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Young White student's experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context

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Young White student's experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African Context

A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
(Clinical psychology)
of
The University of the Witwatersrand

by

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Supervised by

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Declaration of Originality

I, Khanya Phiwe Lufele, declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own original work and that all fieldwork was undertaken by me. Any part of this study that does not reflect my own ideas has been fully acknowledged in the form of citations. No part of this thesis has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, or is to be submitted for a degree at any other university.

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30 May 2021

Date

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To my colleagues and friends, thank you for all the meals we shared, the aimless walks arounds campus (peak anxiety) and all the laughter that filled the room whenever we gathered.

Abstract

This research report focusses on the experiences of young white students of the increased conscientization of black youth in the South African context. Five white students were recruited through snowball sampling. The interviews that were conducted with the participants were semi structured and explored what the students' experiences were. The project made use of interpretive phenomenological analysis in collecting and analyzing the data. The theoretical framework underpinning this study is Critical Race Theory.

The data collected from the participants revealed that young white students feel a sense of diminished belonging within the University community in light of the increased conscientization of black youth. There is a sense that young white students feel let down by previous white generations as they have largely felt unprepared for the demands of the black student movement.

Participants accounts revealed a limited understanding of the daily struggles of many black students which leads to white students viewing their places at universities as assured and legitimate while viewing black students' places as a product of a transformative agenda which makes them less legitimate. There also is a feeling of voicelessness and alienation from the student movement, the student community and even the country which leads to them considering leaving the country as they feel unrepresented.

The participants reflected on the irreconcilable approaches to understanding race that are experienced from childhood where there is a view that black people are subhuman but also good enough for child rearing. Most participants experienced deep connections to their domestic helpers which has made it hard to reconcile with the status of black people within society. Secondary to this is the experience of black youth who exist outside of the confines of their privileged spaces, who are not interacting with white youth for their benefit or comfort and through whom these white youth experience black rage. Lastly, young white students also expressed a desire to belong to a social justice movement and in turn equate the black student movement to other social justice movements such as gender-based violence, climate change and health which they feel they can belong to.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction and rationale

1.1 Introduction

This research project focuses on the experiences of young white students considering the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. In the South African context, there has been a fairly recent and vibrant interest and participation of black youth in the political landscape of the country (Chetty & Knaus, 2016). In their paper, Chetty and Knaus explore the ways in which the student population in many ways shifted something within higher education in South Africa when they took to streets to protest a number of issues such as high university fees and other barriers to accessing higher education such as language policies at universities, structural inequalities and colonial symbols on university campuses.

This has become a particular area of interest that researchers, across multiple disciplines, have endeavoured to delve into with the aim of producing literature that deepens the understanding of both student activism in the current climate and the racial dynamics of our time (Kwoba, Chantiluke & Nkopo, 2018). Habib (2016) states that a vibrant student participation was able to achieve, in a matter of a few months, what political and academic leaders have been unable to achieve through years of efforts at transforming the higher education sector. He states that students were able to centre the transformation of higher education in both the minds of the general public as well as political spaces far removed from the higher education space.

Historically, South African universities, much like all other aspects in South Africa, were racialised. This meant that access to and participation in these spaces was reserved for white students. In post-apartheid South Africa, however, access to the university space has diversified and, in its diversity, has granted more access for black students to participate in them. Although black people have been granted access to these spaces to a large extent they remain “white spaces” and consequently white students have continued to enjoy a greater sense of belonging within them. The student movements are also, consequently, challenging ideas of who belongs in these spaces. With this in mind, there has been, a glaring paucity of

research exploring the experiences of young white students which would provide rich data in understanding the complexities and racial dynamics of our time.

1.2 Background and Rationale

South Africa has had a long and complicated history of oppression. It can be traced back as far as the arrival of the Dutch East Indian company at the shores of the Cape in 1652 (Thompson, 2001). This is generally accepted as the first time that South Africa had contact with the concept and later very real lived experience of racism. Racism is structured by collective racial beliefs and can be defined as:

> "An ideology through which the domination or marginalization of certain racialized groups by another racialized group or groups is enacted and legitimated. It is a set of ideas and discursive and material practices aimed at (re)producing and justifying systematic inequalities between racialized groups". (Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey, & Seedat, 2001, p. 2).

This led to a deep system of colonialism which subsequently established the apartheid system wherein racism, both overt and systematic, arranged South African society (Duncan & Bowman, 2009). This system lawfully remained in effect for about 50 years. Despite its official termination in 1991, in preparation for the first democratic elections in 1994, the consequences of these systems are still deeply entrenched and felt in South Africa. Twenty five years into the democratic dispensation, South Africa remains characterized by racialized determinants of social interaction, division and identity (Duncan & Bowman, 2009). In this context, entrenched patterns of privilege and poverty remain ingrained across racial categories as a result of legislated and systematic racism that continue to infiltrate the very fibre of society. The lethal impact of racism in South Africa has not only caused racialized inequality but a host of psychological problems (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). The malignant consequences of apartheid are still vividly evident beyond its official end in 1991.

More recently there has been an active interest and participation of young black South Africans in political engagement across the country (Kwoba, Chantiluke, & Nkopo, 2018). Often described as the born free generation, those who are born

during and after the democratic elections have not experienced change and understand that race struggles continue. This has become more and more evident within the growing conscientisation of black South Africans and the public interest in the transformative/decolonial agenda. The #RhodesMustFall protests which gained momentum internationally at institutions such as Oxford University are a recent example of the expression of the conscientisation of black youth in South Africa (Kwoba, Chantiluke, & Nkopo, 2018).

Another such example would be the #FeesMustFall movement of 2015/16 that sparked heated debates on fee increases in universities. The movement was not solely based on the affordability of higher education but was rooted in the idea and demand of a decolonized educational system, transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities, as well as insourcing of general workers (Langa, Ndelu, Edwin & Vilakazi, 2017).

This increased conscientisation in black South African youth can be understood through the work of Steve Biko and later writers who define conscientisation as a process that is deemed unique to human beings as they consciously engage in and with the world (Freire, 1998). The capability of transforming the world through understanding, reflection, action and the expression of reality through language is only possible through the will of the people (Freire, 1998).

Freire, a Brazilian educator, authored the pedagogy of the oppressed which is based on critical pedagogy studies that investigate the role education systems play in perpetuating social dissonance and therefore explores how schools can contribute to social change (Eskell-Blokland, 2012). Freire saw education as a means of emancipating the oppressed from their circumstances, however the participation of the oppressed for liberation is paramount (Freire, 2005). Conscientisation therefore entails a reflective function that is incumbent upon the individual living in the world and reflecting upon this very existence within the world and questioning the relationship engaged in with the world (Freire, 1998).

In the South African context, transformative policies have often been used as proof that society has transformed (Essed, 1991). This is in contrast with what the daily lived realities of many people in this country are. The denial of current racial

dynamics has largely sustained hegemonic structures through ignorance and a lack of willingness to cede racialized power on the side of those who have power.

The changes in political systems have ensured that legislative change occurs and in so doing has diminished the privilege and power of whiteness (Straker, 2011; Suchet, 2007). The political system no longer discriminating based on race has meant that whiteness has also changed in social scope. This means that there have been changes in the meanings that are attributed to whiteness. These changes have the potential of being experienced as unjust especially because political and legislative systems have changed post 1994 (Straker, 2011).

The loss of political power, however, has not filtered through to many social areas which sustains the social impact of whiteness. This has lead to a diminished capacity to identify and acknowledge that whiteness sustains its hegemonic influences at a social and economic level (Suchet, 2007). In post apartheid South Africa, the positionality of whiteness has become more subtle and as a result it has become easier for white people to disengage in social discourse due to political and legislative changes.

The narrative of the increased conscientisation of black youth is therefore polarized and has also incited an anxiety in predominantly white South African spaces. In addition to this, there is a growing narrative of a perceived white genocide in South Africa (Newman, 2012; Van Der Merwe, 2013; Gilbert & Hook, 2015) and that there is a gap in knowledge production around the root of this anxiety and what it means for the democratic future of South Africa.

While there is ongoing research exploring black students processes through higher education activism (Pillay, 2016; Hodes, 2017; Naicker, 2016; Langa, Ndelu, Edwin & Vilakazi, 2017; Xaba, 2017; Molefe, 2016) there is a glaring lack of exploration into the white experience of increased conscientisation of black youth that is represented through higher education activism. This exploration would be crucial for gaining rich, textured insight into the interaction between black and white youth and further open up spaces to critically engage with race issues in a racialized society. Literature on whiteness does suggest that there are 1) engagements within white circles about race and race relations but that most of these expressions are reserved for white spaces and not meaningfully engaged with at a holistic level (Verwey & Quayle,

2012) and 2) an ignorance contract that suggests that the marginalized history of South Africa is not engaged with and snubbed as external to the individual and not any of their doing so non-existent (Steyn, 2012).

With this in mind the research explored how young white students at the University of Witwatersrand experience themselves in such a context and climate. The research contributes to the body of knowledge already generated of post-apartheid South Africa but also explored how young white South African students at the University of the Witwatersrand experience the growing and nuanced conscientisation of black South African youth and their expression of this conscientisation. The research explored how the participants experience the increased conscientisation of black youth, how they make sense of themselves in the current political climate and what role they play in activism. The focus of this study being a historically privileged group and their experience of a historically disadvantaged groups activism, contributes to existing literature on post-apartheid South Africa and student activism (Pillay, 2016; Hodes, 2017; Naicker, 2016; Langa, Ndelu, Edwin & Vilakazi, 2017; Xaba, 2017; Molefe, 2016).

1.3 Research aims and objectives

For the purposes of this research, it is important to locate the history of South Africa within it's colonial and apartheid history as a way of understanding the racial dynamics mirrored within the student activism. Mbembe (2015) asserts that the current socio-political state of South Africa reflects old problems within the system that have remained unresolved and continue to persist for generations growing up in post-apartheid South Africa. As such, South Africa, as a young democracy, has recently witnessed a rapid evolution of political views and an increase in the conscientisation of black youth (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This can be understood as the black youths efforts at resisting colonial systems that have persisted well into post-colonial times.

Defined as "the patterns of power that remain embedded in post-colonial society long after colonialism" Maldonado-Torres (2007, p.243) points us to the glaring reality that colonialism is still maintained in society through knowledge systems that originate in colonialism and have largely been normalised at the expense of other indigenous knowledge systems. Student activist movements then, call for decolonisation in an

effort to undo colonial systems that still persist in society and higher education (Mbembe, 2015). The idea of decolonisation is embedded in the imagining of power and knowledge existing outside of the bounds of colonialism though still being immersed within colonialism.

The call for decolonisation in university spaces, challenges the ideas of who belongs and who doesn't belong in historically white institutions of higher learning. The main aim of this study is to understand young white student's experiences of the increased conscientisation in young black people. The objective of the study is to explore how young, white, South African university students understand the history of South Africa and their place within this history, how they understand black youth who are engaging in activism in higher education and what kind of roles they see themselves in in light of the increased conscientisation of black youth

1.4 Chapter outline

This research report consists of 6 chapters. Chapter one introduces the research, provided a rationale and has discussed the aims and objectives of the study.

The second chapter explores literature that is available offering insights on issues of race, racism as well as student activism. The third chapter outlines the theoretical framework, critical race theory. The methodological framework used to analyse and interpret the accounts of the participants' experiences is presented in chapter four.

Chapter five presents the findings and discussion. This chapter identifies major themes that emerged from the stories and experiences of the participants. The study explores three main themes: whiteness and belonging, interactions with black people as well as social justice. These themes emerged from the data collected from participants through one-on-one interviews and are explored in the context of the subthemes that emerged.

Chapter six provides a conclusion and reflexivity. The reflexivity section is included in the final section of this thesis as opposed to the methods section because of the data that emerged in the research. The data that emerged from required the discussion to unfold prior to the researcher's reflexivity as some of the data that emerges in the discussion feeds into the researcher's reflexivity section. Finally, the limitations and recommendations of this research are also discussed.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As has been iterated previously, the aim of this research is to explore the experiences of young white students behind the backdrop of an increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context, more particularly in the university/academic space. Chapter 2 briefly touches on some of the concepts that help to create a well-rounded picture of the current existing racial landscape. This chapter will proceed by discussing the literature on the notions and concepts that underpin and accompany a heightened black conscientisation and what that means for privileged white students within higher education in the South African context.

More particularly, this chapter will interact with literature on concepts such as black consciousness, provide a brief historical narrative of black consciousness in South Africa, and continue with discussions on white supremacy, identity and belonging.While the research is focused on how white students at universities are experiencing black student activism, the discussion of the black experience is justified as it creates the backdrop and the context within which the white student experience exists.

2.2 A brief historical narrative of black consciousness in South Africa

The history of oppression in South Africa can be traced to the arrival of Dutch settlers who established themselves in the Cape Colony in 1652 (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). Since then, black South Africans experienced grave losses within their culture, religion, political freedoms and overall way of life at the hand of the oppressors. A little under 400 years later, legislative means were introduced and used to significantly frustrate the social and economic standing of the black community. Through statutes such at the Black Land Act of 1913, the black majority, which comprises 87% of South Africans, was pushed out into demarcated pieces of land making up only 13 % of the total land area in South Africa, most of which was not arable (Kloppers & Piennar, 2014). This affected the economic position of black

South Africans who depended on agriculture and farming as a way of sustenance and development.

Furthermore, when racism was formally institutionalized in South Africa when the National Party came into power in 1948 (Changuion & Steenkamp 2012). Black consciousness became the response of the black community – this was a continuation of the struggle for national liberation that had been waged by liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and South African Communist Party (SACP) (Dolamo, 2017). A significant era arose between the years of 1960–1990 as these were exceptionally challenging years for the liberation movements. Many had to go into exile after the very significant 1976 student uprisings took place, while others were imprisoned (Brotz, 1977; Davenport, 1987; Lodge 1983; Motsoko 1984).

Some four decades later in 2015, South African universities experienced an outburst of student protests, more commonly known as the #MustFall protests (Nyamnjoh, 2017). At the core of these lay the outcry of black, historically disadvantaged students, to radically transform and decolonize the education system in South African universities- in a bid to recalibrate the white supremist system that seemed to forever barricade and exclude black people at every turn. This outpour of activism may have been exacerbated by the fact that since the end of the oppressive and racist apartheid system in 1994, the landscape still looks the same. Epistemologies and knowledge systems at most South African universities have not considerably changed; they remain rooted in colonial, apartheid and Western worldviews and epistemological traditions. The curriculum remains largely Eurocentric and continues to reinforce white and western dominance and privilege (Nyamnjoh, 2017).

2.3 Black consciousness and black conscientisation

The notion of black consciousness has been described as the phenomenon that represents the quest by black people to claim particular values as their own. Conscientisation is concerned with the collectivizing of black people who believe in their potential and value as black people and educate themselves and others of the experiences of black people while also working together for the holistic liberation of black people. This phenomenon also proposes a political strategy for doing so

(Khoapa, 1972). In South Africa, its movements were initiated and founded by Stephen Bantu Biko (Stubbs 1978; Wilson 1991), who has been instrumental in shaping what black South African movements look like in the present day. In his definition of black consciousness, he says (1978, p.92):

> "(it) is an attitude of mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time. Its essence is the realization by the black man of the need to rally with his brothers around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It is based on a self-examination which has ultimately led them to believe that by seeking to run away from themselves and emulate the white man, they are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black" (Stubbs 1978, p.92).

Drawing from the above definition, the importance of affirmations of self and quests of self-determination can be deduced. Additionally, the notion requires black people to positively establish their own set of values, norms, systems and cultures that are significant and important to the black culture as a whole- in and of themselves, thereby rejecting all value systems that seek to reduce their human dignity (Khoapa, 1972). It also requires of black people, a raised sense of self-awareness alongside the realization of the power they hold in community through solidarity. By that reasoning, group cohesion and solidarity become fundamental and intrinsic characteristics of the concept.

Black consciousness speaks to the identity of the black community; their sense of self and also their sense of belonging. These aspects make up more than just the outward or physical black experience. Instead, they speak to the psyche of the black person as well, thus including his psychology and thought processes. Therefore, black consciousness can be deemed to have an impact that supercedes the body, straight to the soul i.e the place where the mind, will and emotions exist. Stubbs (1978) for example, iterated that:

> “The central contention of black consciousness philosophy was that resignation to racial domination was rooted in self-hatred and this had major political implications: the black person’s low sense of self-esteem fostered political disunity, allowed ethnic leaders and other moderates to usurp the role of spokespersons for the black masses, and encourage a dependence on white leadership. Conversely, a heightened sense of racial awareness would encourage greater solidarity and mobilize mass commitment to the process of liberation” (Stubbs 1978, p.100).

