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It has never been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. All sources that I have used, made reference to or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged.

Ryan Klette

2017

Signed _____

Glossary of terms

BAC	Black Academic Caucus
DHET	Department of Higher education and Training
HESA	Higher education South Africa
HWI	Historically white institutions
HPS	Historically Privileged Students
#FMF	The Fees Must Fall student movement
#RMF	The Rhodes must fall student movement
#OpenStellies	OpenStellenbosch
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
WITS	University of Witwatersrand
UCT	University of Cape Town
UP	University of Pretoria
UKZN	University of Kwa Zulu Nat

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Abstract

This project focuses on the narratives of white students at South African universities at the time of the rise of the student movement in 2015. Nine post-graduate white students were recruited through snowball sampling. Interviews were mostly unstructured although they each followed a similar temporal movement that included past and present experiences as well as imagined futures. The study primarily made use of narrative inquiry as a way of collecting and analysing the data.

The stories collected showed that the movement came as a shock for the majority of participants, which highlights a significant rift between black and white students. Although students study in close proximity to each other, realities outside the classroom reflect much greater distance in experiences that continue to be shaped by both race and class. Participant accounts showed limited understandings about the daily struggles that many black students face. Furthermore, white students appear to take their places at university as assured and tend to take these positions on meritocratic grounds. The movement has been synonymous with change and many students described having being transformed in some way as a result of choosing to be involved in the protests and related events or vicariously through friends, media and being on campus. However, although participants reflected on their privilege and their understandings were shifted through the events of student protest, the data also suggest that many white students feel alienated from the movement, the student community at large and even the country and are experiencing a general sense of disrupted belonging.

While perspectives are changing and white students on the whole appear to be integrating more inclusive orientations, it should also be noted that the study found 'whiteness' to be resistant to change and the unsettling of white identity is a layered process. Apparent progress is coupled with underlying layers of exclusionary thinking and ostensibly subtler forms of racism and ignorance. Moreover, there are also varying degrees that white students want to turn toward their ignorance, if at all. It is encouraging that the majority of participants in this study were at least beginning to question their privileged social positions and the historical moment they find themselves in.

1. Introduction and rationale

In the context of the social structure of inequality originating from a highly oppressive past, Chetty and Knaus (2016, para.8) state that in 2015 "something shifted inexorably at South African universities. Students protested against institutions' language policies, high fees, structural inequalities and colonial symbols." The campaigns and related events that comprise the student movement have done something momentous in the way that they have resisted a range of socio-political structural effects and, in doing so, fundamentally shaken up notions of identity, belonging and their meanings both within universities and in wider society. Students accomplished in months what political and academic leaders were not able to in decades putting the higher educational transformation agenda front and centre in the public mind (Habib, 2016).

In order to better understand the onset of the student movements of 2015/2016 we need to explore higher education space in general in South Africa and some of the factors that exacerbated or triggered the student led events in 2015 and beyond. Historically, South African universities, like all aspects of South African societies, were racialised, with access to and participation in the most elite universities restricted to white students. Post-apartheid, access to these historically white institutions (HWI) has been considerably increased for black students although these spaces to a large extent remain 'white spaces' and consequently white students have continued to enjoy a greater sense of belonging. However, the student movements are challenging ideas of who belongs in these spaces.

This study focuses attention on historically privileged white students' responses to the movement. This demographic is especially interesting not as a way of extending continued focus

to historically privileged students but rather because the events of 2015 represent a significant turning point in the balance of power between black and white students. This meant that I could explore how white students are responding and dealing with the prospect and experience of a loss of power and privilege.

1.1 Historical context

It is important to contextualise South Africa's colonial past and post-colonial futures as a way of understanding the racial dynamics reflected in the student movement and also to understand more about what the movement hopes to transcend. South Africa is in a "grey" post-colonial moment says Mbembe (2015). In a similar manner to other African postcolonial societies, Achille Mbembe describes the South African situation as "almost murky. It lacks clarity" (Mbembe, 2015, p. 1). He maintains that the South African socio-political situation is problematic, because old problems remain unresolved as new ones continue to arise. The student movements underscore this point as they also show how new problems are intimately bound to an unresolved past.

Furthermore, Mbembe (2015, p. 9) speaks about a "Eurocentric canon" to describe an overemphasis of Western knowledge within South African Higher education. He contends that the nature of this canon is to attribute all forms of truth to Western knowledge. Knowledge systems that have their origins in colonialism are therefore normalized at the expense of other epistemic traditions. Similarly, Maldonado-Torres (2007) calls our attention to the long-standing effects of this "Eurocentric canon" with his definition of coloniality as "the patterns of power

that remain embedded in post-colonial society long after colonialism" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243).

This definition highlights the colonial residue that has been engrained in South African society. Moreover, from Maldonado-Torres (2007) account, this can be conceived in a visceral sense, as he argues that we "breath" it in as part of our everyday reality. The decolonial turn can be seen as form of resistance to colonial systems that have persisted in post-colonies. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) defines decoloniality as a movement that seeks to untangle colonial systems that are still seen as functioning in contemporary society. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) points out that this is a highly complex project that aims at undoing colonial power and associated knowledge systems. This project is also at the heart of the recent student movement as well as student struggles under the apartheid regime.

The complexity around this movement hinges on the catch of somehow re-orienting knowledge and power from an imagined 'outside' of the colonial system while at the same time being immersed in it. The resultant conundrum is of 'needing' colonial knowledge systems as the route to work, socio-economic mobility and benefits while at the same time being confined by it in the way that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) has described. Mbembe (2015) suggests that decolonisation of the academic space needs to be addressed in relation to the mind and in social space. This can be achieved firstly, through creating pedagogies of presence which involves creating colonial mental dispositions. Secondly, Mbembe (2015) argues that decolonisation can happen through decolonising public spaces like buildings and statues many of which have served to normalise hegemonic structures.

Another way of looking at decoloniality is through Mignolo's (2007) notion of "epistemic disobedience". Mignolo's ideas succinctly convey the heart of the student movement as it emphasizes that to resist the pervasive colonial powers is also in some way also to be disobedient to a system that has its roots in privileging some groups over others. The notion of epistemic disobedience also relates to Fanon's ideas on the politics of resistance. The student movements have shown the effectiveness of 'disobedience' in action. 2015 therefore marks an unprecedented moment in South African history as many students across South African universities collaborated to resist the social power dynamics that have their origins in colonialism.

Moreover, student activism that seeks to address unequal access to education stretches far back into South African history. Under the apartheid regime, Bantu education was designed specifically for black people to learn their 'inferior' place in South African society under the Apartheid regime (Langa, 2017). They were therefore taught skills that were considered appropriate for their social standing, such as manual labour, trade and domestic skills. Legislation was also designed under apartheid to specifically exclude black people from well-resourced western education system.

In 1975, it was decreed under the Bantu Education Act that Afrikaans was to be the new medium of instruction in schools, which led to the Soweto uprisings in 1976. Biko's black consciousness movement was instrumental in influencing student thinking and encouraged youth to stand up against the injustices of the time (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). Student protests that fight for greater inclusion and better representation from the state in more recent times are also not a new phenomenon. This is especially true of historically black universities, which have seen numerous

student protests that have called for improved access to tertiary education, especially for black students (Langa, 2017).

Langa (2017) highlights that, post-apartheid, students also protested against political decisions to reduce the number of higher education institutions that resulted in many of these institutions being merged. Although the intention may have been to improve access for black students (Davids, 2016), transformation in this regard is still significantly lagging. Jansen (2003) points out that South African universities are still characterised by material and cultural differences rooted in each of their somewhat unique histories and social positioning.

1.2 Inception of the Student Movement of 2015 and beyond

Many authors mark the starting points of the student movement at the University of Cape Town in March 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall campaign, followed by the #OpenStellenbosch movement and #FeesMustFall campaign (Wits) in August and September 2015 respectively (Luescher, 2016). However, as Glenn (2016) points out, these were the universities that gained the most media coverage (due to their enhanced status) and not necessarily the front-runners of the student led movement toward equal access to education and curricula freed up from colonial entanglement.

I use the term 'student movement' to broadly describe the campaigns and protests of 2015-2016 in South Africa that have at least one of the inter-related objectives as part of their campaigning. Amongst others, these included decolonial initiatives aimed at transforming the higher education syllabus and related university spaces, making education more accessible for black students and in general, addressing issues of race and gender inequality (Langa, 2010). Following protest

action in which faeces were thrown over the statue, students from UCT began to call for the removal of the Rhodes statue that stood in a prominent place on the campus, representing South Africa's legacy of colonialism and establishing the university's institutional culture and knowledge-making practices as firmly part of this history. This initiative became known as the #RhodesMustFall campaign.

Meanwhile at Stellenbosch University, students produced and distributed a powerful and controversial film in August 2015 called 'Luister' (Afrikaans for listen). The film focused on black student experiences on and around campus in relation to race, class, language and unequal learning opportunities. This made way for the #OpenStellenbosch movement that aimed to equalize opportunities for all students at Stellenbosch university and specifically, for changes to the language policy which was seen to serve exclusionary racist interests.

Shortly after the #OpenStellenbosch initiative, the #FeesMustFall campaign started at Wits in October 2015 in response to fee hikes for 2016 that would exacerbate the extreme financial pressure already experienced by most black students who have long been subject to financial exclusions at Wits and other similar universities throughout the country (Davids & Waghid, 2016). FMF soon gained considerable support largely because of momentum already gained by initiatives at other South African universities and also due to the viral like nature of social media (Glenn, 2016).

Whilst these campaigns attracted the most media attention, students from other universities like Fort Hare, UKZN and others not only fought for better access for primarily black students, but also raised concerns about the balance of power between universities. As Duncan (2016) points

out, their protests did not find much attention in public space due to their inferior social positioning as compared to privileged institutions like Wits, UCT, Stellenbosh and Rhodes universities.

Hall (2016) also refers us further back to Tshwane University of Technology where in the first months of 2015, registering students who had outstanding debts were denied registration. Additional complications arose when financial aid schemes like NSFAS were not able to honour their commitments, thereby aggravating an already dire situation (Hall, 2016). While students with financial means were unaffected by these actions, those in lower socio-economic positions faced increasing financial pressure.

It can therefore be argued that the starting point of the #MustFall movements could more accurately be located prior to the events at UCT in 2015. If, however, we wish to measure inception in terms of when students found public attention, then Pather (2015, p. 2) refers us to a useful starting point in relation to the public arena, "it was only when the statue of Rhodes was defaced on 9 March, that the university - and indeed the country and beyond - sat up to take note of why there is an urgent need to acknowledge and tackle the transformation-related challenges facing the university".

This study acknowledges less documented accounts before the events in 2015 but uses the early part of 2015 as a beginning point for the analysis. The campaigns and related movements that have taken place throughout the country (again where UCT and Wits have drawn most of the attention) have instigated heated debates and considerable reaction in public space. As Glenn (2016) has suggested, debates have largely been focused on whether the students and supporters

were justified in their actions and conversely, whether the use of police presence and associated tactics by universities and the state were justifiable and appropriate responses.

As a result of media attention being particularly focused on violent protesting, debates around substantive political and economic changes have, to some extent been avoided. In many cases, actions from both sides have resulted in the destruction of property as well as injuries to bodies. However, campaigns have also in a way forced people to take a position on matters that they may have previously been ignorant about and / or accepted as simply the status quo. This has led to new solidarities and fractures in both the student and staff bodies and in the public arena. In other words, the no opinion/ no stand zone became increasingly rare as the issues being raised become central to anyone studying at a university.

1.3 Economic dimensions of the rise of the Student movement

As acknowledged by Higher education South Africa (HESA), a new higher education institutional landscape has not adequately and justifiably addressed the past inequities, more specially as they relate to the educational, material, financial and geographical elements of the (white) advantaged and the (black) disadvantaged (2014). Davids (2016) argues that shortcomings of the Higher education transformation agenda made way for the resistant uprising embodied in the #mustfall campaigns.

Similarly, Badat (2010, p. 7) argues that “an exclusive concentration on social equity and redress without adequate public funding and academic development initiatives to support under-prepared students has negative implications for quality, compromises the production of high quality

graduates with the requisite knowledge competencies and skills, and adversely affects economic development." The economic dimensions of #FMF can therefore be seen as the result of inadequate funding from the state to universities for infrastructure and staffing that is seriously compromising the delivery of quality education (Badat, 2015; Jagarnath, 2016; Molefe, 2016).

In addition, insufficient resources made available to financial aid programs like NSFAS exacerbate the problem in a context where increasing numbers (now the majority) of students are reliant on state rather than private funding (Davids, 2016). According to Cloete (2015), state grants to universities have also declined in real terms putting South African universities in positions where they have little choice but to increase fees to make up the shortfall.

Black students from poorer backgrounds are most effected by the resultant fee increases. Cloete and Maassen (2015) argue that the student protests are a consequence of these reductions in funding. Furthermore, Badat (2016) points out that diminished state funding has also resulted in related issues like the outsourcing of workers that many universities have adopted in order to combat rising expenses. According to Maringira and Gukurume (2017), the reason for these policy changes is South Africa's adoption of neoliberal post-apartheid policies.

This resulted in the privatisation of the education sector, particularly evident in the increasing numbers of private schools and increased supplementary school fees in 'good' public schools. Consequently, the education sector has been increasingly influenced by the marginalising effects of the 'free market'. Although there has also been a rise in private tertiary intuitions (e.g. Vegas, Midrand Institute, Damelin and others*)* the effects have been particularly pernicious and

exclusionary in the rise in fees for ostensibly public universities, undercutting the notion of the 'public good' of higher education (Davids, 2016).

This means that opportunities and outcomes are compromised, specifically for students from historically black universities (Badat, 2016). The student movement can therefore also be seen as a manifestation of a broader crisis that is essentially grounded in gross social inequalities that have their roots in past injustices (The Guardian, 2016). Research shows that South Africa ranks amongst some of the most unequal societies in the world (The Conversation, 2016).

The percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on higher education can be seen as an indicator of state commitment to the sector (Cloete & Maassen, 2015). Since 2004, the percentage has increased marginally from .68% to .72%. However, when compared to many other countries it is still well below the international standard. For example, Ghana spends 1.4%, Brazil .95% and many European countries contribute over 2% to higher education, (Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Nathane & Smith, 2017).

1.4 Protesting and the role of media and technology

Luescher (2016) points out that the #MustFall movements showed new ways of organising student power in the novel ways that students occupied public space and cyberspace. According to Luescher (2016) social media was instrumental in students' efforts to "conscientize and mobilize others, coordinate activism, share pamphlets, readings, pictures, and video-clips, and document in an unending stream what is happening around the country" (p. 23). Consequently, the recent student movement is vastly different to past activism because of the role of social media.

Students protested in public space where they maximized visibility and also elected spaces that represented centres of power like the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town and the ANC Headquarters in Johannesburg (Luescher, 2016). In addition, campus based protests happened nationwide, where students attempted to close down and disrupt normal operations at universities. In addition, students occupied university spaces that were symbolic of power like the Wits' Senate House and UCT's administration building.

However, despite these strategies of symbolic targeted resistance and peaceful protest, the media tended to portray the student movement as violent and focused on protests that were more heated in nature (Pillay, 2016). This created the impression that the overall movement was violent which justified police action on and around campus space.

1.5 Aims and demands

Broadly speaking, the student movement aimed at limiting or stopping fee increases with the longer-term goal of free education, soon became an immediate all-or-nothing demand for some at the heart of the student movement. Students also called for the decolonisation of the educational system, the transformation of racial and gender inequalities at universities specifically relating to staff composition and insourcing of workers (Langa, 2017).

Davids (2016) points out the #RMF campaign was rooted in "deeper demands for the decolonisation of higher education , which are tied not only to achieving racially balanced institutions – as facilitated through access – but are also about the perceived 'whiteness' of higher education spaces" (p. 3). In comparison to #FMF, #RMF can be seen as having its origins more ideologically located in challenging the legacy of whiteness in higher education.

Nathane and Smith (2017) point out that student demands for free education stem from the idea that education is a public good rather than a commodity. In its present 'commodity' aligned state, education is limited to those who can afford it. Hlatswayo et al. (2016) argue that considering South Africa's long history of marginalisation, education needs to be a public good if social inequalities are to be addressed. Arguments have been made on many fronts as to whether the student responses were in the first place 'reasoned' or reasonable. Leigh-Ann Naidoo (2016) both commended and critiqued the student movement. Her main point of caution was that it should not "get stuck in a politics of shutdown" (Naidoo, 2016, para. 1).

> This language of revolution, of comradeship and war, of tactic and strategy, runs deep in the political life of the student movement. It is in the mouths of RhodesMustFall students, anti-outsourcing student protesters in Tshwane, in the rallying of the new student Pan-Afrikanists. It is a striking fact that warrants some attention. (Naidoo, 2016, para. 2)

Naidoo (2016) argues that it warrants attention because she points out that the older generation of anti-apartheid activists have repeatedly said that 'we are not in a time of revolution'. She also refers to other rhetoric from the older generation that points to the fact that we are already in a democracy and therefore that revolutionary action is not needed because liberation has already been achieved. According to Naidoo (2016) these voices would suggest that the institutions and democratic constitutions of post-apartheid South Africa are sufficient. Naidoo (2016) goes on to say in regard to the previous generation of anti-apartheid revolutionaries:

> The spectre of revolution, of radical change, is in young peoples' minds and politics, and it is almost nowhere in the politics of the anti-apartheid generation. In fact, even as they criticised young people just five years earlier for being apathetic and depoliticized, they have now thought student activists misguided, uninformed, and mad. (Naidoo, 2016, para. 3)

Here, Naidoo makes an important point because the absence of support from the previous generation of activists highlights possible differences in perceptions about education and inequality and/ or different ideas about how to address inequalities. Clearly, the previous

generation of anti-apartheid activists do not see the same revolution that the student body perceives.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) criticises the previous generation for not being active enough in the current crisis in education and has accused them of "maintaining the status quo of a dysfunctional system by engulfing themselves in the neo-liberal capitalist elitism that excludes students from access to higher education" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). From this perspective, she also justifies their absence from the movement as a consequence of buying into neoliberal ideas and therefore not able or unwilling to see reality from a student perspective. From this view, both ideological differences and what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) alludes to as a kind of brainwashing of capitalism might account for the limited presence of leaders from the anti-apartheid generation.

Naidoo (2016) argues that students that lead the movement are more 'time travellers' than they are 'mad' of which we have said they have been accused. She suggests that students have "exploited the ambivalence of our historical moment to push into the future" (Naidoo, 2016, para. 6). By pointing to the past, the student movement has highlighted the unacceptable status of the present and, in this way, she suggests that they are "hallucinating a new time".

From the standpoint of the previous generation, Ndebele (2017) argues that significant intergenerational disjuncture exists between the current students and past freedom fighters. He maintains "a generation of 'black' students who treasure the designation 'black' and an older generation that does not experience the same pressure to wear it. This may have something to do with a kind of 'groundedness' that is unevenly distributed across the range of environmental and

psychological spaces. It is about carrying one's sense of confidence without the indignity of having to justify and fight for it" (Ndebele, 2017, p.15).

Moreover, Ndebele argues that students have allowed themselves to become overly reactive, "the affected 'black' appears to have lost control over the emergent means of self-definition in the evolving, free and democratic social realm. A 'black identity' in these circumstances becomes a fundamentally reactive one, anchored in the residual agency of 'whiteness', real or imagined" (Ndebele, 2017, p. 15). In contrast, his experience under the apartheid system, he says that despite the brutality of the time, that there was something in him that remained untouched by the system (Ndebele, 2017). This perspective thus suggests that that black students of today in some way have lost their dignity in being 'black' and consequently also widened the intergenerational gap.

Glen (2016) critiques the movement on account of its perceived ambivalence on items such as whether students were asking for the suspension of fee increases for the foreseeable future and to what extent were outsourcing issues included in the demands. Furthermore, was #FMF calling for free education for all and a significant change in economic policy or alternatively were the objectives limited to certain socio-economic groups? In the context of South Africa's specifically racially skewed economy, what was the relation between the calls for free education and the deracialisation of higher education? Moreover, were the movement's objectives expressly linked to calls for transforming colonial based curricula?

In addition, Glenn (2016) also argues that on the whole reasoned responses to student demands had little effect. However, this also suggests that the response to student demands called for more

than reason alone and that Glen's assertions of muddled demands and incoherent aims may also have indicated a far more emotive source that could be fronted by virtually any demand the student movement came up with. This is not to say that all the student demands were unrealistic or unfounded but rather that we need to look past cursory levels and ask the questions that help us better understand deeper motivational factors. Noam Chomsky spoke to this point when he commented about the student movement in Germany 1968:

> I feel that the sharp challenges that have been raised by the student movement are among the few hopeful developments of these troubled years. It would be superficial, and even rather childish, to be so mesmerized by occasional absurdities of formulation or offensive acts as to fail to see the great significance of the issues that have been raised and that lie beneath the tumult…. Only one totally lacking in judgement could find himself offended by 'student extremism' and not, to an immensely greater extent, by the events and situations that motivate it. (Chomsky, 2003, 184)

Therefore, the student movement needs not only to be understood in the context of South Africa's past but also recognise the new manifestations of struggle that are quite distinct from this history despite its roots in it. From this perspective, we can argue that much of South Africa's traumatic past remains undigested and that the student movements represent an attempt on the part of the youth to re-engage with the past and reimagine different, more equitable futures.

1.6 Race, class and ideology

The *Sunday Times* published an article in January 2016 stating that of the 60% of black students that make it through the first year at university, only 15% will graduate (Chetty & Knaus, 2016). The article explains these disturbing statistics by pointing to our history of class and racial inequality. Many of these students come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. The article argues that the notion of class defined as "norms and experiences that come from living

within a particular economic and financial resource base" is highly relevant in a "post-apartheid but not post-racial" South Africa (Chetty & Knaus, 2016, para. 2).

Glen (2016) highlights the strong ideological component as many who were actively involved in the movement were so beyond personal motivations. At UCT for example, the Law faculty became known for their active involvement with the campaigning in Cape Town. Since the faculty is mostly comprised of postgraduate students, they presumably did not face the same struggle for access and resources, as did their undergraduate counterparts (Glenn, 2016). Furthermore, the student movement can be seen as transcending class barriers because comparatively more privileged institutions such as Wits and UCT were instrumental in the movement.

Luescher (2016, p. 23) writes about the movement both in terms of race and ideology and describes it as a "black intellectual rage against ideological superstructures of South African higher education and its whiteness". The film 'Luister' created by Stellenbosch students exposed white on black racism. Interviewed students shared stories about every day racialised encounters (Corder et al., 2015). A common theme found in some form or another throughout these stories was that of belonging.

Many black students came forward to express a common feeling of not belonging at the university or being excluded, marginalised and discriminated against. In some instances, interviewed students reported experiencing outright racism at the hands of white students. The film also highlighted other issues like linguistic challenges that non-Afrikaans, mostly black students face for example as they rely on translation devices to understand lectures presented in

Afrikaans (Corder et al., 2015). The film points out that lectures could just as easily be carried out in English with much higher rates of comprehension at little or no cost to multilingual Afrikaans speaking students.

This highlights important hegemonic influences embedded within the university system and strongly suggests for whom universities and related spaces and epistemologies belong. Furthermore, historically Afrikaans institutions like Stellenbosch, Free State and Pretoria universities have been accused of using language policies as a barrier for racialised access (Luescher, 2016). In some instances, lectures have only been available in Afrikaans which significantly gives unfair advantage to white students at the expense of black students. Maringa and Gukurume (2017) assert that this can be seen as a form of institutional racism in the way that, in many cases, black students are forced to learn in colonial languages. Language therefore, is central to the decolonisation project.

