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Narratives of Intimate Interracial Relationships in South Africa

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University of the Witwatersrand, 2020

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology)

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report entitled “Narratives of Intimate Interracial Relationships in South Africa” is my own, unaided work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signed this_____ day of _____ 2020

_____

Lorenca Sikonela

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ..... *Error! Bookmark not defined.*

DECLARATION *2*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *3*

Table of Contents *4*

Chapter 1: Introduction and Rationale *6*

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review *10*

The Hinge Generation **10**

Racial Classification in Apartheid South Africa **11**

Race and Racism **12**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) **15**

The South African History of Intimate Interracial Relationships **16**

The Black-White Binary **19**

The Colonized Mind **21**

Transitioning Racialized Spaces and Intersectionality **22**

The Pathologizing Nature of the Term 'Interracial Relationship' **24**

Who Dates Interracially? **27**

Racial Identity in Interracial Relationships **28**

Chapter 3: Methodology *30*

Research Aim: **30**

Research Questions: **30**

Methodology **30**

Narrative Methodology 31

Narratives and Time 32

Sample and Sampling **34**

Participants' Demographic Profile **36**

Data Gathering Process **36**

Ethical Considerations: **37**

Data Analysis **38**

Reflexivity **39**

Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis *42*

1. Race and Class 42
1.1. Whiteness and Privilege 43
1.2. Schooling and University 46
2. Race and Gender 50
2.1. Intersectionality 50
2.2. Embodiment 52
3. Forming New Identities 57
3.1. Fluidity of Identity 57
3.2. Culture and Beliefs: Constructing New Versions 60
3.3. Negotiating Language and Family Relationships 67
Chapter 5: Conclusions 71
Race and Class 71
Race and Gender 73
Forming New Identities 73
Limitations of the Research and Directions for Future Research 76
References 77
Appendices 87

Chapter 1: Introduction and Rationale

Conducting research on intimate interracial relationships within the South African context is vital as this information is quite limited (Steyn, McEwen & Tsekwa, 2018). Despite being within the second decade of democracy, racism and racial division is still prevalent in South Africa (Jaynes, 2007). This is contrary to the idea of a 'Rainbow Nation' which was a term created by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu to portray the 'united' state of South Africa post-1994 (Baines, 1998). The discrepancies between the actual state of South Africa and the notion of the 'Rainbow Nation' may be clearly seen in people's perceptions and everyday experiences and interactions with others, particularly, in relation to interracial intimate relationships which are often still viewed as exceptional and stigmatised as problematic (Jaynes, 2007). This raises issues of racial tolerance and acceptance as many interracial couples are discriminated against and policed by society. This policing of interracial couples is contradictory to Witenberg's (2000) definition of tolerance defined "as the absence of prejudice of what is disliked" (p.3) of people who are different from oneself. Thus, although such relationships are not deemed illegal anymore, there is still a prejudice against interracial couples. This research is thus essential to conduct because the topic of intimate interracial relationships has been, and still is, controversial in South Africa as a result of its apartheid history and allows us to explore the possibilities and constraints in constructing a nonracist democratic society (Seekings, 2008).

Thus, this research project aims to provide the reader with different insights into the experiences of people in such relationships from their own perspectives. Research on the topic of interracial relationships tends to be pathologizing as it constantly compares interracial couples with intraracial couples who are same-race couples (Steyn et al., 2018). Therefore, conducting narrative research on interracial relationships will allow such couples to let their voices and personal stories be heard and made known to the wider South African community, which will create an awareness of mixed-race relationships. Furthermore, the media plays a significant role in creating a certain perception of interracial relationships in society (Lienemann & Stropp, 2013). Although South Africa is racially diverse, the media tends to portray more homogenous families than interracial families, creating the perception that interracial couples are not the norm. The use of social media is more prevalent amongst

young people; thus, it is essential to explore their perceptions and attitudes towards interracial relationships within the South African context.

For young people, the formation of an identity is inextricably tied to their development of intimate relationships (Montgomery, 2005). Erikson (1968 as cited in in Montgomery, 2005) postulated that having a sense of identity consists of the organization of one's beliefs, capabilities, desires and one's past into a consistent and self-directed self. This may relate to narratives and their aim to make meaning of one's life and to construct a coherent identity by considering the past, the present and the future (McAdams, 2001; Squire, 2008; Freeman, 1993). In this sense, this research speaks to issues of identity among young South Africans, through a specific focus on hyper racialized intimate relationships. Furthermore, because the study is narrative, temporality or the movement from the past to the present and towards the future is essential in making sense of interracial relationships of young people specifically in South Africa. This is due to its history of racial segregation and discrimination, which may affect how the youth have formed not only their identity, but also how they form intimate relationships across race. In essence, the current research study is important as it focuses on how socio-political dynamics of race are experienced and lived out within the South African context, which is a present issue informed by the past, and may continue to affect future generations. In this sense, temporality and relationality plays an important role in the construction of identities through narratives (Brockmeier, 2000; Bruner, 1987 & Ricouer, 1991; Freeman, 2002).

This study focuses on the experiences of young South Africans in interracial relationships, and what their personal experiences may tell us about the concepts of race and identity in the context of South Africa. Although race may be experienced as real and has an impact on identities and relationships, it is only a social construct (Afful, Wohlford & Stoelting, 2015; Guillaumin, 1999). During the apartheid period, people were classified within the racial categories 'Black', 'Coloured', 'Indian' and 'White' (Afful et al., 2015; Posel, 2010). As a result of this, people still classify themselves according to these categories, which constructs certain types of identities. Therefore, the current research study aims to understand what these categories mean for individuals within interracial relationships, and how they affect the relationships they are in. This speaks to the importance of racial identity, which can be defined as how one identifies and embodies their racial category (Hill & Thomas, 2002; Violi, 2008). Despite being categorized as a specific race in South Africa, individuals may assert different parts of their identity at various times (Ndlovu, 2012). Through this narrative

study, participants were given the space to construct their narrative identity in a way that provides the reader with insight on the complexity and multiplicity of identity and interracial dating. These narratives provided a more personal and in-depth understanding of interracial relationships opposed to the dominant narratives depicting such relationships as dysfunctional, that much of the literature has provided in the past. These dominant narratives include perceiving interracial relationships as having more conflict due to racial differences, and that people who choose to form intimate romantic relationships with people outside their racial category may do so in order to benefit materially (Troy, Lews-Smith & Laurenceau, 2006; Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). Furthermore, much of the literature focuses on intimate relationships between Black and White individuals. Although this Black-White binary is the dominant racial framing in the South African context, it is also essential to obtain more narratives with couples of different races and not only the Black-White binary which is so common in literature, in order to understand what it means to identify as being part of an interracial couple in the South African context.

Narratives allow people to give meaning, coherence and understanding of their lives in the form of stories (Custer, Holmberg, Blair & Orbuch, 2008; Fay, 1996; Ricoeur 1991). Freeman (1993) states that narratives help people perceive their own personal growth as they tell their stories in their own way, through reflecting on their pasts and looking to their present and future. "Narrative can refer to an entire life story, woven from the threads of interviews, observation, and documents" (Riessman, 2005, p.1). This research aimed to obtain the life stories of young people from young South African people in order to make sense of their experiences of interracial relationships. Hoffman (2004, as cited in Frankish & Bradbury, 2012) describes the 'hinge generation' as that generation between a traumatic past and the post-conflict society. In our context, this is the generation of young South Africans who were either too young to remember apartheid or were not yet born. With this understanding of life as historical, temporality is key in understanding this generation's experiences of their intimate interracial relationships. However, racism cannot be consigned to the past and the relational dynamics of the present are critical in understanding these experiences. Because one's social context is important in the construction of their narrative identity, it is also important to consider the relational construction of identities in the present. In this study, there is a specific focus on the spaces individuals are exposed to or are a part of, as well as with their relationships with others beyond the intimate relationship itself, e.g.

family members, fellow students, friends, members of the public in impersonal spaces such as shopping malls, in these contexts. (Fishbane, 2001; Gergen, 1991).