The psychological impact of oppression and racism on the black community cannot therefore be separated from the study of black consciousness.

2.4 Whiteness

2.4.1 South African features of whiteness

While the apartheid era officially ended in 1994, the racial categories that were associated with it can still be experienced through discourses and practices in contemporary life (Klette, 2018). Racist discourses no longer receive public support, and the implication this has is that society has undergone radical transformation post-democracy. This view is problematic because it is not an entirely true reflection of society and as Klette states, it instead works to “keep power imbalances from being identified and exposed to the forces of change” (Klette, 2018). Ergo, in line with Klette’s thinking, it also begs the question whether apartheid can truly be considered a phenomenon of the past if its roots are still (howsoever loosely) in the same place in which they were during the height of the regime.

On paper, the appearance of apartheid may have diminished significantly, but the lived realities of many suggest a very real, intangible and hegemonic presence of a white supremacy. In this way, racial dynamics are again denied and hidden from full view. Such denial perpetuates the maintenance of those hegemonic structures that silently uphold the status quo (Klette,2018).

Other authors (Suchet, 2007) express the change in the power dynamic within political systems since apartheid. 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. While this may be true, one could argue that the political system is not the only contributor to racism, as racist nuances can be found in every structural aspect of South African life and society- more particularly (and for the purposes of this study), universities. As has been mentioned above that racism and oppression have had impacts beyond the physical or structural dynamic of the black community, the research therefore submits that the political system, regardless of the power shift does not provide for an adequate yardstick by which to measure the eradication of racism.

Suchet (2007) contends that a by-product of the 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. Sitze (2012) defines melancholic disposition as “the indispensable condition of possibility for the transmission of sublime inheritances, for the conversion of the self into one of those technical apparatuses that is able to operate as a device for the transmissibility of tradition”. Freud additionally defines melanchonia as “a refusal to accept the ‘verdict of reality’, to acknowledge the loss of an object” (Truscott and Donker, 2017).

Moreover, the loss of power and privilege can be experienced as an unjust process (Suchet, 2007). Therefore, in a very real way, it is possible that white South African university students who are privileged, may be experiencing a sense of loss over what they know to be their norm. Straker (2011) points out that white power has diminished in real terms while white privilege is still applicable and experienced in numerous spheres of South African life. This as Klette (2018) has mentioned, has made it increasingly difficult to expose white hegemonic influences and undertones, thus rendering it easier for white people to disengage from conversations concerning white privilege, on account of the political and legislative changes that have occurred since 1994.

This offers some level of insight into the reasoning behind the resistance of white people of the social positioning of whiteness and its privileges. The refusal and/or resistance by white people to acknowledge racial power imbalances speaks also to their potential desire to retain the status quo, ie to perpetuate the sense of

melancholia by clutching onto what remains from the sense of loss of power they experienced. Weis and Fine (1996) contend that awareness relies on naming the properties of whiteness, which has the effect of unsettling the existing power dynamics. They provide that “naming whiteness displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself and effect of its dominance” (Weis and Fine,1996, p.6).

2.4.2 The position of the apartheid beneficiary

One of the greatest criticisms that have been expressed against the redressing of South Africa’s historical past is that much of the work of reconciliation has not changed the position of the beneficiaries of apartheid. Young white students currently still enjoy the fruit of a broken past, while their black counterparts continue to endure the burden of the same said past. While some would argue that since they did not have an actual hand in the outworkings of apartheid, they ought not carry the mantle of responsibility, some authors (Schaffer & Smith, 2006) disagree, stating that part of their inheritance as translated in a new, democratic South Africa includes holding the responsibilities of their inheritance. As to what these responsibilities look like may vary in each case or situation, and in the academic space i.e universities, this research submits that this would look like an intentionality by white students in ‘holding the door open’ for other black underprivileged South African students, as well as creating open spaces of having difficult conversations with black students in safe, neutral surroundings.

The research also poses a question as to whether young white South African university students, who have had their experiences of black youth activism, feel a moral or ethical duty or obligation towards black underprivileged students to stand in solidarity with them, in a bid to play their part in correcting the injustices of the past. In other words, assuming that the apartheid beneficiaries understand the extent of injustice experienced by their black counterparts, has there been any conscientisation on their part, of the vital role they can potentially play in the eradication of segregation?

For example, Schaffer and Smith (2006) mentioned the following, that:

> “many of those who suffered structural and systemic violence accused those who benefited from it of amnesia, denial, and (often blind) complicity. They demanded that beneficiaries respond ethically by admitting their culpability and taking responsibility. Many white South Africans refused the call. Others […] were able to empathize with victims after hearing their stories, and broke through silence and denial to face their own shameful past. In so doing, they could understand themselves as complicit with some aspects of perpetrator violence or acknowledge the ways in which they directly and indirectly benefited from the suffering of others. Those who responded empathetically, in other words, recognized themselves in the position of privileged beneficiary of other people's suffering’.” (Schaffer & Smith, 2006, p.121)

Guaging from the above quote, it becomes a pertinent question whether the sense of denial and outright refusal of culpability, has become the inheritance of the young white South Africans, and whether this is reflected in the manner with which they engage (or refrain from engaging) black youth activism on university campuses. Krog, in her reconciliation memoir, Country of my Skull, heeds the call for witnesses of other people's suffering to rethink their own positions as beneficiaries of South African apartheid. She additionally states that victims for forgiveness. She also implies through her poetic work that white belonging in the new democratic South Africa can only be granted by others, and that the beneficiary self must be made vulnerable to the other who suffered.

Krog presents the white person as not only a beneficiary of apartheid, but also as one whose place in post democratic South Africa remains an uncertain no (white) man’s land, into which she and others like her have not experienced the pleasure of being invited. Furthermore, her body of work explores the extent of unsettledness of identity experienced by her as an apartheid beneficiary.

Krog’s work gives insight into some of the white experiences, particularly those marked with a sense of white guilt and feelings of loss. This notion could very well be the feeling of many young white South African students, ie a sense of loss in what they have known to be their idea of normalcy. There is also room for an inner conflict to arise within apartheid beneficiaries, upon the realization that their sense of normalcy was built on the pain and oppression of a majority ethnicity.

In other words, a white student might ask himself, outside of the marginalization and segregation of the black student for example, what then becomes the social standing/position of the young white student, seeing that his/her privilege derives itself from the maintenance of an oppressive white supremacy? Where the tables are being overturned, what is the place of the white student in the context of the academic space? That being said, the potential for harboured feelings of displacement may exist, and while very real, the research submits that they cannot be regarded to pale in comparison to those experienced by black underprivileged students. It is also this comparison of feelings eg that black students have had it far, far worse, that often negates the experiences of the white student, and shuts down the channels of communication.

2.4.3 White guilt

While there has been no singular, authoritative operational definition of white guilt, it has generally been understood to be motivated by the recognition of unearned and unfair racial privileges, the acknowledgement of personal racist attitudes or behavior, and/or the sense of responsibility for others' racist attitudes or behavior (Grzanka, Frantell, and Fassinger, 2020). It is also made up of a cocktail of mixed consequences which are known to correspond with antiracist attitudes and behavior on the one hand, while on the other, may motivate defensiveness and disengagement. The notion of white guilt carries emotions at the center, and psychologists have explored the extent to which feeling remorse about racism and racial inequality facilitates or inhibits antiracist attitudes and behavior (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999).

Feagin (2013) for example, in his work with white framing, explores how white people experience their social spaces and how whiteness informs their way of life i.e. within academia, in government, housing. Some of the pillars of white racial framing included denying that inequalities are due to racial forces and disavowing individual or collective responsibility for racial stratification, or in other words what is commonly referred to as power evasion (Awad, Brooks, Flores, and Bluemel 2013). So, on the extreme side of the pendulum there exist a group of white people that experience a sense of white guilt and shame, while on the other extreme there exist those whose

emotions associate with denial and refusal; those who discuss racism in the passive voice i.e., it occurred, but no one is responsible (Gonzalez Van Cleve, 2016).

Beyond the two extremes exists another feature of whiteness known as white fragility. DiAngelo (2018) describes it as 'the affective strategies white people use to hijack, deflect, or co-opt difficult conversations about race and racism', and he additionally argues that this racialized form of fragility is inextricable from the concept of white guilt. While the construct itself remains unclearly defined, it does remain somewhat ambivalent in its ability to predict certain antiracist attitudes, such as support for compensatory affirmative action programs (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer et al., 2003; Leach, Iyer, & Pedersen, 2006).

Some psychologists have agreed however that a sense of guilt can be good insofar as it promotes prosocial behavior, which motivates psychologists to classify guilt as a "moral emotion" (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Tangney et al., 2007). A question that can be posed is whether any or all of these attributes are being experienced by white students in South African universities, and if so, to what varying extents.

2.5 Identity

As a starting point, Jenkins (2014) defines identity as the "human capacity- rooted in language- to know who's who (and hence what's what). It involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on" (Jenkins, 2014:6). It is the multi-dimensional mapping of the human world and our place in it, as individuals and members of collectivities (Asthon et al.,2004). Other authors have additionally agreed to the multi-layered nature of identity. For example, Hall (1996), highlights the varied nature of identity, while 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 (Klette,2018). 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.

2.6 Social desirability bias

Research has found that there has been a significant decline in the proportion of white Americans expressing anti-black prejudice (Kluegel & Smith 1986; Krysan 2011; Schuman et al. 1997). Additionally, the percentage of whites agreeing with the statement that African Americans “should have as good a chance as white people to get any job” rose from 45 in 1942 to 97 in 1972 (Schuman et al. 1997, p.104). Similarly, the percentage of survey respondents saying that they oppose residential segregation and favor principles of equal treatment has also increased sharply (Bobo 2001; Krysan 2011).

These examples may be attributed to the evidence of rising liberalism, however some authors have disagreed, stating that such decline in openly expressing racist attitudes in social settings , is due to the growing norms against it (Devine 1989; Sears & Henry 2005). These growing norms then pressure people to respond in a certain acceptable way, which is not a true reflection of the way they feel. In social interactions, people strive to present themselves in a favorable light (Goffman 1959). As a result, people are thought to refrain from reporting potentially embarrassing opinions and behaviors, a tendency referred to as impression management social desirability bias (Paulhus 1984, 1986, 2002; Paulhus & Reid 1991).

This bias emerges most powerfully when a person is asked to reveal something that is highly tinged with social desirability implications in situations where the revelation can be directly observed by people who cannot necessarily be trusted to refrain from passing judgment. Therefore, in the face of black activism, white students may be especially motivated to present themselves in favorable ways. Owing to the fact that

an increased black conscientisation directly impacts their sense of belonging and unsettles their identity, it would not be farfetched to draw the conclusion that a percentage of white students may not agree with black student activism/ protests.

2.7 A sense of belonging

To simplify understanding of belonging, Yuval-Davis notes that it would be useful to differentiate between three major analytical levels on which belonging is constructed. The first level concerns social locations; the second relates to individuals' identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings; the third relates to ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging/s (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The student movement provides a contemporary example that has shaken up various attachments of belonging among young people in general. More specifically, in determining belong with regards to who9te students, it can be drawn that the student movements have rattled what seemed a safe and solid space (sense of belonging) that whiteness has afforded many white students in university spaces.

For example, Robus and Macloed (2006) found that in Rhodes University and University of Fort Hare staff and students alike held whiteness as the standard ideal, and both universities also held discourses of white excellence and also black failure. Moreover, black students reported a sense of having to continually overachieve in relation to their white counterparts and highlighted their struggle to be recognised on the basis of merit alone (Robus & Macloed, 2006). These findings highlight the historical themes of universities being spaces to which white people belong and in which white people can succeed, and spaces in which black students must strive to fit in- further pinpointing the structural decolonisation for which the recent student movements were protesting against.

Belonging also implies the acquisition of moral orientations that have implications on justice (Clayton and Opotow, 2003). In this way, identity can be linked to justice because identity informs belonging, which connects individuals to group values that

tell us who to care about. Identity therefore determines for whom justice matters (Clayton & Opotow, 2003).

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, and the converse is true. 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. There are psychological boundaries that make it possible for people to cause harm to one another as a result of falling outside of one's moral group community. (Clayton & Opotow 2003).

With respect to the research, it is noteworthy to highlight the fact that in light of the student movements, what initially constituted the boundary of exclusion/the othering aspect, is changing for the context of white students, as a direct consequence of the evolving student movement.

2.8 Concluding Remarks: Not so black and white?

The passage of time has seen the emergence of a trend where the racist undertones do not diminish but evolve to suite the current climate of the time. This is also evidenced through, for example white peoples' use of offensive and degrading names to refer to black people. These too have evolved over time. Because of the shape shifting nature of the concept of white supremacy, and the different lens through which it exists and can be experienced by a group of people, it is not surprising that there has not been one clear cut way or solution of effectively combating the inheritances of apartheid. This is also owing to the multi-faceted nature of race in the grander scope of life, society, law, politics and power dynamics.

The current situation within South African universities creates a unique tension. On the one hand, there exist those who are the direct beneficiaries of apartheid, and on the other hand, there are those who are the heirs of the injustices of apartheid. The former group experiences a true sense of loss of power, at the empowerment of the latter group – and all this is taking place in a racially charged time. This most

certainly creates a conundrum. However, owing to the multi-layered nature of the discourse of white supremacy and racism, this research submits that it would then be appropriate to consider a multi-pronged approach to eradicate the effects of such notions.

The decolonization of universities, in order to be effective, must seek to include extended racial diversity education, create inclusive campuses, and prepare students, both black and white, to be active participants in a multicultural democracy and pluralistic global economy. A critical aspect of this decolonization lies also in the educating of white students of their dominant status and position in society. (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Bohmer & Briggs, 1991; Johnson, 2006; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Marshall, 2002; Tatum, 1992).

3. Chapter 3: The Critical Race Theory

3.1 Introduction

As has been mentioned in other chapters, race has historically carried social issues for all aspects of human society. Such issues metamorphose and work their way into the present, everyday life. Most racial inequalities find their greatest manifestation where aspects of opportunity, access and outcomes are concerned- and this happens largely within the educational space (Groves, 2020). This point is relevant since the context of the research considers the changing or perhaps, tumultuous tides of race and inequality against the backdrop of a university setting.

This chapter will discuss the concept race and of the critical race theory (CRT) and the ways in which it has continued to outwork itself practically in the tertiary education system in South Africa, more particularly Witswatersrand University, as the area of the study. The chapter will offer detailed definitions of the theory, as well as a brief history of the concept. Additionally, discussions of its tenets will be made and will also provide some of the criticisms which have been leveled against the theory. The chapter will conclude by presenting potential solutions and recommendations, some of which are frameworks which critical race theorists have put together in an attempt to develop the way in which CRT can inform educational leadership, with the hopes of eliminating racial inequality in the university space.

3.2 Race and racism

Racism is the design of a collection of racial beliefs that stem from viewing other races that are different from one's own, as being inferior. One definition of racism is that it is:

"An ideology through which the domination or marginalization of certain racialized groups by another racialized group or groups is enacted and legitimated. It is a set of ideas and discursive and material practices aimed at (re)producing and justifying systematic inequalities between racialized groups". (Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey, & Seedat, 2001, p. 2).

In the United States, counselling psychologists have developed a longstanding program of research that has exposed how emotions shape White people's experiences of racism. Specifically, Spanierman and Heppner (2004) coined the psychosocial costs of racism to whites to describe white individuals' affective experiences of racism. Notably, Spanierman and her colleagues do not suggest racism and white supremacy hurt white people in the same ways racism creates systemic disadvantage for people of colour (i.e., so-called reverse racism). Rather, they argue racism has specific psychological consequences for White people (Spanierman, Beard, & Todd, 2012). These psychological costs may exhibit different patterns or types (Spanierman et al., 2012) and may shift over time (Spanierman, Todd, & Anderson, 2009; Todd, Spanierman, & Poteat, 2011), and they can lead to increased awareness of privilege (Garriott, Reiter, & Brownfield, 2015).

The impact of racism in South Africa has produced devastating outcomes, including a plethora of psychological problems (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). With regard to social standing and the availability of opportunity, Barnes (2013) argues that race remains a significant social marker for opportunity and access to resources. However, some authors (Gallagher, 2003; Sayyid, 2010) have opined that South Africa has entered a post-race period where race has generally become less salient. These arguments revolve around the idea that black people are increasingly taking positions of power and have more equal access to opportunity.