2. Theoretical Framework

Because the study is essentially concerned with white student identity and how it is being affected by the student movement, the following theoretical concepts will be presented: identity in relationship to belonging, narrative change and development as well as cultural context and race.

2.1. Belonging

Identity can be said to exist when the individual has created a narrative that has meaning within the cultural context (McAdams, 2003). For McAdams (2003) identity is comprised of narrative connections between significant, self-defining experiences that represent broader themes that shape a life story. Identity, as many authors argue, should not be conceived as singular. Hall (1996), for example, highlights the varied nature of identity. Likewise, Clayton and Opotow (2003) also underscore the multiplicity of identity and point out that different identities tend to be foregrounded depending on situational context.

Identity also informs our sense of belonging – where and to what we feel we belong as well as our orientation in relation to the other(s) who may or may not share a similar experience of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2006) defines belonging as an emotional attachment to the feeling of 'home' with the implication that home carries a sense of safety and belonging. This sense of safety and belonging tends to become politicised and exposed when threatened and can result in the construction of in-groups and out-groups or "us" and "them" Yuval-Davis (2006) argues. In other words, when people feel unsafe, issues relating to identity become more apparent. The recent student movements can be seen as a contemporary example of a social movement that

appears to be unsettling identity and therefore foregrounds notions of belonging.

Categories of belonging should also be considered in the context of emotional investment in combination with collective narratives. Belonging is inherently about desire and where social actors want to position themselves. This may be in opposition to where the influences of social discourses want to position one. It follows that barriers to belonging also inhibit desire resulting in tensions between individual wants and collective constraints. From this perspective, identity construction can be seen as a combined process of "being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202).

These tensions between 'belonging' and 'longing to belong' form an important part of narrative identity. The student movement serves as a contemporary example that has shaken up various attachments of belonging among young people in general. More specifically, looking at belonging in relation to whiteness we could say that social movements such as these may unsettle the seemingly safe and steady terrain that whiteness has afforded many white students in university spaces.

A local study undertaken in the South African higher education al space underscores consequences of belonging or [not belonging] to universities. Robus and Macloed (2006) found that in Rhodes University and University of Fort Hare (where the research was carried out), staff and students viewed whiteness as normative and held it as an ideal. Both universities mobilised discourses of "white excellence" and "black failure". Moreover, black students reported a sense of having to continually over achieve in relation to their white counterparts and highlighted their struggle to be recognised on merit alone (Robus & Macloed, 2006). These findings highlight

historical themes of universities being spaces to which white people belong and in which white people can succeed.

Hage (1998) also identifies a type of belonging that he terms 'governmental belonging' which refers to the degree to which one's opinions about national issues are represented in the public discourse. It follows that governmental belonging is dependent on the extent the subject matters in social space. The student movement has particularly challenged this quality of belonging through protest and institutional shutdown, forced discourse into public debate whilst also fighting for better representation of the marginalized voice in political structures and in the economy.

Governmental belonging can be understood in terms of hegemonic influence. Frankenberg (1997) asserts that white dominated countries use race, culture and nation to constitute whiteness and in doing so also naming difference. Whiteness in these countries is therefore also connected with ownership of the nation (Frankenberg, 1997). As whiteness is defined in terms of rightful owner, "brownness" and rights of the original occupiers is repressed. Consequently, white people in white dominated countries globally enjoy a better sense of belonging within social space and associated infrastructure due to this idea of whiteness as custodian and owner of the nation. According to Hage (1998) white people enjoy comfort and confidence within the nation space that is a logical result of their social standing. In contrast, minority groups are made to feel unconfident and uncomfortable (Hage, 1998).

2.1.1. Discursive structures affecting belonging

Before the student movement, the social domain contained little threat for the identities of privileged students. The world was on their side such that an outward gaze into social space was met with confirmation that privileged people could be and become whatever they choose. The student movement can be seen as a direct challenge to this notion because it seeks equality and therefore interrupts the story that 'becoming' is limited to a privileged few.

Therefore, in addition to the personal and biographical, we also need to understand the social, cultural and political spheres in order to understand how white identities are developed, constructed and deployed. Hall (1996) points out that identities cannot be produced outside of discourse. On the contrary, identities are constructed within discourse and therefore says Hall (1996), are also influenced by discursive formations. Moreover, individuals may to varying degrees resist these social positions; we can understand this in terms of what Fanon (1967) refers to as the "politics of resistance".

Willig (2000) argues that people have more choice than Foucaldian discourse theorists would have us believe. This highlights the role of individual agency in the sense that to some degree, people can confirm or deny subject positions. However, to ignore the momentum of social pressure on the individual is also to underestimate the power of the past and all the myriad of ways that people are influenced by discursive structures in society. Hall (1996) also reminds us that individuals can to some extent resist subject positions to which they have been called. Resistance to subject positions may show up in the form of counter-discourses (Hall, 1996).

These are discourses that are formed in opposition to dominant discourses in circulation and therefore can be seen as opening a space for new subjectivities. Black consciousness or feminism(s) are examples of such "counter-discourses". The question is whether dominant subjects such as 'white' or 'male' subjects can similarly create counter-discourse or alternative narratives of identity. Identities are therefore significantly entangled with power dynamics in society (Hall, 2000; McLaren ,1997; Van Dijk, 1992).

From this perspective, we can understand the continuation of a social identity is an act of power since any affirmation at the level of identity is only possible by repressing that which threatens it (Halls, 2000). Because identity is fundamentally connected with social power relations, the more that people subscribe to being a white male for instance, the greater the "violence" on other(s) who do not belong to this category. Since more power in social context is associated with whiteness and masculinity, identities that are constructed in this way can be seen as oppressive.

In relation to this study, it is important to understand to what extent students have 'bought into' their white identities and furthermore, whether they are aware of social power dynamics at play. The above example also underscores that people are socially located on "multiple axes of difference" as Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 200) argues. This highlights the challenges of understanding changing identities of whiteness in relation to the student movement as whiteness cannot be separated from a range of other possible identity constructs, e.g. class, gender and sexuality.

Yuval-Davis (2006) therefore maintain that points of difference should be seen as constituting each other rather than as a sum of the parts. From this perspective to be a white male student is different to being a white female student or a white female middle class student. It is important to

note though, that some aspects of identity remain salient in particular contexts, such as whiteness and different intersectionalities may then reinscribe each other – such as race and class.

2.1.2. Scope of justice

Belonging also implies the acquisition of moral orientations that as Clayton and Opotow (2003) assert, have implications on justice. In this way, identity can be linked to justice because identity informs belonging, which connects one to group values that tell us who to care about. In Clayton and Opotow (2003) words, "identity affects why people care about justice" (p.301). They maintain that people are motivated to adhere to cultural systems of ethics to preserve their individual and group identities. Identity therefore determines for whom justice matters (Clayton & Opotow, 2003).

For Clayton and Opotow (2003), the "scope of justice" refers to the question of who belongs to one's moral community or, in other words who resides "inside or outside our psychological boundary for justice" (p. 301). This has significant implications on moral decision making in relation to 'other' people or groups. Including another person or group in one's moral community means that they will be treated with fairness and consideration and that one is likely to extend help if needed.

If the 'other' is positioned outside one's moral community, Clayton and Opotow (2003) assert that the 'other' is morally excluded and therefore will not enjoy the same benefits as in-group members. They suggest that these psychological boundaries also make it possible for people to cause harm to one another (Clayton & Opotow, 2003). In relation to this study, it is important to

explore how these boundaries concerning the Other may be changing, specifically for white students as a consequence of the student movement.

2.1.3. Belonging as a consequence of "merit"

In the broader context of social inequalities, we turn to Thomas Pickety for an assessment of the workings of meritocracy in western context. Pickety (2014) asserts that income inequality has worsened since the industrial era, which has resulted in an ever widening gap between rich and poor. Leaving aside the complex technical aspects of his argument, he maintains that because capital is unequally distributed, the rich accrue greater wealth in time at an increasing rate (Pickety, 2014).

From this perspective, it can be concluded that capitalism essentially results in inequalities found in modern day society. Despite the glaring inequalities, the narrative that underpins and upholds the capitalist ideology is that achievements and material successes are mostly a consequence of merit alone (Pickety, 2014). However, on closer inspection it is clear that the odds are stacked against the majority of people because of a myriad of variables that affect capital accumulation such as race, class and gender.

In local context, Franchi and Swartz (2003) show in their research that white monolingual English speaking South Africans are generally attached to privilege because they perceive their accomplishments and social standing on the basis of merit alone. They conclude that many white South Africans are resistant to aligning themselves with the new democratic dispensation which is defined as 'black' although they may still claim alignment with democratic values.

In relation to educational advantage, Melanie Verwoerd (2000) points out that many young white people, post 1990 generation tend to see their educational achievements on merit alone and as unrelated to the apartheid regime. This highlights the disconnect that arises between historical past and privileged social positions common among young white students. Moreover, the fact that this disconnect is still so prevalent in South African universities suggests that there has been no real social pressure for white students to confront their privilege, up until the recent student movement that is.

2.2. Narrative change and temporality

Narrative theorists claim that we are in essence narrative beings. As Fay says, “our lives are enstoried and our stories are enlived” (p. 197). It follows that identity and selfhood are inherently connected to story. According to Freeman (1993), human development can be understood as a retrospective exercise in the way that we attain new perspectives by looking back into past experience. From this standpoint, looking back gives clues into present and future lives. This account implies that reflecting backward is a necessary precursor for change and that the past provides a developmental roadmap going forward. Polkinghorne (1998) also affirms this idea, claiming that "an approximation toward desired ends can be revealed. The shape that emerges out of the past extends itself into the future" (p. 118).

It follows that if we have not cultivated awareness of personal and collective experiences that have come before us, then we also have no control over the influence of past on future. Consequently, the absence of a backward gaze also places limitations on change and development. In other words, avoiding past can also be seen as avoiding change or an investment in staying the same. In relation to this study, we can extend this idea beyond the personal to the

collective past and argue that for racialised identities to transform, it is necessary for white students to reflect on the experiences of past generations to truly understand the identities that they have inherited.

2.2.1. Morality and hindsight

The metaphorical Ghanaian bird Sankofa, who gathers the wisdom of the past whilst flying forward (Bradbury, 2012) highlights the important role the past has on present and future lives. This movement in time also speaks to identity as white students look back in time they are also attending to identity. It is within this space that Freeman (2010) argues change can take place because hindsight opens a window of seeing what was not seen in present time. Consequently, this temporal movement forms an integral part of this study as it provides a view into the ways students are changing or not in relation to significant social dynamics represented by the student movement. Freeman (2010) conceives present time as kind of autistic lens where it is not possible to access a broader perspective because, in lived time, we do not have outcomes on hand and typically our focus is egocentrically driven.

Therefore, hindsight provides a means of distancing from self and escaping the narrow view that we are bound to in the present. Hindsight therefore opens up aspects of experience that were not visible to us in present time and allows for a moral reconciliation of the past. Moreover, Freeman (2010) points out that the value of hindsight tends to be overlooked in favour of present time being a more accurate reflection of reality. This is Freeman's essential point as he argues that in some ways lived experience can be seen as being more distorted than hindsight's view.

It follows that this backward gaze is necessary for moral development. “Hindsight, in assuming the form of narrative reflection, thus emerges as a potential vehicle not only of truth but goodness and should therefore be understood as a key player in strengthening and deepening moral life” (Freeman, 2010, p. 24). From this point of view, we can say that narrative provides a structure for attending to the relationship between past and present and between self and other(s) thereby gaining deeper understanding about selfhood especially as this relates to moral orientation.

Furthermore, due to the enhanced view of past experience from the standpoint of the present, Freeman argues that morality often arrives ‘late’ and therefore reflection can bring awareness of what ‘would have been the right thing to do’. This brings us back to one of the fundamental agendas of this study, which is how white students can conceive of themselves as ‘good’ moral citizens when they are living privileged lives rooted in an immoral past. Hindsight can therefore function to open the way for increased moral standing or alternatively, negating hindsight’s window, which suggests an avoidance of past and consequently an investment in maintaining the status quo.

As individuals reflect back on their own lives as well as generations before them, Tappan and Brown (1989) contend that we develop “increased authorship” meaning that ‘owning’ past stories provides the possibility of creating different futures. Bakhtin (1986, as cited in Tappan and Brown, 1989) eloquently sums up this idea and writes, “the search from for one’s own (authorial) voice [means] to be embodied, to become more clearly defined … to cast off reservations … not to remain tangential [but] to burst into the circle of life [and] become one among other people” (p. 147).

In relation to white identity; at the heart of the 'white story' and perhaps the point of greatest contention is the notion of whiteness as good, moral and untainted. According to Applebaum's (2007), the most glaring blind spot for white people is that whiteness is not this or still further, that it encompasses precisely the opposite qualities. This is whiteness as oppressor, tyrant, unjust and, as Applebaum (2007) describes, it is easier for white people to disconnect from these aspects in favour of romanticised ideals that have little basis in reality.

2.2.2. Construction and integration of Self

Hindsight therefore provides an important view into the past but in order to understand change we need to look at how identity is constructed and integrated. Freeman has highlighted the elusive nature of the self because of the difficulty of looking at ourselves objectively. In a sense, we are the object we are looking at meaning that our subjectivity in some way hinders our ability to put ourselves into clear focus. But Freeman (1993) argues that this is what makes our interpretive efforts interesting and worthwhile in that there is no singular right way to make sense of the self when we look at the self through the lens of narrative.

Identities can and do change as many authors have claimed. Clayton and Opotow (2003) maintain that identity is in a continuous state of change as it develops through a life course and therefore should be seen as fluid in nature. Identity is therefore best understood as a complex and multidimensional construct with motivational and behavioural implications (Clayton & Opotow, 2003). According to McAdams (2001), our innate desire to create meaning from experience makes identity construction possible. Identities, says McAdams's (2001) are constructed or integrated in synchronic and diachronic ways. Synchronic integration of the self refers to the

relationship between identity and the numerous roles one adopts whereas diachronically, the self is integrated along the temporal dimension (McAdams, 2001).

Crites (1986) maintains that the integration of self is bound up with an individual's willingness to recollect their personal story that connects to Freeman's point that development is a retrospective exercise. This also highlights the importance of both the recent and distant past in the lives of all people in developing identities. In particular, the construction of identities for the young white South Africans who are of interest in this study, entails retrospective integration of the events of Fees must fall in the recent past with both their individual life histories and the longer socio-political histories of intergenerational families and wider society.

In addition, identity construction should not only be conceived in terms of summative gain, but also in relation to exclusion. Hall (2000) speaks to this point as he contends, "identity construction is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the resultant poles" (Hall, 2000, p. 7). This highlights the fact that an integral aspect of identity can be understood as 'violent' in the way that any assertion of 'who one is', is also an act of asserting of 'who one is not'.

2.2.3. Transformation

Augustine's story stands out as an excellent example of a narrative about how the self can change. Freeman (1998) describes Augustine's personal narrative as a person moving through a 'lost and found' type sequence. The overarching theme of his story is a search for meaning that leads Augustine into a new version of himself made possible by an authentic encounter with his past self. Augustine's story is directly related to the subject of this study because his experience

of ‘being lost’ can be compared to white people’s general racial ignorance and what can be seen as a careless living out of privileged lives.

McAdams (2001) claims that narrative identity is made up of memories of emotionally significant experiences that are interpreted to reveal self-defining meaning and are integrated into the broader themes and patterns that comprise the life story as a whole. He expands on this by explaining that some memories fit neatly into the existing story line that has already been constructed, thus providing identity continuity, whereas others challenge the story line and invite identity questioning and transformation (McAdams, 2001).

Patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving can be altered though significant life events and trauma, says Pals (2006). This runs parallel to Freeman’s (2014) notion on the connection between collective or individual calamity and upward changes in moral orientation. The priority of the other, he claims, comes into sharper focus when there is catastrophe in social or individual spheres (Freeman, 2014). As an example, Freeman (2014) recounts the tragic events in Worcester, Massachusetts where a terrible fire broke out. Six fire fighters lost their lives unnecessarily on misleading information that homeless people were stuck in the building.

None of the rescue workers returned from the burning building and, consequently, Freeman (2014, p. 53) explains, “the entire city fell into a state of shock and then profound grief”. Amidst the grief and horror, what stands out somewhat ironically says Freeman, is that the weeks following the tragedy brought the community together in unprecedented ways; “there was an incredible outpouring of care and love” (p. 54). The Other came into view along with all their

needs and concerns and in wake of the tragic events in Worcester, people acted more than ever on needs of others than would normally have been dictated by their scope of justice.

The student movement can also be conceived in this way. Although the events did not involve loss of life as in the above example, the student movement conveyed the tragedy of South Africa's past and the resultant bind in present time for the majority of South Africa's black youth. Moreover, the student movement itself involved numerous rupturing events along the course of its unfolding. These ranged from physical and psychological injuries endured by students and staff as well violence and disruption in surrounding public space. However, unlike the Worcester fire where the prevailing effect was unification, the student movement resulted in fractures within the academic body as well as increasing unity where it did not exist before.

2.3. Race and racism

Hall (1992) talks about "the double syntax of racism- never one thing without the other" (p. 17). He explains this idea with reference to nostalgic impulses from "so-called civilized" societies for an innocence embodied by native people. But, as Hall (2009) points out, the nostalgic images are also accompanied by fears of "being overrun by the recurrence of a dark savagery" (p. 17). In van Dijk's (1992) terms, racism can be understood as perceiving others from different ethnic or racial groups as inferior and has its roots in well-defined ideologies.

Barnes (2013) argues that despite the widespread recognition of biological sameness, race remains a significant social marker for opportunity and access to resources. Because of changes in socio-political realms in the last few decades, some authors (Gallagher, 2003; Sayyid, 2010) highlight that social discourse would have us believe that we have entered a post-race period

where race has generally become less salient in western societies. These arguments revolve around the idea that black people are increasingly taking positions of power and have more equal access to opportunity.

According to Gallagher (2003), a defining feature of 'post-race' society is the notion of colour blindness, which asserts that opportunity is open to all and that seeing race is a choice. However, as will be shown in the following sections, these arguments underplay the role that race plays in virtually all areas of contemporary life. In the South African context, van Dijk (1992) makes the point that since post 1994 political and social changes, a common misconception especially applicable to beneficiaries of the apartheid system is that racial discrimination in the new South Africa is an individual deviation from the norm rather than a highly systemic pertinent social issue. This again serves as an example of misplaced, post-race thinking.

In opposition to the post-race perspective, Cooper (2004) argues that race is one of the primary organising principles of inequality in society. Race, says Copper (2004) is deeply implicated in the production and reproduction of worldviews and shapes our perception of how we make sense of social life. Vice (2010) makes the point that since white people generally have the most to lose in regard to confronting racial inequality, that it has become too sensitive a subject for people to dialogue with. Moreover, van Dijk (1992) argues that racism has become less visible in recent decades with the result that racist behaviour is easier to deny and more difficult to identify.

It follows that racism has therefore adapted to more contemporary and subtler forms that allow its continued existence (Van Dijk, 1992). Racism is therefore more difficult to name in contemporary society because of its increasingly covert nature. However, in recent years one

could make an argument for the resurgence of overt racism that is clearly evident in right wing international politics such as the Trump administration and in the shocking cases of individual brutal violent racist incidents in SA, e.g. ongoing xenophobic attacks, increased racialized incidents in schools and universities and the Marikana massacre where police opened fire on striking black miners.

2.3.1. Blackness and whiteness

In essence, initiatives that aim to address racial inequality resulting from colonialism, require the transformation of subjectivities, both oppressed and oppressor. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), black subjects are constructed as deficient and incomplete, in a state of becoming. Gordon (2007) defines the colonised or the black subject in a state that is below existence or as residing in a "zone of nonbeing". This is because the colonised subject is severely limited in the way that she can be, to "appear means to over appear" (Gordon, 2007, p. 10). She is therefore always cast in contrast to the white subject and cannot escape her blackness as a form of oppressed subjectivity.

In contrast, Steyn (2005) defines whiteness as, "an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to people of European descent as a consequence of the economic and political advantage gained during and subsequent to European colonial expansion" (p. 121). From this perspective, blackness is cast as a deviation of the white norm. However, in western societies whiteness as ideal is not confined to people of a particular skin colour. According to Dixon et al. (2005) whiteness can be seen as an achievement for any individual. Though possible for a person of colour to achieve a somewhat white status, Bobo (2001) argues that this is done on the condition that power relations are kept intact.

In this way, social discourse tells black people that they may strive for a white ideal but not disturb the racial hierarchy while doing so, thereby maintaining whiteness as superior. This creates a paradoxical position for black people because they face rejection when they own their heritage (be it markers such as clothing, language or any other makers of coloured descent) and also when they assimilate too well into white culture (Bobo, 2001; van Dijk, 1992).

Green, Sonn and Matsebula (2007) highlight the changing meanings of race; race as "multifaceted, situationally specific, and reinscribed around changing meanings of race in society. The meaning of whiteness varies in relation to context, history, gender, class, sexuality, region, and political philosophy" (p.393). This is an important point because although the construct of whiteness is malleable and influenced by cultural and social setting, features of whiteness are also deeply engrained in western context (Suchet, 2007; van Dijk, 1992; Vice, 2010).

Due to the situational factors of race, Vice (2010) suggests that South African whiteness and whiteness as a general phenomenon need to be distinguished. As such, whiteness in general terms will be presented before returning to South African specific features of whiteness. Achille Mbembe (2015) speaks of whiteness as "entrapment". Whiteness he says, " is at its best when it turns into a myth. It is the most corrosive and the most lethal when it makes us believe that it is everywhere; that everything originates from it and it has no outside" (Mbembe, 2015, p. 3). In essence, the false mythology of whiteness lies in its link to meritocracy, deserved fruits of labour and the delusional inevitable linking of 'whiteness' and 'goodness'. Mbembe consequently argues for action that sets out to demythologise whiteness.

Whiteness can also be understood as an empty category, "defined solely by what it is not." (Rasmussen et al., 2001, p. 10). As a result, white people experience life through the frame of whiteness as natural and normal (Straker 2011; Suchet 2007). Whiteness and associated power and privilege is therefore also largely rendered unquestioned and instead experienced as truth. In this regard, Suchet (2007) articulates whiteness as, "that which is not seen and not named. It is present everywhere and absent from discussion. It is the silent norm" (p. 868).

Whiteness can therefore be theorised in global terms as "the invisible, working in the background as a standard, not of one particular way of being in the world, but as normalcy, as universalizability, of just being the way things are" (Vice, 2010, p. 324). Vice's point underscores the challenge of transitioning white identity because its normativity makes it difficult for white people to question and therefore see more clearly into its hegemonic dominance. Arguably, seeing what whiteness represents is a precursor for any kind of change to identity. In this way, we can track the ways that some white people may be waking up from this state of ignorance.

2.3.2. South African features of whiteness

Although apartheid ended in 1994, the racial categories imposed by the system are still promoted through discourses and practices in contemporary life. Since the fall of Apartheid, racist discourses are no longer officially supported in the public domain; instead, new discourses have taken root that suggest that society has been transformed and racism is a phenomenon of the past. These discourses therefore function to keep power imbalances from being identified and exposed to the forces of change.

Essed (1991) points out that transformation policies are used as proof that society has transformed in more equitable ways when for many people, everyday realities suggest otherwise.

Consequently, racial dynamics can again be denied and hidden from view whilst hegemonic structures are maintained on the basis of ignorance and an unwillingness to surrender racialised power dynamics on the part of white people.

Suchet (2007) points out that real power as it exists in political systems has changed since apartheid. Similarly, Straker (2011) makes the point that power and privilege of whiteness has diminished since the political system does not discriminate on the basis of race any longer. As a result, meanings of whiteness in social spheres have also changed in response. Suchet (2007) contends that a by-product of changing meanings of whiteness is white melancholia. This refers to the ways that white people are increasingly confronted with a quality of loss in relation to changing meanings attributed with whiteness.