The research report is comprised of 5 chapters: the current introductory chapter that provides the rationale for the study; Chapter 2 that consists of the theoretical framework and literature review; Chapter 3 that presents the research methodology of the study; Chapter 4 in which the data are thematically analyzed and discussed; and finally, Chapter 5 that presents the conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The Hinge Generation

South Africans born after 1994, within the democratic South Africa, are commonly known as the 'born free generation', however, it is well established now that it is a misnomer (Frankish & Bradbury, 2012). Hoffman (2004) speak of a 'hinge generation' (as cited in Frankish and Bradbury, 2012) which is consistent to Frankish & Bradbury's (2012) conceptualization in the South African context that consists of individuals who did not directly experience apartheid as they were either too young during this period, or were born after apartheid. This generation of South Africans can be considered to carry the experiences of the history of South Africa simply because their parents lived through apartheid, as well as hold their own personal experiences of the current South Africa, and thus, carry both experiences into their future. This begs the question of how this hinge generation experiences issues of race and racism in relation to how they experience interracial relationships. Freeman, (2010 cited in Frankish & Bradbury, 2012, p.2) speaks of a "narrative unconscious", described as "implicit knowledge" which is knowledge indirectly accumulated. This may be seen in the history of South Africa embedded in racism. Although the hinge generation has not directly experienced apartheid or specifically, the prohibition of interracial relationships, such implicit knowledge is carried by them, thus, affecting their current and future experiences of their intimate interracial relationships. Fay (1996) postulates that "…how [a generation] understands itself is in part a function of what it takes the past to be" (p. 189), supporting the notion that the past, whether directly experienced or not, may affect the present and how one perceives oneself. Ultimately, this may also affect how one experiences their intimate interracial relationships, and how questions of race and ethnicity play themselves out.

In a narrative study on Black and White students in a university setting post-apartheid, it was found that "who these students chose to associate with is revealing of who they take themselves to be in post-apartheid South Africa…" (Walker, 2005, p. 52) where some Black students still found that the apartheid past was still important and very much alive in their present identities and experiences . This speaks to how young people's choices of self-identification in terms of their race, as well as how the apartheid history of South Africa both play a large role in young people's relationship choices, further supporting the notion of the

hinge generation. It is however interesting that young people who date interracially may be exploring ways of identifying themselves and others in different ways that may challenge these historical categories.

Racial Classification in Apartheid South Africa

During the apartheid period, in a very particular application of 'race science', physical differences between people's bodies and looks were used to classify, exclude and dominate certain groups of people (Posel, 2010). In 1950, the Population Registration Act was put in place to classify people into racial groups (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). The four racial categories used to differentiate between people were 'Whites', 'Indians', 'Coloureds' and 'Blacks or Bantus', although the category 'Black' was later used to refer to all people that were not categorically 'White' in post-apartheid South Africa (Posel, 2010). Differences in physical features were assumed to indicate differences in ways of living, intellectual abilities and habits, and thus asserted as 'real' differences that underpinned systematic racism and oppression (Posel, 2001). Psychology was used to maintain the apartheid status-quo as psychological assessments developed for White English speakers were used to test the Black population in order to categorize Black people as inherently inferior to White people (Clay, 2017). In essence, individuals had no choice on how they could identify in terms of race as imposed racial categories were binary, hence restricting large parts of people's lives such as where they could work, spaces they could occupy and who they were allowed to interact with (Mare´, 2001). Although race is a social construct rather than real, these Apartheid categories had very real effects that continue to shape people's lives in the present. For this reason, the study will use the four Apartheid categories of 'race' to explore how individuals in intimate interracial relationships race themselves and others.

Although there has been an improvement and a progression of contact between different races within South Africa, a large portion of the population is still separated from interacting with races that differ from their own (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). One study on racial contact found that even in public informal spaces such as beaches, restaurants and bars, interracial contact is quite limited as people of the same race generally form groups of their own (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). This is not only an issue of race, but also an issue of class and such aspects of identity as culture, language and education that intersect with racial categories with the potential to disrupt, but typically are mutually reinforcing lines of difference. Khunou (2015) suggests that identifying as part of a particular class involves certain

particularities such as language and other factors of identities that impact one's sense of belonging to a particular class. In this sense language, class, levels of education and racial categories may play a role in interactions between people of different backgrounds and racial categories.

Race and Racism

There has been much debate on the concept of race. Guillaumin (1999) posits that 'race' is a socially constructed concept that has no real scientific basis. However, although there is no scientific basis to race, it is still a central factor to people's identities, as well as a factor that shapes the way people interact with each other (Afful, Wohlford & Stoelting, 2015). Weeks (1990, as cited in Walker, 2005) conceptualizes identity as the feeling of belonging and having things in common with others, as well as recognizing that one is different from other people. Billington, Hockey and Strawbridge (1998) add to this definition by postulating that identity, one's sense of self, may change in different social contexts as "no person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.10). For the purpose of this study, race will be conceptualized as a social construct in accordance with the racial classification created in apartheid of "White', 'Indian', 'Coloured', and 'Black', as these categories still affect people's identity (Afful et al., 2015; Posel, 2010). Although the current research study does not accept race as a 'real' phenomenon and rejects racism, by speaking of relationships as interracial, it draws on race and racial differences constructed within the apartheid period. A South African study investigating the narratives of Black and White students in a historically Afrikaans university conceptualized race "as a complicated multiplicity of identifications producing, reproducing and transforming identities under changing social and historical circumstances" (Walker, 2005, p. 41). In this sense, race is understood as that which is changing, negotiable and embedded within time, and context. Because race may form a big part in the forming of people's identity, race can also be conceptualized as social in accordance to how Appiah (2018) describes identity as shared and social. Although in the South African context, 'race' and 'culture' may often be used interchangeably (Betancourt & López, 1993), complicating the idea of what 'race' is and how it works to create identities, these two ideas are different. Triandis et al (1980) define culture as an amalgamation of social norms, ways of living and beliefs that are held by many people (as cited in Betancourt & López, 1993). Furthermore, ethnicity is also often used interchangeably with culture and race, as ethnicity is often associated with groups of people of the same race, those who share a language and are from the same culture (Betancourt &

López, 1993). Therefore, this begs the question of how the relationship between race, culture and ethnicity may impact on the interactions and experiences of interracial couples.

Racism tends to be seen as quite a complex concept to understand as a result of how it may manifest differently in different contexts and spaces (Duncan, 2003). Racism can be understood as the marginalization of a certain racial group in order to cast the perpetrators of the marginalization as superior or dominant over the marginalized race (Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey & Seedat, 2001; Duncan, 2003). This may be seen as a form of abuse that seeks to reinforce, reproduce and justify the acts of systematically dominating over specific racial groups (Duncan, 2003). Biko (1973) supports this definition of racism with the words "racism does not only imply exclusion of one race by another- it always presupposes that the exclusion is for the purposes of subjugation" (p.4). A consequence of structural racism, racist discourses and everyday racist practices is to reproduce systemic oppression for Black people, and to reinscribe the idea that racial differences are 'real' in South Africa, leading to the perpetuation of the four racial Apartheid categories (Duncan et al, 2001). Fanon (1986) suggests that the root of all racism may be due to an unconscious attraction or an idealization that the oppressor or the racist experiences towards the oppressed (as cited in Hook, 2004). The racist dominant group desire a certain characteristic possessed by the marginalized racial group, but, although the characteristic is desired and wanted, the racist dominant group cannot have it, thus, they begin to fear and hate the marginalized group for possessing the desired characteristic (Hook, 2004). Although this theory may give some account of the root of racism and racial discrimination, it does not necessarily account for discrimination against interracial couples. This theory seems to only account for racism of White people towards Black people, however, the theory does not explain discrimination of Black people against Indian or Coloured people, or vice-verse (Vaquera & Kao, 2005). Because of the history of apartheid in terms of the racial dynamics of oppression, and due to the fact that race is inextricably linked to power, it is expected that people of color would experience discrimination and racism from White people for being in mixed-race relationships (Mtose, 2011; Pillay, 2017). However, it should also be noted that White individuals may experience difficulties and racialized interactions as a result of being in such relationships, and Black people in mixed-race relationships may also experience racialized interactions and responses from other Black people. As a result of not adequately addressing the racism of the past, the South African society still experiences and is faced with vile acts of racism (Ratele & Laubscher, 2013). Biko (1973) postulates that "the racism we meet does not only exist on an

individual basis: it is also institutionalized to make it look like the South African way" (p. 1). This may speak to the way different racial groups are stereotyped, influencing the way in which they are perceived within society, and ultimately, the way they are treated. Furthermore, this also influences how the South African society may understand or feel about interracial relationships.