Gallagher (2003) states that one of the more prevalent characteristics of a 'post-race' society is the notion of colour blindness, which implies that seeing colour is a matter of choice, and that opportunity is open to all, regardless of the colour of their skin. The problem however with colour blindness is that it undermines the crippling effects that white power or privilege have had on the black person. This will be critiqued in the following sections.

Similarly in South Africa, van Dijk (1992) makes the point that owing to the socio-political changes that took place post 1994, a common misconception undertaken by the beneficiaries of apartheid is that racial discrimination in the new South Africa is an individual deviation from the norm rather than a highly systemic pertinent social issue, thus implying that racial discrimination is an exception, as opposed to the

'norm'. Additionally, this misunderstanding serves as an example of misplaced, post-race thinking.

Due to its increasingly covert nature, and the new ways in which it manifests in contemporary life, racism is proving more and more difficult to pin point. While previously, more overt examples could be directly named and easily spotted, the monster that is racism seems to unfortunately be evolving with the times. Van Dijk (1992) for example, 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.

3.2.1 The effects of a racist legacy

According to Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "the issue of race [in the US] is endemic; it is deeply ingrained in American life through historical consciousness and ideological choices about race which then influence and shape societal structures and functions such as discourse and rhetoric" (). Much like the American stance, South Africa has also inherited a legacy that is plagued with racism, segregation and oppression. One of the effects of a racist legacy is its ability to metamorphose and justify its way through the generations, in more subtle ways than in the previous instance. Bonilla–Silva for example highlights that one of the ways in which white people seek to maintain their white dominance is through a colourblindness to racism. He defines it as an ideology that acquired "cohesiveness and dominance in the late 1960s, [and] explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics", and states that it operates by constructing a social reality for people of color in its practices that are subtle, institutional, and apparently nonracial.

The flaw of this race rhetoric is that it still supports a hierarchical racialized status quo that maintains white privilege and superiority. It also maintains a means of explaining people of color's social standing in biological and moral terms. For example, colour blindness could be used in a way that explains away the under representation of black people in higher education because of erroneous beliefs about inferior intelligence due to biological factors such as smaller brain size and unfavorable breeding. In this way, racism has evolved from "blaming-the-victim" type of practices based on biological shortcomings, to blaming practices that focus on the victim's so-called shortcomings rooted in their culture or ethnicity.

On the face of it, it appears clear that colourblind racism is the refusal to see a person's racial make-up, and by that token, a resistance to acknowledge the damning effects that oppression has had on society, thereby perpetuating the highly racialized status quo. In opposition to the post-race narrative, Cooper (2004) argues that race is one of the primary organising principles of inequality in society. He denotes it as being deeply implicated in the production and reproduction of worldviews, thus moulding our perceptions of how we make sense of social life.

Vice (2010) makes the point that since white people generally have the most to lose in confronting racial inequality, it has become too sensitive a subject for people to dialogue with. It follows that racism has therefore adapted to more contemporary and subtler forms that allow its continued existence (Van Dijk, 1992). The relevance of colour blind racism in the context of South Africa's inherited racial past has to do with the way in which it applies in a post democratic era. It is as though the subtle racist nuances persist, and ripple even into the age of democracy. Bonilla–Silva asserts, the ideology of color blindness seems like "racism lite," as it "others" softly and suggests people of color lag behind the success and achievement of whites because they do not work hard enough, do not value ideals of success and achievement, do not take advantage of the equal opportunity available to them, and complain too much while making too many excuses for themselves based on the country's racist past. In response to this "new racism," scholars of color in law created the Critical Race Theory (CRT).

3.3 Critical Race Theory – A Brief History

CRT originated in the field of law and emerged as a reaction against the critical legal studies (CLS) movement due to the failure on the part of CLS to acknowledge how race is a central component to the very systems of law that were being challenged. It is largely informed by civil rights scholarship and feminist thought. CRT was initially introduced into American law schools and used as a thought process that could synthesize multi-disciplinary issues of power, race, and racism to address power imbalances particularly as these are racialized (Garza & Ono, 2019).

While it has been argued that the theory has no identifiable date to which its commencement can be assigned, the foundations of CRT have been linked also to the development of African American thought in the post-civil rights era, that is, from

the 1970s to the present day (Bell, 1980a,b; Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, 206). Other authors (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) have gone further to argue that the roots of CRT back date as far as the turn of the last century with DuBois' (1903) work in "The Souls of Black Folk" (p. 474).

In terms of development of understanding, Tate (1997) indicates in a historical overview of CRT that while interpreting the origins of the theory, he does so openly, thereby allowing room for its critique. He additionally states that it in his view, it is possible to "construct more than one history of this scholarly movement" (p 237). In a similar vein, Solórzano (1998) adds that he does not consider CRT to be a static or uniform concept, but rather one that evolves over time. In support of this, Crenshaw (2011) mentions the following in her historical account of CRT:

"CRT is not so much an intellectual unit filled with natural stuff—theories, themes, practices, and the like—but one that is dynamically constituted by a series of contestations and convergences pertaining to the ways that racial power is understood and articulated in the post-civil rights era....I want to suggest that shifting the frame of CRT toward a dynamic rather than static reference would be a productive means by which we can link CRT's past to the contemporary moment". (p. 1261)

Having considered the above input from the critical race theorists, the research will also continue in the same light, that is, considerations of CRT will be thought of as dynamic, evolving, as well as non-static. The research will also consider the centrality of race in the discussions of CRT, particularly with considerations of the context of South African universities i.e black conscientisation movements in the face of white supremacy and white privilege.

3.4 Definitions of the Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Solórzano (1997, 1998) who draws from Matsuda's (1991) work defines CRT as the work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law, and that works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (Solórzano, 1998, p.1331) In other words Solórzano and Matsuda

explain that the work of CRT is to not only eliminate the social issues brought about by racism, but to recognize that the legal component for racial bias affects more than just the racial aspect of society. It actually spills over into other forms of social inadequacies for specified groups of people. Therefore by placing race as an integral part of the notion, the intended result is such that where issues of race are addressed, they will inadvertently address other existing social justice issues.

According to Garza and Ono (2019) CRT is an intellectual movement that seeks to understand how white supremacy as a legal, cultural, and political condition is reproduced and maintained. While it originated as an extension and critique of the critical legal studies, it now stands on its own as a theory that seeks to be a vehicle for social and political change (Garza and Ono, 2019). The unique feature of this genre of race scholarship is that it does not treat race as an independent variable; instead, it regards race as a site of struggle (Orbe & Allen, 2008, p.209).

CRT in legal studies identified the critical importance of experience and minoritized voices that paved the way for mining counter-stories in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) and in educational leadership (Horsford, 2009, 2010a, 2010b), and how these counter-narratives push back against majoritarian stories. CRT in legal studies argued how seeming legal advances only occurred when they supported white interests at the same time and, in so doing, negated racial progress (Bell, 1980a; interest convergence).

Therefore, the body of work put together by CRT scholars addresses color blindness and argues that ignoring racial differences maintains and perpetuates the “status quo with all of its deeply institutionalized injustices to racial minorities” and insists that “dismissing the importance of race is a way to guarantee that institutionalized and systematic racism continues and even prospers” in the name of a post-race society. (Olson 2011). This can also be considered as being one of the main criticisms of CLS. On the other hand, one of the criticisms that have been identified by CRT scholars that fall in line with Olson’s thinking is the critique of liberal anti-racism, where liberal law reform in this regard tends to treat racism as irrational, aberrational, and intentional. A more detailed discussion of this critique is available below.

The work of the CRT seeks to uncover how law shapes and is shaped by ‘race relations’ across the social plane. One of the advantages of CRT is the fact that it

does not romanticize racism; it instead focuses on real word effects of race and racism, while also highlighting its effects on the bodies, identities, and experiences of people of color. It therefore expounds on how the social condition of racism goes well beyond individual, intentional racist acts and must be understood at institutional, social, economic, political, and historical levels (De La Garza, 2015).

In understanding white supremacy in South Africa at institutional level, it is important to consider the historical means through which it was established, i.e through the enactment of legislation which not only othered the black majority population , but also placed a superiority on whiteness. Some examples of such legislation included the Natives Land Act as well as the Group Areas Act. These Acts of Parliament, alongside others were successful in demarcating areas that would be populated by groups of people according to their skin colour- in a way that frustrated the natural way of life of the black majority, while simultaneously providing a more opulent and rich lifestyle for the minority white people. As mentioned above, the CRT additionally assesses the role which the law plays in perpetuating a white supremacy status quo, as it has been prevalent in South Africa that this has been the case.

This notion of whiteness persists even in the face of a post- democratic South Africa through the way in which institutions of education and information dissemination have not sufficiently transformed to incorporate racial diversity in their student intake, their employees and also in their curriculum and use of their shared/open spaces. Institutions are required to go a step further than merely disfiguring the face of white supremacy; particularly because this kind of monster has its roots that have been long established by the apartheid regime. Ergo, to deface white supremacy is not to deal with the actual issue, but rather to make it go away, if only for a while, or to temporarily appease the social situation. An additional and necessary action would be to affirm the place and positioning of the black students in this case. This could be done by means of returning/restoring and extending the position and the place of black students within university spaces.

CRT scholarship also scrutinizes the production and maintenance and naturalization of white supremacy as a normative and “legitimate” regulatory social regime. Some authors have strongly argued that without increased attention to racial critique, “the ideology of whiteness will remain dominantly depoliticized unless more of such

scholarship is acknowledged, and we recognize the historically embedded roots of structural racism" (Anguiano & Castañeda, 2014, p.110).

Groves (2020) has additionally identified CRT as "a framework that offers researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers a race-conscious approach to understanding educational inequality and structural racism to find solutions that lead to greater justice". Placing race at the center of analysis, CRT scholars interrogate policies and practices that are taken for granted to uncover the overt and covert ways that racist ideologies, structures, and institutions create and maintain racial inequality.

López (2003) explains further that "CRT's premise is to critically interrogate how the law reproduces, reifies, and normalizes racism in society, in particular for individuals of lower social classes and persons of color" (p. 83). In the context of applying CRT to education and educational leadership, CRT can be aligned with six primary interrelated tenets which will be discussed below.

Some of the other identifiable advantages of CRT is that in the field of education, it has been regarded a helpful tool for policy analysis in areas concerning segregation, school funding, language and discipline policies, and testing and accountability policies. It is also helpful for critically examining the larger issues of knowledge production, which are reflected in curriculum and pedagogy. As education is one of the major institutions of knowledge production and dissemination, CRT scholars often push the field to critically examine the master or dominant narratives reproduced in schools and the counter-narratives that are silenced.

3.5 The Tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Capper (2015) describes the six tenets of CRT. These are tabulated and discussed below.

CRT Tenet	Definition	Source
Permanence of racism	Racism, both conscious and unconscious is a permanent component of	Bell (1992); Ladson Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Ladson-

	(American) life	Billings (1998)
Whiteness as property	Because of the history of race and racism in the United States and the role U.S. jurisprudence has played in reifying conceptions of race, the notion of whiteness can be considered a property interest	Harris (1995); LadsonBillings (1998); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)
Counter storytelling and majoritarian narratives	A method of telling a story that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths especially ones held by the majority; majoritarian narratives are also recognized as stories and not assumed to be facts or the truth	Matsuda (1995); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Delgado (1995); Ladson-Billings (1998); Solórzano and Yosso (2001)
Interest convergence	Significant progress for Blacks is achieved only when the goals of blacks are consistent with the needs of whites	Bell (1980a, 2004); Ladson-Billings (1998)
Critique of liberalism	Critique of basic notions embraced by liberal ideology to include color blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality of the law	Crenshaw (1988); Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Tate (1997); Ladson-Billings (1998)
Intersectionality	Considers race across races and the intersection of race with other identities	Crenshaw (1991)

	and differences	

Table 1: Tenets of the Critical Race Theory.

A more in depth discussion of the above tenets is provided below.

3.5.1 Permanence of racism

People generally perceive racism as a singular or isolated individual and irrational act, amid a world which is otherwise just and neutral (Lopez, 2003, p.69). Additionally, racism is often viewed as outward expressions of a greater internal individual battle. While this can be true, this truth often stands to cloud the deeper, often invisible, and more internalized forms of racism that occur on a daily basis. (p. 81-82) This forms part of the rationale which CRT scholars use to justify racism as being central, endemic and pervasive in society (Tate, 1997).

The state of the post racial society in which we all live is an indication that while outright acts of racism may have been reduced, the systemic out workings of racism and its benefits for whites is far from an end. To go a step further; to assume that the effects of racism no longer exist on the mere basis of the abolishing of racist laws, is the very mindset that would perpetuate the status quo of white supremacy- because the etchings of racism into the foundations of human society run far deeper than the abolishment of those racist laws. In other words, white privilege outlives the very laws that were used to establish it. Also, such laws acted as the means upon which the building blocks white supremacy could stand. This was the very design of white supremacy, and this is how it continues to thrive, even after the seeming legislative progress which has been made in democratic South Africa.

This, in more specific words means that “race [still] matters” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 8), and will always matter. This tenet of the permanence of racism can help white educational leaders acknowledge that they themselves are racist, even without any outward racist actions, and that all leaders regardless of race are complicit in racism (Khalifa, Jennings, Briscoe, Oleszweski, & Abdi, 2014). Bell (1992), who is considered to be one of the godfathers of CRT, discusses racial realism as part of CRT, which is “a philosophy [that] requires us to acknowledge the permanence of our subordinate status” that “enables us to avoid despair and frees us to imagine and implement racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph” (p. 373-374). This research critiques this approach on the premise that if the status of black and

any other ethnicities that are not categorized as being white, is permanently subordinate to whiteness, is there an end to which white privilege and racism will eventually arrive?

The research however agrees with the view of Theoharis and Haddix (2011), who state that working against racism is a “life-long process personally, and it is an ever-evolving and continuing process […]”.

3.5.2 Whiteness as property

Historically, with the takeover of Native American land, whites were the only people who could legally own property, while African-Americans could not own property and they themselves became property who could be traded and sold. Owning property afforded the said owner with power, privilege, status, and rights, based simply on skin color. Put simply, to be white meant and still means an automatic affordance of rights and privileges—thus implying that whiteness is property. The historical situation in America is very similar to the one of South African history which was inflicted by apartheid. Based on legislation, the black majority could only live and own land in demarcated and restricted areas, whereas the white minority were free to buy and own land essentially anywhere they wished.

From a legal perspective, whiteness and property share some profound common ground i.e that both contain in them the right to exclude. The possessors of whiteness were granted the legal right to exclude others from the privileges of whiteness. This meant that whiteness became protected and guarded closely. In addition to the absolute right to exclude, anyone who held property held the “rights of disposition, rights to use and enjoyment, reputation and status property” (Harris, 1993, p. 1731).

This conceptual nucleus has, according to Harris, proven to be a “powerful center around which whiteness as property has taken shape” (Harris, 1993, p. 1707). Harris further explains that this right to exclude was also a central principle of whiteness as identity among white people themselves. The characterization of whiteness is based not on any unifying characteristics of white people, but more on their exclusion of others deemed to be “not white.”

3.5.3 Counter storytelling and majoritarian narratives

A third key tenet of CRT addresses the importance of personal experience shared via narratives of people of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). These narratives are positioned as counterstories to the white norm at the individual, institutional, societal, and epistemological levels (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Tate, 1997), and they make visible the daily micro-aggressions and societal and institutional racism that people of color experience.

Solórzano and Yosso (2001, 2002) were among the first CRT in education scholars to develop counter storytelling as a research method and further legitimize counterstories as justifiable data (Ladson-Billings, 1998) that "can be used as theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical tools to challenge racism, sexism, and classism and work toward social justice" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 23). Delgado (1993) explains further that, "Majoritarians tell stories too. But the ones they tell—about merit, causation, blame, responsibility, and social justice—do not seem to them like stories at all, but the truth" (p. 666). W. A. Smith, Yosso, and Solórzano (2007) agree and argue that "counterstories challenge this facade of truth by revealing the perspectives of racialized power and privilege behind it" (p. 565).

Pollack and Zirkel (2013) offer the most nuanced and detailed explanation of how counter and majoritarian stories operate when educational leaders are engaged in equity work. They explain that whites use majoritarian narratives to "justify, legitimate, and help to maintain the status quo of racial inequities (p. 298). In other words, they make use of these narratives to make acceptable the current state of white supremacy. They go a step further to rationalize and cement as the norm; the status quo, their own narratives. As Biddings (1998) stated) "whites use these narratives to explain racial inequities— narratives that are "embedded with racialized omissions, distortions, and stereotypes" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18), deficit thinking, and blame the victim.