Moreover, the loss of power and privilege can be experience as an unjust process (Suchet, 2007). Straker (2011) points out that white power has diminished in real terms but white privilege is still applicable in numerous spheres of South African life. This also highlights increased difficulties of identifying hegemonic influences of whiteness due to the subtler positionality it has assumed post-apartheid South Africa. As a result, it has become easier for white people to disengage from the debate on account of justifications that relate to political and legislative changes.

These points offer insight into why many white people are resisting awareness of the social positioning of whiteness, because doing so means acknowledging interracial power imbalances. From this perspective, resistance offers the prospect for continuation of normative privileges. Weis and Fine (1996) contend that awareness depends on naming the properties of whiteness which has the effect of unsettling power dynamics. In Weis and Fine's (1996) words, "naming

whiteness displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself and effect of its dominance" (p. 6).

2.3.3. Ignorance and accountability

According to Steyn (2012) white subjectivities are formed on the basis of discourses founded in ignorance and they become performers of ignorance. This implies that to some extent, choice is limited as people are interpellated into their subjectivities. It follows that developing awareness about privilege and power is not possible as long as we are bound to these subjectivities. Mills (2008) maintains that white racial domination resulted in the state of white ignorance prevalent in the world today and describes white ignorance as "an implicit agreement to misrepresent the world" (p. 233).

Moreover, Steyn (2012) contends that ignorance is a 'social accomplishment' which highlights the fact that ignorance as it exists in society is the result of repeated strategies to maintain social discourses of white supremacy such that all subjects subscribe to them. Racial ignorance says Steyn (2012) relies on a "meta-rule that enables communal denial" (p. 247). The meta rule in Steyn's terms is what enables and secures what she refers to as the 'ignorance contract'. The essence of the contract is that subjects heed to the underlying social rules about what can and can't be spoken about and deny knowledge of the original rule.

According to Mills (2008) the essence of white ignorance is what he describes as discourses that generate a "feel-good" history for whites (p. 241). This results in a 'deliberate forgetting' of actual historical accounts in favour of new narratives that overlay memories of whiteness as oppressor and persecutor. Furthermore, ignorance from this perspective, applies to both black

and white subjectivities as each one created their own “epistemologies of ignorance” during the apartheid era. The important difference is that these epistemologies were created in the context of white dominant rule under the apartheid government that led to white subjectivities enjoying a myriad of privileges.

Privilege also play out in simple notions and assumptions of what family is or how it should be conceived. In her work on child development, Burman (2008) makes the argument for constitutive constructionism, thereby refusing traditional developmental notions that rest on immediate family context as predictor of child development. The starting point, says Burman (2008) is that children and childhood are constructed; therefore we have to study not only the child but also the context (that is the interpersonal, cultural, historical and political situation) that produces her" (p. 9).

Moreover, she points out that most developmental research affirms notions of the nuclear family where normal is defined as “a male breadwinner and female childcarer" (Burman, 2008, p. 111). She points out that this severely undermines the fact that this structure is far from ‘normal’ when taking into account feminist ideologies, white privilege and imperialism. In relation to this study, the typical white student family stands in stark contrast to that of the black student, which is often more fragmented and atypical, when compared to the nuclear model.

2.3.4. Denials of complicity

Applebaum (2007) cites the example of feminist philosopher, Sandra Lee Bartky who to her dismay, discovered that many of her students perceived her as being somewhat racist. Instead of dismissing the charge, Bartky began to explore how white people often perpetuate racial injustice

unknowingly and unintentionally in service of being good whites. Thus Applebaum (2007) suggests that traditional notions of morality may actually be counterproductive by encouraging denials of complicity rather than justice.

Racisms conceived of in terms of intentionality alone, also allows for further evasion of responsibility (Applebaum, 2007). Alternatively, if racism is conceived of within a systemic view then white people are more likely to confront racial injustice because it does not depend on any action or intention per se. This view prevents white people from claiming to have transcended racism and instead supports engagement with the numerous ways that white people are complicit in upholding racial inequality. However, adopting this perspective may also lead to white people locating the problem in the 'other white'.

Powerful ideological systems prevent whites from seeing their role in perpetuating racial injustices. According to Applebaum (2007), these systems function to "reassure whites that the suffering of darker-skinned Others is not of their doing" (p. 456). Moreover, Applebaum (2007) argues that the invisibility of white complicity is a consequence of privileges that are also about what is excluded from white people's experiences. This makes privilege even more difficult to recognise because it does not only mean 'acquisition of' but perhaps more importantly implies 'absence'. It follows that whiteness is performed by white people continuously and complicity hidden from view because privilege is experienced as normative. Therefore, complicity does not depend on any specific action but can also arises as a consequence of simply "being white".

Vice (2010) points out that these patterns are fundamentally engrained in our identities. It is important to note that privilege in its origins is nonvoluntary but also at a later point may be

"more or less consciously embraced or rejected" (Vice 2010, p. 325). According to Memmi (2000), normativity of privilege allows for denials of negative qualities of whiteness and racial inequalities. Moreover, Memmi (2000) points out that at the forefront of the contemporary psyche is an aversion to be labelled as racist. This again leads to denial of racism as a prominent feature of western society.

What follows is a conundrum because the antidote to this denial is exposing racial inequality but at the same time there are power dynamics at play that inhibit awareness and promote continuation of the status quo. In other words, the task at hand is making visible what is invisible and the bind is that discursive structures have a very powerful effect of numbing the mind and reasserting new narratives about accountability in relation to the past. Van Dijk (1992) maintains that denial of racism can also be understood as a form of disciplinary power. Denials are often maintained by those who benefit from the structural elements of the system, i.e. interplay between racial and class dynamics producing social positions of power.

Denials of racial issues can discipline the oppressed by invalidating their concerns. In this way those with power can use their power to further reinforce their subjectivities through disciplining their accusers with sophisticated defences. Van Dijk (1992) argues that dominant subjectivities therefore get to define what racist behaviour is as a result of their privileged subjectivities. Consequently, the voice of the oppressed can be further weakened by subjects reinforcing their own positionalities and denying the existence of gross racial power inequalities.

From this view, we see that beneficiaries of the apartheid system also have the power to write and maintain the post-apartheid story in a way that limits meaningful engagement with the past

and also maintains their privileged social positions. This can be construed as a gross misuse of subjective power in the way that the status quo is maintained. One of the primary defences often used by white people is that many white people did not support the Apartheid regime and consequently cannot be racist.

Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) has argued that the denial of culpability especially common among white people born post-apartheid is the result of an aversion to an uncoupling of the white identity from notions of "good, moral or benevolent". It follows that any kind of admission of complicity is akin to a shattering of white identity as inevitably "good". Similarly, Mbemebe (2008) also suggests that "born free" beneficiaries of the apartheid system tend to adopt a stance that "what's past is past" and that victims of the system need to move on and put the past behind them.

There are many ways that white people can distance themselves from racism and privilege. Hytten and Warren (2003) point out that distancing from past injustices is made possible through various social discourses that protect white dominance. Examples of distancing or deflecting acknowledgement of privilege may include externalising racism and limiting it to social structures, blaming others who are overtly racist and highlighting relationships with people of other ethnic and racial backgrounds (Suchet 2007; Thompson, 2003).

In addition, Thompson (2003) suggests involvement with anti-racism movements can also have the effect of limiting complicity. This is whiteness identified as good and principled. From this position, white people can differentiate themselves from extreme racism due to their identification with a morally correct position which also allows for an avoidance of complicity.

Consequently, good intentions and commitment to anti-racism do not always translate into awareness of privilege and power associated with whiteness. These strategies therefore function to prevent white people from becoming aware and reflective of their social positioning and privilege that has its roots in an unjust past.

As a result of these prevalent ways of thinking on the part of whites, Mbembe (2008) suggests that many whites have retreated to comfortable positions of non-culpability. This has implications on truth telling because exposing past misdeeds and current social privilege would mean moving toward the discomfort of facing current racial and class challenges and ultimately confronting one's own inheritance built on a system of oppression.

In terms of addressing these denials and confronting social inequality, Fanon (1967) argues that politics of resistance needs to be addressed both in the context of internalised constructions that have been imposed on the oppressed and on those in dominant positions. Likewise, Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) argues that confronting past injustices leads both the white and black subjects into a process of mourning. In relation to whiteness, mourning involves working through the past and integrating the split off 'good and bad' of the past into a coherent whole.

The process of mourning requires facing the negative aspects of the past as well as their self and internal object representations, acknowledging them and dealing with them. Therefore, the denial of guilt about the past and its idealization reflect a denial of mourning, an "inability to mourn" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012, p. 259). This point of view highlights the need for white people to confront the past in more authentic ways. As Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) maintains, this is likely to be an uncomfortable process for white people because in essence it involves facing up to the

ways that white people are both personally and collectively complicit. Similarly, Vice (2010) states, "shame, regret, or guilt would be the expected responses to knowledge of one's whiteliness and insidious connection to injustice" (p. 337).

Moreover, Vice also contends:

> White South Africans face daily and tenacious moral tests that show themselves up as inadequate as much as revealing the deep structural and systemic injustices of the country. However one acts, shame is never far away, for so many interactions seem charged with power or racial dynamics. It is hard to be comfortable like this and hard to resist the thought that for most white South Africans it will be almost impossible to lead a good life. (Vice, 2010, p. 338)

Given the complexity of this subject, a "way through" may seem like it borders on the impossible. However, we need to take seriously the ideas of continuing to revisit the past in order to reshape the future as Freeman (2010) has suggested.

2.4. Concluding remarks on theory

This section has laid the basis for understanding present day subjectivities. Clearly both black and white subjectivities have arisen and developed out of historical injustices. This has translated into a significant opportunity gap for black and white students in South African society. For the majority of black students that still find themselves grappling to pay fees and cover their living and related expenses, this means that their tertiary education is often cut short, thus perpetuating the status quo. In contrast, many young white students have the momentum of past privileges on their side and therefore have not had to worry about the economic foundations that enable their studies.

This allows us to place black and white subjectivities side by side because as Hall argues, they enable each other. In essence, it can be argued that the student movement has sought to revolutionise these subjectivities that reflect the severity of inequality in South African society. From this point of view, young white people are therefore facing increasing pressure to face up to their social positioning and look past meritocratic ideals. This means in essence increasing their scope of justice toward greater inclusion. Perhaps as more white people do this, we will find the insight we need that leads to appropriate action. In this regard, Vice (2010) proposes that silence on the part of white people is often what is needed because it runs counter to the central space that whiteness usually occupies. This might mean that a white person may not express their thoughts or try to manage others in certain situations.

From this perspective, Vice (2010) calls for "humility and silence" on the part of whites as one possible remedy for addressing racial inequality. However, she warns that silence can also be another "moral failing" in the way that it may represent a deliberate attempt to make an ethical statement or may passively ignore social injustices. Consequently, it is important to distinguish between various forms of silence and motivational factors behind them.

3. Methodology

3.1. Rationale

For many years there seems to have been limited understanding on the part of white students in regard to the inherent privilege associated with whiteness and racial inequality in the higher education space. The student movement appears to be placing increasing pressure on white students to rethink their identities and has shaken up notions of whiteness, blackness and consequently racial identities nationwide.

Moreover, the fact that the FMF campaigns resulted in universities closing for periods of time meant that all students were affected by the possibility of a premature end to their studies. This can be conceived as a significant threat to the student mind as for many student's success in academia equates to the possibility of a good future. Conversely, it is clear that for many black students, the premature end to their academic careers is the current status quo.

In a context of a racist and colonially exploitative history, it may be argued that politics always entails questions of ethics and personal morality. I make the assumption, in line with McAdam's (2001) notions of the developing adult identity that young people not only want to find social identities but also want to be "good" citizens in society. But what does it mean to be a good "white" citizen when whiteness is equated with colonial oppression? Furthermore, what does it mean to be "good" when the material and social privileges that many white people enjoy today can be traced to historical exploitation of non-white races? In other words, how can white people be "good" if they continue to enjoy the fruits of an immoral past?

3.2. Aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to explore constructions of white student identities in the context of these movements and, following this, how white students have integrated these events in their sense of self. In other words, are white students rethinking and reshaping their identities and if so, how are they doing so and what do these emerging identities look like. In essence, my interest was to explore the ways in which white student identities are changing (or not) as a result of the movement. This has important implications for the South African socio-political landscape and possible futures.

In addition, the study aims to understand the ways that white students may endeavour to construct their identities as "good" in the context of an immoral past and in relation to the current socio-political dynamics as well as in imagining themselves as future adult citizens. The research also examines connections between personal and collective narratives and how participants might employ dominant cultural narratives in service of protecting privilege and maintaining social power imbalances, or how they may be harnessing new versions of the world to reconstruct their sense of themselves and where they belong. Conversely, the study explores what participant narratives might tell us about dominant discourses in circulation.

3.3. Research questions

1. How do students believe that the student movement has impacted on their identities?
2. How do these identity positions relate to a continuum of identity positions reflected in their historical narratives?
3. How do these identity positions reflect elements of change or status-quo maintenance?

3.4. Research design

The study is broadly rooted in the phenomenological paradigm but also recognises that subjects are powerful and need to be read with a critical edge. Therefore both phenomenological and critical frames were adopted as an overall analytic approach. Narrative inquiry, which is a form of qualitative methodology, was used to collect and analyse data. Chase (2005) describes narrative inquiry as a particular type of qualitative research characterised by a combination of "interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them" (Chase, 2005, p. 651). A narrative approach is seen as a relevant interpretive mode because of the storied nature of identity (Bamburg, 2006; Freeman 2010; McAdams, 2001). Since this study aims to track changes in identity in relation to events in the socio-cultural space, the narrative mode was an obvious analytic fit.

Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) note that despite its popularity, narrative research is often a complex and difficult modality of research to undertake. We need to consider what story is worthy and also think about how to elicit narratives not to mention the possibility that an interview might not produce narratives in the way that we expect. Therefore, what questions are asked and how they are asked are especially important in a narrative frame because the central idea is to encourage a kind of spontaneous sharing of experience.

Furthermore, since narrative research is relatively new, methodological process is relatively limited and also the subject of contentious debate. Even the definition of narrative itself is highly contested with authors like Tamboukou (2008) arguing for the possibility that perhaps a definition is not needed and in a way contrary to the spirit of the narrative approach. According

to Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) narrative research can open up new possibilities precisely because it is not bound up with methodology. We are then free to meet the story on its own terms. This can result in a richer understanding of individual and social change.

Despite the challenges, the narrative mode offers the possibility of uncovering new forms of meaning that are sometimes contradictory in nature. This allows for the examination of complex data and some would argue allows for a deeper and more accurate engagement with the data. As this study deals with identity, in fundamentally layered and intersectional ways, the narrative mode was seen as offering unique insight into the student movement in general and more specifically, white identity.

> By focusing on narrative, we are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means; the mechanisms by which they are consumed; how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted and what, if any, effects they have. For many of us, problematic as they are, narratives carry traces of human lives that we want to understand. (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 2).

3.4.1. Shift from 'Big' to 'Small' stories

'Big Stories' can be understood as life narratives or autobiographies or stories that at the least have life determining episodes as their basis. These stories have traditionally been the focus of narrative research. Regarding the value of 'big stories', Freeman (2006) maintains that larger biographical narratives deliver a different quality of experiential richness and reflectiveness. However, many authors (Bamburg, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2006) have since been critical of the over focus of 'big stories' in the narrative space and have argued for increased focus on shorter sections of narratives.

Bamberg (2006) asserts that the narrative turn has led to an "an (often uncritical) celebration of 'Big Stories'" (p.63). For Georgakopoulou (2006) a small story focus "does not prioritise a unified, coherent, autonomous, reflected upon and rehearsed self within a restrictive view of narrative" (p. 5). Small stories, according to Bamberg (2006), share the following characteristics: they are short and told in an interactional context that do not thematise the speaker nor do they represent a life story. Instead small stories are those shared in an everyday context and revolve around very ordinary subjects and everyday occurrences. Bamberg (2006) goes as far as to say they may not even be recognisable as story, "quickly forgotten; nothing permanent or of particular importance – so it seems" (p. 63).

It therefore is unsurprising that small stories have been ignored in favour of larger biographical narratives. Small stories also allow for an analysis of interactional and structural features of narrative which means that we can circumvent some of the analytic problems associated with examining data without sufficient passage of time. In other words, as is the case of #FMF and related campaigns, not only would some authors argue that insufficient time has passed but also that the subject has not found an end point and is still in process.

This can make the analytic process more complicated as the data are examined when variables are in still in flux and therefore subject to further change. Adopting a small story focus in relation to this study allows us to explore smaller sections of experience and infer meaning in relation to identity and the broader social forces in play. From this perspective, we also see that the subject position is "troubled" to some extent due to the co-constructive characteristics of narratives (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Labov, 1997). This position therefore places limits on what we can say about individual agency.

Others like Bruner (1991) have argued the converse, that narratives do provide insight into individual agency. The middle ground is narrative research orientations that borrow from both camps, those that are interested in agency as well as the socio-cultural influences on narratives (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008). In relation to identity however, this implies that identity should be examined as multiple versioned, fluid and sometimes fragmented. This is important for the study as the multiplicity of identity may even be positioned in contradictory ways, which underscores the importance of setting a theoretical tone that acknowledges these newer notions of identity construction.

Although the analytic approach focuses on small stories, I also invited longer biographical accounts from each participant. This was done by asking them to talk about their past with focus on early schooling and various transitions leading up to university. I therefore used a 'big story' approach to create a context from which participants could then talk about their experiences of events related to the student movement. I used the recent past as a starting point and then worked backwards before attending again to current events and imagined futures. This approach of inviting biographies tended to have a relaxing effect on participants so that they had more to say when they returned to their recent experiences with the student movement for a second time.

3.5. Participants

Sampling in qualitative studies is informed by a focus on the quality and richness of data. Fossey et al. (2002) have suggested that "appropriateness and adequacy" should guide the sampling process. Therefore, sampling should be aimed at those best suited to provide meaningful data in line with the research aims; and also, adequate in the sense that information sources should provide a comprehensive account of the phenomenon being researched.

According to Fossey et al. (2002), "Qualitative sampling is described as purposive (or purposeful) when it aims to select appropriate information sources to explore meanings" (p. 726). The sample can be described as purposive as I purposefully recruited a specific demographic with the aim of eliciting narratives in relation to my subject of interest – the student movements of 2015 and beyond.

The sample comprised of white students from the Wits, University of Cape Town and University of Pretoria. As I made use of snowballing to recruit students to the study and approached postgraduate students to begin with, students tended to recommend their friends who were in similar years of study. Five participants were interviewed late in 2015 (after the protests had ended) and four early in 2016 (before the next wave of the movement).

I included one foreign student as part of the sample. Sarah, from the UK had been studying at Wits for four years at the time of her interview. Like South African students, she too she can be considered historically privileged but her privilege does not originate in the South African context.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Institution	Area of study	Study	Year involved	Nationality	Home language
Gloria	Female	40	Wits	Humanities	Hons	2015	RSA	English
Sarah	Female	33	Wits	Humanities	Hons	2015	UK	English
Joe	Male	22	Wits	Humanities	Hons	2015	RSA	English
Alison	Female	22	Wits	Humanities	MA	2016	RSA	English
Heidi	Female	22	UP	Humanities	Hons	2015	RSA	English

Kelly	Female	23	Wits	Humanities	Hons	2015	RSA	English
James	Male	25	Wits	Humanities	MA	2016	RSA	English
Frank	Male	26	Wits	Humanities	MA	2016	RSA	English
Mark	Male	25	UCT	Humanities	Hons	2016	RSA	English

3.6. Data Collection

Chase (2011) suggests that contextualising the subject is an important part of the narrative interview because it focuses both the interviewee and interviewer's attention toward narratives that are relevant to the aims and objectives of the study. This was done by providing a brief overview about the aims and objectives of the study whilst highlighting specific time periods of interest as the inception of the student movement in 2015 and beyond. This contextualisation was kept brief as providing too much information was seen as being leading and limiting of spontaneous accounts of personal experience (Wengraf, 2001).

In a broad sense, participants were given a temporal structure as means of expressing their narratives. In all cases, interviews involved four temporal sequences – present, past, present and future. Interviews were initiated with an open-ended question inviting the participant to speak about what ever experience came to mind in relation to their experiences with the student movement. For example, ("what stands out as your most vivid memory in the recent student campaigns?").

Firstly, I invited talk about recent experiences of the student movement. Then I asked participants about their past including early schooling, primary, high school and university. We would then return to recent times and I would ask them again to speak about their experiences with the student movements.

On a final note, interviewees were asked about their perspectives about the future in South Africa especially with regard to the youth, opportunity and education. I was interested in understanding whether participants were hopeful about their imagined futures as well as their attitudes toward the future for South Africa's youth particularly in relation to education and opportunity. Although the above structure imposed a temporal ordering on participant narratives and limited participants from producing their own sequencing, it facilitated narrative recollection and meaning-making and also seemed to aid in building trust in the interview process and their relationship with me as the interviewer.

Using this approach, the interviewee was free to share experience along a temporal spectrum according to the loose structural design of the interview as well as their own narrative flow. I have provided a list of some of the questions I used, see the interview schedule in Appendix A. Note that this was not a fixed schedule as I asked questions that felt most appropriate to the interview being conducted. Follow on questions were used to further probe participants about significant events or experiences. Examples include questions like, ("can you tell me more about..") or requests for more detail about time, place and people. The aims of the study and the researcher's interests in race, class, identity and notions of privilege informed these prompts.

3.7. Transcription

Each interview session was recorded using standard voice recording software. Video was not collected thus any visible non-verbal cues were not included as part of the analysis. I then made use of transcription services to convert audio into text. Following this, I reviewed transcripts for the purpose of quality assurance. It should be noted that transcription did not include the majority of other non-verbal cues such as changes in tone. In some cases, however, I did record pauses

that I felt were relevant to the analysis. I made use of the following transcription symbols based on very small section of Jefferson's (2004) system:

(.) A micropause.

(0.7) A timed pause – long enough to indicate time.

() Unclear section.

= no pause between one sentence and the start of the next.

3.8. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is organised around two critical theoretical dimensions in the making of narrative identities: 1) the self is constructed in relation to others and through fluid processes of identification and distancing; and 2) the storied nature of human life is constructed in and through time, teaching change and continuity. Two chapters of analysis are presented; the first focusing on relationality and the second on temporal storylines, particularly as participants' positions shift in relation to the events of the movement and as they describe themselves as shifting from ignorance to greater understanding and claiming various 'good' identities for themselves.

It should be noted that although the second chapter deals with the theme of change and temporality, that this theme is common across the dataset. Consequently, when exploring participants initial experiences of the movement in the first chapter, a foundation was also established on which to further explore the theme of change in following sections. This included ways that participants both embraced and resisted change.

I began the analysis by conducting a high level thematic analysis. The purpose of this exercise was to arrange narratives in meaningful sequence so that the narrative analysis could be presented in the context of overarching themes. In some instances, the narrative analysis shows similar stories arising out of different themes but in this way I could report from both a high level thematic point of view as well as more detailed accounts of individual narratives and what they might reflect about wider discursive elements.

To begin with I familiarized myself with the data. This entailed both listening to the recordings and reading through the transcripts, which falls in line with Braun and Clark's (2006) first step of thematic analysis. I then coded the data in order to identity potential themes. I revisited and made adjustments throughout the analysis in order to categorize and order narratives within a thematic frame. It should be noted that this involved both inductive and deductive orientation. I already had some idea of what the themes I might find as a consequence of engaging previous literature. For example, I knew that many of the narratives would reflect a movement of distancing from accountability and ignorance and therefore, I was primed to identify those themes. However, I also tried to engage the data without imposing too many ideas and thus also allowed for an inductive orientation.