One way of justifying racist discourses and perceptions is through the negative representation of a specific racial group using media platforms (Duncan, 2003). The media such as TV series, adverts and movies have a large impact on people's attitudes, values, as well as on how they perceive other people (Lienemann & Stropp, 2013). At the same time, people influence and shape what the media portrays as normal and abnormal (Lienemann & Stropp, 2013). For example, an American company selling cereal aired a commercial in 2013 that contained an interracial couple of a Black man, a White woman, and their mixed-race daughter (Steyn et al., 2018). The many complaints and negative responses towards the interracial family caused the company to stop airing the advert, however, after many viewers expressed positive feedback on the advert on *Facebook*, the advert was then shortened and aired again (Steyn et al., 2018). This incident indicates how institutionalized racism may be. South African media still tends to represent families as racially homogenous despite mixing in public spaces or even friendships. For example, in many South African soapes, most families portrayed are racially homogenous. However, in adverts directed to a generally younger population, couples may be interracial, however, they tend not to be depicted as married or as having children. For example, in 2012, a Democratic Alliance Student Organization (DASO) advert portrayed a young Black woman embracing a young White man in an intimate position, with the caption "In OUR future, you wouldn't look twice" (Hlongwane, 2012). This advert was seen as controversial, and resulted in many complaints, illustrating many South Africans' disapproval of intimate interracial relationships. Another local example is the *Nando's #MixItUp* advert aired in 2017, depicting an interracial couple having lunch with a female friend that was seemingly against interracial relationships (Marie Claire, 2017). In both local adverts, the interracial couples depicted are young, seemingly unmarried and consist of a Black female and a White male. These dynamics speak to how the younger generations are seen to enter into intimate interracial relationships, as well as how these relationships are viewed by society. Furthermore, this highlights the gendered relations of race (Mama, 2001). Therefore, the current study aims to explore what interracial couples within South Africa experience as a result of their mixed intimate relationships. Another

example is of a well-known South African interracial couple, Siya Kolisi a Black man and his wife Rachel Kolisi, a White woman, who received public disapproval from other White people who commented "what a waste of good white genes" (The Citizen, 2016). This illustrates that some South Africans still disapprove of interracial relationships and may still hold racist apartheid ideology. Furthermore, the media has a large part to do with framing interracial relationships in a particular light, causing biased or negative misrepresentations of interracial couples (Doubenmier, 2014). For example, interracial couples are usually portrayed on television programmes as having lower relationship quality, and as being less affectionately expressive than intraracial couples (Doubenmier, 2014). Washington (2012) posits that despite the progress that the media has made in portraying interracial couples, it still depicts such relationships in a way that perpetuates simplifying and homogenizing Blackness as most interracial relationships depict Black-White couples, opposed to depicting the variations of interracial relationships such as Black-Asian couples. However, it is vital to note that the racial category 'Black' may not only stand for indigenous African people but may also refer to all people who do not fall under the category of 'White' within the South African context (Coetzee & Roux, 2001). Thus, interracial relationships may consist of various complexities and intricacies that research, especially within the context of South Africa, has not delved into.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) helps us better understand issue surrounding racism, (de) racialization and hyperracialization. CRT was initially developed in the USA in order to tackle issues surrounding race and racial discrimination in the American jurisprudence (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). However, because of its direct focus on issues of racism and race, it is widely used in various fields other than the legal field (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Critical race theory is also regarded as a movement of individuals that have an interest in transforming associations between power, race and racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT maintains that race is a product of "social thought and relations … [and] races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.8).

CRT has three basic ideas that are relatable to the topic of interracial relationships. Firstly, the notion of counter-storytelling, which is the construction of stories and dialogues that deconstruct ideologies created by powerful and dominant voices, in order to give a voice to

the marginalized and break stereotypes perpetuated by dominant stories (Pulliam, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The purpose of this study is to explore the narratives of those in interracial relationships, and get personal understanding from people, as opposed to using dominant research results and media depictions to understand the experiences of the minority group of interracial couples within the South African context. Furthermore, counter-storytelling speaks to the importance of self-identification, as perceiving people as singular in their identities or fixed in certain racial categories may perpetuate racism (Ndlovu, 2012). Therefore, the current study aims to give research participants the freedom to self-identify. A second principle of CRT is "the permanence of racism" (p. 27), which speaks to how enmeshed racism is within society and how society functions and deems racism as "ordinary...the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of colour" (Pulliam, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 7). It is this element of being ordinary that makes racism so hard to address, thus, is unacknowledged (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Moreover, it highlights the 'Othering' of certain groups of people and the privileging of other groups of people, which in essence, may affect interracial couples as they may be treated differently from intraracial couples; or individual partners within the interracial relationships may be discriminated against as a result of their racial group, while other individual partner may be placed in a position of privilege. This ultimately, relates to each individual partner's racial identity. The final tenet is the critique of liberalism. Liberal ideology consists of colourblindness and the neutrality of the law, holding the idea that the law does not see people for the colour of their skin, and thus, it is neutral (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998). This relates to the South African notion of rainbow nation which is a false sense of equality and neutrality. Despite the idea of a rainbow nation (Moller, Dickow & Harris, 1999) and the abolishment of apartheid laws, apartheid racial categories still hold weight in the current South African context, thus, interracial couples still experience much disapproval and discrimination even if the law does not necessarily criminalize them, the old system of South Africa still does. Essentially, interracial couples continue to be policed not by the law, but by society (Ratele, 2009a).

The South African History of Intimate Interracial Relationships

Despite the country's progressive constitution which sets out to have a racism-free society, and the abolishment of apartheid laws, current perceptions and experiences of intimate interracial relationships are undoubtedly shaped by racist apartheid ideology (Jaynes, 2007; Steyn et al., 2018). Before apartheid, intimate relationships between White and Black people

were not uncommon, resulting in the birth of mixed-race individuals of Black and White parentage, which have been termed 'Coloureds' under the apartheid system (Jacobson, Acheampong, Heaton, 2004; Jaynes, 2007). When the Dutch arrived at the Cape during the seventeenth century, it was common for White men to be intimately involved with Black women as physical racial differences such as skin colour had very little effect in determining sexual or romantic partners, keeping in mind that the rape and slavery of Black women by White men was also uncommon (Henriques, 1968; Zikalala, 2016). Ultimately, religion played a larger role in regulation of such intimate relations between races as Black women were required to convert to Christianity prior to entering into a relationship or marriage with a White male (Henriques, 1968). During apartheid, when the 'pro-White' National Party gained political victory in South Africa, intimate interracial relationships were deemed illegal (Jacobson et al., 2004). This was a result of the use of both law and religion, as the National Party legislated the prohibition of mixed-marriages through the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949, making it illegal for individuals of different races to get married. This was also enforced through the Immorality Act passed in the 1920's and amended again between 1950 and 1988, which prohibited interracial relationships (Jacobson et al., 2004; Steyn et al., 2018). The Immorality Act was amended numerous times with the purpose of strengthening restrictions and punishments for interracial physical intimacy (Jacobson et al., 2004). This was further supported by the Dutch Reformed Church, which deemed intermarriage as sinful (Henriques, 1968). Ratele (2009a) argues that the Immorality Act was simply legislature to idealize the notion of whiteness, maintain the othering of 'non-white' individuals, and sustaining racial superiority in which the ideology of apartheid was based on, as whiteness was seen to be potentially under threat. Furthermore, laws like the Group Areas Act, as well as the Population Registration Act further exacerbated the segregation between racial groups and separated existing interracial families within public spaces (Thompson, 1990). The Population Registration Act had specific definitions of race that prevented the 'mixing' of different races. A White person was defined to be "a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a White person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a White person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person" (Union of South Africa, 1950). Evidently, definitions of race and racial classifications were as contentious during apartheid as they are contentious post-Apartheid as race cannot be scientifically proven and therefore these convoluted definitions were developed. This speaks to the current dilemma of making sense of not only race but interracial relationships as one cannot make blanket statements about such relationships due

to the unique and personal experiences each couple and individual may have. Because racial classification as well as legislation such as the Immorality Act and the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act was a politically driven process to maintain whiteness, this begs the question of how far South Africa has moved away from apartheid ideals as intimate mixed relationships are still frowned upon post-Apartheid. Kopano Ratele (2009a) discusses the complexities that arose as a result of racial classification in relation to intimate interracial relationships. In his paper 'Sexuality as Constitutive of Whiteness in South Africa' (2009b) he discusses the confusion that came about when people who lived as a certain race their entire lives could not marry or be in a relationship with another individual due to finding out that the law did not consider them to be the 'right' race. This raises issues of race and identity, and also speaks to the importance of self-identification which are issues considered to be important within this current research study. When family members were reassigned to different racial groups, this not only separated the family physically, but also affected the social, educational, occupational and psychological life of the family as different races had different levels of access to certain spaces and resources (Ratele, 2009a). The Group Areas Act was implemented in 1950 in order to maintain racial purity within the different population groups as individuals were not permitted to live outside of their allocated population group (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). Although this Act has been abolished, it still speaks to the type of residential spaces that people of different races still occupy post-1994. Racial segregation is still maintained, and this still raises issues and challenges for couples in intimate interracial relationships (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008).