Pollack and Zirkel (2013) suggest two questions from the CRT tenet of counter/majoritarian narratives to guide leaders attempting to make equity-oriented

changes: “What are the narratives we might use to frame public debate? What are other narratives that might surface in response and how can we anticipate them?” (p. 300).

Additionally, Pollack and Zirkel (2013) identified four majoritarian narratives of privilege in their case example. These are provided below:

(a) to be fair means to not notice race, to be colorblind or do anything different for/with students of color, and to treat all students the same;

(b) a belief that difference in intelligence or ability are genetically determined, and thus “normal, expected, and to be accepted” (p. 303), and furthermore, that the racial inequities prevalent across the country in every school confirm this fact;

(c) student achievement differences are due to talent and effort thus some students are more worthy than others, and it is best to invest resources into students who are worthy, rather than low performing students of color; and

(d) if equity efforts aim to increase the achievement of students of color, then these efforts are unfair to students who are already successful, and thus we are rewarding students who are unworthy and punishing students who work hard.

These majoritarian narratives continue to undermine the role that race has played in the way in which it has affected and influenced the ability of students of colour to perform to their best capacity. In many instances, because of the inheritance of apartheid, most black university students come from impoverished or very poor backgrounds. Most of the difficulties and social challenges that black students have to endure through are something that their white counterparts have never had to go through. Therefore the scales are tipped from the onset. This bears significant implications that when student achievement, talent, effort and success are considered the only measure of intelligence , ability performance, or worthiness to be rewarded, the university system continues to fail historically disadvantaged students who were very well placed in their current position by the goals of white supremacy.

3.5.4 Interest convergence

A fourth tenet of CRT addresses interest convergence, which means that the gains toward racial equality have only happened and can only happen when whites also stand to benefit, most likely through business or politics (Horsford, 2010b; López, 2003). Alemán and Alemán (2010) state that the limits of interest convergence for equity change.They argue instead that using interest convergence as a political strategy can perpetuate racism. While they highlight the limited ways in which interest convergence can foster racial inequity, they make some suggestions regarding ways to mitigate those limitations.

Firstly that “discussions of race and racism and their implications for public policy and social life are central, regardless of how unpleasant these conversations may be perceived to be” (p. 15). Secondly, that the interest convergence principle should not be utilized as a justification for an incrementalist strategy of change, as incremental change should not be regarded as the sole strategy for change. The reason behind this is the fact that it can also foster an acceptance of slow, incremental equity gains, and these gains in racial equity rely on “notions of meritocracy, colorblindness, and ‘fair play’ within a democratic system, all without critiquing the power differentials that remain intact” (Alemán & Alemán, 2010, p. 16).

Thirdly that in taking an interest convergence approach, leaders must address equity changes by considering how all students could benefit and how students of color are harmed by current practices. However, at the same time, leaders must keep race and the elimination of racism central to the equity work and not back down from the difficult racial conversations as a result of this work, ensure race discussions focus on eliminating structures and systems of racism rather than become mired in blaming individuals, and understand that interest convergence is just one strategy among a plethora of strategies for eradicating racism.

3.6 Critique of liberalism

The critique of liberalism recognizes how the liberal ideas of color blindness and the ways liberal equity policies and practices can perpetuate racial oppression. Scholars in educational leadership who rely on CRT often refer to the problem of color blindness in race equity work (Horsford, 2010b; Khalifa et al., 2013; Khalifa et al., 2014; López, 2003; Valles & Miller, 2010). The concept of color blindness can be

manifested in two ways: one, when people claim to not see a student's color or claim that race does not matter, and when educators do not realize the ways their school is not race neutral and reflects white culture and, in turn, when they expect students of color to assimilate to and blend into the existing white school culture.

However, to claim color blindness, or that race does not matter, or that educators need to treat all students the same and not differently, denies the atrocity of racial inequities in the past and the pervasive racial microaggressions, societal racism, and systemic racism that individuals of color experience on a daily basis and the way racism permeates all aspects of schools (Evans, 2007).

Leaders must instead ensure that all aspects of the school—the curriculum, culture, structure, and policies—not only reflect the racial diversity in the school but also challenge and eliminate racist assumptions. This is in line with and reflects one of the underlying matters of this research. André-Bechely suggests that leaders for equity must examine how "the rules and processes that districts institutionalize to bring about access, equity, and equality may serve to hide the very real ways that race and class still support exclusion in our schools (p. 302).

Horsford (2010b) also cautions that inclusion programs and initiatives that fail to recognize how race and racism work to maintain hierarchies, allocate resources, and distribute power will not do much to address gaps in student achievement, low school performance, and distrusting school communities. (pp. 311-312) Furthermore, even effective practices such as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1999b), if not fully understood or implemented properly can fall far short of addressing racism.

In sum, the CRT tenet of the critique of liberalism requires leaders to understand how the concept of color blindness reflects a racist perspective and denies historical racism and the current and pervasiveness of racism. Furthermore, the critique of liberalism points out how school culture and practices are never race neutral and perpetuate and require students of color to assimilate into the white culture.

3.7 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined based on three considerations: one is the extent to which scholars address race across races (Solórzano, 1998). Moving beyond the Black/White racial binary, Crenshaw (2011) describes how in the formation of CRT scholars addressed race across races. The second is how intersectionality also considers the extent to which scholars address the elimination of racism as a part of a larger project of addressing social justice across differences (Solórzano, 1998). In doing so, CRT scholars vary to the extent they identify the specific identities of this broader social justice work. When describing "A Commitment to Social Justice" (p. 7) as a CRT tenet, Solórzano (1997) explained,

"In the critical race theorist's struggle toward social justice, the abolition of racism or racial subordination is part of the broader goal of ending other forms of subordination such as gender, class, and sexual orientation" (p. 7). Thus, the first two intersectionality considerations are conceptual building blocks for intersectionality. That is, a CRT scholar cannot address the intersectionality of race with other identities if other identities in addition to race and across races are not acknowledged in the first place.

A third intersectionality consideration represents the typical definition of intersectionality which is the extent to which CRT scholars address race and its intersections with other identities, such as social class, language, ability, sexuality, and gender identity/expression for the purpose of revealing oppressions that are hidden when examining just racial identity (Crenshaw, 1988).

When considering the CRT tenet of intersectionality across legal studies, education, and educational leadership for practice, public school leaders cannot pick and choose which students they will lead in their schools or which typically marginalized students they will attend to (Dantley, Beachum, & McCray, 2009). While some leaders may hold more expertise in some aspects of identity and difference than others (e.g., a leader may have expertise in facilitating inclusive practices for students with disabilities but not be as knowledgeable about ways to integrate students who are bilingual) to lead equitable schools and districts, leaders must continuously work toward such expertise across student differences and their intersections (Capper & Young, 2014).

Related to intersectionality, however, scholars and practitioners of culturally relevant pedagogy do not generally consider students with disabilities. Leaders must seek out equity policies and practices that are effective across students with disabilities, students from low-income homes, students who are linguistically diverse, students of color, and students who are LGBT and their intersections of differences and identities. At the same time, learning from the CRT tenet of interest convergence as previously discussed, leaders must guard against the ways that unifying policies and practices across student differences can reproduce racism.

3.8 The criticisms of the Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Though Tate (1997) presented this CRT history in part, centered on these three scholars, Solórzano and Yosso's (2001) CRT history point out how "these criticisms had their roots and are still being influenced by similar criticisms that were developing in ethnic studies, women' s studies, cultural nationalist paradigms, Marxist and neo-Marxist frameworks, and internal colonial models" (p. 474). As such, some histories of CRT in CLS chronicle the central role of critical theory in its development (Solórzano, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001), in response to laws, associated policies, and legal practices that perpetuated oppression.

One of the more prevailing critiques of CRT has been that of objectivitiy. The argument here has been that racism would be difficult to identify objectively, more so in a world where there are varying and unnoticeable forms of racism. CRT scholars have however rebutted this critique by stating that objectivity is a myth that has been put in place to justify inequality and defect racial criticism.

A second critique has been that CRT is ultimately an essentialist racial paradigm. In other words, by saying that all black people encounter or experience racism, CRT scholars are participating in over inflating people's personal or individual experiences. In this instance CRT scholars have rebutted this critique by centering white supremacy as a constitutive feature of race-based critique. In other words, while people may experience different levels of racism, some more intensely than others; this does not excuse the white supremacy discourse. In other words, regardless of whether a person experiences whatever varying degrees of racism,

this does not place them in a position where they cannot challenge the very structures that reproduce white supremacy.

3.9 Concluding Remarks

CRT in educational leadership literature suggests three interrelated practices educational leaders can take to recognize and eliminate the pervasiveness of racism. First, educational leaders should work toward developing an antiracist identity (Gooden, 2012; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011),

Thus, as a second strategy to address the pervasiveness of racism, educational leaders as well as students from all racial backgrounds need to engage in informal individual conversations about race when issues arise at that are informed by race. Discomfort is inevitable, but it should not stand in the way of making progress on this front. In order to resolves such issues, everyone must get a seat at the table and have their voices heard, and not micro-managed.

A third way that leaders can recognize the historical and current pervasiveness of racism and work toward eliminating racism can be through holding equity audits of their institutions and ensure that those results reflect a healthy balance of opinions, representations etc. Leaders can collect and analyze race data (Gooden, 2012; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011), develop concrete goals and implementation plans to eradicate these inequities, design effective measures of progress, and make all of these data and strategies transparent and easily accessible to the community.

To counter the eruption and strengthening of these majoritarian narratives, the CRT tenet of counternarratives suggests that leaders working to eliminate racism need to ensure that individuals and communities of color are authentically included in democratic decision making about strategies and plans to eliminate racial inequities. At the beginning of equity work, leaders must seek the perspectives of students, families, and communities of color and make public their stories, views, and examples of how the current system is not working for them (Knaus, 2014). Seeking these perspectives must occur at the institution and district level in multilayered ways.

4. Chapter 4: Research methods

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research questions and the methodology employed. The chapter then explores the procedure and analysis employed in the research project. The chapter will also give information on the participants and how they were selected for the research. The chapter will further consider the ethics and trustworthiness.

1.2 Research questions

Primary Question

How are young, white, South African students experiencing increased conscientisation in black youth?

Secondary Questions

- How are young, white, South African university students understanding the history of South Africa and their place within this history?
- How are they understanding black youth who are engaging in activism in higher education?
- What kind of roles do they see themselves in in light of increased conscientisation?

1.3 Methodology

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that it is framed by use of words rather than numerical representation of data that is central to quantitative research. It also seeks to make depth meaning of phenomenon among a smaller sample than in quantitative research (Creswell, 2013). The researcher conducted an explorative qualitative study among young white South Africans of any age at the University of the Witwatersrand (Babbie, 2011; Creswell, 2009).

More specifically, the study employed Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is especially significant in this kind of study because it explored the participants experiences of black conscientisation. IPA offers richer quality of data into the experiences of the participants that cannot be quantified using numbers as

would be done in quantitative research. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding and uncovering meaning from people's experiences and their perceptions. According to Atieno (2009), this type of research is valuable, especially to the field of psychology, as it explores the ways in which people make sense and meaning of their experiences and analyses the complexities of those experiences

Explorative research seeks to understand the meaning the human beings make of everyday social and human experiences (Creswell, 2013). This was beneficial for this study in that the researcher was able to explore participant's subjective accounts and experiences of their existence in South Africa under the current political climate. These participants were used in order to obtain information about the way in which white students experience living in South Africa with the evolving political views of South Africans (DuPlooy, 2009). According to Babbie (2011), in qualitative research, respondents' information is expressed by means of in-depth interviews, observations or case studies in a natural setting as compared to surveys. Because qualitative research is phenomenological (describes the lived experiences of individuals about a certain phenomenon), the meaning and experience of the participants were taken into account without judgment or generalization (Silverman, 2011; Creswell, 2013). This implies that qualitative research produces in-depth, comprehensive and rich data that quantitative research does not produce.

Atieno (2009) explains that qualitative researchers are interested in the process and value the process of the research to a higher regard than the outcomes. For qualitative research, the researcher plays a central role in collecting the data and the quality of information retrieved from the respondent is largely dependent on the rapport established between researcher and the participant/s (Silverman, 2006). Moreover, qualitative research recognises that the researcher enters the research space as a biased and conflicted being. This is important to note because it means that qualitative research is aware that the researcher's biases will have an effect on the study and encourages the researcher to evaluate their own opinions, views and position in relation to the context of the research being carried out (Willig, 2009).

It is important to position IPA within the phenomenological paradigm as it has its theoretical origins in phenomenology and hermeneutics. Phenomenology is not only descriptive in nature but is also interpretative as it is primarily concerned with

unpacking lived experiences and meaning making. First theorized by Husserl in 1931, phenomenology is appreciated as a way of understanding and uncovering the lived experiences of participants together with the meaning that participants have made of those experiences (Alase, 2017). This kind of approach is centred on researching groups of people who have encountered the same phenomena to explore the similarities and differences in these experiences.

Phenomenology concerns itself with translating the experiences of the research participants into psychological expressions that give insight into their thought processes and meaning making processes (Alase, 2017). Additionally, phenomenology provides more in-depth data collection and analysis unlike general inductive approaches. This is because this type of analysis seeks to convey feelings into words and text. Alase (2017) states that the combination of a critical and interpretative approach to help unpack the lived experiences of research participants is important when conducting phemenological research. “Interpretive paradigm can explicitly and interpretively narrate how the phenomenon has impacted the ‘lived experiences’ of the research participants.” (Alase, 2017 p. 12).

Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) assert that IPA, as a qualitative research approach, is committed to examining the major life experiences of participants. They also view people as sense-making creatures who are continuously processing their experiences. This is important to note because people can experience the same phenomena in a similar environment in varying ways because of the processing component (Willig, 2013). IPA is particularly concerned with phenomena as one engages with the world and began as a psychological-orientated approach (Alase, 2017).

The way phenomena are experienced is dependent on several factors that are conditional on the observer (Willig, 2013). These factors include, but are not limited to, the context and location of the observer, their emotions, mental orientation, judgments and wishes. This method explores, in detail, the way participants make sense of their world, perceptions and experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Alase (2017) adds that IPA allows for participants to tell stories about their lived experiences without distortion or persecution.

IPA is a method that originates from phenomenology and as such is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of this study. It is also helpful in that it allows for critical moments, about the stories and experiences being shared by the participants, to be explored because of its use of semi structured interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2007). It also offers room for the researcher to understand the lived experiences of participants (Alase, 2017). IPA's dedication to understanding the lived-experiences of participants means that it focuses on the "here-and-now-moments" which further justifies its suitability for this research. The individual cases of participants are explored in detail before general claims are extracted from the narrative accounts of the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2003). IPA acknowledges that one's thoughts and emotions are interconnected and that part of interpreting data is being cognisant of this chain of connection (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Dynamic topics that are interested in areas of identity, the self and subjectivity are best investigated using Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This method of analysis speaks to the heart of the study which is interested in understanding the young white students' experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. Smith & Osborn (2007) also note that there is no singular or definitive way of carrying out IPA research.

1.4 Participants

The target population was sampled purposively from the University of the Witwatersrand population. Non probability, purposive sampling was utilized for the study because it did not aim to make generalizations about the population. IPA also does not randomly select participants. This is beneficial for the study because the study is interested in a specific group of people and what their subjective experiences are. IPA then employs qualitative analysis to analyse the findings and make interpretations of these to give insights into these people's experiences.

A small pool of research participants is in line with the guidelines provided for IPA research because IPA research is less interested in the quantity of the research and rather focuses on the quality of the data provided within the interviews. IPA research seeks to unpack the experiences of the people in a rich and in-depth manner (Alase. 2017). The researcher conducted a total of 5 interviews that were interpreted for

purposes of this research. As such, these participants took part in one in-depth semi structured interview each.

All of the participants participated voluntarily in the study and met the criteria of being young white students between the ages of 18 and 25.

1.4.1 Table of participants

Pseudonym	Race	Year of participation
Adele	White	2019
Alex	White	2019
Amanda	White	2019
Andrew	White	2019
Christina	White	2019

1.5 Procedure

The researcher first sought ethical clearance from the university to conduct the study by seeking permission from the Research and Ethics Committee of the faculty of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand to conduct the study. Ethical clearance was obtained (MCLIN/19/003/IH). The researcher started by putting up notices inviting participants that fit the criteria to contact the researcher. The researcher also set up an appointment with a lecturer in the department of psychology and asked to address a few classes after their lecture, as a way of recruiting participants for the study. The lecturer agreed to this and also allowed the researcher to post up notices on Sakai psychology students groups, which allowed the researcher to have access to the student population and participants contacted the researcher. Students were also approached by the researcher on campus. The sample size for the study was be limited to 3 to 6 participants in line with phenomenological research guidelines.