After coding the data I grouped similar codes, which allowed for the naming of themes (Braun and Clark, 2006). These are reflected in each section of the analytic chapters. This this was a high level exercise and therefore I did not delve deeply in sub levels or sub themes. I then began the narrative analysis that involved exploring narratives on various levels. Firstly, I asked myself what the story was saying on its own terms. I therefore looked at the content of the narratives and provided an analysis from this perspective. I then looked for what the narrative might say about

the identity of the narrator and thus looked for unspoken elements of the text. I did this by looking at linguistic features of the text like whether narratives were based on first person perspective and noting the significance of changes in perspective.

Analysing pronoun usage also allowed for an exploration of distancing between the participant and the subject matter that she/he was speaking about. I made the assumption that when participants made use of first person pronouns and more specifically first person singular ('I'), that they were also demonstrating the most accountability in relation to their talk. When participants used first person plural statements ('we') this suggested a hedging of accountability within their identified group. Statements made in second person or further still, in third person, suggested even less accountability in relation to statements being made.

Using pronouns in this way also tended to indicate sensitive subject matter where participants exercised caution in saying the 'wrong' thing and therefore they could frame their statement as arising from a group, 'we' or make it about other people, 'they' or 'them'. Again, this showed how they were able to hedge their accountability in relation to their views on the subject matter.

In some cases, narratives also spoke to the interaction between myself as the interviewer and where this was evident I included these dynamics in the analysis. Taylor and Littleton (2006) suggest that narrators are positioned by others and also by themselves and thus there can be a kind of "identity negotiation" taking place where participants can either be contesting an identity or actively claiming one. This play between individual and her/his relationship to social discourse was deemed to be very telling not only about both the ways in which identity is mobilised in personal space but also the influences that social discourses have on identity.

The discursive approach consequently allowed for an analysis of the data with both individual and social context in mind. Talk was examined in consideration of how the wider discursive context may inform the speaker. Participants demonstrated the connection to discourse in instances when they answered questions about their own lives and in doing so also exposed their position on debates relevant to the topic. In this way, aside from sharing their personal narrative, much of the talk was also about speaking against or in favour of established ideas.

I also used Wengraff's (2005) notion of PINS (Particular incident narratives) which are incident based narratives and were used to examine more detailed accounts of particular experiences that participants spoke about. These extracts were typically longer than other extracts presented in the study. PINS also gave further insight into identity as well as cultural and performative elements of the text.

Although I have presented the above methods in sequential order it should be noted that I adopted a mixed approach, which aside from the thematic analysis did not follow any particular order. Instead, I approached the data on its own terms and used what I felt was most appropriate for the extract in question.

3.9. Ethics

South Africa has undergone and continues to undergo much change as a raced society but remains a highly unequal society with complex systems of power dynamics that serve a range of agendas. With consideration to the history of abuses of power that were largely mobilised around race, any project that focuses on race may be deemed extremely contentious. The student movement is a highly relevant example of a contemporary movement that exposes a range of inequalities in South African society.

Although white middle-class participants in a study focused on race and class inequalities may be considered, by definition, dominant rather than vulnerable, I was cautious to approach the study as an investigation into systemic issues albeit accessing these through personal narratives. The approach taken was sensitive toward subject positions as to not locate them as either "racist" or not, but rather recognise the complex and fluid nature of identity construction within a historical moment in time.

As this is a qualitative study, neither confidentiality nor anonymity could be guaranteed. However, measures were taken in order to ensure that the study strives for high levels of both. Participants' names have not been disclosed. Furthermore, informed consent (see Appendix B) included sufficient detail about research aims and methods as well as implications of taking part in the study. Squire (2008) suggests that in some cases it may be appropriate for the researcher to change or omit some of the data where it is overly revealing or exposing. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw any data that they deem to be excessively identifying. No requests of this nature were made.

3.10. Reflexivity

Analysis has been filtered through my own interpretations, which may also not be an accurate representation of what participants intended to say. In an attempt to keep abreast with my own subjectivity as a white male researcher, I made a point of integrating the subject into my everyday social life. I asked for feedback from friends, academics and family. I initiated conversations about the subject matter where the occasion allowed for it in order to get additional insight into my own worldview.

This has been a highly challenging project to undertake because in so doing I have had to confront my own experience of living in my white skin as well as my privileged past as a white person in South Africa. As such, I see myself as sometimes having over sympathised with the student movement and, more specifically, with black students to alleviate my personal guilt. In this way, I may have over focussed on searching for racist themes in the data. I wanted to find 'perpetrators' perhaps as a way of feeling that I, myself had done some good. What I came to recognise is that this tends not to be a binary space of either, 'racist or 'libertarian'. Instead this is complex terrain with varying degrees of subtleties and shades of beliefs.

3.11. Limitations

For Leininger (1994), saturation can be understood as "the full immersion into phenomena in order to know them as comprehensively as possible" (p. 107). Because of the limitation of time and resources only nine interviews could be conducted. This is not likely to cover the broad range of perspectives, stories and beliefs in relation to the subject matter. Therefore, I do not claim that saturation has been reached or even close to it. In addition, I tried to contact representatives of the #TakeWitsback movement but did not receive a response after repeated

requests. A more balanced view of white student experiences could have been provided had I been able to include student representatives from this group. This could therefore be considered in future projects.

It should be noted that this was a small section of the white student body, a body that in itself is fractured by race, class, gender and sexuality. Therefore, it is unlikely that we can generalize findings in this study to white students as a whole. However, I would argue that since, many patterns were common across the data seta and also tied in with theory, that inferences can be made to the wider group of white students.

It is also important to highlight that all participants interviewed were engaged in postgraduate study and were also from the humanities faculty. In following research, it would be interesting to widen this research to include other faculties and undergraduate students. That said, I would still argue that many of the racialised patterns that were discussed in this study go far beyond differences such as these. What varies is how other students vocalize and construct their storied identities.

4. Relationality, identification and Distancing

This first analytic chapter focuses on themes that emerged that articulate identities relationally and entail fluid processes of identification and distancing. The following sub themes will be presented in this chapter: affect, identification and belonging, ignorance, violence and student involvement. In many instances, the data indicate contradictory positionalities which suggested that in general, students did not feel confident to take decisive stands on many of the core issues represented by the movement and felt themselves to be in flux. The data show an avoidance of accountability, especially as it relates to privileges associated with whiteness.

These ambivalent orientations underscored the multiplicity of white identities in the ways that different identities are brought forth depending on the context of the talk although some identities emerge as more dominant than others (Clayton & Opotow, 2003; Hall, 2000; Parker, 2011). As Yuval-Davis (2006) has argued, identity also becomes more salient when under threat and the data affirms this in the varied ways that identity shows up in the talk.

Ndlovu (2012) underscores the importance of examining the working of intersectionality in constructing selves. The data show that multiplicity is especially relevant where accountability is foregrounded. This relates to Hall's (2000) point that competing identities are especially salient where talk is focussed on social, political, economic and ideological concerns. Accountability or the lack thereof on the part of whites as this relates to the historical past and the resultant racial inequalities, can be seen as a core ideological concern in relation to this study.

Furthermore, as identities are often contradictory, it is important to examine the ambivalences in dominant identities and their relationship to social discourse. In this way, we can say something not only about the individual but also identify broader discursive themes that inform and shape individual identities.

4.1. Affective responses / embodied experiences recollected

The participants reported experiencing a range of emotions in relation to the protests and the resultant disruption of the academic programme. They expressed first, surprise at the emergence of the FMF campaign, indicating that they had been unaware / ignorant of the level of anger and anxiety among fellow black students. The majority of participants expressed concern and anxiety, especially in relation to threatened disruptions or delays of exams. This was usually a subject that was broached early on in the interviews and suggests that participants' priorities, especially in the early phase of the movement, were focused on the continuation of the academic programmes.

Furthermore, most participants noted that their reactions changed significantly as the movement progressed and as they gained more understanding of what the protests and the movement at large represented. This highlights that students tended to position themselves as being more 'mature' and 'transformed' in comparison to how they perceived themselves at the start of the movement. In addition, emphasis on transformation also suggested that participants felt uncomfortable with earlier selves that could be cast as ignorant, or worse still, as racist.

It should be noted that many of these initial sentiments changed as the movement progressed and students became better acquainted with the ideological foundations of the student movement.

This underscored the movement of change and temporality, discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Many students in the group reported being frustrated and sometimes angry with the movement and related events. Like other participants, Gloria framed her initial experience with the protestors and the movement as frustrating.

> ja it felt like roving packs of students that it didn't = it wasn't a very nice place to be
> And then we actually turned out to not have lectures because ahm there wasn't decent access = it was dangerous to get onto campus and so then lectures were cancelled. So I think initially my response to Fees Must Fall was quite= one of frustration (Extract 1: Gloria, line 45)

From the above extract, Gloria expressed her initial experience as one characterised by frustration. However, her description of the protestors suggests a much stronger emotional tone, "felt like roving packs of students (line 45). The use of "roving packs" alludes to a description of animal like behaviour and suggests an experience of fear in the context of the protests. Her description also suggests a derogatory orientation towards the black people protesting, likening them to animals and specifically deploying the racist analogy with 'dogs'.

Furthermore, she tells us that she experienced campus as dangerous space "it was dangerous to get onto campus" (line 47). This highlights her positionality in relation to the protestors. From her point of view, she sees danger 'out there' on campus but does not appear to be aware of systemic 'dangers' that black students are exposed to on a continuous basis as has been highlighted by Picketty's (2014) notion of social and political inequality. Her description of campus being dangerous also underscores racialized divisions within the student body where

‘danger’ denotes perpetuators and victims of violence. Gloria clearly identifies as being vulnerable to perceived dangers on campus and therefore casts herself as a potential victim.

Furthermore, Gloria does not speak in first person but instead makes a statement of fact with the implication that this is common knowledge. However, those who are most likely to have perceived campus as dangerous during the protests would have been students with privilege. This perception of danger also suggests that Gloria claims a position of ‘innocence’ as she does not see herself as part of the danger. This speaks to Straker’s (2011) notion that white people tend to remove themselves as contributing to systemic injustices and in this way, tend to locate ‘danger’ outside of themselves.

Consequently, danger is therefore not applicable to herself and the broader non-protesting student group to which she belongs, nor is it applicable to the institution or the security commissioned to ‘protect’ it. It follows that perceiving danger or overestimating threat can also be seen as a tactic that creates distance between Gloria and her own sense of being accountable for what is happening in the social space around her.

Like Gloria, Kelly also spoke about frustration in relation to her initial encounters with the movement. She spoke about emotion that she witnessed amongst her classmates. Although she makes use of ‘we’ language, the extract below suggests that she does so in order to “hedge accountability”. In this way, she is able to say more without assuming much personal liability.

> A lot of anger = a lot of frustration, confusion (.) no one knew what was happening (.5) Ja, just anger I think. We studied so long to write this test and like we didn’t see the full perspective of the campaign back then (.) we were just (Extract 2: Kelly, line 19)

Unlike Gloria, and perhaps partly because of her first-person position, Kelly was more transparent about her emotional experience in response to the movement. She emphasises anger as she repeats the word in the same line "a lot of anger" and "yah, just anger I think" (line 19). Her second take on anger appears to be less self-assured as she completes her sentence with "I think" (line 19) that also suggests some doubt as to whether it was ok to name or even speak openly about anger.

In the same sentence, she also refers to her initial difficulty with the movement "a lot of frustration" (line 19). Kelly also offers a justificatory account to explain her emotion, "we didn't see the full perspective of the campaign back then" (line 20). In this way, she emphasizes a change in perspective that has taken place between "back then" (line 21) and present time. This shows how she positions herself as having acquired more knowledge in present time in contrast to a former self that did not know. From this perspective, we see Kelly establish distance between herself as she is in the present and an earlier version of herself and/ or others that were unaware. This suggests a discomfort with 'not knowing' or being ignorant which is evident in the way that she positions herself as having transformed.

In addition, the use of 'we' indicates group membership. In the context of her talk, the 'we' suggests white privileged students in general or more specifically she may have also been referring to Wits Post Graduate students which can be seen as the group to which she is most closely bound in everyday university life. Kelly's extract also speaks to the ways that she has integrated herself diachronically (McAdams, 2001) as she reflects on an earlier version of herself and her present self as changed in certain ways.

From this perspective, we can say that Kelly feels she is not the person she used to be since the backward gaze of hindsight has opened up new moral insights and ways of perceiving the world (Freeman, 2010). From the stand point of the present she is then able to recognise what she could not in lived experience due to the "autistic" like limitations of the present that Freeman (2010) speaks of. In short, Kelly is now able to see that the frustrations and anger that she and other white students experienced were unfounded and inappropriate when taking greater context into consideration. But as Freeman points out moral lateness is a consequence of not having the full picture at hand and hence Kelly's sentiment not only reflect an aversion to being cast as ignorant, but perhaps more importantly suggest that she has integrated this new perspective.

Others in the sample echoed Gloria's frustrations especially around class and exam interruptions. Joe also expressed initially feeling annoyed with exam disruptions.

> We finally got into the venue and we found out that the exam had been cancelled and it was something that we had been preparing for a while ahm so I think my initial reaction was that I was quite annoyed. (Extract 3: Joe, line 7)

Joe's annoyance alludes to an affective tone of more than just annoyance as he prefixes his annoyance with "quite" (line 7). Like Kelly, Joe also justified his annoyance with a reference to exam disruptions. This highlights his unawareness in regard to many black students that were struggling to meet fee demands. Like Kelly and Gloria, his sentiments also show that the protests came as a surprise to him, evident again by his annoyance at the disruptions they caused. Moreover, we see at this stage of the movement, that Joe has prioritised his own academic interests.

Annoyance and frustration were typical responses to the practical disruptions caused by the protests. The above justifications also suggest that even being annoyed wasn't acceptable without some kind of explanatory account to contextualise the emotion. In most cases, as has been highlighted in the above extracts, the emotional tone is downplayed, suggesting a discomfort that participants felt in relation to their emotional reaction. None in the group were able to articulate their own anger or fear clearly and few expressed their emotional experience in first person. Instead linguistic tactics like third person talk or using more neutral emotions to describe stronger emotional experiences were commonly used by participants.

As we have seen, some participants underplay these emotions by framing them as frustration or annoyance whilst others like Kelly, express them through distancing themselves from these situations or earlier versions of themselves. It is evident that anger and fear were very much a part of participants' experiences. However, some participants involved themselves not only as participants in the major marches and protests but also active supporters of the movement. This shows that difficult emotions that were especially characteristic of initial experiences, did not necessarily translate into withdrawal of support for the movement.

4.2. Personal and collective orientations

In the extract below, Gloria expressed concerns about how the movement could affect her personal life. This extract puts into perspective the vastly different positions students find themselves in. Whilst #FMF might result in increasing the cost of Gloria's vacation, students from lower socio-economic groups were struggling with meeting fee demands.

> The lack of communication =were exams actually going to happen and what was going to be included = were we going to complete lectures (.) ahm and especially because although for me it was finishing the final of Psychology and for some of my classmates it was finishing their degree (.) so I think that was quite

> hard and then we had travel plans (.) so the later exams went on would have also impacted on (.) would we actually go away and that had quite a lot of financial implication. (Extract 4: Gloria, 65 – 70)

Although Gloria mentions the potential impact the movement might have on her travel plans, it is clear that her main point of concern hinges on continuing with her academic trajectory "although for me it was finishing the final of Psychology" (line 66). What is apparent from this extract is that Gloria may not have considered how she would have reacted had her own academic progress been threatened in some way. It is clear that she is equally invested in her education, the difference is that she has not been denied access as is the case for many students from lower socio-economic groups. It is therefore clear from the above excerpt that Gloria does not perceive that short-term sacrifices may be necessary for longer term social-political goals.

Picketty (2014) outlines systemic 'dangers' in his work on social inequality and meritocracy and points out that people from privileged social backgrounds are more likely to gain entrance to universities. According to Picketty (2014), family income which is largely determined by western democratic values that perpetuate racial and class inequality determine access more so than merit. It is evident from Gloria's extract that she has bought into the idea of merit because her talk suggests that she feels entitled to her place at university.

We can therefore say that she is speaking from a "meritocratic worldview" which Picketty (2014, p. 422) points out is based on the underlying belief that inequality is a consequence of merit alone rather than "kinship and rent". Her account thus suggests that she feels deserving of being at university and has not taken seriously how others who may be equally deserving and are denied access because of their less privileged social backgrounds. Had she been more aware of

this social occurrence, she may have had a different perspective on the disruptions that she experienced.

In a similar vein, Alison also stated her priority as her studies. In the extract below, Alison uses her thesis as a reason for limited focus on the movement but also interestingly acknowledges it as such.

> mainly I had my head in my thesis so, um and that was also quite convenient as an excuse to not pay so much attention to it. (Extract 5: Alison, 30)

It is evident from the above that Alison, like Gloria also prioritises her academic work. What differentiates her from Gloria is that she acknowledges her focus on academics. In this way, she recognises that her focus on her thesis as an account of her absence is an inadequate explanation. This also underscores the ethical dimension of the movement as students like Alison wanted to be seen as in some way aligned with the principles of the movement. Presumably, if this was not the case Alison would have found it easier to be more forthcoming in her response. A response without explanation would have indicated that she was not invested in being cast in any particular way in relation to the movement.

This also raises the question as to why she was not able to provide an adequate explanation and what other motivational factors her excuse might have concealed. This thread of not being able to more accurately identify motivational factors is common across the sample. In Alison's case, she recognises that her account of non-involvement is played as a means of escaping 'duty'. However, she is still not able to provide a clearer account of why she chose not to be more engaged with the movement. It appears as if she felt she ought to have been more involved as her excuse implies that either she may not have known the real reason/ reasons herself, or she was

aware and perhaps felt uncomfortable to disclose them. Perhaps more importantly, Alison's justification also suggests that she feels guilt for not taking a more active role in the movement.

Alison's admission that her thesis was a means of avoiding the movement also speaks to the notion of whiteness as benevolent truth teller (Suchet, 2007; Straker, 2011; Vice, 2010). She plays into the white identity as 'good' in the way that she exposes herself as using an excuse to avoid engaging the movement further. However, she also does not follow this up with any other insight into why she was not more engaged with the movement. As a result, she does not have to be further accountable because she has aligned herself with benevolent white values and in doing so claims a status of nonracist. Ironically then, her openness functions as a defence against her own sense of accountability towards the protestors and the movement in general and lets her 'off the hook' so to speak.

Most of the participants echoed some version of these 'studies first' orientations, especially in the early stages of the movement. This underscores the importance participants placed on the continuation of the academic project regardless of the struggles that other black students faced. It should be noted that these dynamics had their origins in South Africa's racially unequal past. We can therefore distinguish between a period before the student movement where these social inequalities were rendered even more unseen and the period incepted by the student movement which to some degree forced privileged students to look at these dynamics within the university space and beyond.

In contrast to Gloria, Heidi shows an understanding that extends beyond her own personal needs. In the early stages of the protest she was able to balance personal needs with the greater

collective needs of the student body. This is evident in the following excerpt where she shows more sympathy for crisis facing black students than she does her fellow white students. The extract below suggests a dismissive orientation toward white students and a distancing from their concerns.

> I think it was like, this is an inconvenience I am already stressed about the exams already and this is kind of amplifying the anxiety. So I get why people were kind of frustrated by the protests but at the same time .. like your biggest worry is passing your tests. Other people are worried about being allowed into their tests because their fees haven't been paid (Extract 6: Heidi, line 155)

In the above, Heidi contextualises the personal stress caused by academic disruptions with greater social problems like affordability issues. From this perspective, two broad groups of students can be contrasted; those who can afford tuition and can't write because of disruptions caused by protestors and those who can't write or have results withheld because of fees. Heidi therefore puts the frustration described by the majority of participants in the study into perspective because where it concerns privileged students, this affect seems unfounded in relation to those students who have always faced problems with access to education.

This view was in the minority in the initial stages of participant encounters with the movement. It was more common for participants to focus on the disruptions to their personal and academic lives. It should be noted, as Biko (1987) has argued, that the motives of white 'freedom fighters' should be questioned and not simply taken at face value. Likewise, Vice (2010) has also pointed out that white activism is too often tainted with motives that outwardly appear selfless but inwardly are more about relieving guilt. This also runs parallel with the idea that white involvement in anti-racism can function as a means of limiting complicity.

This is not to say that Heidi's motives are not altruistically based, but rather that as we progress through the data it is important to explore other motivations that white students may have for aligning with the student movement. This analysis can have the effect of positioning a white person as compromised either way as their motivations need to be questioned regardless of their actions or orientations. As Vice (2010) has eloquently pointed out, the subtleties of white privilege are deeply rooted in western society and much racialised thinking and behaviour happens unknowingly.

4.3. Distancing

In the previous section, I have touched on elements of distancing in the data. This section explores this theme further and shows how students distanced themselves from the movement and 'others'. The data also show how some participants moved 'closer' to the movement and away from earlier selves, families and white students whilst others distanced themselves from the movement and the collective student community, retreating to more personal (or neoliberal) concerns.

4.3.1. Distancing from the movement

In the following extracts, Frank shows how he distanced himself from the movement for various reasons. His first justificatory account was framed in relation to his injured foot.

> My left foot was in a cast at that point (.) my left foot was in a cast so I wasn't participating in any of it = I was really observing from the outside (.) I saw a lot of photos, I saw part of the videos but I didn't participate at that time because I was actually in a cast. (Extract 7: Frank, line 64).

From the above we see that early in the interview Frank provides a clear reason for not being involved on account of a physical limitation. In the next extract, which followed shortly after the

above, Frank provides another explanation for not being more engaged with the movement. Here, he talks about events in his personal life accounting for his absence. We can see Frank's absence is reflected in both a physical sense as well as mental and emotional absence.

> I had so much else happening in my own personal life (.) that kind of the noise from outside especially from all these stories and things – it was kind of on the peripheral. I took notice of them but they weren't playing off in my forefront like they were playing for some other people (Extract 8: Frank, 188).

The above extract shows that Frank felt somewhat detached from the movement as he describes his initial experience as "noise from outside" (line 188). It is clear from the above that the protests and related events were not a priority for him as he talks about the movement as a kind of side-line experience "it was kind of on the peripheral" (line 189). Moreover, the fact that he prefixed the above statement with "kind of" (line 189) suggests some ambivalence in his positionality as his language lacks precision and therefore indicates that there may be more to this point. I will expand on this point in the following extracts.

However, as his narrative unfolds it becomes evident despite Frank's distancing from the movement, he is not able to escape being emotionally affected. What begins to emerge from Frank's account is that he does not appear to be aware of exactly why he did not engage more with the movement. Instead he provides numerous 'excuses' that do not seem to add up to a coherent explanation of his absence. In this way, his reasoning for being absent can be seen as defences that conceal other motivational factors.

Frank also provided other reasons for distancing himself from the protests and related events. In the extract below, he cites danger as an account of his absence.

> Especially with last year that they want to kind of – this radical group wanted to kill a student to kind of start – to add fire to this movement, to really get it to escalate. And that was unsettling especially since

> black friends from outside who told me this. It wasn't, I wouldn't want to say white friends or white parents or more conservative people coming to me and saying, 'hey! you are white, you know' … this racial tension – it was actually people who are black who told me consider this this might not be the safest place to be. (Extract 9: Frank, line 230)

The above extract shows some similarity with Gloria's sentiments expressed above in regard to perception of danger. Like Gloria, Frank clearly felt that being on campus whilst the protests were happening meant that he would be exposing himself to danger. In this context, Frank does not make the connection to systemic 'violence' imposed on underprivileged students as Picketty (2014) has outlined. Like Gloria, he therefore positons himself as potential victim of violence rather part of a system that perpetuates subtler and more chronic forms of violence.