Under the legislation that prohibited intimate interracial relationships, interracial couples experienced police brutality and humiliation as they were constantly watched, insulted and arrested for having any sexual or romantic relations (Du Pre, 1994; Sherman & Steyn, 2009). Interracial couples also experienced the challenge of being rejected by their relatives as well as their friends as a result of their relationships (Jacobson et al., 2004). However, in 1985, the Prohibition of Marriages Act and the Immorality Act were both abolished, consequently resulting in an increase in mixed marriages of Black and White individuals (Ratele, 2003; Jacobson et al., 2004). Post-1994 South Africa allowed for the emergence of racial tolerance (Jacobson et al., 2004).

The Black-White Binary

Research on interracial relationships focuses and depicts intimate relationships between Black and White individuals. This binary "simplifies analysis dangerously, presenting racial progress as a linear progression: it can end up injuring the very group" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, p. 79).The present racialised dynamics of our society are also complicated by the Apartheid race categories that segregated Black people on ethnic grounds and further differentiated people as 'Indians' or 'Coloureds'. Steve Biko (1987) describes Black people to be inclusive of those that were defined as African, Indian and Coloured under the apartheid system. In order to address racism, and even address the negative perceptions and stereotypes placed on interracial relationships, it is necessary to question the discourses of race and racism that are a result of white hegemony and the privileging of whiteness within society (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007). In the South African context issues of whiteness are not only seen as a matter of skin colour (Green et al., 2007). For example, Black people may see socio-economic status, level of education, lifestyle, and religious and cultural practices or how 'westernized' a Black individual is, as a part of whiteness (Green et al., 2007). This has heavy implications for interracial couples as research has found that individuals that date outside their race may come from similar schools or places of work which may speak to their socio-economic status and level of education (Yancey, 2002). Consequently, this idea of whiteness may further perpetuate negative stereotypes and misconceptions about interracial relationships.

Fanon (1986), in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* alludes to this binary when he talks about the "mullato" Black women who aspire to be White, and whose main goal in life is to marry a White man in order to achieve a status of whiteness. This desire for whiteness stems from a place of insecurity and inferiority, and a desire to gain status and superiority over those without the power that whiteness affords (Fanon, 1986). In essence, because this discourse of Black-White relationship is still quite prominent, and because this binary appears to be the representation of interracial relationships, many people may apply this discourse on interracial relationships in the current South African context with all its complexities and intricacies of race and identity. Because of the heavy focus on the relationship between Black and White people, it is essential to discuss whiteness within the South African context. The concept of whiteness is a multifaceted one that encompasses social context, gender, sexuality and social class (Green et al., 2007). In other words, whiteness, like race, is "a socially constructed phenomenon" (Green et al., 2007, p. 393). Steyn and Foster (2008; Steyn, 2004)

position whiteness at the centre of the construction of privilege as normal in relation to the powerlessness granted to Black people. This raises questions about the dynamics within interracial relationships in South Africa as issues of whiteness and privilege may impact on relationships.

Although interracial couples may focus on their similarities and try not to focus on their differences, there may be power dynamics and issues of differential privilege within the relationship. Killian (2001) suggests that the types of responsibilities each partner carries within the relationship speaks to the power dynamics and existence of privilege within and between the partners in the relationship. This may include who worries more about being accepted by their partner's family, who has the most socially acceptable knowledge or behavior, and who makes most of the decisions on how children will be raised. In the South African context, White privilege has been a major concept of focus within studies of race and social class (Green et al., 2007). It can be understood as a phenomena or system that is by nature political, structural, economic or even social that is built solely to benefit White people, while disadvantaging other races (Bohonos, 2019). Similarly, the concept of whiteness is also an institution that serves White people; however, the idea of whiteness may not solely exist in race or in a body (Gruenes, 2018). Whiteness is a social concept that can be performed and embodied by people of different races which serves to reinforce certain ways of being sexually, socio-economically and even in how one may be perceived by others (Gruenes, 2018). Bohonos (2019, p. 320) postulates that it may be difficult to describe as a result of whiteness being seen as normal or "raceless". Furthermore, once White people are able to recognize and acknowledge their racial identity, it may create complexities within that racial identity as their whiteness can be experienced as a "liability" (Bohonos, 2019, p. 321). White people may tend to feel a sense of shame once they recognize their whiteness and their treatment of people of color (Bohonos, 2019). In a study conducted by Gruenes (2018) on interracial relationships, it was found that the acknowledgment or lack thereof of differential privilege in a relationship does have an impact on the relationship in some form, depending on the couple. This is important to take into account for the current research study, due to South Africa's history of apartheid and how that may play into the hinge generation's relationship dynamics.

The Colonized Mind

In his book *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (1986) examines the level of superiority that a Black man receives from other Black people when he masters the White man's language. The Black man is no longer seen in the same way, and neither is he treated in the same way (Fanon, 1986). This elevation of Black people affiliated to White people can be linked to how people may treat and perceive individuals in interracial relationships differently, as they may appear to obtain a 'higher' status from such a relationship that cuts through the racial border. The perception that Black people within interracial relationships are of a higher status may stem from an inferiority complex: a sense of being inferior because of one's race as a result of the oppression and deprecation that Black people experienced for years (Biko, 1987). Fanon (1986) also examines a woman in an interracial relationship who describes the White man she is in a relationship within the following manner: "All I know is that he had blue eyes, blonde hair, and a light skin, and that I loved him". The woman seems to display an inferiority complex that Biko (Ahluwalia & Zegeye, 2001) postulates that Black individual may have in the face of the White 'superior' (Biko, 1987). Many research papers that reinforce the Black-White binary, also indirectly reinforce the idea that Black people who date outside their race are searching for higher status, ultimately highlighting the inferiority complex. This current research aims to bring forth a different narrative about interracial relationships that are void of financial and class gain.

Fanon (1986) also discusses the "Negro" (p. 35) man with the inferiority complex, who strives to get the attention of the white man in order to feel better about himself. Although this current project seeks to find multiple reasons as to why people fall in-love with people outside their race, it is a reality that one should be prepared that some may be in interracial relationships for social class reasons, or reasons of status. Fanon (1986) supports this idea with the words "when a story flourishes in the heart of a folklore, it is because in one way or another it expresses an aspect of the spirit of the group" (p.64). This may suggest that in some ways, ideas surrounding interracial relationships may be true or applicable in different contexts. Fanon (1986) also speaks of the Black man who falls in love with the White woman, and how this feeling of being loved by the White woman elevates and dignifies the Black man in his psyche. Fanon discusses how the Black man assimilates into White/ European culture in order to be seen as an equal among men, and how this assimilation changes the way he perceives himself, as well as how he is perceived by both Black men and White men. Essentially, this speaks to how interracial couples are, at times, understood in the

South African context. When people date outside their race, they are perceived differently, as drifting away from their roots and assimilating into a different culture or are seen as different from other people from their racial group. Fanon's above stories of interracial relationships focus on caste and status, opposed to placing love as an important driving factor to dating a particular person who may happen to be outside of one's race. Mbembe (1949) comments on the relationships between social class and interracial relationships:

> "Insofar as truly interracial marriage is concerned, one can legitimately wonder to what extent it may not represent for the colored spouse a kind of subjective consecration to wiping out in himself and in his own mind the color prejudice from which he has suffered so long. It would be interesting to investigate this in a given number of cases and perhaps to seek in this clouded motivation the underlying reason for certain interracial marriages entered into outside the normal conditions of a happy household. Some men or some women, in effect, by choosing partners of another race, marry persons of a class or a culture inferior to their own whom they would not have chosen as spouses in their own race and whose chief asset seems to be the assurance that the partner will achieve denaturalization and (to use a loathsome word) "deracialization." Among certain people of color, the fact that they are marrying someone of the white race seems to have overridden every other consideration. In this fact they find access to complete equality with that illustrious race, the master of the world, the ruler of the people of color" (as cited in Fanon, 1986, p. 71).

Transitioning Racialized Spaces and Intersectionality

Although South Africa has moved and is still moving away from the apartheid era and its systematic racism, the reality of the current context indicates that there still exists strong remnants of racism as racial constructs remain prevalent in the experiences of many (Long, 2003). However, arguably, the racism that confronts South Africans post-1994 "is articulated less crudely than had been the case" (p.46) during the apartheid period (Duncan, 2003). This shift can be attributed more to the differences in how racism is expressed opposed to the diminishment of the phenomenon of racism (Duncan, 2003). This is important to consider within the context of interracial couples as their experiences of discrimination and racism may differ from what may be typically expected. Essentially, the role of this research study is significant in that it allows individuals to share their own unique experiences of their relationships (including but not reduced to experiences of racism), thus giving individuals

who date outside their race a voice, and giving society an opportunity to better understand the experiences of such individuals.