The participants were informed of the research objectives, nature of the study and what the procedure would entail prior to the research through the participant information sheet that was provided to all participants. Furthermore, participation

was completely voluntary. Participants were informed of their rights, and that they could cease participation in the study at any time if they so wished without penalty. Participants were also be asked to read and sign an informed-consent form to participate in a semi-structured interview to validate this (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). After permission was granted, the researcher sent a formal letter to each of the participants outlining the research objectives and procedure.

Participants had to be white and between the ages of 18 and 25 as the research focussed on young white students experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. In preparation for the interviews, the researcher selected a number of videos of the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements and put these together into a 15 to 20 minute video which was played at the start of the interview. These videos were all videos that are already in the public domain and it was highly unlikely that participants had not seen these videos before through social media and mainstream news reporting.

After the video was played, the researcher then facilitated a semi structured in depth interview where the themes around student activism, conscientisation and the historical context of South Africa were explored. The participants did not benefit from the study in anyway. They may have, however, derived a sense of satisfaction from the knowledge that they are contributing to the existing body of literature generated in post- apartheid, South Africa.

The study made use of semi-structured interviews which were conducted according to an interview schedule because of the study's focus on young white student's experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in South Africa. Semi structured interviews form part of the qualitative research interviews and are characterised by largely being informal, non-directive, conversational and open ended. They allow for the interviewee to narrate their experience themselves without directing focal area of the research into the responses of the interviewee (Crow, 2013). Semi structured interviews are flexible and don't seek to include large samples for purposes of generalisation, but rather focused on in-depth accounts of participants lived experiences (Crow, 2013).

The categories of inquiry within the interview schedule of the study were based on the research questions that are outlined in the study. An audio-tape recorder was

used to provide details that even the most careful field notes are unable to. The researcher also observed and made notes on non-verbal cues during the discussions. Interviews were approximately sixty to ninety minutes per session per participant. The one-on-one interviews provided rich information about the participants' ideas, feelings and thoughts which may have been restricted if the individuals were in the company of others such as in a focus group (Smith, 2004). The decision to use semi-structured interviews stems from the premise that this will allow room for free expression and follow-up questions about ambiguous or unclear comments or statements made during the interview by the participant (Willig, 2013)

1.6 Data analysis

The research used an Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA). This method was employed because of its focus on a phenomenological approach to data analysis. IPA was utilized in the study because it is a method that is focused on the examination of how people make meaning of major life experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). That is to say that the main aim of this form of data analysis is to explore the perceptions and understandings young white students rather than make more general claims (Smith & Osborne, 2008). The method is phenomenological and ideographic and therefore endeavours to explore participant's unique, personal experiences and perceptions (Shaw, 2010; Smith & Osborn, 2008). Furthermore, Shaw (2010) also states that "although we accept that events 'actually exist' in reality, we realise that our only access to those events is through a particular lens" (p.178).

The researcher analysed the data using IPA and the four-stage process by Smith & Osborn (2007) was followed in order to interpret the data as accurately as possible. A number of authors provide steps on analysing data using IPA however, Smith & Osborn were considered most appropriate for this research. IPA recognises that there are varying levels of interpretation that can be employed. According to Smith (2004), this is also contributes to what makes qualitative different to quantitative research because it creates room for complexities of psychological processes. Smith (2004) does not give prescribed outlines for analysis but gives suggestions about how to go about analysing the data.

In the initial stage, audio-recording devices were listened to repeatedly so as to familiarize the researcher with the data and to transcribe the data. At this initial stage, the researcher read and re-read the individual interviews as suggested by Smith & Osborn (2007). Following this, the researcher made notes based on language use and the context of participant. Descriptive comments made were based on the researcher's initial thoughts and observations during interview process. These notes are recorded in the left or right margin of the text. Each individual interview was analysed and significant themes were then extracted from how these participants articulated their experiences to the researcher. This is what Smith (2004) refers to as an idiographic commitment to each individual interview.

The second stage of analysis involved identifying and labelling emergent themes from each section of the text. These themes were recorded in another margin next to the initial margin where notes and comments were made. Themes extracted from this process needed to capture the experiential quality of the participants' accounts and Osborn & Smith (2007) suggest that psychological terminology is used to differentiate each theme. This also entailed the exploration of relevant information that is linked to or answers the research questions at hand. In coding the data, the researcher employed a theoretical driven analysis in which data was coded due to the specificity of the research questions that focuses on issues related to whiteness and the experiences of black conscientisation. The research is embedded in critical race theory and this is what essentially guided the coding process.

The third stage involved looking for connections between themes identified in stage two and constructing meaningful clusters from these themes. This process involved actively reading and engaging with the data. At this stage, it is essential that the researcher immerses themselves in the data. It is in this process that the researcher began to make meaning of the transcripts and both verbal and non-verbal cues were noted and later used as part of interpreting the data.

In the final stage of analysis, a summary table, in which main themes were presented and sub-themes were listed beneath these. Each theme was explored through between 3 and 4 sub-themes each. Quotations from the interview transcripts were included as these helped to capture the quality of experiences of the

participants. In this final stage, producing the report entailed the analysis of the themes, selecting what is important, compelling and relating this information to literature and to the research questions at hand.

1.7 Validity of the research

It is unavoidable that qualitative research raises questions of both validity and reliability (Van der Riet & Durrheim. 2006). Reliability is defined as 'the consistency or stability of a measure" (Cozby, 2005, p.92) while validity can be defined as "the degree to which a measure does what it is intended to" (Durrheim & Painter, 2006. P.147). Reliability therefore refers to whether the research can be repeated while validity is whether the research does what it is intended to do. Durrheim (1999) distinguishes between two types of validity: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is whether "any results arrived at are sustained by the design itself, and cannot be explained by alternative considerations" and external validity is the degree to which the results can be generalized or not.

The control required to achieve validity and reliability, as defined above, is impossible in qualitative research (Ankomah & Ford, 1994). The implications and expectations brought about by the terms 'validity' and 'reliability' are unattainable in qualitative research. It does not seem rational to expect research about something as subjective as someone's experiences, emotions and perceptions to be completely reliable and valid. However, qualitative research does aim for trustworthiness, which requires credibility, transferability, dependency and confirmability (Babbie & Nouton, 2005). Credibility refers to the "compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them" (Babbie & Mouton, 2005, p.277).

Trustworthiness is crucial to reliability and is at the core of qualitative research. It is achieved by ensuring that the research is of high quality as this also increases the likelihood that the results can be generalised. There are various strategies and techniques that were used to increase trustworthiness (Lopez, Figueroa, Connor & Maliski, 2008). Once transcription had taken place, the researcher's revisited the recordings to check the accuracy of the transcripts against the recordings. The researcher's supervisor was also given access. Themes that were identified from the transcripts were thoroughly examined against the original transcripts provided to the

supervisor and upon approval and verification of its contents, the findings were reported. The researcher employed the use of continuous reflection and a personal reflection diary was used throughout the process as the nature of the research and the researcher and participants racialised identities evoked certain emotions in the researcher. This reflection diary was used to assess and reflect upon the researcher's own opinions and any personal biases they have about the subjects of this research (Shenton, 2004). These reflections were also discussed during supervision, as it was imperative to determine in what ways the researcher's experiences and feelings were shaping the way the data was analysed.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles were complied to safeguard the rights, dignity, safety and well-being of all participants in the research study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). The following ethical measures will be adhered to during the research:

1.8.1 Informed consent

The researcher first sought ethical clearance from the university to conduct the study and then the researcher sought permission from the Research and Ethics Committee from the faculty of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand to conduct the study. Ethical clearance was obtained and ethical clearance certificate was issued (MCLIN/19/003/IH). The participants were informed of the research objectives, nature of the study and what the procedure would entail prior to the research. Furthermore, participation was completely voluntary. Participants were informed of their rights, and that they were allowed to cease participation in the study at any time if they so wished without penalty. Participants were also asked to read and sign an informed-consent form to validate this (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). After permission was granted, the researcher sent a formal letter to each of the participants outlining the research objectives and procedure. This letter was also read with the participants at the site of the interview before proceeding with the interviews.

1.8.2 Avoidance of harm

Due to the nature of the research topic, every issue was discussed with sensitivity. The researcher endeavoured not to ask questions that could cause psychological discomfort or harm to respondents. The researcher also organised free counselling for participants at both the Emthonjeni centre and CCDU should any of the

participants and/or the researcher feel that it was necessary. None of the participants nor the researcher made use of these services as the need to use them did not arise at any point in the research.

1.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Data was collected by means of an audio recorder and the researcher obtained written and verbal consent from the respondents, this is primarily because the quality of the recorded discussions will depended on the comfort level of the research participants. Also, participants' right to privacy was respected and under no circumstances was the research report presented in such a way that the participants are identifiable or any personal information is revealed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). All data obtained was treated in the highest ethical and confidential regard, except information suggesting that individuals were at risk of significant harm or request assistance. This was not the case during this study

5. Chapter 5: Discussions on the emerging themes

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the themes and subthemes which emerged from the interviews that were conducted with the participants. Three major themes have been identified. These main themes which are: Whiteness and belonging, interactions with black people and social justice are discussed below. The first theme explores the participants affected experiences of belonging. The young white students are currently experiencing belonging differently in relation to the family context and to the school or academic context. Their feelings of a sense of responsibility for the actions of a previous white generation as well as an increased feeling of voicelessness within all these spaces is evident in the participants responses.

In the second theme, the participants explored their experiences and interactions with black people in their private and in public spaces. Their interactions within the home have largely been within the confines of their privileged worlds. It has been hard for participants to reconcile their deep meaningful relationships with their house helpers who are deemed subhuman but good enough for child rearing. This ties in with their experiences of black youth in activism in the shared university space. This has made young white youth very aware of their privileges which has led to feelings of frustration towards both the previous white generation as well as the black conscientized youth.

Lastly, the final theme explores the young white youths' experiences of social justice. They feel they do not have a space to participate in social justice movements and have resorted to equating different issues to human right issues to feel that they can participate in some form. They do not imagine that there is any role they can play within the conscientization movement and would rather concentrate on other movements where they feel they can have a voice and find space to participate.

5.2 Main Themes

5.2.1 Whiteness and belonging

Until recently, sociologists and social scientists have had very little to say about whiteness as a distinct socio-cultural racial identity, typically problematizing only non-white status (Yorukoglu, 2017). However, white identity has not been stable, and its definitions have changed over time, in interaction with the institutions of slavery, colonial settlement, citizenship, industrial labour and so on (Yorukoglu, 2017). Similarly, this is true in the South African context where young white students are experiencing a difference in the manner in which they perceive and experience a sense of belonging.

The Collins dictionary defines belongingness as 'the human state of being an essential part of something' (Collins Dictionary). A certain set of practices (of consumption and a sense of a 'lifestyle') act as affective elements to signify one's belonging to a specific group. Belonging therefore at the core of it, speaks to our quality of life (Bacon, 2019). Where people are not able to relate or connect in a way that makes them feel that they are contributing positively to the society around them, there tends to be a sense of dislocation, and this holds the potential for social disorientation.

What appears to be the underlying common denominator is a sense of an 'imagined shared orientation' (Alcoff, 2015: 79). Often, a sense of belonging can be expected to be more greatly experienced within the confines of a home environment, than within work or academic/ university spaces. In the context of university students, Hurtado and Carter (1997), define students' sense of belonging as their psychological sense of identification and affiliation with the campus community.

5.2.1.1 Navigating racism and belonging

From the interviews, it can be derived that the young white students are currently experiencing belonging differently in relation to the family context and also to the school or academic context. Exploring their experiences of race in the home, participants spoke of race and racism as something that was hardly ever addressed. Andrew describes racism in the home as follows:

"Racism was like pushed underneath the table, like you never say anything about race. You just keep quiet, you shut up and that's it. So that's more like how… it's not really dealt with its more shoved under the carpet"- Andrew

In this quote, Andrew seems to be describing real experiences of racism in the home but there not being room to engage in conversations about racism. He illustrates that there is, in fact, an understanding of race and racism even before being formally introduced to different races in schooling environments. In his narration Andrew seems to be alluding to something of a discomfort that is experienced but cannot find a voice in the home setting. Similarly, Christina unpacks the limitations within the home settling where race and racism is concerned.

"My dad is Afrikaans and his whole family are very Afrikaans. Uhm his father is actually an Afrikaans professor at UJ. Uhm and then race… I mean we are obviously…we're all white. My cousin on my dad's side, he is actually my first cousin. I've only got him as a cousin and then my dad's sister has a child. But my first cousin was adopted by my dad's sister…no my dad's brother. His name is Garry and we were very close when we were young and now he's way too cool for me *giggles* He doesn't hang out with me anymore. He lives in Cape Town. It was never… it was never weird for us, me and my sister, that he was black. Like he was our cousin. But my grandfather's new wife, he remarried when my dad was about 25, she had an issue with it. And I always remember that being like really weird for everyone else. She wouldn't want my grandfather to come to family events if my cousin was there and it was like scandalous for her and her family."*- Christina

Here, Christina begins by stating that her father is Afrikaans. She goes on to emphasize that his whole family is *very* Afrikaans. What she also does in this first line of response is to separate herself from the Afrikaans identity and includes herself in the white identity "I mean we are obviously…we're all white". There is a part of her whiteness that she feels connected to and a part that she may not feel as connected to. In this response she doesn't feel the need to elaborate on what "Afrikaans" means and there is an assumption in the room that both her and the interviewer know what this means in terms of race and racism. She also illustrates that there is a shared identity that she feels she belongs to even though there is a part of that same identity that she would rather not willingly associate herself with.

She goes on to talk about her adopted cousin whom she had not imagined as different to her but comes into contact with the very direct act of racism towards him, perpetuated by her step-grandmother. Interesting here is that she doesn't describe a situation where the act of racism is called out or condemned but rather describes that she found it "weird" that her step-grandmother did not want to be associated with her black cousin. She describes a clear discomfort with the different treatment that her cousin is subjected to but yet unable to find expression for it in this setting. This is similar to Andrew's description of racism as something that is not spoken about and that it is "shoved under the carpet".

In the family context, some of the participants remarked that they came from conservative backgrounds who still regarded white supremacy very highly, and who lived in a 'way-back-when' kind of mindset. While the young white students indicated that they did not agree with the belief systems of the older generation in their families, they also indicated not being able to engage them on topics and discussions of race and diversity in those areas as it was a 'dead end'.

"Uhm… my dad in particular is quite conservative and by conservative… prejudiced, if I can put it that way. Uhm… so my brother and I weren't necessarily raised uhm… in a very conscientious way.– Amanda

It is due to this closed off but very sensitive topic that the participants indicated their affected sense of belonging within the home space. A difference of opinion and beliefs regarding racial equality rendered it difficult for them to speak to their parents or grandparents in some cases. This can create the feeling of two different experiences inside the home, and outside the home for the participants, which in turn may contribute to conformity within the home, for the sake of peace.

"uhm my dad is quite a conservative Afrikaner. If I can say it like that. So, he's still of the mentality like you have to work hard but he's… he's just a… he gets upset about politics in South Africa especially like the Zuma things and that. But I don't know if it's just… if it's a race thing or it's more like a thing because of corruption. It's like the country is going backwards because of corruption. So, it's more he feels that… he has to work hard well everybody has to work hard and we have to pay tax and then they just go and steal our tax and spend it on… stupid stuff like a Medupi power station that goes 6 times over the budget because of fraud and scams. And also, he

works with mines so there's always like this thing of like BEE and your company has to have this and this and this and then …because he had…like they're these… uh what is it? Ag no today my English is giving up on me. Um what do you call it? NUMSA… these faculties. It's not faculties what do you call it? Unions! They come to his business and they're like "no you need to be BEE and this" and he's… he says "well bring then the black partner that can pay half of what my company is worth, then I'll help him. But I'm not just gonna give it away" then he becomes angry at that because they simple want to take… your stuff… without compensation. And he says… even in the household if we speak about rugby… we always go and we say that "we don't mind black players in the springbok team but we want people there that's the best" and that's how I think also as a student. Like I don't mind black students that's in my class but I just wanna know that they deserve that spot. Even, for me, if the whole rugby team is purely blacks… players, but they are the best players in that position. I will wear my springbok shirt or my Bafana Bafana shirt. I really don't care about race as long as it's the best people. And I find sometimes with BEE and with the like rectifying the past we put people that are not really qualified, in that position… in that position simply because based on race or based on… like just… they just shove them in there simply because it must… we must settle the quotas score. And I don't think that the correct way to go about it." – Andrew

Interesting in the above quote is the way that racism slowly shifts for Andrew. From a previous quote Andrew mentioned that race was never spoken about in the home, that it was shoved under the carpet. From this quote we get a sense that race was spoken about in the home and that some of his ideas about black people, and the space they ought to occupy, is shaped by the views that his father continues to share with him about race. In this quote it can be said that Andrew experiences a sameness with his racial group and part of his sense of belonging is linked to his conformity with the ideas of the main group.