It is evident from the above that Frank perceived campus as an unsafe space during the protests, especially for white people. He substantiates this claim through his reference to black friends who gave issued him a warning in this regard. The fact that Frank emphasises that black students warned him about safety risks tells us that he does not perceive that black students faced the same risk as white students.

In addition, Frank's reference to black students also positions himself as a white student with close enough relations with black students so as to be informed of potential dangers. In this way, he also orients himself as a recipient of empathy from fellow black students as presumably they cared enough to warn him about these dangers. It follows that from Frank's perspective, there is a divide in the protesting body of students, those that care about his wellbeing and those that pose a threat to it. What is confusing is that there is presumably significant overlap in that his black friends also belong to the protesting body on which he has projected his fear.

Frank also emphasised a close relationship with a fellow black student with whom he studied at University of Pretoria and who was denied access to his exams on account of outstanding fees.

> And basically, if you can't pay you are locked out of the University, you can't attend to it in any formal way. And I know there is a big need for many of these students to get that and it is – I am privileged to a point where I can go to University, I could get a grant and do it and I feel for many of those (.) specifically my best friend actually is touched because he can't continue his studies at this point (Extract 10: Frank, line 260)

What stands out in the above extract is Frank's is the fact that he recognises his privilege to an extent as one who has access to university. However, his statement suggests that he perceives his privilege as limited. This also underscore's Applebaum (2007) point that white people avoid seeing the full extent of their privilege because doing so means that they see that they are complicit as a consequence of their privilege.

This implies that he does not recognise that he is privileged to be selective about the kinds of privileges he chooses to own as he is in a position where he is not forced to confront extreme social inequalities that characterise South Africa. In addition, like Kelly and Heidi, Frank also places emphasis on his relationships with black students, "my best friend actually is touched" (line 263). From Applebaum's (2007) perspective, this can be seen as a form of defence against complicity as he positions himself as progressive through his relationships and therefore not racist.

Frank has shown us through a combination of distancing from the movement, identifying as being in danger from it and through his emphasis on relationships with particular black students, that he does not see himself as being complicit in a system that in many ways privileges him. When I asked Frank whether he would have been involved had his personal life allowed, he said

that it was unlikely that this would have changed his involvement. His final justification for non-involvement was on account of his distance from campus.

> I don't think so to be honest. Especially when there is a – there was a disconnect with the train. Even still with honors like I would know people well, I would be friendly to people, they would be friendly to me but because I would automatically go back on the train back home. I wouldn't be in the Joburg region it kind of stopped a lot of the friendships from developing. And I realized even with Eva there was like relationship, there was this proximity to relationships; if you are not close enough in so many ways you are excluded. It is not like they don't like you but that is kind of like how you are situated in relationships. So, I feel if I lived next to Wits or in the Joburg region and I drove in every day and I really had to – I made more friends and get drinks afterwards, I would probably be more invested in some of the people there. So, in many ways the train driving kind of created a remote sense of distance. I kind of divorced myself every time from the space ever since going back on the train. (Extract 11: Frank, 1049)

Not only does the above provide a spatial account of absence and distance from the movement, it also speaks to the theme of who belongs to university spaces and why. Frank indicates that his university relationships are limited because he lives in Pretoria and commutes by train every day, "if you are not close enough in so many ways you are excluded. It is not like they don't like you" (line 1050). It is worth asking who "they" is in this context and also why Frank has raised the idea of being "liked" or not without being prompted. He has also clearly stated the reason for his exclusion – the train which somewhat ironically bridges two cities but in Frank's experience has inhibited him from building meaningful relationships.

It also worth mentioning that Frank's reference to commuting on a train may mislead the reader to think that he is in a lower socio-economic group. Quite the opposite is true since the Gautrain is far more expensive than many other forms of public transport such as buses, taxis or local metro trains. Presumably as the preceding question focussed on his involvement, the "they" that he referred to can be broadly conceptualised as 'black students'. These extracts highlight a

strange mixture of distancing and caring. Frank shows concern on an individual level but, on a collective level, his talk shows distance from broader concerns represented by the movement. This points to a perceived division of who is worthy or not of access to education amongst less privileged students. These exceptions can be seen as a form of institutional racism (Maringa & Gukurume, 2017).

It is evident from these extracts, that Frank provides a range of justifications for not engaging with the student movement. As a result, no one account can be taken as a reflection of his reasoning. Taken together they suggest that he may not have clearly known his primary motivation for not being involved. As Yuval-Davis (2006) points out, there are various ways that people can belong and, importantly, we need to understand belonging as a dynamic process. This is evident in Frank's account which indicates that his sense of belonging is undergoing change. Yuval-Davis (2006) maintains that people feel belonging in relation to social locations, their own individual identifications with groups and finally, belonging in relationship to ethical and political value systems.

Frank's account suggests that his belonging in all of these areas has been both disrupted and also affirmed. In relation to Frank's sense of belonging to the university, the extract suggests that he feels both secure in his belonging and also in some ways excluded from the student community. In terms of his security, it is evident that in terms of Yuval-Davis's (2006) notion of the social and political aspects of belonging, that Frank feels secure in his sense of belonging because he is able to choose to disconnect from the university at his discretion "I kind of divorced myself every time from the space ever since going back" (line 1058).

This stands in stark contrast for the students from less privileged backgrounds for whom belonging is a continual fight rather than a right. Frank does not show any awareness about his privilege to separate and disconnect to the university at will. From this view, the university in an institutional sense can still be seen as 'owned' by white students even though they spend less time on campus than black students. Conversely, the above extract also suggests that Frank feels excluded from the university from a communal perspective, "if you are not close enough in so many ways you are excluded" (line, 1053). This highlights a disrupted sense of belonging on an individual and emotional level. His justification rests on the fact that he lives far away. However, geographical distance from the university does not satisfactorily explain being excluded because many other students also travel significant distances and presumably don't feel excluded in the same way.

It is ironic that he feels excluded from the university community which has historically benefited his social positioning. The extract suggests that Frank feels somewhat displaced from university which highlights a struggle of belonging and raises the question of who then belongs within the context of the university. This may mean that for the first time, white student's belonging has been unsettled and therefore they share something in common with black students for whom this has been the norm. Consequently, this may also indicate that at present no one belongs to the 'university' which could present an opportunity for rethinking more equitable ways that future students can find their sense of belonging.

4.3.2. Distancing from ignorant 'other' whites

The following extracts speak to the ways that participants articulated their distance and difference from white ignorance as represented by fellow students, staff and even earlier versions of themselves. In the extract below, Heidi distances herself from fellow white students that she perceives as having overreacted about the 'dangers' of the protests.

> Everyone else is calling their moms and they are just, 'oh mom, we are trapped on campus' and 'the protestors are coming' and it just seemed so ridiculous. All that huff about people who actually attend your campus, they are just like you. They're just (.) yeah I don't know, I thought it was very silly and that panic I was like whatever, I'll just sit and then they opened a back gate and sort of smuggled everybody out the service entrance (Extract 12, Heidi, line 78)

In the above excerpt Heidi's remarks are made in a tone of mockery towards the students that she perceives as overreacting to the oncoming protestors (see line 78). Furthermore, she frames this reaction as "ridiculous" (line 79) and "silly" (line 80). In contrast, she describes her own attitude as imperturbable "I was like whatever, I'll just sit" (line 81). In this way, Heidi distances herself from these actions and also this group of students. Furthermore, in doing so she positions herself as more progressive then fellow white students as she contrasts herself as one, who presumably, did not feel the need to call her mother.

Her extract also leaves us with the sense that students on her campus perceived the oncoming protests as if "barbarians" were en route to campus. This runs a parallel with Gloria's descriptions of the protestors as "roving packs" (see extract 1). The fear stirred up seems out of place when considering that the protesting body was made up of other students. However, it is important to note that the majority of protestors were black students and therefore we can deduce that fears towards protestors were racially motivated. References to needing to call mothers also

points to the fragility and vulnerability of privileged students and suggests childlike mentalities amongst this group.

Heidi's account may also be telling of how she wants to be seen as she places importance on herself as one who was not as affected as others were. This may play into interactive elements of the interview as she may have also been vocalising a position that she thought that I as the interviewer would perceive as favourable. Heidi and Gloria's accounts appear to be polar opposite but still share commonality in their descriptions of panic and fear. For Gloria, fear is framed as 'frustration' whilst Heidi's reaction is aimed at her fellow students on campus instead of the protesting body of students. Also, unlike the majority of the participants, Heidi did not express frustration at exam disruptions. She appeared to quickly align with the movement without much concern for any personal cost on account of academic disruptions.

James was the only other participant who oriented in this way. Both expressed being affected and irritated by their privileged peers more than by the protestors. James explicitly situates himself as progressive in relation to other white students.

> I don't mean to generalize and completely condemn, but we had a lot of white students at the back of the protests walking around, picking up trash and even though it's good intention, it's like the whole like sort of hippy ethic of environmental and that causes like a lot of aggression and frustration from sort of more radical backgrounds, because it seems like priorities are not in check, just in South Africa generally, the [inaudible] like people will be more concerned with rhinos or with SPCA's lost dogs than with actual people, so that had an effect on me (Extract 13, James, line 51).

In the excerpt above, he begins with a disclaimer that he does not want to judge others and then follows up by doing the opposite and criticising the privileged white body of students.

In this way he positions these students as ignorant in relation to himself as having greater insight. He also protects himself from being perceived as unreasonable when what follows is judgemental and accusatory "it's like the whole like sort of hippy ethic" (line 53). The text shows how James distances himself from ignorance that he perceives as embodied by the white protestors.

Interestingly, James makes a comparison between the animals and black protestors that can be contrasted with Gloria's animal like description of the protestors (see extract 1). James' extract suggests that for white student's animals are in some way more important than the needs of black people. The extract highlights a psychological boundary between himself and the white privileged students. As a result, it appears as his scope of justice shows greater inclusivity for black students and less so for white counterparts.

This extracts some similarity with Heidi's experience although James shows greater emotional intensity. Where Heidi perceives other privileged students as "silly" and where her descriptions allude to a mockery towards the absurdity of the reaction from white students; James use of words like "condemn" invoke a more critical account. Both extracts show that Heidi and James position themselves as 'knowing' whilst positioning other white students as ignorant.

4.4. Meritocratic extremism

Following on from the above section in relation to distancing from social accountability, Picketty's (2014) provides insight into why white people choose to ignore inequality. One explanation is that they do so because they have bought into the idea that their achievements have been hard earned and therefore that they deserve the privileges that they have.

The following extract underscores Picketty's (2014) notion of "meritocratic extremism" which rewards certain people on the appearance of merit whilst in reality these rewards are more closely linked with social background. Below Heidi describes views that she heard from fellow students at University of Pretoria.

> People were saying things at the time like, 'if you can't afford to go to University then you shouldn't go' and I just hate that kind of mentality, I hate it (Extract 34: Heidi, line 345).

Her reference to "people" suggests white privileged students and reveals attitudes that blatantly disregard any notion of fair and equal access to university. Meritocracy can be seen as the cover that justifies these kinds of statements as a means of distinguishing who is deserving of university access whilst concealing realities that exclude people on account of their race and / or class. Heidi's view, as can be seen in the following extract, is that students at the protests were generally not oriented in this way.

> People wouldn't say stuff like that at the marches, I think if you are at the marches you kind of 'get it'. Even if you only get it a little bit, I think you get it at least enough to know that there is an issue and it's important" (Exract 35: Heidi, line 358)

This suggests that white students that took part in the marches were more aware of inequality on the whole in comparison to those that were not involved.

4.5. 'Knowing' and 'not-knowing'

Following a question where I asked Frank whether there were any messages that were disturbing for him, he said that he found it especially disconcerting to see some white students wear t-shirts with the words "Fuck whites" written on them. It is interesting to note that in addition to black students who wore these Tshirts, a few white students joined them and James happened to be one

of them. In this way, we can contrast opposing perspectives between James and Frank and in doing so underscore the multiplicity of white identity (Hall 2000).

In the extract below Frank speaks about his discomfort about this.

> Especially like the 'Fuck whites' that was on some shirts and some walls that popped up. Because in many ways that was kind of the start of what I feared when the Great Assembly started last year when they held it = I actually watched the live version from home when Wits pulled out of it but the students still had it from all the organizations and I realized at the heart of it it is a matter of racism more so than about higher education = fixing higher education (.) that was not such a big shock but it was such a discomforting feeling that was there for months and it was really affirmed by those events that day. (Extract 21: Frank, 130)

James expresses a version of whiteness that in essence attempts to undercut itself by wearing clothing with this statement. Frank on the other hand shows a deep discomfort with this statement being represented by other white students. He tells us that his discomfort that he says "was there for months" (line 135) was more about his realisation of how racialized the core concerns of the movement were instead of, in his words "fixing higher education" (line 135). Moreover, he positions himself as knowing this was the case "that was not such a big shock" (line 135) but still describes being shocked by it. This stands out as contradictory statement because if it were true that Frank did know this as a race issue then presumably he would not have experienced prolonged shock as he described.

Furthermore, the fact that he tells us that his discomfort lasted for months suggests that this may be understood as a confrontation with his own ignorance which speaks to Steyn's (2011) theory of ignorance as an indication of underlying feelings of shame and guilt. However, Frank does not say anything more about the discomfort he feels nor does he link it with any awareness of his

own racial privilege. He merely states that he is uncomfortable with what he perceives as a contradictory student movement.

His statement therefore underscores the essence of the ignorance contract (Steyn, 2011) in the way that white people agree to 'forget' that they know more than they think they do. From this perspective, Frank shows that he is aware that the movement was fundamentally concerned with race and inequality but did not wish to acknowledge it as such. His talk suggests that he is disappointed that this is the case as if South Africa should be 'past this by now'. This speaks to Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) point that whites born after the democratic transition tend to distance themselves from past injustices and tend to be impatient about racial transformation. Consequently, Frank's discomfort can be framed as exposing his knowingness about racial issues whilst also looking elsewhere to justify the status quo. It follows that Frank not only has distanced himself from the movement but also from any sense of accountability.

4.6. Identification and belonging

Participants' descriptions of their involvement in the movement in many cases suggested experiences of underlying guilt for not being more engaged. This was evident in the sense that when students spoke about their non-involvement, it was usually accompanied by some form of explanatory account. Justifications pointed to performative aspects of the interview as it is likely that participants would have wanted to be seen as "good" citizens, aligned with non-racism and social justice.

One obvious account for non-involvement is that the issues driving the student movement did not directly affect the white corpus of students as they did black students in lower socio-economic

groups. Consequently, this wasn't a fight that white students in general needed to take up because most could afford access to higher education**.**

In the extract below, Gloria shows no supporting action for her stated support for the movement.

> I didn't march so I wasn't part of that movement = it's not part of who I am= I don't like to march, ahm so I wasn't part of that energy but I think from what I have gathered from others was there was a feeling of solidarity in that and fighting for a good movement so I definitely supported the cause. (Extract 14: Gloria, line 144).

Gloria then uses her personality as a justificatory action "it's not part of who I am" and finally again summarises her position as one who was not "part of that energy". She therefore makes political action about personality by making being involved or not about the kind of person she is, a matter of personal taste like enjoying sports or not. Hall's (2000) ideas on identity as a temporary attachment to subject positions to which we are called into is relevant here. We might ask what discourses are in circulation around whiteness that produces a subject that rejects protesting on the grounds of "personality". Gloria has already referred to protestors as "roving packs" (see extract 1). It follows that she is not referring to protesting per se but a certain quality of protesting to which she does not relate.

Using Hall's (2000) ideas of identity construction, we can postulate that when Gloria says "it's not part of who I am" (line 144), she is also locating this behaviour within the identity of others for whom this behaviour does apply. She is therefore able to define herself in relation to an 'other'. This brings us to the question of 'the other' against whom she is able to claim her identity (Hall, 2000; Parker, 2014). Gloria's inference of the Other for whom protesting is a part of who they are can be seen as racially constructed and also ties into Butler's (1990) theory of

performativity. In the context of racial performativity, there are certain ways that black bodies are expected to behave. Gloria's account underscores what she views as appropriate for the black other – in this case protesting in ways that her talk suggests is 'animal like' and sub-human.

It follows that Gloria defines herself as subscribing to 'normal' behaviour and the protestors or black other as barbaric. In this way, she does not show an awareness of whiteness as 'barbaric' in its oppressive qualities. Protesting action characteristic of #FMF from this point of view can be seen as lower than or not proper behaviour as far as white middle class norms are concerned. Moreover, these notions of 'the other' are rooted in discourse and through consistent exposure, they are experienced as 'true' and affirmed through the body and language (Hook, 2001; Parker, 2014). It follows that Gloria's account also gives us a glimpse into social discourse that constructs the black subject in these ways. From this perspective Gloria's personal perspective is also reflective of a collective position.

Moreover, her claim of not being involved on account of her personality can also be understood as not wanting to be exposed to elements that may threaten her sense of identity. This suggests that Gloria is invested in a version of whiteness that can be defined in terms of normativity. In this way, she has cast behaviour that she views as 'abnormal' as part of the identity of the black other. This notion is affirmed by Hall (2000), who points out that, definitions such as these are only possible because they originate as an antidote to undesired characteristics in others. In this case, white identity can be cast in 'non-barbaric' terms only because the black other can be perceived as 'barbaric'. These labels could quite as easily be replaced with 'normal' and 'abnormal'.

We can also explore Gloria's identity claims in relation to Clayton and Opotow's (2003) notion of the 'scope of justice' as it is clear that she has drawn a psychological boundary between herself and the protestors. Again, this is evident in her condemning description of the group. This extract therefore underscores racial and class markers because the absent other in this case in which she is able to make the claim of 'not me' are the black students who made up the majority of the movement.

Furthermore, as Picketty (2014) has argued, power and politics are on the side of whiteness rendering the need for protesting action for their rights unnecessary. Here we find a commonality between the fallists and privileged students in that both groups share a desire for access to higher education and the continued opportunities that education affords. The important difference is that this is an unequivocal 'right' for privileged students because access is granted on 'merit' and the ability to pay fees alone.

It is clear that in the context of South African education, meritocracy is an illusion that conceals extreme social injustices and allows privileged white students the luxury of 'choice' as it concerns their involvement in the movement. However, it is also evident that the movement has challenged the privileged group to look at these inequalities to a degree that has not happened in the past. When I asked Kelly if she was involved in the protests, she said the following:

> No, I wanted to be. That is the thing like so the only bit that I had seen was from that day and apart from that I was just watching from social media you know. That was like a conflict with myself. I wanted to participate but I felt like I didn't have the right to (.) you know like I couldn't understand (.) so who am I to protest it sounds weird. (Extract 15: Kelly, line 408)

In a way that seems ostensibly similar to Gloria's position, Kelly also makes reference to her personal identity in accounting for her non-involvement, "who am I to protest?" (line 411). However, where Gloria defines herself in terms of not being a protestor, Kelly conversely alludes to a quality of lack in her identity that prevents her from being more involved. Her account is therefore quite different to Gloria although both refer to "identity" as a reason for non-involvement. Kelly said she wanted to be involved more "I wanted to participate" (line 410) and also reported feeling conflicted about being involved, "that was like a conflict with myself" (line 409).

This highlights her ambivalence on the subject which makes it possible for her to present herself as aligned with non-racism and social justice whilst not showing any outward active support in this regard. She articulates the conflict that she experiences in relation to the movement as the wish to be a part of the movement but, at the same time, not feeling like she has the right to be an active participant because of who she is, "I felt like I didn't have the right to" (line 410). This suggests that Kelly did not experience herself as belonging to the black student community and experienced herself more as an "outsider". This is evident in her lack of investment in pressing social issues.

It also worth noting Kelly's reference to social media. Here she shows that to some extent she does engage with the movement but in the context of social media she does so on her own terms and limits her risk of exposure. From this point of view, online activism like signing petitions and other online forums can be seen as representing a kind of ambivalent middle ground of being 'in' and also 'not in', a form of elite 'activism' that does not require too much of one.

In the following extract Kelly spoke explicitly about race.

> I mean I knew what they were representing but I have never been there. So it was like how do I relate to that (.) And I really did want to get involved but I just felt that I would be you know (.) criticized or looked down upon. Because there weren't a lot of white people involved in the protests = or not that I saw. (Extract 16, Kelly, line 445)

In the above extract, Kelly provides an account of exclusion and gives a sense of why she might not have felt like she had the right, "there weren't a lot of white people involved" (line 447). In this way, she infers blackness as the quality that would give her the right to be involved and shows that she perceives her whiteness as a barrier to entry. In contrast to Gloria, Kelly's 'scope of justice' (Clayton and Opotow, 2003), appears to include black students because of her desire to belong in the context of the protestors.

Gloria, on the other hand seems to have done the reverse by distancing herself from the protesting group on account of her derogatory framing of the protestors . From this perspective, we can get a sense of the broader group values that might shape her perception of protesting students. "Group values" (Clayton and Opotow, 2003), then also inform Gloria about her psychological boundary for justice and it is clear that in doing so she also excludes this group as deserving of the same rights and privileges as those of her own.

Mark also spoke on the point of feeling excluded from the movement on account of his whiteness.

> And I think that as far as I understand that support is still there in sentiment but maybe not so much in action because there is feeling of exclusivity call it (.) to the movement now which white students I think feel alienated from (.) to make it more personal from my own perspective ahm (.) I had a cousin there 2 years ago, who was very involved with Fees Must Fall ahm and Rhodes Must Fall ahm and I had a lot of sympathy for her but when I was at UCT last year, the feeling that I got to be completely honest was that (.)

> ahm it was not as open to white students ahm so I guess the emotional response was something like (.) ah (.) sort of a indifference towards the movement (.) there is a respect but there is also intimidation around it you know. It is quite niche now I think. As far as I understand it at least yah, I don't know if that gives you a sort of picture of my experiences (Extract 17: Mark, line 12)

Here, Mark begins by commenting on his perception of the exclusivity of the movement. This stands out as a contradictory description since it implies that the movement would have the interests of a select few at heart. Clearly, it would be inaccurate to define the student movement in this way because it is representative of the majority of black student body. His statement therefore suggests that perhaps the movement itself was not exclusive in the way that he might have imagined but rather that he himself, as a white student, felt excluded. This is evident in the statement where he claims that white students in general "feel alienated". This can be seen in Yuval-Davis's (2006) terms as the inverse of belonging.

He then speaks clearly in first person as we see him express his own position on who he perceives was welcome in the context of #FMF, "the feeling that I got to be completely honest was that (.) ahm it was not as open to white students". He then also comments on his cousin's involvement in the movement and expresses sympathy for her on account of being white and active. Mark's sentiments clearly highlight a disconnect from his sense of belonging to the student community.

His extracts alludes to #FMF not being open to white students and given that the movement is largely representative of the majority of the student body, that he perceives himself as a white student to be excluded and therefore with a disrupted sense of belonging. It should be noted that he does not acknowledge his privilege in having a choice not to join the movement and from this

perspective one could say that his sentiment also provides him with a justification for avoiding engaging his privilege as a white person. However, the positionality that Mark occupies can also be interpreted in Vice's (2010) terms where white silence can be seen as reflecting an ethical position.

In contrast to Mark's account of exclusion, Joe reported an experience he had where all students were included through song.