Intersectionality is a concept that is important to consider when speaking of issues of race and identity, especially in the South African context due to the immense transition that has taken place within different racialized spaces. This concept can be understood as how different parts of people's identities such as their race, social class, and gender influence and work together in different spaces (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). An important idea to hold on to when thinking of interracial relationships is the idea of multiple consciousness, postulating that different people experience the world differently depending on who they are (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Crenshaw (1991) explains this well in her definition of intersectionality as that which "offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identities and the ongoing necessities of group politics" (p. 16). Therefore, "categories and subgroups, then, are not just matters of theoretical interest. How we frame them determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 61). In essence, individuals may experience different spaces in different ways depending on their race, social class, level of education and other factors that play a role in forming one's identity. Furthermore, this also suggests that interracial couples may experience their relationship differently depending on the spaces they occupy, family histories and the racial combination that forms that interracial couple. For interracial couples trying to create their own unique culture and way of being, it may be difficult when it comes to language in terms of communicating with each other's families and integrating within the different spaces that each individual is part of (Thomas et al., 2003). This difficulty is further exacerbated by the possibility of being excluded from integrating within a partner's social contexts as a result of not being able to communicate in their language (Brooks & Brooks, 2016). Many interracial couples in South Africa use English as a lingua franca, making communication within the relationship easier; this also allows the couple to interact with each other's friends, creating a transitioned space. This may speak to the types of schooling and university experiences people in interracial relationships may have (Meier & Hartell, 2009). However, recognizing the ways in which language barriers prevent full integration with the families and communities of their partners, interracial couples may also want their own children to be able to be in different spaces by planning to teach their children multiple languages (Brooks & Brooks, 2016).

Issues of intersectionality within interracial relationships may also include how each individual embodies their own race while being in a relationship with someone from a different racial category than their own. Embodiment may be perceived as the way that our bodies interact and relate to our contexts in relation to our gender, sexuality, race and social class (Violi, 2008; Waskul & Vannini, 2006). In a narrative study of mixed-raced women who were in interracial relationships, issues of hair and the significance of hair in women were also discussed (Doyle & Kao, 2007). As a result of not having the same hair experiences as Black women, these mixed-raced women were not perceived as Black women (Fisher, 2011). Essentially, this also relates to the experiences that children that are a product of interracial relationships may experience. Tate (2007; Kelley, 1997) discusses hair as linked to identity and race, and as an important form of expression among particularly Black women. Ndlovu (2012) discusses the idea of how people may assert multiple or singular parts of their identities at different times. Slatton (2012; Kelley, 1997; Johnson & Bankhead, 2014) adds to this idea of asserting identity by suggesting that Black women tend to wear their hair in an afro as a political statement to resist the White standards of beauty placed upon them. This raises questions about how asserting racial identity and politics are navigated in interracial relationships. Slatton (2012) further posits that whiteness has been normalized as a standard of beauty, and that this standard may still be applied by White men in relationships with Black women. In her study, Slatton (2012) found that White men in intimate relationships with Black women found Black women with stereotypically White physical characteristics more attractive. This view of Black bodies and what constitutes beauty may be illustrating racist views towards Black people, and these standards of beauty may impact on the racial identity development of young Black women (Johnson & Bankhead, 2014).

The Pathologizing Nature of the Term 'Interracial Relationship'

"Naming not only gives identity to a cluster of characteristics, it also asserts the legitimacy and essential existence of that identity" (Lloyd, 2003, p.4). The label 'interracial relationship' tends to do more harm than good to couples who are of different races (Ratele, 2003). Labeling couples of different races as interracial can insinuate that the relationship deviates from the norm or is impure as a result of having a mixture of two different categories of race in an intimate relationship (Ratele, 2003). This then may further perpetuate racial binaries and hierarchies, as well as highlight relationships of mixed races as out of the ordinary. Perceiving interracial couples as different from intraracial couples may result in inaccurate stereotypes or judgements about the nature of interracial relationships. For example, it is

common for researchers of interracial relationships to postulate that interracial relationships are dysfunctional (Troy et al., 2006). In a study conducted by Joyner and Kao (2005), it was concluded that such relationships had a lower likelihood of becoming marriages than intraracial relationships. Through the use of scientific measures of research such as quantitative studies to compare interracial and intraracial relationships, such as the above study has done, research appears to perpetuate the idea that interracial relationships are inherently dysfunctional and 'abnormal'. Existing research has created the assumption that interracial couples face more challenges in their relationship as a result of their racial differences, than couples in intraracial relationships, however, these assumptions have not been proven as research comparing interracial couples to intraracial couples is very limited (Negy & Synder, 2000). The misconception that interracial relationships are dysfunctional is challenged by a study comparing the level satisfaction between interracial relationships and intraracial relationships, in which interracial couples had higher levels of satisfaction in their relationships (Troy et al., 2006).

Much research on interracial relationships attempts to explain how individuals from different races come to fall in-love and maintain an intimate romantic relationship, why interracial couples are different from intraracial couples, as well as how society perceives mixed relationships (Steyn et al., 2018; Troy et al., 2006). A large portion of this research may be pathologizing (Killian, 2012) as much of this research uses Caste theory to explain interracial relationships. Caste theory posits that the individual from the racial group with the higher social standing is rebellious, thus, gets into relationship with an individual from a lower racial social standing **(**Troy et al., 2006). Another way of explaining this is that individuals from racial groups of lower standing may be obsessed with the superior racial group, thus, choose to date outside of their race to gain status, for example, Black women may benefit from financial security when dating White men (Troy et al., 2006). However, these theories are pathologizing and create a negative stereotype of interracial couples. Furthermore, they dehumanize interracial couples by stripping them of experiences that 'normal' couples go through. Steyn et al (2018) use the word "hyperracialized" to describe how interracial couples have been focused on in terms of their racial differences. Hence, it is necessary to explore and correct these theories that hyperracialize and place stereotypes on interracial relationships as many of them are without evidence (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008). In the same breath, it is essential to monitor and reflect on much of the arising research on interracial relationships as many researchers have some form of personal investment in such research which may result in

more positive findings than from researchers who have no personal investment, who may yield more negative findings (Mojapelo-Batka, 2008,). This brings forth the notion of narratives being co-constructed by both the researcher and research participant. Although the researcher of this study has a personal investment in that she is in an intimate interracial relationship which can cause potential biases, supervision ensured a critical perspective that was taken throughout the entire process to minimize any biases.

Research conducted in the USA on interracial relationships found that interracial relationships are stigmatized, meaning that interracial couples may experience rejection or social pressure from society, resulting in interracial couples spending less time going out in public in order to avoid such treatment from society (Vaquera & Kao, 2005). Essentially, this difference seen between interracial couples and intraracial couples can be seen as a result of people's perception of interracial couples as 'abnormal' thus, causing society to stigmatize interracial relationships. Moreover, this means that these differences between interracial and intraracial couples are not inherent to the couples or the races of the couples but are rather caused by external factors such as how society perceives and treats these couples. Steyn et al (2018) supports this notion by positing that society polices the behavior of interracial couples in public spaces, and further goes on to state that this policing by society may cause the couple to police themselves (Steyn et al., 2018).

Although the term 'interracial relationship' may be pathologizing, the current research study continues to use this term as a result of the prevalence of race thinking, racism and the perpetuation of racial categories in the South African context, which make interracial relationships quite visible in this specific context. Therefore, although this research study will use the term 'interracial relationships', the term will be used with the understanding that it is a term "under erasure" (Hall, 2000, p.16). This means that the term is used with the understanding that it is unfixed, complex and problematic, as the aim of this study is to deconstruct socially constructed categories such as race and 'interracial relationships' through narrative inquiry. By allowing individuals in interracial relationships to share stories of their experiences of their intimate interracial relationships, research participants may provide different ways of thinking about race and interracial relationships, thus, change the narrative of race and intimate interracial relationships. In this sense, the current study allows participants to give new meanings to the term 'interracial relationship' as each individual participant may self-identify differently from what apartheid racial categories prescribe, thus, empowering participants to define themselves. Biko (1973) states that "as people existing in a

continuous struggle for truth, we have to examine and question old concepts, values and systems" (p. 3), thus, not merely accepting and reinforcing concepts and ideas that may be pathologizing or even harmful to others.

Who Dates Interracially?