The above experience can be understood from a group position theory perspective which suggests that human societies have shown a tendency to organize or group themselves collectively, thereby defining themselves according to either degrees of sameness or differences. This is so, no matter how arbitrary or significant/ similar the group boundaries may be (Blumer, 1958). It was also shown that group members have the tendency to automatically deem their group as being the superior one. In

the above quote, Andrew articulates that "*we always go and we say that "we don't mind black players in the springbok team but we want people there that's the best" and that's how I think also as a student. Like I don't mind black students that's in my class but I just wanna know that they deserve that spot*". Andrew has automatically deemed his racial group to be the superior group so he would not question the deservingness of ruby players or students that look like him but wants to know that the black players and black students (out-group) deserve to share the space with him. A separate study conducted which divided students into completely fabricated groups, led to consistently different perceptions of in-group and out-group members (Bloom, 2005).

The group position theory has also been utilized as a means of explaining race prejudice (Blumer, 1958). According to this theory, group definitions, boundaries, and meanings are the product of complex collective and social processes rather than a result of individual interactions or bias:

'Through talk, tales, stories, gossip, anecdotes, pronouncements, news accounts, orations, sermons, preachments, and the like, definitions are presented and feelings expressed…If the interaction becomes increasingly circular and reinforcing, devoid of serious inner opposition, such currents grow, fuse, and become strengthened. It is through such a process that a collective image of a subordinate group is formed, and a sense of group position is set' (Blumer, 1958).

This theory suggests how race, or any group-based identity, becomes socially constructed, through a simultaneous and unorderly process that cannot be pre-defined (Blumer, 1958). It can follow that belonging, or a lack thereof, is associated with the extent to which one person or a group feels free enough to express themselves. Conformity, therefore, in the context of belonging refers to the act of changing one's actions, attitudes, and behaviors to match the norms of others. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), people often conform to gain the approval of others, build rewarding relationships, and enhance their own esteem. Considering that a sense of belonging, especially within the home, contributes so significantly to a person's sense of identity, it does not come as a surprise that the participants would seek to conform in a bid to preserve their family relationships, and by so doing keep their identities intact.

Additionally, the above quote from Andrew also gives us insight into the heightened emotions when exploring the ideas brought forward by conscientization. There is a pulpable feeling of being stripped of what they "worked hard for" and this brings about feelings of being "very upset" and nervous that black people will not be able to match the standard of excellence that he believes white people have; *"Like I don't mind black students that's in my class but I just wanna know that they deserve that spot".* There seems to also be something about the University space that seems to be in contention. Who does the university space belong to? Who has claim over it and who is deserving to occupy that space?

5.2.1.2 Intergenerational responsibility

As explained in the section above, the meaning of belonging for young white students in South African universities continues to metamorphose. There are also a variety of differences they experience between their generation and that of their parents and/or grandparents. While they embody a greater openness to the tenets of a democratic republic, their views have tended to clash with those of their older family members who still hold apartheid beliefs of segregation. A subtheme of intergenerational responsibility emerges as participants share their understanding of South Africa's history and their place within this history.

"I think… uhm…at the beginning obviously there's this stigma of "oh because that's what your parents believe, that's what you believe too"" – Adele

"well first of all it's made me very very aware of my privilege, which I appreciate that but sometimes it makes me feel bad, like I'd rather not be privileged just because of everything that's attached to it." – Christina

In the above quotes, both Adele and Christina, albeit in different ways, remark about the uncomfortable experience of wearing their race in the wake of black conscientisation. Adele describes what her physical presence evokes for black youth in South Africa. She describes the feeling for her as a feeling of stigmatization and is painfully aware of the immediate assumption that they too are white supremacists and that they too enjoy the oppression of black people. Christina describes her experience as somewhat of a thing she would rather rid herself of. She feels bad about the way in which she exists in the world and what her existence in the world means for others who do not have the same privileges as she does. In both these

narration it is clear that black conscientization evokes an anxious response from white South African youth. It challenges the way in which white youth experience being white in post-apartheid South Africa and that a discomfort exists for these youth when confronted with their privilege in university spaces.

"as the youth we're having to make up for our ancestor's mistakes. Especially me, because I am of white descent. And although not all my family supported apartheid, there were those who encouraged it and … even though I may be related to them by blood I do not associate myself with their ideas. But nowadays just cause of your skin they immediately assume that you agree with what your ancestors did. And then I always look around and I'm going "just because our skin tones may be different doesn't mean that one of us is more capable of a job than the other" – Alex

As young white students in post-apartheid South Africa, there seems to be a sense of feeling responsible for the actions of the past generations. There also exists an awakening to the effects of the actions of the previous generations that continue to benefit them as people that were not physical participants of the apartheid regime. There is a guilt that is evident in Alex's narration as well as a subtle hint of fear of what conscientization will mean for white youth in post-apartheid South Africa. This also creates an internal conflict as she feels she has to disassociate herself with the ideas perpetuated by her family although still existing and identifying as a member of that racial group, and even family.

This is consistent with literature on white guilt. Although there still isn't one true definition for white guilt, it has been understood as being motivated by the recognition of unearned and unfair privileges, experiencing a sense of responsibility of other people, within your racial group's, racist attitudes and behaviors as well as the acknowledgement of personal racist attitudes (Grzanka, Frantell & Fassinger, 2020). Alex feels a sense of responsibility for the actions of her ancestors and even goes as far as to say that she feels that she needs to "make up" for her ancestor's mistakes. In the same breath, white guilt can also be associated with the lack of responsibility from some members of that group which consequently is transferred to other members of the same group as can be noted in the below quote from Amanda:

"It's always been a very pressurized environment, you know. Gotta (You have to) achieve academically, be the best and all that sort of stuff and when I come home

from school and say "oh I learnt about this, this and this" or "I learned this about apartheid" or whatever it was it would always be commentary of like "ugh now look at our country post-1994. It's an absolute disaster" you know that sort of commentary that I think is quite common among the older white generations of South Africa." – Amanda

Amanda shares that there seems to be a shift in responsibility and that conscientization seems to have displaced the responsibility to a younger generation because of a lack of accountability in the older generation. This transfer of responsibility seems to not only be a consequence of black conscientization but also a consequence of a lack of reflection from "older white generations of South Africa". Here, Amanda also seems to be feeling disappointed that the older white generations have not done enough to protect them or educate them, as white youth, so as to prepare themselves for a black consciousness movement that requires a higher level of reflection of them.

This is consistent with the pillars of white racial framing explored by Feagin (2013). In his study, he outlines that these pillars include denying that inequalities are due to racial forces and distancing the group form any responsibility for racial groupings and the consequences thereof. This is also known as power evasion and seems that the responsibility is transferred from one generation to another as one generation engages race with denialism and refusal to associate it with present day circumstances (Gonzalez Van Cleve, 2016).

"a girl once said at this other research I was doing… that when it came to Nazi Germany the… children and grandchildren aren't allowed to be able to question "why did you do it" whereas here black people are looking at the new white generation, the ones who were not born during apartheid and making us do the answering when we're like "we don't know why it happened either" and so a lot of that is on us and then because of that a lot of white people have immigrated and the white percentage has gone down a lot here." – Alex

The sense of responsibility is very pulpable in most responses by the young white students. There is an underlying feeling of irritability and frustration at the black consciousness movement as well as previous white generations and just as there was very little room for racism to find expression in the home (as discussed above in

2.1.1). It feels that there is very little space for these white youths to find expression for their frustration which leads to a need for escaping the frustration by escaping the physical space of South Africa. This will be elaborated on later in this theme (2.1.4).

"Obviously when it comes to my father I don't really bother engaging in those conversations because I don't feel like it gonna progress anyway, he'll never change as I said earlier." – Amanda

Lastly, Amanda articulates a sense of feeling let down and a sense of despondency when it comes to engaging her father about race, racism, conscientisation and the effects of the apartheid history of South Africa. This further impacts young white students' sense of belonging, as expressed, in that when they do engage with older generations, it has largely been unhelpful and led to them feeling they cannot engage their own people on what they face as a result of previous generations' actions.

5.2.1.3 Voicelessness

The result of this has been a sense of voicelessness of young white students within the home, and disorientation at least in those sensitive areas of discussion. The extent to which this has affected the participants' sense of belonging within the home remains uncertain. At this point, the research seeks to also highlight one of the limitations of the study, which ironically, is the potential for the participants to have provided information in the interview that they feel suits a narrative which helps them be viewed as acceptable in society. Even where such narratives are contrary to their actual beliefs or lived experiences.

In other words, in studying the participants' conformity, one must also consider the said conformity as a potential limitation in the information that was provided through the interviews. Another limitation is that the study only interviewed a small population of the bigger group, and that their perspectives, conditions and situations are not necessarily accurate representations of those of the wider group. This renders the research both layered and potentially filtered.

White students' sense of belonging as they have known it to exist, is being challenged. From the interviews, it can be gathered that while the white students may have had opinions and views about the #MustFall protests, they also admitted

to not feeling as though there was a safe way of articulating those views in a manner that would be received with ease.

"I don't know if there's a role that I can play that has like an influence. Will my one voice be heard? Like will my one voice have like an effect on anything? … and that's the big thing it's like is there a role for me to play and will this role have an effect on the outcome? Will it change anything? So, why partake in something that you know well… it's not gonna affect me. If there's like probably some students that gonna get free fees it won't be me because… obviously I won't fit in the criteria they're probably gonna make so…why must I protest?" – Andrew

In this quote, Andrew articulates that he feels left out of the conversation and that the movement doesn't consider him to which he, in turn, responds by devaluing the protests. He doesn't see it necessary to participate because he feels that the black conscientization movement is deliberately designed for his exclusion, "obviously I won't fit the criteria they're probably gonna make". He doesn't feel he belongs with the groups of protesting students and also feels he cannot express his views or his struggles, if any, with accessing higher education. This is slightly different to Amy sentiments in the below quote:

"I just applied for NSFAS and if I get NSFAS it's because of the fees must fall protests. So, I'm very grateful for that. I think I probably would've been a part of it as well, if I was studying at that time. But I don't feel like I'm a part of... uhm…the political movements that black students are involved in a lot. I don't know if I'll ever be able to. Which is okay because I mean I think the race is a division still but it's also more than that, it's about culture. So, yah I'm still sort of figuring it out. Where do I fit in with the bigger picture and also what the bigger picture is?" - Amy

Amy, although similar in not feeling she completely belongs with the protesting students, has a different understanding of what that means. She is able to align with the part of her being a student that she feels is similar with that of black students and respects the parts that she does not belong with "But I don't feel like I'm a part of... uhm…the political movements that black students are involved in a lot. I don't know if I'll ever be able to. Which is okay because I mean I think the race is a division…".

Beyond feeling excluded from parts of what it means to be a student, Amy seems to have a better understanding of what race has meant for students and their different levels of access to the university space. This is because white students' whiteness became a symbolic representation of black students' suffrage and therefore became harder to accommodate as emotions became more heightened in the movement. Because of their apartheid inheritance and position of privilege, their voices in the fight for racial and social equality, particularly in the student movements, have been watered down.

In attempts to contribute to social discussions, some of the participants often felt they were not allowed to have a voice and were often shut down. This seems to have left the mark that there is no place for commentary, communication or expression of the white voice (no matter what it has to say) in a black movement. In going by the definition of belonging provided by Baumeister and Leary above which places contribution to society as a primary element of belonging, it should follow that the participants feel a sense of not belonging where they haven't had the space to contribute meaningfully to social discussions affecting their worlds.

So, it can then be said that the young white South African student is caught between the rock and the hard place of voicelessness. Because of opposing views at home and being the representation of an oppressive nature in the heat of black conscientisation movements at university, it may be that white students' authentic thoughts and beliefs may have become quiet. This may have increasingly felt as though they do not belong in the very spaces, i.e the home and school, wherein feelings of belonging are meant to exist freely.

The result of this kind of impact on belonging can be complacency and stoicism. By virtue of feeling unheard, or the sense that they must constantly walk on eggshells to be considered as acceptable to different groups of society, may mean that the part of their opinions which are voiced, may not necessarily reflect their true views. By entering into an 'appeasement mode', which is also often a creature of 'survival mode', young white students deepen the feelings of not belonging and being unsafe.

"You always have to be a bit hesitant to not overstep your boundary and to say something that's more… it's not that you say it intentionally but just out of… how can

you say it… like not knowing. You just don't… you don't know their culture so you must always be a bit… just be hesitant of what you're saying." – Andrew

In the above quote, Andrew seems to be pointing out the invisibility of whiteness or what Suchet (2007) refers to as the "silent norm". That is to say that it is so mainstream that it is not something that needs to be learnt or thought about in relation to other races or cultures. He articulates an anxiety about being in black spaces or engaging with blackness because it is somewhat foreign or unfamiliar. White youth can be easily offensive in those spaces from a place of not knowing what is offensive and not offensive. It is perhaps partly this white ignorance that further alienates white students and fosters their experience of voicelessness.

"when if a white person… especially one of us said "well we don't think it's that way" it like was an issue of saying "well we don't think the school meant it that way" they immediately would shout "what would you know, you're white. You have privilege cause (because) you can go to this school. You have this, this and this"" - Alex

In addition, Alex, in an attempt to refrain from patronizing the voices of black students, mentioned not wanting to speak out on the #MustFall movements. This is done in fear of exerting their privileged understanding, thereby minimizing/belittling the impact of the black students' experiences. This additionally communicates the changing dynamic of the place of whiteness within the university setting and also the meaning of belonging for young white students in the university setting.

"Uhm… so… I support it. I'm very supportive of a lot of the calls and like that are being made by black youth but at the same time I know it's also not my place to speak for these youth because this isn't my narrative. If I try and involve myself or try and speak for black youth… then I'm basically asserting white dominance over the narrative which is what needs to be eradicated I think." – Amanda

"you're not allowed, you have to walk on eggshells when it comes to racial problems… cause a lot of black people and coloured people believe that only a white can be racist and it works one way… so at times you just say whatever it is. You just agree with the masses so that you're not persecuted for thinking differently." – Alex

The subtheme of voicelessness is layered. It also comes through that the silence of white students during black movements is not out of not having anything to say.

Instead, it can be taken to mean that conformity and complacency have already started to settle in. This subtheme therefore emerges from the increasing inability of white students, ie the participants, to express themselves fully at home on racial issues. It is also in the context of having the university setting, which was previously a space identified as being majorly theirs, being drastically transformed not only to include other races, but done in such a way as to diminish their own voices.

5.2.1.4 Occupying physical space

In the context of university life, the belongingness of young white students in the face of the black conscientisation movements is also challenged. While historically, university structures were put in place with the comfort of the white student in mind, nowadays there is seemingly fewer and fewer white university spaces that haven't experienced the resonance of the black student's voice. This is interesting to note because in the context of Wits University, the campus and its academic spaces were built essentially for white students. The activities and curricula were formulated to serve white students, with little to no consideration for black, Indian or coloured students. This may be attributed to the fact that university life was not designed to accommodate them, only the white students.

The matter of interest comes in now where in the present day, black conscientisation movements are being carried out by black students in what was designed to be a space that belongs to white people. Some questions that arise in this regard are 'does the University of the Witswatersrand belong to any one group of people? If so, to whom does it belong?' and 'how are white students navigating this space they previously considered theirs, that has since been infused with a strong sense of non-whiteness and blackness?'. It also begs the questions whether white students still feel they belong to this space or not.

"I: How does it feel to be a white student in South Africa especially in a university like WITS?

R: uhm I think… obviously there's a level of discomfort because you're… you know… I think most people who are part of a generation where you weren't responsible necessarily for a lot of the wrongs that occurred in history, it's difficult to accept a lot of the… not difficult to accept but it's... it's just… there's a discomfort that

comes about, you know. But at the same time... I feel like as a white person I need to acknowledge that being a white individual in itself…means something" – Amanda

In the above quote, Amanda unpacks the discomfort that white students experience in university spaces where they are confronted with blackness and black conscientization in many different ways across the university campus.

Another resultant issue that emanates from the notion of belonging is that of othering. It has been defined by some authors as 'a set of dynamics, processes, and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group identities' (Powell & Menendien, 2016: 17). Othering is essentially the opposite of belonging, as it seeks to marginalize an 'out-group, or a different group of persons that do not identify with the qualities or characteristics that are held by the 'in-group'. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (class), disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone. In this case, the othering of young white students would be as a result of race, and socio-economic standing (class).