> Joe: It was just a collection of students who had been = they held a vigil outside the great Hall and I found that to be very moving (.)
>
> Joe: Uhm just because it was just a stark contrast to how the movement have been portrayed in the media = as being quite a violent, aggressive confrontational movement but here it was the people who had literally been photographed in the front page of the news papers just singing together ahm (.) ya that was quite a moving experience (.) and I think that was quite a moving experience
>
> Interviewer: What did that look like (.) when you say they were singing together?
>
> Joe: Uhm (.) so it was: dark = it was at night ahm there must have been about 25-30 people in the Great Hall steps lined up with candles ahm (.) trying to remember what the song was = it was "Senzeni na" ahm and it was one of the first times where I think everyone who was there actually felt included in it even though people weren't actually involved in the singing = it was like ya (Extract 18: Joe, line 105)

The above account shows that perceptions of white exclusion from the movement were not always accurate. Here Joe describes a meeting where students experienced a sense of belonging through song that he found to be "quite a moving experience" (line 108). It should be noted that the song to which Jo refers to, "Senzeni na", is a South African anti-apartheid song but, perhaps significantly, it is sorrowful rather than an aggressive song.

It is interesting to note that those that avoided the movement, to some extent also avoided engaging their whiteness in the context of #FMF, rendering themselves even more alienated.

From this view, belonging in the context of changing social realties, means that white students need to engage their privileged realities. Those that did this and faced discomfort, as Joe described, also allowed for the possibility of being included in new ways and experiencing new Others, as Joe experienced in his account above.

From this point of view, it is clear, as Yuival-Davis (2006) has suggested that identity and belonging is exposed when under threat. The above extract shows that Joe's whiteness has been called out and as a result his belonging to the student group has been challenged in fundamental ways. We see him persevere through the 'threat' and as a result, he avoids positioning himself in an 'out group', (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The following chapter attempts to track and contextualise the identity positions that students currently align with. In this way, we can revisit the origin of these identity positions as arising from family and cultural value systems. What transpires is how participants both contested and also aligned with cultural and family norms. This provides some context for situations like Joe described above where he is willing to risk exposing his raced identity within a predominantly black group.

5. Temporality and change

This chapter focusses on significant moments in participants lives both during the protests and in earlier periods of their lives. I looked for narratives that underscored moments of significance which instigated change in participants outlooks towards race and inequality. I also included stories that stood out as significant in the way that they revealed more about the white psyche in contemporary South Africa.

The first section deals with early life with a focus on childhood, home and school. It should be noted that there is some overlap with the previous chapter, especially in this first section in that the theme of relationality is also salient in these narratives. They are been included in this chapter because, aside from the focus on change, narratives are presented in a temporal order with the aim of tracing life trajectories of participants.

This chapter is therefore broadly grouped across time, beginning with narratives and recollections from early life, followed by the period of university and finally future perspectives. An important thread in relation to change and temporality are moments of recognition of ignorance, complicity and privilege. This chapter therefore focusses on stories that participants chose to tell that reflect their becoming more aware of their white identities.

The closing section deals with how participants perceive future realities for themselves, higher education and broadly speaking, for South African youth in general. Views in this regard varied significantly with some participants outlining negative futures and others expressing hope and possibility in the future.

5.1. Childhood, school and home

This section gives a glimpse into the upbringing of some of the participants. These extracts can be seen as broadly representing experiences of white people growing up in post-apartheid South Africa. The exception to this was Gloria who grew up during apartheid era. The section then also contextualises the experiences of white students in relation to the student movement through tracing the origins of white identity. Significance is created through their choices of which narratives they recollected in the context of their current identities.

What transpires as a common thread across the data is that participants typically grew up in homes with live-in nannies who fulfilled both cleaning and child-rearing duties in the white home. One exception to this was Frank who came from a very conservative Afrikaans home and reported not having a nanny at any point during his childhood. He did acknowledge this as a rare occurrence in the context of his community and societal norms. Other than this all participants reported having been exposed to the dynamic of 'black help' under white authority in the context of home.

It is noteworthy that participants were mostly "born-free" whites and therefore one might expect the relationship between the white home and the black domestic worker to have changed more than the participant stories suggest (Shefer, 2012). This typically meant that white children learned in Steyn's (2011, p. 13) terms "what not to know" and "what not to notice". Steyn points out that children are socialised into the politics of the time and are essentially raised into a state of racial ignorance about their social standing as white citizens. This gives us some insight into social challenges that white people face in their adulthood as a result of their racialised

childhoods. Glimpses into participant childhoods therefore tell us something about the origin and formation of the white identity in the context of South Africa.

What is clear in the data is that is that young white identities are constructed in contrast to the 'black other' and can be defined in terms of superiority in relation to 'them'. Fanon (1967) speaks to this point as he describes the black child as "abnormal" in the context of a white world. The data shows early accounts of learnt 'othering' in the inferior ways that nannies were treated in the white home that underscores white 'normality' and black 'abnormality'. Furthermore, Hall (2009, p. 16) makes the point that the Other is "not out there, but in here. It is not outside, but inside". It follows that white people have this representation of Other as inferior to address in themselves if they are to transcend their raced identities.

5.1.1. Nannies as cleaners, helpers and 'mothers'

In her research about the role of domestic workers in South Africa, Ally (2011) found that domestic service "is more than a material relation of labour – it is also an affective, psychic and sensory condition" (p. 4). In the extract that follows, Heidi shows the varying roles her 'nanny' took in the home. What is striking about her case is that she comes from a conservative Afrikaans background where the psychological boundary between black and white people was clearly defined. In the context of her family's scope of justice (Clayton and Opotow, 2003), black people were not included in their "moral community" nor were they considered deserving or needing of the same resources that the family enjoyed.

However, whilst her nanny was treated in inferior ways she was also entrusted with caring for the children. This underscores the strange paradox of nanny as 'mother' and also as inferior Other. This story underscores common themes for white children growing up in South Africa.

> My parents are both incredibly busy people especially when we were young, they just started a business so they were not very...they weren't home very often so they were often quite far away and so we were mostly raised by our Nanny who is a black woman and with her own child who she kind of raised along with us. So we were three sisters, kind of just living at home, this was before my brother were born. And I think for a long time we spent way more time with her than we did with our parents and I think it's difficult...to then identify with her as a mother figure but also dismiss all other black people. (Extract 19: Heidi, 1270)

In the above, Heidi talks about the challenge of having a black mother figure within a culture that devalues black people, "I think it's difficult...to then identify with her as a mother figure but also dismiss all other black people" (line 1273). This extract gives us insight into the psyche of the young white child growing up in post-apartheid South Africa. She is consistently exposed to irreconcilable ways of understanding race, where on the one hand she is exposed to cultural values that degrade black people and on the other, is provided with a black 'surrogate mother'.

Steyn (2011) makes the point, that as a result of the apartheid system, white children developed little insight into the worlds of black people outside of their privileged homes. Heidi's extract highlights that she knew her nanny only in the context of her own home. She knows that her nanny had a child of her own only because the child was raised alongside her family, "with her own child who she kind of raised along with us" (line 1273). She does not say anything more about this child which suggests that she did not form a meaningful relationship with him/ her.

Furthermore, her reference to "kind of raised" implies that the child was not fully part of their family system and did not benefit from the same resources. We are left with the sense that her

nanny's child was half-heartedly raised in comparison to herself and her siblings. This following extract illustrates this point as Heidi reflects back at a younger self that was out of touch with her nanny's experience of living in her home.

> And then you kind start seeing things from different perspectives so to me she was important as a mother figure and as somebody who raised me and somebody really did a lot of important stuff for me. But then you start to realise but what did take away from her. She had to live with us. She couldn't...she didn't live in her own house which she had but she couldn't live there. She couldn't raise her own daughter at one stage because she sent her daughter to school. And like the kind of sacrifices that she'd had to make for me, who is not her daughter and that was...obviously I think loves us a lot, but it's to make money at the end of the day. (Extract 20: Heidi, 1270)

It is evident in Heidi's extract that the interplay between white children and their 'maids' is still very relevant in post-apartheid South Africa. Through hindsight (Freeman, 1993) Heidi is able to see a different view of her nanny's life. This underscores Steyn's (2011) point that as a child she was taught "what not to know" but with the benefit of time, Heidi is able to see the costs that her nanny accrued, "you start to realise but what did take away from her". Here we also see Heidi describe a significant change between a former self and her current self that, through the acquisition of new perspectives in time.

Freeman (2010) has compared lived experience with a kind of "autistic lens" (see theory chapter too) that results from egocentrism. Hindsight allows a more expansive view of the past as a result of having outcomes at hand. It is only through this view that Heidi is able to reflect back on racial dynamics that were present in her childhood but absent from her view as she was taught not to notice these racial interplays. With the benefit of hindsight, she is able to distance herself from her earlier self, integrating across differing roles, diachronically (McAdams, 2001).

This also indicates that Heidi's scope of justice (Clayton and Opotow, 2003), has undergone significant change as she now sees her nanny, back then, as deserving of better life or even further, of a quality of life that she and her siblings enjoyed. Heidi also shows that she has acquired significant understanding of her nanny's social and family positioning as she recognises that she did care for or "love" herself and her siblings but that mostly she was economically motivated. She shows that she understands that the cost to her nanny was that she was not able to fully mother her own child.

The next extract illustrates a conversation that Heidi had with a fellow teacher (while studying, Heidi is a part-time teacher) about 'black help' It is clear that her colleague has not found the same understanding as she has.

> I have a conversation with a lady at my school who is about to have a child, and then she was saying that sending her kids to crèche is too expensive, she's just going to have a live-in Nanny and it's so cheap, it's just costs like R2500.00. And that's really so little amount of money for a person to live on and then they have to like live in a single room in your back garden and like not eat at your dinner table. (Extract 21: Heidi, 1270)

The extract highlights white values that understand black people as inferior and not deserving of the same standards that white people are accustomed to (Clayton & Opotow, 2003). It should be stressed that this conversation happened in recent time and therefore highlights modern day conceptions about what white people think are acceptable living conditions for black nannies, "single room in your back garden and like not eat at your dinner table" (line 1272).

This clearly illustrates how black people can easily be excluded from a white person's moral community without awareness about the racial dynamics at play. It is easy for Heidi's colleague to hire help for her child and not accord her the same rights and privileges that would be

expected for a white person. Comparing these experiences raises the question why Heidi made use of hindsight lens to gain new insight into a former self and why her colleague hadn't. In other words, what might have inspired Heidi to change. To address this question, we turn to another significant moment in Heidi's life.

5.1.2. Implicated through family

Towards the end of the interview with Heidi, she told me that her great grandfather was president of South Africa for a short term. In the extract below we see how her pride is disrupted by the reaction of her black friends and the realisation that her grandfather was directly complicit in the apartheid system.

> I mentioned this fact because we had, we had a history assignment where we have to dig into our own history and kind of find out something interesting, and this was my fact. I am related to a president of the country and I had been completely excited about it I thought it was really cool and um all my black friends were kind of like 'okay so your grandfather was part of apartheid then'. And it was such a shock because I have never considered it. It was never...it was never even an issue to me, until I realised that obviously he must have been and... (Extract 22: Heidi, line 1190)

Here Heidi describes a significant moment at high school where she is confronted with conflicting realities about her grandfather. Her black friends bring about a change in her perception by making a connection with her grandfather's values, "all my black friends were kind of like okay so your grandfather was part of apartheid then" (line 1192). In this way, she is forced to acknowledge her great-grandfather as president and complicit in apartheid regime.

Furthermore, she talks about the shock of this realisation as she had not made the connection up until this point, "it was such a shock because I have never considered it" (line 1193). This can be conceived as 'seeing of the light' moment in Augustine's terms (Freeman, 1998), as a situation

that arose in her social surrounding that challenged her in fundamental ways. To some degree, successive experiences of being confronted by the Other, might explain Heidi's transformation from a child who was taught 'not to notice' her nanny as person in her own right into an adult that chose to integrate new ways of 'being' and 'seeing' in white skin, thus alleviating some of the 'autism' of the past (Freeman, 2010).

From this perspective, we could say that being exposed to different ways of thinking about the world, challenges existing notions and therefore also opens up hindsight's window to make apparent in present time what was not apparent in past experience. We might then say that these reflections on former selves are essential for white people to make racism personal. In this way, externalising racism in the ways that Hytten and Warren (2003) have outlined can be avoided and reflection can begin with oneself.

5.1.3. Parents

In some instances, participants were able to resist their parents' worldviews and authority and other cases, participants succumbed to parental authority. Sometimes student views were in sync with those of their parents and in other cases diametrically opposed. Broadly speaking, students either rebelled against or conformed to their parents' paradigms. In terms of home, most of the participants reported having enjoyed stable childhoods in loving and supportive homes. For example, Joe says of his parents:

> I think they were very supportive (.) Uhm (2) I guess they were quite strong people sometimes overly involved and too anxious but very compassionate so I think I was lucky in terms of that and having difficulties in those times to actually have that support network = It was almost unquestionable and obviously there were times where I also felt questioned ahm (Extract 23: Joe, line 243)

Similarly, Gloria also recounts her parents as being very supportive and her childhood as stable and loving.

> My family was very stable= my parents think they are normal= they discovering they are not = so my parents don't fight, they kind of didn't go out a lot = their whole world revolved around working hard and providing for their kid = we would go to the sea once a year and so maybe if we were lucky we would go overseas = so it was a very nice time you know = like life was about going to school doing your work doing well, playing your sport coming home doing your homework ahm seeing family a little bit and very stable and very non eventful to be fair. I would say non-eventful compared to the rest of my life (Extract 24: Gloria, line 341)

It is interesting that Gloria casts her childhood as "normal" and her extracts suggests that she did not lack for anything. All her schooling needs appear to be more than fulfilled and she was able to visit other countries and this is presented as ordinary, and her life as "very non-eventful to be fair" (line 346). From a black child's perspective, Gloria's upbringing would presumably be seen as extra-ordinary and luxurious. This also speaks to Burman's (2008) notion of the normativity of the nuclear family. Gloria does not show any awareness that her experience of family was very atypical when taking into consideration the experiences of the majority of South African citizens.

In the following extract, Alison takes the idea of home and belonging even further as she casts her family in ideal terms.

> Um, I have a lovely family, I wish more families could be like my family. We are very open, we are very supportive, we argue like cats and dog, me and my Dad particularly, but we even when we were little, my brother and I, we were never told to shush. We were never told to go play or if we had something to say we were heard. We were allowed to be involved in conversations that we probably at that age, had no idea what we were saying but we were involved. (Extract 25: Alison, line 500)

The above illustrates again a picture of a loving and stable family home. Alison describes her home as model home, "I wish more families could be like my family" (line 500). She emphasises the freedom that she enjoyed to speak and be heard, "we were never told to shush" (line 501). This also underscores early experiences of feeling included in her family system, "We were allowed to be involved in conversations that we probably at that age, had no idea what we were saying but we were involved, (line 503). She leaves us with an impression suggesting competitiveness - as if her family is 'best'.

Although James, like other participants, came from a relatively privileged home, he chose to speak more about his mother's background from poorer working-class family.

> My mom is like the stereotypical kind of conservative Afrikaans woman you know, also coming from a poor family. The area they come from is also in Germiston, it's called [inaudible], I call it like apartheid RDP, I don't know whether you are aware during apartheid, they created these housing settlements for like poor whites, okay it was way bigger than the ones they created for black people, she came from that sort of background. My father he was more liberal, he was a liberal White. (Extract 26: Mark, line 272)

In the above, we see James draw a comparison with his mother's socio-economic background and black people living under apartheid, "during apartheid, they created these housing settlements for like poor whites" (line 274). In doing so, he also positions himself as having something in common with #FMF students as he emphasises his family origins also as poor. This serves to deracialise his position.

Like James, Frank also emphasised his family's origins in terms of poverty.

> So, both my parents come from very meagre backgrounds. So, very poor. My mother actually came from Hazyview side of the world away from the farm country. Very poor side from there. My granddad on my mother's side actually worked on mine fields for a very long time. So, nothing amazing. (Extract 27, Frank, line 544)

Although Frank, James and Alison described their family origins in lower-class terms, they still had access to everything they needed and had the benefit of quality education. This section then underscores that all participants, regardless of their families' social standing came from privileged backgrounds by virtue of their race. Consequently, the normativity of white privilege (Applebaum, 2007; Suchet, 2007; Vice, 2010) is made clear in the ways that participants speak about their 'privileged' upbringings in very casual ways with little awareness about how extra ordinary these upbringings would have been for many black children. As Moon (1999) maintains, this is the voice of privilege and it is privileged social categories such as these that that affords participants to speak in these ways.

Furthermore, Burman (2008) speaks to these themes in the above extracts, as she describes the cemented western roles of the nuclear family and that 'normal' is seen in a nostalgic sense of reflecting back on a happy childhood with conventional parental roles. As is evident, most participants have remembered their childhoods in this way. Moreover, Burman (2008) points out that although this family model is considered normal in western context, it is far from the experience of the majority of people, especially in South Africa. In reflecting back on their childhoods, participants show little awareness that their experiences were significantly privileged and certainly not 'normal' when taking into consideration the vast majority of children growing up in South Africa.

5.1.4. "Distancing from" family authority

In the extract below, we see how Heidi's mother holds authority over who she takes to her Matric dance. Heidi has already mentioned many ways where she resists parental authority but, in this situation, she is not able to act on her desire to take her black partner to her matric dance. These moments suggest a kind of threshold that Heidi is reached where her resistance breaks down under parental and societal pressure.

> So we started dating and I kind of just did not tell my family because I knew it would be an issue and then matric dance came round and because my mom knows everything about my life I think she sort of knew what was going on but she didn't say anything and um very specifically she asked me to not take him to the our matric dance kind of in a way that it was more a command than a question so I didn't . I just figured it wouldn't be worth the conflict with my family which I now realise was probably a mistake. I mean there is nothing more hurtful than saying my family doesn't accept you simply because of who you are. I can't take you to this special event because my family won't like it. That sucks .. that sucks and we didn't have a fight over it … I think he just sort of .. he was like, "okay I get it, it is what it is." Which is terrible (Extract 28, Heidi, line 595)

The above extract suggests that there is only a certain amount of family conflict that Heidi can tolerate. This points to a kind of pay-off system where she asks whether the reward will be worth the cost. In this case, the rewards may have been numerous and could include her own sense of worth and esteem at being able to express her autonomy. The most obvious cost is that she threatens her sense of belonging in the context of family and community. As Yuval-Davis (2006) maintains, belonging on the level of emotional attachment is motivated by yearning.

This example shows how desire or the yearning to belong can prevent change from happening. Identity can then be understood as a process, "always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 6). Heidi illustrates this point as, in this situation a peace-keeping identity is salient in contrast to other instances where she has

described herself in far more rebellious terms. In addition, the extract highlights Freeman's (2010) notion of "moral lateness" in the way that Heidi looks back at her decision to follow her parents' "commands" in a different light.

Like Heidi, Frank also described having being brought up in a conservative Afrikaans home. In the following story, he describes how he resisted his parents' authority.

> I really don't know. Because it is not like I had this black friend growing up and realized that we are one and the same. I think in many ways especially here in grade 7 -8, I started getting involved in books in Physics and books in Philosophy. Basic books and all of those things and ever since that, it started to foster a lot of things for me to the extent that people branded me as an extreme over thinker. And I asked very difficult questions to my parents at a very early age on. Why do we treat a person this way? Why should we be treated differently? Does this matter? Why should this matter? And I was kind of questioning social norms and rule without me realizing that it was what I was doing.
>
> I just wanted to know that the world works with these rules, why does it work with these rules. And they couldn't give me sufficient answers. Telling me this is kind of what we all agreed upon on how it should work. It is not necessarily right but this is how we do this. And I kind of ended up in a lot of especially in Afrikaans [inaudible 56:28] just because. It has to be this way – you can't especially with my dad. He would be very verbally abusive or very antagonistic if I would question these things because he would say it is a form of back chat, a form of undermining authority. Whereas that never stopped with me, I am still asking difficult questions in social settings. I am like why did you do this? Is it acceptable? This wasn't acceptable. Especially in the house now, my brother and even my mother at some point were very racist especially my brother when he would make very terrible comments about the Fees Must Fall where he kind of speaks about the black students saying that these Neanderthals just burning down things. And I am like but you can't talk about these people that way. Have you read any accounts about these people? It is just this general apathy like I don't have to justify, I can say what I want, this is how I was raised, I see a lot of black people on a day to day and this is how they are. That for me is revolting, it is not acceptable, I will be fighting for that. (Extract 29: Frank, line 795)

I asked Frank how he accounts for the way in which he turned out differently to his conservative parents and family. He describes being the only person in his family with a different set of values. This is evident in his brother's views about black students in the context of #FMF, "he

kind of speaks about the black students saying that, ‘these Neanderthals just burning down things’” (line 809) and aside from his overtly racist father, he also describes his mother expressing the same tendencies. He reflects on how he challenging his parents from an early age, “ And I asked very difficult questions to my parents at a very early age on” (line 798). In this way, Frank gives the sense that he was always aligned with an inclusive value system.

However, unlike Heidi his open and inclusive orientation did not appear to originate in relationality but rather from books and acquiring knowledge, “I started getting involved in books in Physics and books in Philosophy. Basic books and all of those things and ever since that, it started to foster a lot of things for me to the extent that people branded me as an extreme over thinker” (line 796). This indicates that through knowledge acquisition, his existing cultural schemas were challenged to the extent that he was able to develop new value systems outside of his family and cultural paradigms.

Furthermore, he describes how his father subscribed to procedural justice (Clayton and Opotow, 2003) in the way that he justifies negative outcomes on account of what he perceives as fair procedures, “Telling me this is kind of what we all agreed upon on how it should work. It is not necessarily right but this is how we do this” (line 803). Frank also shows how his father’s authority inhibits his questioning of the family’s values and therefore he, like Heidi, shows instances of both acceptance and resistance. “He would be very verbally abusive or very antagonistic if I would question these things because he would say it is a form of back chat, a form of undermining authority” (line 804). In this way, he also highlights how authority functioned to sanction certain behaviours and identities in the white home.

Franks extract shows a movement away from his family. He shows distance in the ways that he questions family and cultural values as discussed above. Furthermore, his reference to "fighting" these norms and that he finds their ideas "revolting" further reinforces his position as non-racist and progressive. This speaks to Hytten and Warren's (2003) point that avoiding complicity can be done by blaming others who are more overtly racist. Therefore, we could say that Frank's reference to his family's extreme racism allows him to align himself with anti-racism and avoid his own positionality as a privileged white person.

5.2. University and adult life

5.2.1. Ignorance and complicity

The data show various defensive strategies used by participants that have the effect of maintaining ignorance and therefore also avoiding acknowledging complicity. It is worth noting Vice's (2010) point that overt and obvious racism was uncommon around the time of her writing although since then, arguably there has been an international resurgence of overt forms of racism, glaringly evident in a range of western 'democracies', like the Trump administration. Vice (2010) points out that subtle forms of racism are also very much in play which are also very evident in contemporary time.

Both forms can be seen as the result of long-term exposure that white people have had to hegemonic ways of whiteness. It follows that when exploring ignorance and complicity, it is important to track the subtle and nuanced ways in which white privilege is perpetuated. Moreover, this section will address how white people maintain "whitely" positions and practices especially whilst also claiming to be 'good' moral citizens.

In the following extract, Kelly highlights limited awareness among her peers in regard to happenings in the surrounding socio-political space.

> We were just = it was a bit selfish I think to say, 'oh, I want to write my test' but I don't think anyone was aware of what was happening = we didnt know because it got ahm.. (Extract 33: Kelly, 21)

This speaks to the subject of 'white ignorance' as the only way that this could have come as a surprise for privileged students is for them to have confined themselves to their privileged worlds and not nurture meaningful relationships with students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, the degree of unawareness that Kelly refers to also speaks to Suchet's (2007) notion of whiteness as the 'silent norm'. Ignorance and unawareness are the markers of this norm which is evident in the above extract. In addition, the white norm is rendered unseen and Kelly's extract shows that her fellow white students are unaware of broader power dynamics at play.