Young people are more likely to be in interracial relationships than the older generations as a result of the youth being more exposed to racial diversity, at university or in the workplace (Joyner & Kao, 2005). Furthermore, external factors such as an individual's family status, the environment one exists in as well as the reaction one's family has on the relationship all have an impact on one's romantic intimate relationships (Vaquera & Kao, 2005). Fujino (1997 as cited in Yancey, 2002) suggests that there are different factors involved in interdating and intermarrying, but these two relationship states should not be confused for the same thing as dating is less serious and is not as committal as marriage which requires the merging of lives, finances, families and friends. A study conducted in America on the characteristics of individuals who date outside their race found that males who attended mixed-race schools were more likely to date interracially (Yancey, 2002). However, it was also found that women were more afraid to date interracially as a result of the negative and sexualized labels placed on women who do date outside their race (Yancey, 2002). This, therefore, speak to the powerful space that heterosexual males assume within society. Furthermore, the above results also indicate to the amount of influence that educational spaces like schools have on individuals' lives. Meier & Hartell (2009) posit that schools and university environments may impact on the way people make sense of race, language and identity. Therefore, it is probable to argue that individuals in interracial relationships may have certain particular experiences in their spaces of education, which intersects with their language and social class, that create positive attitudes and openness towards interracial dating. However, issues of colourblindness or the claim of not seeing others in racial ways may be implicated within these spaces where interracial relationships are experienced as common (White, 2002). This may be seen more in South African private schools where racial diversity is more evident as the poor remains almost homogenously Black (Kennedy, 2019). This, therefore, further speaks to the role of class in interracial dating. Essentially, the role of schools needs to be further explored as individuals have other influences such as religious beliefs, family influence and cultural expectations.

Racial Identity in Interracial Relationships

Race is a complex construct and a sensitive issue, especially in the South African context, and may be even further complicated for individuals within interracial relationships. Racial identity can be understood as how one chooses to identify in relation to their racial category (Hill & Thomas, 2000). Hill and Thomas (2002) understand racial identity as "social constructions that are self-definitions or labels from others appropriated by oneself" (p. 4). This means that social constructs surrounding race and identity as well as how one embodies these constructs plays a role in one's racial identity. According to Social Constructionism, racial identity is influenced by both one's environment, and the way they perform and engage with that identity (Hill & Thomas, 2000). This way of understanding racial identity is significant in understanding individuals in interracial relationships as their own relationship may affect the experience and performance of their racial identity. This is further supported by Appiah (2018) who posits that identity is social and shared. Furthermore, because there may be a lot of opposition and pressure placed on individuals in interracial relationships, their racial identity may be attacked and called into question as a result of dating outside their race (Hill & Thomas, 2002). A review of the literature on interracial relationships reveals that most of the research focuses on the challenges, differences and responses from society that such couples experience (Ross & Woodley, 2019). However, not much of this research focuses on how being in interracial relationships affects one's racial identity, or experience and performance of their race, as well as how one's racial identity impacts on the relationship (Ross & Woodley, 2019).

The idea of racial identity is also an important concept to look deeper into multiracial individuals in interracial relationships (Carvalho-Malekane, 2015). Multiracial individuals may experience complex challenges within their own racial identity as they may not fit within specific racial stereotypes and racial categories, thus, creating a complex layer and dynamic within their intimate multiracial relationship (Carvalho-Malekane, 2015; Bonam & Shih, 2009). In the USA, many multiracial individuals are considered to be Black if they have one Black parent, regardless of how the multiracial individuals identify racially (Doyle and Kao, 2007; Carvalho-Malekane, 2015). Consequently, multiracial individuals may be more open to dating outside their racial category as a result of their experiences and difficulties with their own racial identity. Bonam and Shih (2009) posit that multiracial individuals are more likely to have grown up in racially diverse families and environments which may have influenced them to form relationships with people who have a different racial and cultural identity than

them. In a narrative study of biracial women, the women told stories of how their parents did not discuss their interracial relationship or focus on race as an important factor in the way they should live their lives (Fisher, 2011). Furthermore, these women who had one Black parent and one White parent, reported to not feeling able to fit in with Black or White people as a result of not being perceived as belonging within these racial categories (Fisher, 2011). In terms of intimate relationships, these women reported that although they dated White men, they were not introduced to their partner's family as a result of their blackness. Contrastingly, they were seen as trophies to the Black men they dated, causing issues with other Black women who may see them as a threat. Essentially, this also speaks to the experiences that children that are a product of interracial relationships may experience. It is important to consider the role that gender plays within such relationships in the South African context as Mama (2001) posits that gender relations are an integral part of African communities. These issues of racial identity such as hair and gender speak to the concept of embodiment. This concept can be understood as the way that our bodies interact and relate to our contexts in relation to our gender, sexuality, race and social class (Violi, 2008; Waskul & Vannini, 2006

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter frames the research questions, discusses the methods used to access participants, collect the data and analyze the data. Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss ethical considerations within the current research study, as well as the reflexivity of the researcher in relation to the impact of her position and identity on the collection, transcription and analysis of the data.

Research Aim:

The aim of the project was to explore the narratives of participants' experiences of intimate interracial relationships.

Research Questions:

What are the narratives of participants in intimate interracial relationship about experiences of interacting with each other's friends and family?

What are the narratives of participants in intimate interracial relationships about the impact of race differences (and associated cultural aspects such as language) within the relationship?

Methodology

The current research study is a qualitative study, characterized by the flexibility and the reflexivity of the researcher (Bickman & Rog, 2013). Qualitative studies are also defined as methods of research that do not use statistical methods to make conclusions, however, focus on subjective meanings and how individual people make meaning of the world; in this sense, this method enables researchers to obtain multi-layered insight (Rahman, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative studies allow for the gathering of rich and in-depth data from participants, and organizes this data into categories, themes or underlying patterns (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, because the current research study aimed to gain rich, in-depth and subjective insight, this design was most suitable for the study. The paradigm is interpretive because the study investigated individuals' experiences of intimate interracial relationships through the telling of their stories, rather than investigating objective phenomena (Creswell, 2012). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) posits that only perceiving single stories is problematic and dangerous, as this may lead to misunderstandings. In essence, the study aimed to explore

individual narratives of interracial relationships in order to obtain diverse and rich narratives opposed to obtaining a single story of such relationships.

Narrative Methodology

In order to comprehend individual and personal experiences and stories regarding interracial relationships, it is vital to make use of the narrative approach. Narratives can be understood as stories that individuals tell about their lives either to themselves or to other people in order to give meaning to their lives (Custer, Holmberg, Blair & Orbuch, 2008; Fay, 1996). Freeman (1993) supports and expands on this notion by stating that narratives foster personal growth and communicate the development of individuals' sense of being from their past, to their present, as well as towards their future. Ricoeur (1991) in agreement with Freeman (1993), argues that having a sense of time is essential in the construction of a narrative as individuals need to move back into their past, and forwards into their future in order to make sense of their present (Josselson, 2011). The idea of making meaning of one's life through temporality and recollection is important in the current research study as the racist history of apartheid may form a vital part of an individual's current sense of being, and may also have large implications for interracial relationships. Furthermore, because the current research study focuses on the 'hinge generation', the relationship between the past, present and future is important. These temporal relations are captured by the narrative approach.

The narrative approach can have emancipatory effects for the marginalized as it allows them to deconstruct dominant narratives that either exclude them or demonize them, by constructing narratives of their own (Langallier, 2001 as cited in Riessman, 2005). Furthermore, the process of telling one's narrative enables people to process their past experiences, thus, allowing them to move forward from them. Ultimately, through the narrative approach the current research study affords individuals within interracial relationships the platform to make their personal stories and voices heard, while moving forward from their past experiences. Josselson (2011, p. 2) posits that "narratives are also central to how we conceive of ourselves; we create stories of ourselves to connect our actions, mark our identity, and distinguish ourselves from others". This notion is important to understand for this current research because the study aims to better understand interracial relationships at a personal level, which is tied to people's identities, race, and how people experience themselves as well as how they experience others of the same race as themselves, and those of different races to them. In essence, telling stories through the narrative approach

has the power to unite people who feel that they are alone by showing them that others share similar experiences to them (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Furthermore, "powerfully written stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 50).

Narrative inquiry "offers no automatic starting or finishing points" (Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou, 2012, p. 1) allowing the researcher to be led by the data and information collected opposed to directing the research itself. Because there are very few fixed ways of analyzing narrative data, narrative research provides more flexibility for the research to study stories in various kinds of way that seems most suitable to the data presented (Squire et al., 2012). This fits with the current research study in that much of the literature found on interracial relationships has been analyzed in specific quantitative ways or specific qualitative ways such as through Thematic Analysis. This may limit how interracial relationships are understood and made sense of. Furthermore, because of the open-ended nature of narratives, it allows for the analysis of contradictions within the data and may open up conversation for adding to the richness of meaning-making and understanding (Squire et al., 2012).