The research reveals that in an unintentional way, and perhaps as an unforeseen consequence, the progression of democracy has led to young white students potentially experiencing othering at home and at school. At home, the manifestation of 'other' may come from the fact that they are of a younger post democratic generation that does not share the views of older family members. Within their academic spaces, the door for othering is swung open by the fact that non-white students may consider white students as being on the outside of the struggle, and because of this, not being able to fully relate to their pleas, thereby existing in some world that is not the reality of the non-white students. This may lead to demarcations of an inner circle versus outer circle and may cause genuine feelings of exclusion for white students who wish to integrate and educate themselves about non-white spaces.

While the language of othering has been fashioned to encompass the many expressions of prejudice; and to majorily operate within the dynamic spaces of racially-based injustices. For the purpose of this research, othering will be discussed as something of an unintended generational consequence on the heirs of white supremacy. It has been fairly clear and direct how marginalized people groups have

been impacted by the activities associated with othering. The more unclear effect of othering is the one in which young white students are the victims; and the effect this has had on their sense of belonging.

Additionally, authors explain that othering provides a clarifying frame that reveals a set of common processes and conditions that propagate group-based inequality and marginality, thus socially constructing a group based-identity. It is a broadly inclusive conceptual framework that captures expressions of prejudice and behaviors such as atavism and tribalism, but it is also a term that points toward deeper processes at work, only some of which are captured by those terms.

Othering is a broadly inclusive term, but sharp enough to point toward a deeper set of dynamics, suggesting something fundamental or essential about the nature of group-based exclusion (Othering and Belonging, 2016). Similarly, the term belonging connotes something fundamental about how groups are positioned within society, as well as how they are perceived and regarded. It reflects an objective position of power and resources as well as the intersubjective nature of group-based identities (Othering and Belonging, 2016).

5.2.2 Interactions with black people

This next theme aims to explore these young white students' exposure to and interactions with black people, blackness and how they have come to understand black youth who engage in activism in spaces of higher education. In this theme quotes from the participants can be seen, broadly, to represent the experiences of young white people growing up in post-apartheid South Africa. This section contextualizes the experiences of white students in relation to their interaction with black people in their private spaces as well as in public spaces. A common thread with the responses from the participants is that they recalled their initial encounters with black people as being through contact with house helpers who fulfilled both child-rearing and cleaning duties for their families.

Steyn (2011) points out that children are essentially socialized into a state of racial ignorance where their whiteness, and the social implications of it, is concerned. This gives us some insight into some of the challenges that were unpacked in the first theme "whiteness and belonging" that are essentially social in nature and are as a result of their racialized childhood.

5.2.2.1 Private spaces (childhood, house helper's and "mothers")

In the South African context, Ally (2011), found that the service that house helper's offer is not merely that of cleaning and child-rearing, but rather that it is more than just labour and extends to affective and psychic conditions. In the below quote Alex explores the sense of controlled interactions of white students with black people within the home setting, particularly in the context of house helpers.

"I was quite close to our domestic worker. She raised me till I was 17. yeah, she was basically my surrogate mom and she would greet me in Setswana. Although I couldn't always speak Setswana, I knew what she was shouting at me for…

[both laugh]

…when she spoke in Setswana. Like the tone of the voice told me what I did, and I was like "run!"" – Alex

This is a common theme with white children growing up in South Africa in both apartheid and post-apartheid times. Alex narrates the challenge of having a black mother figure within a culture that devalues black people. In an earlier quote Alex talks about her family as being very conservative and this gives us insight into the upbringing of young white children. Their exposure to irreconcilable approaches to understanding race. One the one hand, Alex has been exposed to cultural values that degrade black people yet on the other hand she is brought up by a black person whom she regards as a "surrogate mom".

The paradox here can be seen in that while black people were considered subhuman (or less-than) in many aspects by white people, they were thought good enough to care for their children and input significantly into their lives. Steyn (2011) also makes note that the result of an oppressive apartheid system, is a young white generation that have very little insight into the lives of black people outside of their interactions within their privileged contexts (i.e their homes). Alex was unable to provide any more information about her house helper or her life although she considers the relationship a very significant relationship for her.

"My whole life I've had more black friends uhm I think it's because I had a Tswana woman looking after me. So, I never really saw race. I saw you as another human

being who I enjoy the company of. And my best friend, Mmabatho, she's a black girl."* -Alex

Similarly, in the quote above, Alex points to yet another significant relationship with black people, her best friend as well as her other friends that were mostly black. She points to her colour blindness and that she only saw people as humans whom she enjoyed being around. Interesting here is that she describes her experience as that of affection and significance that she attributes to these people but again struggles to see their blackness and what that means for those people's everyday experience in the this country.

The lady who was our domestic worker up until I was about 11, Augustina, she was like a mom to me. Which I know is quite common among a lot of uhm privileged white households. Uhm… but she was like a mom to me and her daughter would come to our house after school and she was like my big sister and we're still very close today even though Augustina* doesn't work for us anymore.* – Amanda

Amanda also describes a similar upbringing where house helpers are concerned. She also affectionately describes her house helper as being "like a mom" to her and expands this sentiment by remarking that she is aware that this is common amongst privileged white households. It is interesting that with both Alex and Amanda's narrations they are still very clear that these women work for them or are their domestic workers. That they are of service to them in their privileged homes. Even though seen as surrogate mothers there is still a very clear separation that these women are not one of them and that they are of service to them.

The experience of interacting with black people has been on that makes it hard for these young white students to reconcile what the realities of black people are outside of their privileged lives. These young white students seem to experience a difficulty in feeling they have a space to belong. They have had confusing and conflicting exposure to race and racial dynamics even in the home setting which is racialized but overlooked as a nonracial space.

5.2.2.2 Public spaces (#FeesMustFall, School and shared spaces)

From the participants narrations of their initial encounters with black people in their homes, an interesting aspect was their encounters with black people outside of their

homes. Most of these interactions have been with other youths growing up in post-apartheid South Africa and brought about interesting reflections from the participants.

"so, when I got to high school, I'd gravitate towards, you know, the black group more obviously. But they were different from the ones I had in my co-ed school cause they went to a single sex school. And then in high school… not all of them but I'd say 90% of the black girls in my grade were radicalised in some way or another. And when if a white person… especially one of us said "well we don't think it's that way" it like was an issue of saying "well we don't think the school meant it that way" they immediately would shout "what would you know, you're white. You have privilege cause you can go to this school. You have this, this and this" and well we were like "you are coming to this school as well. Your parents drive fancier cars than we do. You've never lived in poverty yet here you are shouting at us". – Alex

In previous quotes, Alex speaks very fondly of her house helper whom she considered to be like a mom to her as well as her friendships with mostly black people throughout her childhood. In this quote she seems to be narrating an encounter with a conscientized black youth "And then in high school… not all of them but I'd say 90% of the black girls in my grade were radicalised in some way or another.". She elaborates by exploring her sense of frustration with the conscientization of these young black girls in her high school. This feels like one of her first encounters with blackness or black people that were vocal about their struggles as well as her first encounter with black people that was not centered around her comfort or as a service to her (i.e outside of her privileged home.)

Additionally, where the #FeesMust Fall protests were concerned, some of the participants mentioned that they desired to stay away from all protest activity because it seemed unsafe. Violent activity ensued as police fired rubber bullets into the crowds and vandalism took place. A lack of safety is one of the quickest ways of diminishing a person's sense of safely. The feeling of being 'at home' leaves when a person feels threatened or simply not protected. Therefore in the heat of the actual protest activity, it is not far-fetched to assume that the participants may have felt a glaring sense of increased estrangement from the university space where feelings of

being unsafe were invoked; either by having been involved in the protest, or by having watched the protest videos.

"but I think it's that's sort of innate panic that comes over one's body. That whole fight or flight type thing. Uhm… so I think that was sort of my bodily reaction to the situation. It is very scary and intimidating when you see an angry group of people coming towards you and… you don't wanna get in the way. I didn't want to get in the way. Uhm… yeah." – Amanda

"oh wow. Okay. [sigh] I mean I was here in 2016 when some of the protests were going on and I got a phone stolen [laughs] but that was because I was sitting in the fields and everyone came marching and because I'm not confrontational I ran off to the bathroom and when I came back my phone was gone, and it was stressful." – *Amy*

Participants also explored their interactions with black youth engaged in activism in the university setting through protest action. The above quotes are the participants experiences of the #FeesMustFall protests where they felt physically unsafe during the protests. These narrations give insight into the fear that went through these young white students minds when confronted with a group of protesting students

In the above quotes, both Amy and Amanda articulate a sense of anxiouness when directly confronted by protesting students. They both describe not wanting to get in the way of the protesting students because they had some kind of understanding of what their physical presence in that moment represented for the protesting students. In their narrations, both Amy and Amanda reflect on the anxiety that they experience as they are directly confronted with black rage. This ties in with the notion of white guilt as discussed in earlier chapters.

Although Amy articulates that it was stressful for her to have her phone stolen during the protest, she also attempts to downplay her feelings about her phone being stolen by laughing while narrating it to the researcher. This could be because the researcher is black, and the participant may not have wanted to offend the researcher or she felt guilty for complaining about a lost cellphone (which she was able to replace) while other students (black) had taken to the streets because they have financial constraints that effect their access to higher education.

"I think that's a response to all the security. You see the people with all their big glass shields and their guns. That freaks you out a bit because you don't have that. So, you can't retaliate against it. And I think also you go into a protest and you see that, and you assume that there's gonna be violence from the beginning and people just sort of go with that. But I think it's just… I think a lot of people are drunk when they go to protests or on some kind of drugs. Not some people but maybe like a few and they are enough to set off a violent sort of tone to the whole protest. Uhm…but I don't know if there's a way around that… I don't know. I think that the police just need to be better trained." - Amy

Additionally, Amy goes on to defend the protesting students in terms of the violence that ensued during the protests by saying that they were responding to the perceived violence that police officers with big glass shields and guns brings to the protests. She ends the response by suggesting that the police force needs to be better trained to deal with protest action. Interestingly, she also accuses protestors of inciting the violence by being drunk or high on drugs at protests and setting other students off. Her experience of black students and largely black police officers also gives us insight into her conflicted experience of protesting students. She feels the need to defend the students but also feels that some of them are disinhibited and have diminished capacity to express themselves in a manner that would be socially acceptable, or nondisruptive, to the comfort of members of the university community that do not have the same struggles as them.

"they would just take photos of black students almost. And they would make it as if it's a black fight but when they went to the union buildings that year, there was lots of white students in my class that also went the union buildings. And Indians and coloureds and it was a united thing of different races and they all went to the unions building but somehow it was made as if it's like a… racial fight because of…blacks that want free education and it wasn't. It was merely students… collectively that didn't want to pay more for student fees" – Andrew

In the same breath, another participant, who also expressed a similar discomfort with the violence that ensued in the protests, also expresses their desire to benefit from or be included in the narrative of the success of fees must fall protests. There is still a sense of a desire to belong with the movement because it is a student movement

while also experiencing complicated feelings of disdain towards the violence that inevitably erupts in protest action.

"Even if you apply for a job then there's like this white person that's like "I'm not gonna get the job because I'm white" and then there's the black person that…knows he gets the job because he's black but not because of his qualification… and I don't know how it feels to be a black person and to know I got a job because of my race." – Andrew

Finally, Andrew also expresses that part of his desire to belong to a group of youths with commonality extends to his desire to be valued above other candidates in the job market. He articulates that he feels that call to redress the past injustices, which have tangible effects on black youth in post-apartheid South Africa, excludes him and as such feels that it diminishes the value of the black candidate in the position. He expresses a frustration with not being considered first for a job or any other opportunity. This also reveals a diminished understanding of the purpose of redressing racial injustices which is replaced by an emotional engagement. This is in line with Steyn's (2011) sentiments that white youth are socialized into a racial ignorance where their whiteness, and the social implications of it, is concerned.

5.2.3 Social justice

Social justice is a relatively new concept. It initially surfaced in western thought and political language at the dawn of the industrial revolution and the parallel development of the socialist doctrine. It emerged as an expression of protest against what was perceived as the capitalist exploitation of labour and as a focal point for the development of measures to improve the human condition. Its five principles are access, equity, diversity, participation and human rights.

In applying social justice, one is required to make considerations of the geographical, sociological, political and cultural framework within which relations between individuals and groups can be understood, assessed, and characterized as just or unjust. A nation usually provides the contexts for the various aspects of social justice, such as the distribution of income in a population, are observed and measured; this benchmark is used not only by national Governments but also by international organizations and supranational entities such as the European Union.

This section details white student activism as an indicator of change in the way that students act in accordance with their changing worldviews and identities. 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 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.

5.2.3.1 Do all social justice issues live in the same mkhukhu?

One of the subthemes that emerged from the interviews was an equating of black conscientisation movements to other social justice issues such as homophobia, gender-based violence, hunger, public health, and environmental issues. Where they felt they could not engage in issues of racial dynamics, there seemed to have been a desire from the participants to express their voices more strongly for social justice causes in which they felt they could effectively partake and be heard. In other words, the participants showed a greater interest in participating in the fight of non-race specific social justice issues such as those mentioned above.

"I can't do anything about the fact that I am white. Uhm but not taking up space where I shouldn't be is probably something proactive that I can do in order to be sort of be respectful because while I don't understand, I'll never be able to understand what it's like to be black. I do understand what it's like to be a woman and I do understand what it's like to uhm have mental health issues. Like being mentally able and male, those are other forms of privilege so like if I… I think in my mind if I sort of use the other aspects in my life where I am not privileged, or I am violated and… put that into perspective… I don't want men telling what I should be as a woman. I don't want people who have not dealt with depression to tell me how to feel better, so it is not my place as a white person to tell black people how to deal… with their circumstances that are a result of my race" – Amanda

"I really like the climate change movements, I also think that comes from a place of privilege though but not for a long time because it' becoming an immediate problem

and pretty soon it won't be a privilege to care about it, it'll be a necessity. So, at the same while I do support it I do feel like there are more pressing matters, but I also don't know how to get involved in those more pressing matters. Uhm… so, yeah, I have been going to this organisation's meetings, that's called Extinction Rebellion" – Christina

However, the racial segregation of South Africa's past was designed in such a way that it majorly crippled the black community in more ways than one, ergo a majority of the social ills are also suffered by the black community. So, although other social justice issues may not be primarily race-specific, the outworking of them was such that they were to be endured by the black community.

After brief discussion of the notion of social justice, the subtheme of clustering social justice issues as being of the same, pressing nature emerged from the participants' interviews. Participants through their conversation interviews indicated a passion for other social causes such as environmental causes, gender based violence and homosexuality.

"I don't think I would partake in protests unless it was because of gender-based violence…when it comes to fees must fall, I feel like I would try and understand what both sides of the party, but I wouldn't actively get involved because in a way… I'd fight this thing that really is not really my fight. I'm not saying that I shouldn't support. Like I would support the protesters if it was for valid reasons…" – Alex

This was so done in a manner that likened or equated the racial issue with all the other issues stated above. The research does not dispute the participants standing up for other causes. It instead goes a step further to investigate whether this approach of considering them all in a group is more helpful than harmful. There is potential of each issue losing its identity into that of another, and also due to the entanglement, the potential of one issue bearing the weight of another issue that may not be directly linked to its cause.

The lack of clarity can cause confusion. For example, issues of food security are not necessarily related to issues of mental health, or homosexuality. The observation of one issue does nothing to preserve or ensure justice for the other. Using this line of thought, it remains uncertain whether grouping all seemingly unrelated social justice

issues is beneficial in any way. This example has been made in order to draw out the point that while all social justice issues are inherently of a human rights based nature, some i.e racial inequality, could benefit from being characterized as being more pressing over others, on the basis of the fact that the threat to a sense of self and human dignity is so much more imminent. The thesis suggests whether there must take place a re-conceptualisation at university level, of the way in which racial injustice is perceived by white student's vis-a-vis other social justice issues.

However, in quoting an excerpt from the previous chapter by Stephen Bantu Biko, he makes mention that fighting against apartheid is fighting against all injustices. Because of the way in which apartheid has intertwined the struggles of the black community, it would seem reasonable, especially against the backdrop of a segregationist past, to combine or group all social justice issues.

5.3 Conclusion

It is evident from the themes that have emerged that South Africa as a nation is still finding its feet considering the journey to democracy. It has also become clearer that even in the context of the white experience, there are existing issues that have become the burden of the younger white generation to figure out. Often, the black perspective perceives whiteness as flawless, or as having little to no issues with navigating the racial space. The emergent themes have revealed some of the actual issues that are contained in the space of whiteness and that the current generations of young white students must face.