This seems difficult to believe given the prevalence of the difficulties experienced by black students and the pervasive and patently obvious inequalities of South African society. It follows that this lack of awareness is a consequence of a blindness to power and privilege on the part of white students and can be linked to Steyn's (2012) notion of the "ignorance contract" which is by definition 'unknowing'. This idea of 'not knowing' points to broader discourses of whiteness as 'innocent' – not at fault for the suffering of the less privileged 'Other' (Applebaum, 2007).

The limited awareness shown in Kelly's statement also suggests that white students were complicit in their inaction and through their ignorance of social inequalities, as Applebaum (2007) has argued that complicity is not solely about actions. Moreover, the fact that being

complicit does not rely on any specific action and can be the result of simply being white as Vice (2010) has argued, makes it more difficult for students to see possible ways in which their whiteness implicates them in a system that privileges white people at the expense of black people.

It is clear from Kelly's statement that students were not aware of this quality of complicity and privilege because ignorance kept them within the confines of a limited perceptual frame. It is also worth questioning the extent that these claims of 'not knowing' can be taken seriously. This can be compared to the context of black domestic workers that have significantly lower living standards than their white employers and where the tendency is to tune out from glaring inequalities. We can argue in both cases that at least to some extent, white people 'do know' but rather choose to ignore inequality because of the many inconvenient consequences that confronting this subject entail.

5.2.2. Shame and guilt

Narratives that deal with shame are conspicuously absent from the data. Shame as Suchet (2007) has pointed out is a healthy sign that racial inequalities are being confronted. Furthermore, Vice (2010) tells us that we should expect a certain amount of "shame, regret or guilt" from white people when they reflect on past and current realities. The fact that so few participants spoke about shame or guilt therefore says something about white student positionalities in relation to the historical past and current racial inequalities.

Likewise, Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) argues that mourning involves facing "negative aspects of past" and "dealing with them" (p.259). This mourning of the past is inherently connected with

emotions of shame and guilt regardless of whether one lived through the apartheid era as inherited privileges were involuntary (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012). This also suggests that young white students that took part in this research are still invested in privileges associated with being white, albeit mostly unknowingly.

As Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) has argued, denial of complicity can also be construed as an inability to mourn. As Gobodo-Madikizela (2012) explains, mourning applies to both victims and oppressors. In relation to white students, mourning then involves working through and hence facing negative aspects of the past. For white students, we could say that guilt provides an entry point for this process. The fact few participants addressed this topic can be further understood as an avoidance of disrupting oppressive aspects of white identity.

Conversely, had more participants expressed sentiments around guilt and shame in relation to South Africa's racialised past and present, this would suggest further unsettling of white identity in Straker's (2011) terms. Sarah was the only participant who spoke about shame in the first person. As a foreign student, Sarah had relatively less exposure to racial and class dynamics in the South African context.

> I remember really not understanding why the protest were happening ahm yes, 'okay logically fees must fall' but why it was so huge? My immediate reaction that I kind of felt a little bit shameful or ignorant about was (.) just kind of let me get this course done now= 'you are actually just inconveniencing me (.) if you gonna do it, can you protest a different time ahm (Extract 30: Sarah, line 11)

Her initial sentiments echoed other participants in terms of feeling frustrated, although she appeared to be more transparent about her reaction to the movement. She uses words like "shameful" and "ignorant" which were descriptions that few other participants used. Sarah

therefore shows an awareness that her initial reaction to the movement was unacceptable in the way that she references her feeling of shame. In addition, the fact that she says "I kind of felt a little bit shameful or ignorant" (line 12) shows personal accountability for being privileged and white.

Vice (2010) argues that shame can be constructive and healthy when, as Sarah's sentiments suggest, it brings awareness of injustice arising out of personal or collective past. It should also be noted that being a foreigner, it may be easier for Sarah to articulate these sentiments. Like Kelly, Sarah also reflects back on an earlier self which she now conceives as being ignorant. This also highlights a similar temporal movement where it is evident that Sarah too has in some ways outgrown an earlier self.

Moreover, her use of "kind of" also indicates that her emotion is partially owned and also underscores the sensitivity of this affect. However, the fact that she talks in first person and raised the subject of shame on her own accord shows a rare sense of personal accountability in comparison to other participants.

In a similar vein to Sarah, Kelly also uses first person language when she speaks about guilt.

> I do feel guilty because of what I have and I feel the need to give to the people that do not have and I reached the conclusion = and I think in actual fact empathy can be a bad thing because you are doing it well not you, but most people do it to make themselves feel better. Which is what I think I was doing for a long time. (Extract 31: Kelly, 492)

In relation to having more than others, Kelly speaks about empathy not always being constructive because it can be done for selfish reasons. In this way, she points to a kind of convoluted empathy as a remedy for guilt. At this point she also switches to second person "you

are doing it" (line 493) and then third person "most people" (line 494). This shows how she increases distance between herself and the subject at hand and indicates how she makes this form of empathic expression less personal. In other words, she hedges accountability.

She now also locates herself outside of this action as one who is not empathic for selfish gain. This is affirmed as she positions herself as transcended from this quality of empathy because she tells us "I think I was doing for a long time" (line 494). Her reference to a past self is evident that she sees herself as having hanged in this regard. Again, diachronic integration is evident here as these changes are constructed temporally. However, we are also left with the sense that because of her distancing and aversion to this quality of empathy, that she is not as neatly transformed as she may have us believe.

In the following extract, Kelly tells us in the context of #FMF that she felt guilty because of an educational opportunity afforded to her.

> I did a BA just because like – obviously with the fees must fall that made me feel guilty you know. The fact that I didn't want to do it and I had the opportunity to do it. (Extract 32, Kelly, 282)

Here Kelly shows an awareness of her privilege of choice and highlights that #FMF made her social position more apparent to her. Interestingly, she states this as an obvious fact "obviously with the fees must fall" (line 282) which suggests common knowledge and common experience for other white students. However, it is evident in the absence of talk on guilt and shame in the data that this is not so for the majority of participants.

5.2.3. PIN – Slow movement toward greater inclusivity

In the act of denying and defending against complicity, the data show incidents where participants externalised racism by confining it to social structures (Hytten & Warren, 2003). In the following extract Alison speaks about an incident that happened in class where a black lecturer unexpectedly suggested that white students should pay for photocopying for fellow black students. A massive uproar followed from white students which sent the class into heated debate.

> Alison: It was and to see the uproar that came of that even directly in the moment, like so much emotion was expressed and it was very uncomfortable to be around so much and so much fixed emotions. But to be in the complete anger and walking out and the…that up roar of support in what had been said, um I am just sitting there in the middle like - oh what do I do (line 827)
>
> It was, it really, really was and it was very, very uncomfortable because a part of me didn't agree with what was said because I don't feel that is the responsibility of white people. I feel it's the responsibility of the government you know. The white people don't have all the money in the world. Ag and I was like, that's so wrong you know, I speak for my humble little loving family and to hear things said like that. I agree with them but at the same time, it's like I don't have enough to give people. Like if I had to give…This is a small example given up to give paper, I am not going to have paper, kind of a thing. You know (line 834)
>
> Interviewer: You didn't have extra paper to give?
>
> Alison: that's a very small thing and it can, it can, it can be a [indistinct] for a very, very large issue of giving money. And distribution of resources and stuff and I have never grown up in Sandton where a lot of people have far more than they need. You know. The first time I was ever actually in that area was when I was dating an Indian who lived in that area, you know. I come from the South of Johannesburg, I have always lived there, I lived in this tiny little house, you know, my parents never went to university, I am first in my family who has a degree um we don't come from a lot, so for us is very hard to share, but we also know what it is to need. So it's a strange place to be in. I mean especially white and being in the middle of some of these big debates (line 845)
>
> Interviewer: Its an unusual place to be hey?
>
> Alison: Yes. And coming from very liberal family we do agree but at the same time its, okay it's not my place because I am white. Like I am actually not on the side where I am a victim you know, Im not but, ja I don't know, it's a very, very odd place to find yourself. And it's very easy to just you know, okay,

> it's not my problem. It's very easy. It was very, very easy it was actually far too easy thinking back on it now but such is life. And having on this jumping on the back of your neck – you not a flesh um. (line 858)

From the above. we see Alison externalise social inequalities by locating responsibility with the state, "I don't feel that is the responsibility of white people. I feel it's the responsibility of the government you know" (line 835). Here Alison clearly articulates a positon of non-culpability by asserting that white people need not be accountable for issues such as these that have their origin in social inequality. This highlights that she sees the "government" or the state as also racialized in that it is a black government responsible black people's problems.

It is important to note, that the extract highlights the intersection of both racial and class markers. Alison identifies as coming from a lower-class family. However, as is evident above, class is very differently inflected by race. From this point of view, it is evident that she feels justified to claim a kind of equality with low income black students because she too knows what it is like to not have money "I lived in this tiny little house, you know, my parents never went to university, I am first in my family who has a degree um we don't come from a lot" (line 849).

What is absent from the above is an awareness of privilege that she enjoyed outside of purely economic markers. Alison describes her position not only in terms of discomfort (see line 835) but also as unique, "it's a very, very odd place to find yourself" (line 860). She seems to struggle to locate herself in relation to the movement and in surrounding social context. Her articulation of being in middle "um I am just sitting in the middle like oh what to I do" (line 830) suggests that she feels conflicted in this "middle ground". Her extract also infers a quality of innocence as if she is caught up in a fight that is less relevant to her because of her somewhat unique positioning.

Here we return to Melissa Steyn's (2011) notion of the ignorance contract which stipulates that white ignorance has the effect of producing arguments in defence of complicity in order to protect privileged positionalities. Alison tells us in her talk that this is 'not her fight' through denying accountability. Furthermore, as Hytten and Warren (2003) point out, externalising social issues that have their roots in past racial injustices can be seen as defence against personal complicity.

Furthermore, she asserts ambivalent support for the fallists: "I agree with them but at the same time" (line 838). She bases her argument on the claim that she is not better off because of her race and she points to the injustice of whites having to take financial accountability for black students when they too in some cases face similar challenges. In this way, though it appears that she shows commonality with black students, she instead increases her raced difference by suggesting she is worse off on account of her class and race. In addition, instead of making an argument for class solidarity and arguing that wealthy students should assist poor students, she remains silent. This can be conceived of as negative version of Vice's (2010) notion of white silence that can be seen as form of ignorance.

However, as we read her extract, we are left with the sense that she is still more "white" then poor and that her lower class roots are not convincing as a social equaliser. Alison also emphasises her relationship with an Indian partner, "when I was dating an Indian who lived in that area, you know. I come from the South of Johannesburg" (line 848). In this way, she contrasts herself as a white person with coloured people living in white affluent areas of Johannesburg. She therefore further distances herself from middle class white norms and in

doing so further justifies a position in the "middle" and therefore excluded from the "big debates". This suggests that she is looking for recognition and admiration as she sees herself as having to work for what she has.

Moreover, her emphasis on her interracial relationship in Thompson's (2003) terms also highlights another way that she distances herself from complicity. She can now be seen as progressive and anti-racist and therefore absolved from needing to take accountability for racial inequalities. It follows that racism from this view is not applicable to her in the same way that it might be for other whites. This shows a similar pattern to that in Frank's account where he too places emphasis on his personal relationships with fellow black students that position him as progressive and exempt from racist tendencies.

Toward the end of the extract she contradicts her initial sentiments by suggesting that some accountability is needed in the way that she infers that ignoring the problem was too easy, "it's very easy to just you know, okay, it's not my problem" (line 860). This shows ambivalence in her talk and also highlights multiple identities at work here. The dominant identity can be seen in light of the predominant concerns in the interview that she feels her social position is somehow unjust. A secondary identity is contrasted with these initial sentiments which appears to subscribe to whiteness as fair and moral. She tells us now in almost confessionary speak, that she has ignored some of these problems and that it is not right to do so and thereby aligns herself with non-racism.

When we look at the overall movement of the story, it is evident that there are ways that Alison has both changed and also resisted change. In essence, her narrative shows that her identity has

remained fixed in relation to her perception of her class as a primary indicator of privilege. However, towards the end of her story she stresses how easy it is to ignore these problems. This suggests that a movement toward greater recognition of the problems that many black students face. Consequently, we could say in Freeman's (2014) terms that the 'priority of the other' is coming into clearer focus for Alison.

5.2.4. PIN - No escaping being 'white'

In the following extract Joe recounts an experience he had whilst supporting a #FMF related event and how he could not escape his 'whiteness' though he hoped it would not have been so salient.

> I think its most social situations = you feel like not getting involved or you feel hesitant about where you fit in = I don't think it was particular to the movement but it was kind of just finding a place and I was with two of my friends there Uhm and it was in senate house (.) And it was ahm so the main meetings were in ahm the concourse there by open square just by where Theos is and then food was distributed mostly for supper ahm (.) and then after that ahm I was trying to find something to do somewhere to be helpful and I just started mopping the floor because it was dirty and something had spilt and then somebody else ahm who'd been involved in the protest more in organizing side of it came to me and there were few comments made as to like a white boy mopping the floor and that I was wasting water and that I didn't know how to do it (.) and it was a strange experience that (.) my identity had literally got (.) and maybe there was nothing wrong = I had mobbed the floor before so it wasn't a big thing but it was = that was also like (.) ya = so it was more (Extract : Joe, line 77)

I asked him how he felt about this experience and he said the following.

> I felt embarrassed = I think it was two things (.) that that kind of work isn't in my life purely because I am privilege person and it brought it like into reality that (.) there are differences in people especially like the people I study with and the second thing was that I was also just annoyed that I couldn't really escape the identity of being white (.5) in that context ahm ya which maybe I'd naïvely thought before that I could (.) ahm well not not necessary escape but just that it wasn't a defining factor in something as simple as mopping the floor (Extract : Joe, line 77 – 103)

This story underscores Butler's (1990) theory of performativity and Durrheim and Dixon's (2005) notion of race as embodied practice in the ways that black and white bodies are expected to behave in social space. Both texts highlight the role of the body in the way that race plays out in social space. The extract also highlights a number of important themes that have been outlined in previous extracts. Firstly, Joe speaks to the emotional aspects of belonging, "you feel like not getting involved or you feel hesitant about where you fit in = I don't think it was particular to the movement but it was kind of just finding a place (line 77).

He shows us that he wants to find a place in the context of the group in his reference to "fit in" and also the anxiety that results from exclusion, "you feel hesitant". Notice that he subsequently switches to second person as he presents his hesitancy as a general phenomenon. In this way, he limits personal exposure for what might have been an unsettling situation for himself as a white student at an event comprising a black student majority. As Yuval-Davvis (2006) contends, people find themselves on a "grid of power relations" where race is a significant determinant of power. It follows that it was likely that Joe's assumed positioning as representative of white power would likely be challenged in this context.

Joe tells us that in order to belong, he felt he needed to make himself useful, " I was trying to find something to do somewhere to be helpful and I just started mopping the floor" (line 81). This suggests that he was looking for group acceptance and that mopping the floor might allow him membership rights. Clayton and Opotow (2003) speak to this point as they emphasise the importance people place on group membership in order to avoid exclusion from groups they identify with or wish to belong to.

It follows that this indicates that Joe broadly identifies with the #FMF corpus because he cares about being included. It should be noted that by taking on a menial task he also reverses roles as this task would typically be performed by black (women) – suggesting that he recognises the dominant role that white subjectivity usually occupies. He is then confronted with an experience of rejection as people joke about this unusual sighting of a white person mopping the floor, "like a white boy mopping the floor and that I was wasting water and that I didn't know how to do it" (line, 83).

He initially describes his experience as "strange". However, in the context of not finding the belonging he was looking for, "strange" appears to come across as an understatement. This could be conceived as estrangement from others and perhaps even from himself. When I probed him further he spoke about being embarrassed about his privilege as a white person, "that kind of work isn't in my life purely because I am privilege person" (line 77). Then he tells us that he was also affected because he was in a setting where his whiteness would be salient regardless of his actions.

It follows that his upset can be traced to a combination of factors – the possibility of not being included in the way that he had hoped and that his belonging to the group depended on him being able to hold his whiteness in an objective light (or not take comments personally). The comments from surrounding students suggests a lack of trust in his "genuinenes" however, an argument can be made that he is making his whiteness available for the 'collective good' – by performing white identity outside of its normal role. In this way, being white and allowing stereotypical impressions to play out within the group could be said to loosen the sense of Othering on both

sides of the racial divide. It is interesting to note that in Joe's words this scene played out in the way that it did as a consequence of "something as simple as mopping the floor" (line 81).

5.3. Turning points and white activism

5.3.1. Shifts resulting from social interactions

The extract from Joe, below is evident of the power that a simple interaction can have on increasing awareness of privilege.

> And then it had actually occurred to me then that this person that I studied with and I work with at times ahm would actually not be able to continue studying if the fees did increase = whereas the protest was inconvenient for me and it was annoying because I studied for an exam that I didn't write (Joe, 15)

In this context, #FMF can be seen as the catalyst that brought about new awareness for Joe. This also tells us how impoverished interactions between students on our campuses have been for decades. Despite sitting next to one another in lecture theatres, they remain worlds apart. The above also underscores Freeman's (2010) notion of hindsight opening up new insight as a consequence of being able to reflect on past experience from the view point of the present.

Similarly, Sarah also recollects how she experienced increased awareness of being white and implicated as a result of conversation on social media.

> But I think as things went on as you experience on social media as people have opinions, I started to (1) become very uncomfortable and very aware of my identity as a white person and (.5) and in some way felt quite implicated in the situation. (Sarah, line 18)

Sarah said she was not active in the movement although she clearly articulates how the movement impacted her as a white person regardless of her non-involvement.

In referring to herself as implicated she does not distance herself from the social inequalities represented by the movement. Instead she explains how the movement brought her significant discomfort as she gained more awareness about her whiteness. The discomfort that Sarah describes is evidence of Straker's (2011) concept of whiteness becoming "unsettled". It follows that this is a disconcerting process for white people because it involves confronting the betrayal of the white ideal as benevolent which can result in what Eng and Han (2000) term "racial melancholia".

In this way, we can understand Sarah's discomfort as a form of 'mourning' that results from a loss related to one's racial identification. Eng and Han (2000) have outlined various forms of racial melancholia and Sarah's extract suggests her loss is related to the betrayal of whiteness with its pronounced values. Therefore, racial melancholia as it relates above, should be understood in terms of an unsettling of identity if the object of melancholia, in this case whiteness is brought into view. Since Sarah's loss is conscious, it seems unlikely that she is caught in melancholia and therefore this contact with her sense of complicity can be seen as a step forward. Few other students in the group articulated a positon of complicity as clearly as Sarah did.

5.3.2. Beggars and protestors

In the extract below, Sarah's narrative contrasts the experience of confronting poverty and class in different contexts. This highlights how Sarah's experience of feeling "implicated" was a consequence of being at university with these students. In this way, she appeared to respond more empathically because the people affected by fee increases were also part of the student group to which she belonged.

> And obviously as the protest are happening all this things happening are starting to trigger (.) about (.5) how easy my life is, and this is why where I say implication (.5) I began to feel privileged (.) I've never felt privileged before or identified with being privileged before = even in my time here in South Africa the 3years prior to that (1) and I don't know what it is because obviously I have become used to beggars at traffic lights (.) but something really became real for me because I guess I was identifying now with certain social groups. So actually we were all students we were one group, but actually amongst those groups there's a million divides and people have sitting next to lectures ahm you starting to see dynamics change, ahm people sitting in different places (Sarah, line 28

Here Sarah confronts what presumably she had been keeping at bay in order to function in South African society. The irony in this narrative is that the student movement shifted her idea of privilege more than an experience of beggars at the robot had "I have become used to beggars at traffic lights (.) but something really became real for me" (line 31). This suggests a change in Sarah's scope of justice (Clayton and Opotow, 2003) as her reference to "real" indicates a movement in her moral community to include black students in her moral community in ways that she hadn't before.

For Sarah, #FMF affected her perspective deeply because she says people in her social circle were impacted, "I was identifying now with certain social groups" (line 33). These were people in her class that she studied with, presumably more difficult to distance from this group than a 'stranger' at a robot. The privilege gap is more extreme in the case of the beggar and easier to distance from. Fellow students were already ostensibly a part of her 'scope of justice' (her 'social group' as she puts it) and she was shocked to discover their structural social exclusion.
Like Joe, Sarah also appears to have experienced the movement as a catalytic force that dramatically shifted her perception of privilege.

5.4. Student activism

This section details white student activism as an indicator of change in the way that students take action in accordance with their changing worldviews and identities. In this regard, I have included two participants who showed dedication and commitment to the movement through their involvement. As has been suggested in foregoing extracts, those participants that reported being more active in the movement also appeared to find new ways of belonging in relation to the university and black student body. It follows that engaging with the movement is closely related with the theme of belonging and exclusion.

When considering white activism in fundamentally black struggles, we need to take seriously Biko's (1987) point about how white people occupy space in these movements so as to avoid replicating hegemonic dynamics from society. This means, as Biko has purported, intentions, however well-meaning as they may appear, need to be scrutinised. Marcus (1999) too, suggests that involvement in anti-racism movements can be a means of avoiding feelings of guilt and complicity. This is not to say that either participant was motivated in this way, but rather to point out that motivational factors should rather be conceived as complex and varied.

James' narratives were especially interesting because not only was he highly active in the movement as a white person and therefore vulnerable to being categorised as a 'white saviour' in Biko's terms; but he also knowingly recognised this about himself and other white students. His awareness in this regard made his actions and perspectives all the more credible.

The extract below follows a story where James was arrested for his activism.

> Even when I got arrested and beaten by those cops, okay I didn't appreciate it, but I was tuning them (.) this is almost revolutionary, because at least you are beating on a white body (.) but you know it could almost

> be a good thing (.) but I think the world will react towards it in a very. very oppressive kind of way. (James, 750)

In the above, James constructs his whiteness as revolutionary. He describes a situation where he used his white body in defence of other black bodies. It is clear from the above that he considers this to be a revolutionary act because the norm is for black bodies to defend other black bodies. From James' view, police beating on black bodies enforces the status quo and upholds white supremacy. He represents the only white student who used his whiteness in this way which supports the idea that this was a "revolutionary" act. Moreover, this highlights an interesting societal contradiction as it is clear that James sees himself as a promoter of black rights thus the situation he describes illustrates black bodies (policemen) enforcing white power and a white body defending black oppression.

In making these claims, James also exposes his relationship with authority with the use of the word "tuning" which indicates that he positions himself as the one correcting the policemen. This points to an interesting power play between himself and the arresting officers. It could be argued that because of his whiteness, the police would have listened to him more than they would a black student or at least hesitate to use violent action. It follows that James uses his race in this encounter to further his own agenda which he says is about bringing about social and racial equality. His privilege as a white student is made apparent in the context of police as representatives of societal authority.

Furthermore, his reference to "the world" (line 752) speaks to the dominant powers in play and that although he appears to have hope in the struggle, he also feels that his action would not be affirmed in the context of a 'white' world. James continues to explain how the police were

confused by his action in the movement. This is evident in the following extract where he describes being in the front of a protest and throwing rocks at the police.

> I got involved with, there was a protest against the police at the theatre, so ja we started throwing rocks and stones at them and something that stuck out and it would be repeated even in subsequent encounters, was the shock of the police at seeing me participating, like seeing this white guy and not completely understanding what is going on (Extract James, line 585)

It is clear that James's presence is unsettling for the police, "the shock of the police at seeing me participating" (line 587). By all accounts, his presence at the forefront of the movement is unexpected. This shows a confusion on the part of mostly black policemen in response to a white student who is passionately fighting for black student rights. It should also be noted that part of James' privilege is that he can act in this way and that it is likely that he faces different consequences in comparison to fellow black students. It is likely that he would not face the same academic penalties for his actions and also that he would in general, be treated differently by the police and university as a white person.