Narratives and Time

The concept of time and changes that occur in one's life throughout time is considered important when studying narratives (Brockmeier, 2000, Bruner, 1987 & Ricouer, 1991). It is necessary for people to move across time, from their past, to their present and towards their future in order to create coherent and complete narratives of their lives, and to make sense of their sense of self (Fay, 1996). This means that narratives involve retrospective remembering of the self that existed in the past, which gives meaning to the present self, and gives rise to the future sense of self. This is important to understand in the context of this current research study as time and the movement across time is an important factor in understanding interracial relationships. McAdams (2001) speaks of synchronic and diachronic identities in understanding one's sense of self across time in order to construct a coherent narrative of one's life**.** A synchronic identity is when different roles of an individual's identity are integrated into one consistent sense of self, whereas, a diachronic identity is when the varying aspects of one's identity throughout time are integrated into one consistent sense of self. Perceptions and experiences of interracial relationships have varied across time, and it is important to be mindful of the contrasting and conflicting experiences and perceptions such

relationships can cause within different people. Therefore, through studying narratives of such relationships, valuable information about the changes, conflicting experiences and the movement towards coherent and consistent thoughts and experiences about this phenomenon can be obtained. Furthermore, this current research project focuses on the experiences of the hinge generation. Young people still carry the traumatic memory of the apartheid history, while representing the future hope of the democratic country (Frankish & Bradbury, 2012). This generation encapsulates the idea of temporality in narrative as their sense of self, and how they experience and perceive interracial relationships is intertwined with a temporal shift.

Freeman (2002) speaks of a narrative unconscious which he describes as the "culturally and historically rooted aspects of one's history that have not yet become part of one's story" (Freeman, 2002, as cited in Bradbury & Clark, 2012, p. 180). This narrative unconscious indicates an existing relationship between what has already happened in the past, and what is yet to happen in the future. This is also important to consider in the context of the hinge generation who were too young to remember their experiences of the apartheid period or were not born yet. However, through the narrative unconscious, the hinge generation is aware of the implications of race and intimate interracial relationships due to the cultural and historical connotations these hold. Subsequently, their knowledge impacts on their experiences of their relationships as well as on their identities. The notion that narratives are connected to one's cultural and historical background is held by McAdams (2001) who stated that gender, politics, social class and cultural norms all influence the kind of narrative one tells. In essence, the hinge generation's experience of their interracial relationships should not be understood in isolation, but rather, in the context within these individuals reside in order to gain a greater understanding of this phenomenon. In taking into consideration the context of each individual in order to make sense of their narrative, it is important to also consider the influence the media may have in the construction of narratives of intimate interracial relationships as their portrayal of race and interracial relationships is quite biased and pathologizing as mentioned above, which can influence the type of narrative one constructs about their intimate interracial relationship. Sarbin (1986) discusses the idea of self-deception in constructing one's narrative with the aim of conforming to existing narratives. Self-deception is defined by Sarbin (1986) as the construction of a narrative that is incongruent to one's life in order to be viewed as acceptable in the eyes of the listeners of the narrative. This is important to understand as Sarbin (1986) further postulates that "human beings think,

perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (p. 8), suggesting that narratives provide people with the power to give motivations to support their actions (Sarbin, 1986). Because race and intimate interracial relationships are still sensitive subjects within the South African context, it is probable that many narratives of individuals within such relationships may be constructed with some self-deception in order to fit dominant or culturally accepted narratives of intimate interracial relationships.

The point of self-deception also speaks to the importance of the reflexivity of the researcher as she may also have her own biases and expectations of the kinds of narratives to be told. Thus, it is important that the narrative researcher is also aware of their interactions with research participants as that may influence participants to provide narratives that they think are desired by the researcher. Furthermore, this also speaks to the co-construction of narratives between the researcher and the research participants.

Sample and Sampling

Non-probability snowball sampling was used in order to access the sample. Non-probability sampling is a random non-calculated manner of obtaining a sample (Laher & Botha, 2012). While Snowball-sampling is when a small number of initial research participants of a study provide the researcher with details of individuals who may possibly be interested in taking part in the research project, or approach people they know and tell them about the research study (Laher & Botha, 2012). The participants in this current research project are young people from the age of 18 to 35 years, as this age group consists of people that were either very young during Apartheid or were born after Apartheid. The specific requirements for the sample were individuals who identify as being in intimate interracial relationships, for a minimum of 6 months, because 6 months is a sufficient time to experience different aspects of a relationship. The sample consisted of 8 heterosexual male and female individuals of various backgrounds and races. In the case of 6 participants, both members of the couple participated in the study but each person was interviewed separately as the primary focus of the study was the individual experience opposed to the dynamic between couples within interracial relationships. Furthermore, this approach was taken to ensure the elicitation of rich data which may have been impacted upon if the partner were present. The chosen sample size was chosen due to the nature of qualitative research, which requires a smaller sample size than quantitative research in order to obtain rich and in-depth information from research participants. Furthermore, qualitative research does not need to be generalizable, thus, this

sample size is adequate to conduct such research (Guetterman, 2015). The sample was limited solely to heterosexual relationships because the intricacies and complexities of conducting research on interracial couples part of the LGBTQI+ community is beyond the scope of this research. The following process was used in order to access the participants:

- Step1: I contacted friends and classmates who I knew were in interracial relationships and asked them if they knew other people who were between the ages of 18 and 35, heterosexual and were currently in a relationship with someone outside their race.
- Step 2: The potential participants who were given to me by my friends and classmates were contacted via text message. I emailed each potential participant the participation information sheet, the demographic questionnaire, and the consent forms in order to give them time to read through everything and be comfortable with the process.
- Step3: Some participants pulled out of the study last minute as a result of their personal commitments clashing with the interview times, and rescheduling was not possible for some participants. The partners of some of the participants who confirmed to be interviewed asked to also be a part of the research study. I then sent the information sheet, demographic questionnaire, and the consent forms to the partners as well, and explained to them that they would be interviewed separately instead of as couples due to the nature of the study. I also explained to them that although their identities will remain anonymous, the individuals within the relationship and possibly people who know their story may be able to recognize who is who from the interviews.
- Step4: After each participant confirmed when they were available, time, dates and places to meet we scheduled.
- Step5: On the day of the interview, each participant was given hard-copies of the participation information to read again if they wanted to, consent forms to sign, and demographic questionnaires to fill in. Before the interviews began, each participant was asked if they had any questions. Only 2 couples were interviewed separately on the same day and at the same venue. It was explained to them together again that they may be able to recognize each other in the research. After they confirmed that they were fine with it, I began the interviews. The other couple was interviewed separately on different days.

Table 1 below illustrates the participants and their demographics

Participants' Demographic Profile

	Name[1]	Age	Race	Gender	Length of Relationship	Partner	Partner's Race	Family Language
1	Joslyn	24	Coloured	Female	3 years	Bheki	Black	Afrikaans and English
2	Jennifer	22	Asian	Female	4 years	Tristian	White	Chinese, English and Afrikaans
3	Tshego	23	Black	Female	2 years	Shaun	White	Setswana
4	Shaun	23	White	Male	2 years	Tshego	Black	English
5	Chloe	23	Black	Female	2 years	Antonio	White	Afrikaans
6	Antonio	25	White	Male	2 years	Chloe	Black	Chichewa
7	Bandile	20	Black	Male	1.5 years	Lucy	Chinese	Mandarin and Cantonese
8	Lucy	20	Chinese	Female	1.5 years	Bandile	Black	English

Data Gathering Process

After obtaining ethical clearance from Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS), participants were accessed through friends and colleagues who knew people in interracial relationships. The participants were given a Participation Information Sheet (PIS) (see Appendix A) as an invitation to participate in the study and were informed on all the details of the study. On the day of the interview, each participant was given a consent form to indicate agreement to participate in the study (see Appendix B), a consent form for agreeing to audio record the interview (see Appendix C),

[1] All names are pseudonyms

and a brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) to fill in and sign. A third consent form was provided to consent to the reuse of interview data for future research (Appendix E). After all the forms were filled in and signed, the interviews began.

Each interview was approximately an hour long and was audio-recorded. Because of the different schedules of the participants, interviews were conducted where it was most convenient for the participant such as on the Wits campus in my office or at the homes of the participants. Interviews were mostly conducted on the weekend as this was when most participants were available. An interview schedule (see Appendix F) was used to help guide the interview, however, the interview was very openly structured to elicit narratives and give participants the space and ability to share as much as they were comfortable to share. Interviewing couples was not initially the aim of the study, however, once I got into contact with some of the participants, their partners also wanted to get involved.