In order to move past the misconceptions that social groups have of each other and begin to move towards a true direction of unity, understanding and tolerance, such discussions, studies, and research are necessary to open up the conversation and facilitate a space for active engagement as opposed to committing to decision making processes based on fallacies or half-truths that do not serve the greater good.

6. Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research project and highlights the main themes that emerged from the research as well as the subthemes that formed part of those main themes. It offers a concise summary of the primary issues that emerged and were the subject of discussion in the research. It highlights the value of utilising critical race theory as a framework for unpacking and making sense of the experiences of young white students of the conscientisation of black youth in the south African context. This chapter also provides the researcher's reflexivity section which is an overview of the research process from the perspective of the researcher.

6.1.1 Concluding thoughts

This research project had endeavoured to explore young white students experiences of increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. What has stood out in the data as an important point of departure is the sense of a diminished sense of belonging for white youth. It has emerged in the data that change has been very hard and scary for white youth to engage in. Young white students appear to be fearful of facing unknown future realities. It also appears that they feel unprepared for the current realities and consequences of an oppressive legacy.

What has come across strongly in the research is that their sense of belonging has been unsettled and that they are currently experiencing a diminished sense of belonging. With this in mind, it would follow that the increased conscientisation of black youth and the direct confrontation of the injustices, that continue to permeate through society, has drastically unsettled white students and fundamentally challenged notions of what it means to be a young white person living in post-apartheid South Africa. The student movement of 2015 and beyond has consequently impacted young white students' construct of identity and impacted their sense of belonging.

The three main themes that emerged from the research were centred around issues of whiteness and belonging, interactions with black people as well as social justice. The participants narrations were mainly centred around their diminished sense of belonging both within their families and within their university communities. There

seems to be a clear disconnect for young white students between the ways in which they have been socialised and the demands that the black youth have placed on them.

The data collected from the participants revealed that young white students feel a sense of diminished belonging within the student movement of 2015 and beyond. There is a sense that young white students feel let down by previous white generations as they have largely felt unprepared for the demands of the black student movement. The study revealed that there are two extreme experiences by young white students, a deep sense of intergenerational responsibility for the actions of past generations or a complete oblivion to the impact of and intergenerational consequences of the actions of past white generations.

Participants accounts revealed a limited understanding of the daily struggles of many black students. This leads to white students viewing their places at universities as assured and legitimate while viewing black students' places as a product of a transformative agenda which makes them less legitimate. There also is a feeling of voicelessness and alienation from the student movement, the student community and even the country which leads to them considering leaving the country as they feel unrepresented. The alienation felt by young white students goes beyond the student movement and exists even in the home setting where they feel they are unable to have discussions about race.

Participants also reflected on their interactions with black people both in their private spaces and in public spaces. The participants reflected on the irreconcilable approaches to understanding race that are experienced from childhood where there is a view that black people are subhuman but also good enough for child rearing. Most participants experienced deep connections to their domestic helpers which has made it hard to reconcile with the status of black people within society. Secondary to this is the experience of black youth who exist outside of the confines of their privileged spaces, who are not interacting with white youth for their benefit or comfort and through whom these white youth experience black rage. Lastly, young white students also expressed a desire to belong to a social justice movement and in turn equate the black student movement to other social justice movements such as gender-based violence, climate change and health which they feel they can belong

to.

6.1.2 limitations of the study

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 five interviews were conducted. Although this is consistent with the guidelines of IPA research, this is not likely to cover the broad range of perspectives, stories and experiences in relation to white students experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. Therefore, the researcher does not claim that saturation has been reached or even close to it.

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 set 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 from the humanities faculty which could have impacted their responses as the faculty is primarily concerned with phenomena of human understanding. In future research, it would be interesting to widen this research to include other faculties. With that in mind the researcher would still argue that the stories and racialised patterns that emerged from the research are unlikely to have been impacted significantly by those differences.

Lopez, Figueroa, Connor & Maliski (2008) argue that cross cultural qualitative research is difficult to conduct due to the issue of reliability and accuracy. The researcher recognises that being a black researcher exploring young white students’ experiences of increased conscientisation has influenced the research. The information provided by the participants could have been filtered because of the identity of the researcher. Although the researcher endeavoured to form a good connection with all participants and create a comfortable environment for them, the impact of the researcher’s identity cannot be denied. When exploring how it felt for participants to have this racialised conversation with a black researcher the participants responded as follows:

"Actually, that was interesting. I thought this was a great opportunity to really know what am I thinking that's okay and what am I thinking that's not okay. And… what do black people actually think about white people, you know. That would be a nice thing to know. I suppose it's definitely not the same for everyone. Uhm… like I've often wondered when I see people wearing the EFF stuff, does that mean they actively hate me? If they see me, before even knowing me, do they hate me? Uhm… so, I wouldn't know how to approach that topic with anyone really. Even with my own cousin, I've sometimes thought, does he have resentment towards us or does that not even cross his mind? So, maybe we will talk about that one day, when… he's not to cool for me again [both laugh] uhm…yeah. What are your political views? Where do you stand politically? Are you allowed to tell me?" – Amy

"uhm I was quite comfortable because my whole life… well from high school and upwards if you… if a white person tried to explain their side of the story and what they felt. They were told "no your wrong. You're being a racist, you can't say that" whereas in this interview I was allowed to express how I felt, allowed to give my opinions and they weren't contradicted. They were saying "well why do you feel that way? Can you explain more?". So, for the first time it felt like I was asked questions based off my race, but I was allowed to truly speak and say what I truly feel" – Alex

"I'm… I'm very… you were very uhm… I would say, you were just sitting there very passive. You simply just asked the questions. So, for me it was… it's a safe environment to give my opinion and I know that I'll be uhm… my name weren't used in anything so I was quite comfortable by raising my opinion. And although you didn't give back an opinion, because that's not part of the research you're not allowed to give back an opinion [both laugh] I would've liked to have heard your opinion a lot of times… You're not me. We don't live maybe in the same social context. We grew up differently. I grew up in a predominantly white, Afrikaans school. I don't know what school you've gone to but you're more English so, obviously our opinions will differ, greatly." – Andrew

Most of the participants were very interested in knowing what the researchers' political views were and what her opinion of the student movement was. This is a clear indication that the researchers race and physical appearance had an impact on the research. The participants also made their own assumptions about the

researcher “I don’t know what school you’ve gone to but you are more English, so obviously your opinions will differ”.

In seeking to explore experiences of people, Parker (2003) cautions against the researcher searching for an ultimate ‘truth’ of human experience or seeking to uncover underlying meaning where it is not being expressed or communicated. The aim or focus of research should not be rooted in a quest to find ‘truth’ but instead, to explore the varied ways that people construct their identities and make meaning of their stories and experiences in ways which become true for them (Parker, 2003). Therefore, the experiences of the participants are subjective and are shaped by several factors such as their social, political and historical context and cannot, and should not, be conceptualised as ‘the truth’ but merely a representation of their realities (Willig, 2013).

Lastly, from a methodological perspective, the data may have been richer had a narrative approach been used for this research topic. This would have allowed for participants to ‘track’ their lives stories in a way that would provide a beginning, middle and end of their experiences. Squire (2005) argues that simple questions such as “tell me a story about…” allows for people to replay certain events of their lives as they happened which provides a cultural trace as well as an expression of their lives and identities. This would have also allowed for their stories to be foregrounded and told in a way that would allow the individual to make meaning of their own stories (McAdams, 2001).

6.2 Reflexivity

There is a distinction made between reflection and reflexivity that are each rooted in different ontological and epistemological assumptions which have implications on how one responds to and approaches research as well as other spheres of practice. Cunliffe & Jun (2005 p. 226) state that “Reflection is traditionally defined as a mirror image—an objectivist ontology based on the idea that there is an original reality we can think about and separate ourselves from.” It does not require one to question our own biases, prejudice or systems of power; it merely entails thinking about a situation in a removed manner. On the other hand, critical reflexivity requires a shifting and unsettling of basic assumptions, discourses, widely held beliefs or

practices. Reflexivity also entails questioning our own thinking and critically examining our ways of interacting with others.

Critical approaches to reflexivity draw from critical theory, post structural and post modern thinking which is interested in questioning ideological assumptions underlying text, language and truth claims (Cuncliff & Jun, 2005). D'Cruz, Gillingham, Melendez (2007) add that critical reflexivity allows room for interrogating power relations and knowledge between professionals and those whom they claim to serve in public spaces; it allows for opportunities for emancipation.

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 black 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.

The identity of the researcher has also had an undeniable impact on the research. The responses provided by the participants could have been filtered because of the identity of the researcher. The researcher is a black woman who's personal style includes wearing headwraps and long dresses. This can often be associated with particular political views and this may have evoked anxiety within the participants when responding to questions. The fact that many of the participants enquired about the researcher's political views is an indication that they were consciously and unconsciously aware of the researcher. This has to have had an impact on their responses.

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 black skin as well as my disadvantaged past and the effects of an oppressive system that are felt on a deep and personal level in my own life. As a result of my own biases, it is a real possibility that I could have under appreciated the difficulties expressed or felt by the participants and viewed them in relation to my own experiences of the concept of whiteness, of racism and of my own blackness. In this way, I may have over focussed on searching for racist themes in the data.

When I initially conceptualised this topic with my supervisor, I was scared and worried about the things that I could potentially hear during interviews and wondered if I would be able to handle the racist undertones that I already assumed I would hear in the interview process. I had to remain mindful of this bias that I already entered into the room with and had to consistently, mentally, check in with myself and my feelings throughout the interview process. I also was very aware that my blackness would impact the space. The fact that I am a black woman who has dreadlocks and frequently wears headwraps made me very conscious of the assumptions that could immediately be associated with that.

I initially wondered whether I should cover my head or wear my hair the way I have it. I wondered what the participants would assume about me if I wore my converse all stars and a long dress to the interview. I realised in these anxiety provoking moments that there were so many distinguishing features of my blackness and that I needed to interrogate my own feelings of being confronted so directly with white students' opinions of me as a conscientized black student studying at the University of the Witwatersrand. I also had to relive the experiences that I had as a student who participated in Fees Must Fall protests on this same campus.

I would also like to reflect on the complicated feelings of rage and simultaneous empathy with the experiences of white students especially where their sense of belonging was concerned. Being a child raised by my grandmother who was a domestic worker on a farm in the Eastern Cape, I could relate with the warm feelings of closeness that the participants felt towards their black domestic helpers but also identified strongly with the rage I felt at the subhuman treatment that my grandmother was subjected to. This required me to introspect and take those complicated feeling to my own therapy space where they could be processed.

Another point of reflection through this process was the eagerness of other races to participate in the study. Two encounters come to mind. In my first encounter a black female student contacted me to enquire about the research. Upon hearing her name. I enquired about her race and she told me that she was black. I explained that the research required white participants as it focussed on their experiences of black conscientisation and she proceeded to let me know that she would approach some

of her white friends to participate in the study this resulted in one of the participants of this study contacting me at her recommendation.

The second encounter was when I had set up an interview with a student via WhatsApp and when they arrived at the venue I walked passed them twice because I was expecting a white student. They were in fact a male Indian student. We entered the interview room and as I explained to the student that I was looking for white students to participate in the research, the disappointment on his face was very clear. Although both the researcher and the student manically defended against the pulpable feeling of being excluded by laughing at all the missed opportunities from both ends to pick this up before the interview date, that encounter stayed with me. It was painfully clear in that room that there are experiences of those that are not white enough and not black enough that are not well accounted for in the race discussion and that I had never anticipated.

In this encounter, as well as in the research generally, my training as a therapist was very helpful in processing that with the student. I was able to enquire about how that made the student feel and allowed us both a few moments to sit in that discomfort as persons of colour.

7. Appendix A: Information sheet

Good morning/afternoon

My name is Phiwe Lufele and I am currently a Masters student enrolled at the University of Witswatersrand and I am conducting a study on young white student's experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. This research is required for the completion of my degree in Psychology and I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

Participation in this study will involve one in depth interview where I will be asking you questions about your personal life stories and experiences. I am hoping to understand your experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth and how you make sense of student activist movements. In taking part in this research, you will assist us in gaining insight into the experiences of young white students and add to the body of knowledge already generated on post-apartheid South Africa.

Because it is of utmost importance that what you say to me, the researcher, is not misconstrued, I would like to request your permission to use a tape recorder during our focus group discussion to aid me when writing up my report. Your identity will be protected by using pseudonyms/fake names and only my supervisor and I will be permitted to listen to the audio-recordings. I may use direct speech in writing up my final report but even in those cases, fake names will be used. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times throughout the interview process and afterwards when data is being transcribed and reported on in the form of my research report. All recordings will be kept locked away in a save room on my computer which requires a password to gain access. After the recording have been transcribed verbatim, original recordings will be destroyed. The transcripts will be kept until my degree has been completed, after which they will be destroyed as well.

The interview will be approximately 60-90 minutes and some discomfort may arise when answering particular questions. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without offering any reasons and/or you may refuse to answer any question that you are not comfortable discussing. Your participation in this study is voluntary and warmly welcomed. This study offers free of charge counselling

services at the career and counselling development unit. Contact details are as follows: (011) 717 9140

Willing participants who accept to partake in this study will be contacted at the end of the study to be given a summary of all the findings and a full research report is available to participants upon request. I am available for questions and queries and I can be reached telephonically on 078 104 5423 or via email on lufelephiwe@gmail.com

Your participation will be greatly appreciated. You are welcome to contact me directly or alternatively contact my supervisor using the details below.

Yours truly,

Phiwe Lufele

Research supervisor: Ruby Patel

Ruby.Patel@wits.ac.za

8. Appendix B: Consent form for interview

Young white students' experiences of the increased conscientisation of black South African youth in the South African context

I _____ agree to participate in an in depth interview on young white student's experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I withdraw participation at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. I understand that this is a research report whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term. I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

…….

(Full Name)

…….....

(Signature)

……

(Date)

9. Appendix C: Consent form for audio recording

I, _____, hereby give consent for the in depth interview (described in the information sheet attached) conducted by Phiwe Lufele to be audio-recorded, with the full understanding that:

- The tapes will be heard by no other person other than the researcher and her supervisor
- All tapes and transcripts will be destroyed after the completion of the research and the qualification has been obtained
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report
- Pseudonyms/false names will be used to identify different participants to maintain privacy
- I further give consent to the researcher, Phiwe Lufele, to use direct speech that will not have any identifying information

……

(Full Name)

……..

(Signature

……..

(Date)

10. Appendix D: Interview schedule

Introduction

-Please tell me a little about yourself?

- Please tell me a little bit about your family background

-How do you feel about being in South Africa (How do you feel about being a student?)

-What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

*Show video

Theme 1 = Student activism

-What is your understanding of what the student's demands were?

- How do you think the students in the video were feeling?

- What do you imagine your role would be in times of student activism?

Theme 2 = SA history

-How do you imagine things got to this point?

- What do you think the students in the video are thinking or feeling?

Theme 3 = Conscientisation

- How did this video make you feel?

- How do make sense of what is happening in this video?

- What do you think about the black student's anger in the video? (Do you think there is an alternative way to achieve this?)

Theme 4 = Role

-As a white student, what role do you imagine you play in student activism?

-As a young white person, what role do you think you play in the current political landscape?

Closing

-How did it feel to discuss this topic with a black researcher?

-Where do you hope to see yourself in the future? (Hopes and dreams)

-What do you think the future of South Africa looks like?

11. Appendix E: Letter to registrar of student affairs

Dear registrar and director of student affairs

RE: Permission to conduct research with students

I, Khanya Phiwe Lufele, a masters student of the University of the Witwatersrand, in the school of human and community development, Department of Psychology, hereby request permission to recruit students from the University of the Witwatersrand to participate in my research study. The research aims to explore young white students' experiences of the increased conscientisation of black youth in the South African context. All participants will be over the age of eighteen and will be asked to participate in one in depth interview each. It will be explicitly explained to participants, in writing, that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the process at any time without explanation. All participants will be informed of the nature and procedure of the research, in writing and verbally, and will be asked to sign an information sheet, participation in an in-depth interview consent form, audio recording consent form as well as a confidentiality agreement.

The project has received ethical clearance from the Psychology department's Research and Ethics review committee as well as from the University of Witwatersrand Ethics committee. The Ethics approval number is: MCLIN/19/003 IH

This research report is supervised by Ms Ruby Patel, a lecturer in the psychology department. Ms Ruby Patel can be contacted on 011 717 4529 or ruby.patel@wits.ac.za

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