In contrast to James, Joe's involvement can be described as "quiet observation". He spoke about being attentive to what was needed in the context of the protests and related events and equally attentive to not overstepping spatial and social boundaries.

> So like on the one day it was making sandwiches = bread had been donated so it was making sandwiches for a few hours (.) ahm and then it was giving lifts and then it was being participating as (.) just observing I guess = so when there was actually open mikes = not actually speaking but just listening = I didn't really think it was my place to speak ahm (Joe, 57)

Joe acknowledges his decentralised position as a white person, "= I didn't really think it was my place to speak" (line 59). From this perspective, he also shows that he recognises how his whiteness has the power to take away from the movement by drawing attention to itself. This

speaks to Vice's (2010) ideas on white silence as a catalyst for change. Joe demonstrates this by not occupying a central position in the event. Instead he shows himself as being present, listening to what is needed and ultimately his willingness to mop the floors demonstrates flexibility in his social positioning. The extract therefore shows Joe in a kind of background capacity as he chose not to draw attention to himself, "so when there was actually open mikes = not actually speaking but just listening" (line 59).

It follows that Joe's action may be seen as "revolutionary" in a different way, as he too does not conform to white norms and therefore can also be seen as resisting the hegemony of whiteness. It has been shown that both Joe and James have distinctly different qualities of involvement and as has been argued, both appear to serve a purpose in the context of the student movement and in the process of reconstructing white identity.

5.5. Imagined futures

Participants spoke about future realities with a mix of hope and hopelessness. What follows are accounts from a few participants who shared their views about the future especially as this related to higher education and also how they imagined their futures lives in South Africa. As Polkinghorne (1998) describes, the experiences and perceptions of the past extend into future. From this point of view, we can say that hope in some way can be linked to this relationship with the past. Those that confront themselves and their heritages could be said to be contributing to a future that reflects change rather than repetition.

I begin with the least hopeful account for future realities. Frank spoke mostly about the state of education and again raises the notion of danger.

> I don’t, I really don’t because a lot of my close friends have already started losing out on opportunities at University. One of my friends Tim worked at the University of Pretoria. He was a post Document from Oxford in Archaeology and he actually lost his teaching position after the Fees Must Fall stuff at the University of Pretoria. And I was just thinking he just wanted to finish his degree and background. He can't even get a position. And now he is running a side job. I feel like that is a kick in the face for somebody who has worked hard in the academic context. And I feel that government has so many other problems with the public protector stuff and all of that. It is going to be like patients that died when is this really bad consequence that is going to come to light.
>
> But until then they are going to take different sides to the point where it is broken. I am not hopeful. Somebody has to buy out academia even if it is the private sector or somewhere else. But it has to be privatized or something along the lines. Now white people not to be privatized but looking at it now they can't force Wits to pay for a whole year without getting funding from the government. It is impossible. So, I am really not hopeful not even with the couple of friends – it is kind of the reasons why I have really side-lined academia and all of that in its totality. It is because I do not want to work for R6 000 a month from 8 to 8 or 8 to 5 for meagre pay seating in a Junior position and I don’t if that junior position is going for next year.
>
> I am not willing to take those risks with my life. It is kind of like asking a person to survive in the desert by giving them a cup of water. You can't impose those conditions on somebody and feel that is fair

In the first part of the extract Frank provides a convincing argument about his white friend’s ‘unjust’ loss of his work. Here he places significant emphasis on merit in the way that he highlights his friend’s credentials and depicts him as deserving of his post. This is evident in his strong use of metaphor, “a kick in the face”. He therefore frames this person’s dismissal as highly unfair in light of his qualifications and his work ethic. This speaks to Melanie Verwoerd’s (2000) claims that young white people, post 1990 generation tend to forget the relationship between their achievements and South Africa’s apartheid past. This is clearly evident in the above extract where Frank has not shown any awareness of his friend’s privilege as inherited from past and intimately bound to his ability to achieve in post-apartheid South Africa.

Frank then highlights the value of his life in the way that he does not want to overexpose himself to risk. It is important to note that the 'risks' he speak about in relation to earning R6000 a month and being a junior for an extended period would be considered achievements for many black people. Thus, he shows ignorance about how he positions his own life as superior in relation to black Others.

He ends again with another strong claim of injustice in the way he feels placed in an 'impossible position' as a white South African. This suggests that he feels white South Africans in general are in a bind that they do not deserve to be in. Again, there is no acknowledgement about the ways in which the racialized injustices of the past impact upon the lives of young black South Africans in ways which they too do not 'deserve', only a sense that it shouldn't be this way for white people.

In the extract below, Heidi speaks to the challenges of confronting racist views in her white friendship or family circles and the value of having difficult conversations.

> Ah it's so difficult because sometimes I do but sometimes I really don't and um I feel hopeful because we are having the conversations and I feel hopeful because people are finally saying the things that they have been thinking and like finally not putting up with things that they don't need to put up with. And um, like I have...you kind of...I used to listen, this is from my personal experience where like people would say something racist or sexist or homophobic or whatever, and you kind of for sake of civility just let it slide. But I don't do that anymore, because I don't have to.. (Extract : Heidi, line 1091)

> And there is no clean air to breath, its everywhere. So you know, sometimes it feels good and sometimes it doesn't. But there is this kind of feeling, I feel kind of worldwide you look at things like Brexit and you look at Donald Trump and look at the way the world is right now and you feel a little bit hopeless. I think I feel a little bit overwhelmed and I feel it kind of like we are finally having the conversations but now people are becoming more and more polarised, like normally people...or I think before it was okay to just fall in the middle and just say like, I don't see race and then move on with your life and how that was maybe to our eye not as bad. But now are people are actively moving to one of the two sides. Because of the conversations. Ja, people don't really live in the middle anymore. (Extract : Heidi, line 1102)

Here, Heidi shows us that she is already aligning in herself with more equitable futures in South Africa. In the above extract, she reiterates sentiments of post-colonies as described by Maldonado-Torres (2007), that we "breath" colonial residue in our everyday lives. This underscores the deep-seated nature of the problems we face in South Africa that have resulted from coloniality and specifically, apartheid. The fact that she recognises this so clearly shows that Heidi demonstrates significant awareness about her own social positioning. Her extract also highlights the connection between this awareness and her sense of accountability. It is evident that she wants social change on account of her reference to "difficult conversations" that need to happen.

Her extract also underscores that people are becoming more polarised and that in a way people being forced to take a position. Despite the fact that this can be seen as a cause for increasing conflict, it can also be construed as progress because the "middle ground" space implies a kind of complacency.

Mark said the following when I asked about the future of South Africa's education:

> I feel hopeful on the condition that a new political movement is formed by people under 40 at this point. I feel like if that doesn't happen I don't have much hope. I feel like there are many very cool people in this country who are very politically aware and caring. And if something of that nature starts manifesting I think that would be amazing. But if it doesn't you know maybe you know (Extract : Mark, line 743)

In the above, Mark tells us that his hope is conditional. Furthermore, he also externalises this condition in the way that a "new movement" needs to rescue the country from the state of affairs. He then distances himself from being involved by using third person language. In this way, he

refers to the change as something that needs to happen 'out there'. This shows an avoidance of personal responsibility and contrasts very differently to Heidi's account.

Both extracts show reservations about the future, however Heidi's reservations are expressed in the first person. She includes herself as a contributor to the changes needed. In this way, we could say that Heidi identifies with this imagined political movement that Mark speaks about. In contrast to Mark, Heidi's account suggests that she feels a sense of belonging within this 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2008) that we could refer to as the 'change makers'. Mark, on the other hand, recognises what needs to happen but distances himself from accountability and related action. However, his distancing appears to arise out of a general sense of disillusionment with politics among people globally rather than apathy.

When I asked Alison about the future, she initially spoke about her experience of being treated well by black people.

> Look, I haven't seen any or experienced any incidents where black people were mean to me or threatened me physically, or that I felt I couldn't do anything. When I did feel that way it was because I cooked it up in my head. Um it wasn't any, it was actually real.
>
> The minute I plucked up the courage and said something it was perfectly accepted, I was not ostracized for being white, um so I think that a lot of the anger that white people are feeling about white privilege and these sort of discussions is because maybe…and I can speak for myself it's because I felt guilty of it and because I felt attacked but it's not actually that they are attacking us, it's that these sort of conversations are no longer silenced. (Extract: Alison, line 1051)

Here Alison discovers that she is not excluded and rather it is her own sense of guilt that appears to separate her from black people. What stands out in the above is that Alison recognises past instances of feeling excluded or mistreated by black people, as primarily a projection on her part. This also highlights a temporal movement in the way that she sees herself as having changed.

Consequently, we can say in Freeman's (2010) terms, that she lifted the 'autistic veil' of past lived experience through hindsight's view and found a new moral standing especially as this relates to racial inequalities in South Africa.

Alison then went on to talk about shame.

> I have faith that South Africa will be a much better place and it will be less secrets and less sort of hidden shame and less hidden anger. It will be far more open, its...and this is probably going upset a lot people but I feel that the fees must fall protests was sort of like a second coming of the TRC. Like it gave way for a lot of people to show their hurt and their anger and stuff they may not be directly related to suffering for apartheid (Extract 8: Alison, 1158)

These extracts convey a sense of hope because Alison brings up shame and guilt, which as has been stated, is conspicuously absent from the data. In this way, Alison tells us that she is at least thinking about these ideas, which to some extent implies that she is also likely confronting shame and guilt in her own personhood. This speaks to both Vice (2011) and Gobodo-Madikizela's (2012) points that transformation depends, to a large extent on recognising and confronting these feelings.

Alison also speaks to Fine's (1996) point that whiteness needs to be named in order to unsettle it from the "unmarked". Alison tells us that she sees a hopeful future for South Africa because she believes that this naming is happening and as a consequence, less will be hidden from view. This suggests further exposing of white shame as a consequence of identifying the dominant position that whiteness has occupied and in many ways still does occupy in South Africa.

James gave a qualified hopeful answer when I asked him about the future.

> I don't know if this is a crazy answer, but it is hope through cynicism, so it's probably not going to work out, it's probably going to fail, but then the beauty of even at failing, they can't keep on failing. It's

> eventually going, I mean nothing lasts forever. It hasn't lasted forever in the past, it's not like it has always been so even if it fails in our lifetime, it is eventually going to collapse the system. (Extract: James, line 767)

The above extract shows some similarity to Heidi's sentiments. Both Heidi and James identify with this 'change maker' community. James' commitment to the ideals of change are clear in the way that he tells us that even imminent failure would not stop him from action. He also provides a refreshing reminder that regardless, these dynamics will eventually change. This is what Freire (2004) calls 'critical hope' in the way that despite the odds, hope is essential in efforts to transform society toward greater equality and inclusion.

6. Conclusion

This study has sought to explore young white identity in the context of changing social landscape reflected in the student movement. What stands out in the data as a significant starting point is the fragility of white identity. Change for many white students appears to be a scary prospect because it entails facing unknown future realities. White people need only to look back in the past to find a temporary comfort in known positionalities and therefore also secure futures.

It is clear that white identity has been drastically unsettled as a consequence of the student movement to the extent that white people are less sure about the foundation on which their identities are constructed. From this point of view, this research indicates that the student movement has penetrated deep into the white psyche and fundamentally challenged notions of what it means to be a white person living in post-apartheid South Africa.

For one this has meant that white students who fall back on meritocratic arguments to justify their place in society no longer find themselves being supported by the overarching student discourse that now includes black students in unprecedented ways. This has significant implications in terms of notions of belonging and justice.

The prevailing view among young white people is that they deserve continues access to education and opportunity on meritocratic grounds - ‘we worked hard for it’. The glaring oversight is that had black students benefited from the same past, white subjectivity would not be able to rely on merit alone as a predictor for access and future success.

Merit was also used as a defence against making a connection between South Africa's racialised past and current social challenges. This meant that many participants were not able to fully grasp their inherited privileges and any sacrifices that might be needed in order to restore some kind of social balance. It should be noted that orientations did change as the movement progressed but the data suggest that this is a difficult area for white students to transcend.

Relationality

Most participants' placed emphasis on personal relationships that they had with black students, which suggested that their relationship with the collective body of black students was affected more so than individual relationships. This was evident in the prevalence of negative attitudes towards the protesting body of students, whilst expressing positive sentiment toward black individuals. The emphasis on black friends also suggested that participants wanted to align themselves with principles of racial equality which underscored the importance they placed on being on the 'right' side of the moral fence.

I use the word 'fence' as a way of emphasising the divide that emerged in the student community as a consequence of the movement. As a result of this divide, the data suggest that students were less able to occupy ambivalent positionalities even though this comes through as a major theme in the study. The point here is that past conditions allowed for even more ambivalence in the ways that white students were able to orient themselves in social space.

What is clear is how impoverished interactions have been between students on campuses where white students have expressed caring individually but show ambivalent attitudes toward a less personnel collective. Moreover, the fact that the movement came as a shock speaks volumes

about perspectives that white students held in relation to the lives of black students that they studied with. Had they been in deeper conversation with black students, then at the very least, they would have been more prepared for the early protests and may have already aligned themselves with some of the grievances of fellow black students.

Moreover, the data suggest that common sense did not pervade the minds of white students. The oversight that students made in relation to the unfairness and inequality of social realities and what that might lead to is so glaringly obvious , it is a wonder how educated people might have missed the years of building tensions and the difficulties that many black students faced.

This also highlights the extent of white ignorance. But the narratives show that we can't make this about unawareness alone as participant's also 'tuned' themselves out of these realities. This in essence is white ignorance – a combination of 'not knowing' and also choosing not to know. The data also underscore how white students exclude black students in their scope of justice. For many participants, although they may have been friendly with black students and have black friends, the 'protesting black student' or the collective black student body as a whole did not fall within their scope of justice. In some cases, racist analogies were used to construct this black subject as inferior and also unreasonable which showed more extreme forms of exclusion.

In this way, language indicated exclusion from moral boundaries and shared resources. The study shows how, through language the black other can be dehumanised so as to justify exclusion on the part of white people. It should be noted that the data indicate that young white people are facing increasing pressure to face up to their social positioning and look past meritocratic ideals. This means in essence increasing their scope of justice toward greater inclusion.

Distancing and belonging

What emerges as an important theme in the study is how participants distanced themselves in various ways from the student community, the student movement itself and earlier versions of themselves. This suggested aspects of their social lives, past and present that they were uncomfortable with.

Where participants distanced from the student movement, this invariably spoke to the ways that their sense of belonging to the student community had been unsettled. Because of changing power relations, white students don't "rule" campus space as they used to, which underscores Suchet's (2007) point that there are fundamental ways that white people have lost power since the new democracy. Further to this, some stories show that white youth have not only had their sense of belonging disrupted in relation to university space, but also to the country and associated cultural and political spheres.

Distancing can also be seen in Hytten and Warren (2003) terms of externalising racism in the way that participants tended to identify racist tendencies outside of themselves. Clearly participants wanted to avoid being cast as racist but this aversion to seeing the ways that we are personally complicit in system that perpetuates inequality must also be seen as an obstacle to progress. This highlights the importance of addressing social inequality at both systemic and personal levels. The tendency among white participants was to focus social inequality on the wider political and cultural realms rather than to take personal accountability.

Change and transformation

For many years white people have been able to avoid confronting their privileged positions in society. The stories collected in this study clearly show that this is no longer possible, at least for white youth. Every participant in this study showed that they were challenged in fundamental ways. I also showed that those that engaged more with the movement also tended to be the ones who progressed most in terms of 'deracialising' their identities.

Since the study explores complex terrain of identity, it is also especially important to take multiple perspectives in order to avoid making claims that that do not reflect identities as multiple versioned. In this way, we are always more than behaviours, attitudes and patterns that the data reflect. Moreover, the data also show in many cases competing and opposing identities where participants reflect ambiguities in their views and experiences. This revealed the contradictions in white identity and also areas where pejorative and discriminatory perspectives dominated the minds of some students in this study.

Typically these identities were foregrounded where the movement posed a threat to academic trajectories. Fears that their studies would be significantly affected or that they would not be able to finish of their academic year and line themselves up for continuing their goals in the following year were the dominant experiences for participants. This exposed the prevailing egocentric orientation that many white students held, at least in their early encounters with the movement. In these instances many participants expressed views about the [black] protesting body that were grounded in racial undertones. Where these identities were dominant, some participants were willing to make judgements about black subjects that inferred animal like behaviour.

This is a clear example about how white identity aspires towards benevolence and sometimes expresses it whilst in other instances can also hold positions that oppress and undermine black subjectivity. Thus, whilst many identities can be identified in the context of this study, the above polarity encompassed the primary polarity for white identity. The question that follows is to what extent are participants aware of these storied identities because as Fine (1996) and other have argued, this awareness of what whiteness can be precedes and changes we might like to make in the area of identity.

The data show that this is not a clear cut affair of students as 'changed' or not but rather a mix of stepping forward and backward toward more integrated identities. It is clear that the changes that are evident are mostly about emerging awareness about the experiences of the black other. Therefore, we can say from the data that participants are finding new understanding and perspective about the lives and struggles of many black students that open them to more inclusive orientations.

The study has also shown how some participants are confronting their personal and collective pasts whilst others are more invested in avoiding confronting the harsh realities that have defined South Africa's unjust past. Fundamentally the question of historical injustices was very present in the interviews as participants grappled with the debt that they are facing in relation to inheritance of privileges as white people.

This was the most contested and resisted factor for participants. Why should it be the responsibly of the current generation to correct past mistakes that they had nothing to do with? Before the student movement, the data suggest that this question was not in the minds of young white

people. As a consequence of the movement, this is now arguably far more prominent for white students.

These past reflections also highlighted how participants found new moral orientations as consequence of hindsight's view (Freeman, 2010) and how they found these orientations "late" because of the limitations in lived experience. Hindsight therefore allowed them to reconcile their past in the present and see 'now' what they were not able to see 'then' and in doing so integrate new selves. Those participants who showed more of this quality of backward reflection also showed greater change. Conversely, those that who did not engage with past experience to the same degree, also seemed to be the participants whose racialised identities were more fixed.

The data also indicate that only a few participants have integrated their identities in radical ways so that their orientations follow through into supportive action. Thus I make the assumption that greater integration of identity must in same way lead to corresponding action. The majority of participants appear to be at the stage of confronting these realities and what it means for them as young white people living in South Africa. These participants were not actively involved in the movement but instead were affected through friends, news and social media. Three participants however, were significantly involved in the movement and attended numerous protests and related events and thus showed identities that can be seen as radically integrated.

I put forward that although this may be cast as slow progress, that this should be seen in positive light when we consider the enormous momentum of past influence on young white people. The power of ignorance should not be underestimated and the fact that many participants experienced transformative moments that resulted in new awareness, is an encouraging sign for white youth.

Final note

If we take seriously the points of prominent writers in this study, the consensus seems to be that social transformation requires proper engagement with the past. This should be a process that stirs up emotion and leads white people to a recognition that their social standing is unfounded and a consequence of gross injustices originating in past. Moreover, it doesn't take much reflection to see that contemporary life has not changed in some fundamental ways.
What does a young person do with such an insight?

I argue in this thesis that the first goal is for young white people to have an insight such as this. This means navigating through all the intricate defences that protect white people from seeing their complicity and privilege. Thereafter, it is about being accountable as a white person, which must lead to a different way of being in everyday life. This speaks to changes that have been presented in this study in the area of self and identity.

Fundamentally as Vice (2010) has pointed out, the white identity is "morally damaged". We can think about this moral conundrum in relation to Freeman's story of the Worcester fire. His point being that often, moral changes require "big" events in the social domain that bring the "priority of the other" into focus. The student movement can be conceived as such an event in the ways that white students have had to take the experiences of black students more seriously. If these participants are representative of the broader group of white students then these findings suggest, that the "priority of the other" is in clearer focus.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Narrative Interview Schedule

Interview questions

1a. What were some of your experiences in the #FeesMustFall campaign? These might have directly have involved yourself or someone you know or perhaps something that you witnessed during this time?
1b. [Follow up question asking more on details and time periods.]
2a. If you were involved in the Union building march, could you tell me a story about your experience with this?
2b. [Follow up question asking more on details and time periods.]
3a. Could you say something about your experience on campus during this time?
3b. [Follow up question asking more on details and time periods.]

Interview prompts

a. Could you tell me more about (spoken about experience of interest)?
b. What happened after/ before/during that time?
c. Related to (specific point) can you think of a story that involved yourself or someone you know or perhaps something that you witnessed during this time?

Appendix B: Participant information Letter and consent form

Dear Student

My name is Ryan Klette and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I will be conducting as part of my Masters degree under the supervision of Prof. Jill Bradbury.

What is the purpose of this study?

To explore white student experiences during the time of #FeesMustFall and related campaigns. My study focuses on white students because although they have been less central to the movement, they have also been deeply affected by it.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be invited to a research interview to share your experiences of any of the Student movements that you feel to talk about. These might include amongst others #FeesMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch and #RhodesMustFall.

Will participating in this study put me at risk or cause me any inconvenience?

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions that you would prefer not to answer. If you choose to be in the study and feel any discomfort as a result of participating, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time. If you want the data in which you appear to be withdrawn from the study, even after the interviewing and recording is complete, you can request withdrawal at any time by contacting me directly.

I am asking that you allow me to audio-record the interview. I will set up audio recording equipment so that it will not distract any participant during the session and recordings from the study will be used for research purposes only.

What will the recordings be used for?

The recordings will serve as the dataset for my Masters research project and may subsequently be prepared for presentation at professional research conferences and or publication in scholarly journals or books.

Will the information I give be confidential?

You may be concerned that the things you say or do during the interview might be made public and used against you in some way. I want to reassure you that your identity will be kept private and you will not be personally identified in any research reports or presentations that are made available to public audiences. The researcher will transcribe the recordings and all personal names will be excluded from the transcript. Therefore you will not be identifiable from the transcriptions.

If you happen to feel that some things you say in the interview are very unique to your situation, you may make your identity somewhat apparent, be assured that none of this information will be made obvious in the transcript. Pseudonyms will be used, as will any other tool to mask any identifying information.

The recordings will not be destroyed following the completion of the study, as they will remain potentially useful for an indefinite period of time. However, they will be kept in a locked storage area and / or on a password protected computer. Only approved research personnel will have access to them and only for research purposes.

Will I be paid to participate?

You will not receive any payment for participating in the study.

Rights of research participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this research study.

How can I get in contact with the investigators?

Ryan Klette
Phone: 082 552 0619
E Mail: ryanklette@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof: Jill Bradbury
Phone: (011) 717 4515
E Mail: jill.bradbury@Wits.ac.za

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

If any questions you have about this research have been answered to your satisfaction, and you would like to participate in the research, please print your name and sign below.

In addition, please choose how you will allow recordings in which you appear to be used, by indicating below in which contexts you are willing to have such be played (check all boxes that apply). Please remember that you may be identifiable to people who know you and who may be in the audience when the recordings are played.

☐ Presentations delivered at scientific research conferences

☐ Classroom settings for the purposes of student instruction

☐ Public lectures

_____

Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

Appendix C: Consent for the use of recording devices

I, _____, consent to being interviewed by

_____for his study on Student experiences of Student Movements in 2015 which will be tape-recorded.

I understand that:

☐ The audio recordings and transcripts will only be seen or heard by the researcher and his supervisor.

☐ My real name will not be used in the transcripts or the research report, but will be replaced by a false name.

☐ Audio recordings of the interviews will not be destroyed, unless participants request that the tape of their recordings be destroyed.

☐ Recordings will be securely stored in a lock up facility or on a password protected computer.

_____

Signed

_____