Ethical Considerations:

To ensure ethical practices are abided by, ethical clearance was obtained from the HREC at WITS before any interviews were conducted. The sample that was selected were individuals above the age of 18 which ensured that each individual could provide consent to participating in the study. A PIS was provided to each potential participant at initial contact via email in order to inform them on all details of the study so they can make an informed decision when deciding to participate. The PIS (see Appendix A) provided information about the study to ensure that the participants were comfortable participating. On the day of the interviews, each participant was also given a hard copy of the PIS. Consent forms were also provided to each participant through email at first contact in order to give participants time to read and go through the forms. A consent form for agreeing to participate in the study, a consent form for audio-recording, a consent form requesting permission to reuse the data for future research were all given to the participants on the day of the interview to sign prior to beginning the interview. Participants were informed that they would not incur any adverse effects should they decide to withdraw from the study, and that they could drop out of the study at any time.

Anonymity could not be ensured as the procedure of collecting data was interviews in which the interviewer was able to identify each of the participants. However, third party anonymity was ensured as the interview process was kept between the interviewer and interviewee, and pseudonyms were used to hide each participant's identity. Confidentiality was maintained as interview recordings and transcripts were kept from external people, excluding the researcher

and her supervisor. Moreover, all the recordings and transcripts were kept on a password secure computer. Because the data were coded on hardcopies of the transcripts, transcripts were kept safe by placing them in folders to ensure that they did not get lost and were stored in a lockable cupboard in the researcher's office to ensure security. Interview audio recordings were transcribed solely by the interviewer in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of interviews and participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were reiterated on the day of the interview, and participants were encouraged to share as much as they felt comfortable with.

Individual members of couples were interviewed separately in an attempt to lessen any potentially negative impact that the interview might have on their relationship in the event of disagreements or differences of opinion. Furthermore, interviews were conducted individually to ensure that each individual was comfortable to share their personal experiences, enabling rich data to be collected.

It was essential for those in couples to be aware of their partner's participation and to think about the possible consequences of this. Furthermore, it was important to be sensitive about what data were used, and how they were analyzed as a result of the sensitivity and complexity of the topics of race in the South African context.

Counselling services were offered to the participants in the event that certain discussions throughout the interviews triggered negative emotional responses. The details of the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) and counselling services at Emthonjeni Centre and Lifeline were given to participants on request as indicated in the PIS. The contact details of myself, the researcher, as well as my supervisor Professor Jill Bradbury were provided on the PIS in case participants had any queries or concerns.

Data Analysis

Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. Each transcript included as much detail as possible, such as laughing and non-verbal communication in order to convey as much detail of the interview as possible. Once the data were transcribed, the interview transcripts were read and coded in order to identify themes and significant stories within and across participants. The transcripts were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was suitable for this research study as it allowed the researcher to find themes across different participants, thus, enabling the researcher to construct a narrative on

interracial relationships based on real people's experiences and stories (Riessman, 2000). Furthermore, the Thematic Analysis was also used to understand what the narrator is communicating through the story by analyzing the temporality and relationality in their narrative.

After reading and coding the transcripts in order to find themes that appeared to be dominant across participants, thematic analysis began. The themes that were included in the analysis were picked by working deductively from the literature to the data, as well as working inductively from the data to ensure that the participants' experiences and counter-stories were not overshadowed by theory and previous literature as doing so may construct and perpetuate the negative dominant narratives that exist about interracial couples. This in turn helped answer the research question and aims of the study, which is to understand the experiences of individuals in interracial relationships, opposed to receiving the dominant narrative about such individuals through hyperracialized research studies. The interpretation of these themes was then linked to the narrative framework, and the meaning that individuals gave to the stories that they told. Themes were identified across participants in order to create a narrative and give meaning to the experiences of individuals in interracial relationships. Although there are 3 main themes ,1) race and identity, 2) culture and religion, and 3) language, class and race, there are also sub-themes in order to encapsulate the majority of the data, and really define the fullness and richness of the data, and what each theme encapsulated for each participant.

Reflexivity

Because I identify as a Black woman, I was aware that the dynamic between myself and each participant may vary particularly as a result of our racial differences or similarities. All of the women that I interviewed were women of color. I feel that the dynamic and rapport between myself and the female participants was largely influenced by our similarities in race and gender. I felt myself getting along quite well with these women, and there were a lot things that I felt that I could relate to such as the significance and meaning about Black natural hair, being in a relationship with a man of a different race as a Black woman in the South African context, and our educational backgrounds. I do feel that because we could identify and relate to each other on a gender and racial level, it did help the female participants open up to me more about issues of gender within their relationships. With the male participants, I felt that each experience of interviewing the males was different as I had two White men who had

completely different upbringings, and one Black man. During these interviews with the males, I did find myself thinking a lot about the experiences of their partners as the theme of patriarchy and gender was raised in all three interviews. The dynamic between myself and Antonio and Shaun (both white participants) did seem to be influenced by my race as they are both dating Black females as well. I feel that they were both quite comfortable to go into depth about the issues and challenges they've faced, possibly, with the mindset that I could understand to a certain extent.

Because of how I've experienced White men, and the biases that I may hold about White men, I was expecting to hear things that I knew I would find problematic as a Black woman. I do find that this skepticism was helpful in that it helped me want to explore more and gain more understanding of the experiences of the White men, which created a richness and depth to their narratives, and to my personal understanding of their experiences as White men in relationships with Black women (Josselson, 2004). These White men seemed quite aware of their ability to say things that may be perceived as problematic to Black women, and when these statements came up in the interviews, I interpreted that as them being comfortable to say certain controversial things to me as a Black woman, as they would to their Black partners with the hope of learning from their partners. This made it quite challenging to transcribe and analyze their data out of ethical concern that their controversial statements may paint them in a negative light in the eyes of readers. This speaks to the close relationship that may be formed between interviewer and interviewee in narrative studies, as hearing one's story places them and the things that they say in a broad context that readers may not perceive or experience through the written report (Boonzaier, 2014). Furthermore, interpreting the narratives of these participants was quite challenging for me as they challenged my biases and prejudices of White South African men, but also at certain moments confirmed some of my biases. In the same breath, it was difficult to interpret the experiences and narratives of the women in the study as striking a balance between my voice and experience, theory, and their experiences was quite challenging as these three things tended to intertwine. Hearing the participants' narratives caused me to be more aware of my own narrative unconscious, and the influences that have formed by experience of my racial identity, as well as how I perceive other bodies. This made me much more aware of my position within the room as a Black interviewer who is also a woman, as well as a Black woman dating outside her race within the South African context and how that can be perceived in many different ways by society.

Although not many participants were aware that I am in an interracial relationship, the ones that were aware did not ask about it, except for one participant. I found it quite interesting that only one of them asked as I mentally prepared myself for the possibility of them asking. I understood this as them being eager and focused on sharing their stories with me. This was later confirmed after every interview, each participant thanked me for interviewing them and mentioned how therapeutic it was for them to share their story and talk about the challenges of being in an interracial relationship with someone other than their partner. This was quite satisfying for me, as one of the advantages of narrative studies is to emancipate individuals through the sharing of their stories (Langallier, 2001 as cited in Riessman, 2005). Lucy was the only participant who asked about my own relationship, and although I had mentally prepared myself to be asked about it, it took me by surprise as it was during the interview. This made me realize how this experience may have given some of the participants not only an outlet and a way to make meaning of their own experiences, but also comfort in knowing that there are other interracial couples out there who may understand their experiences.

Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis

This chapter presents the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke,2006) of the interview data, and uses theory to interpret and better understand the participants' experiences of being in an interracial relationship in the South African context. Fay (1996) proposes that looking at oneself retrospectively is an important part of making sense of oneself, and gives meaning to one's past experiences, thus, creating the self as a storied temporal process. Freeman (2002, as cited in Bradbury & Clark, 2012, p. 180) uses the term "narrative unconscious" to illustrate that this past is not only the short-lived lifespan, but also the longer histories of families and communities. These histories are forcefully felt, particularly where these histories are oppressive or traumatic. Furthermore, present political relations such as gender, culture and class work together in influencing the types of narratives individuals may tell (McAdams, 2001). Given the particular focus of this study on intimate relationships across the historical and contemporary socially constructed category of race, it is therefore critical to consider the ways in which narratives of identity are constructed in relation to one's social context and relationships in the context of temporality and relationality (Fishbane, 2001; Gergen, 1991). The following thematic analysis will, therefore, explore the participants' narrative identities in relation to the following overarching themes: 1) race and class, 2) race and gender, and 3) forming new identities.

1. Race and Class

In the South African context, race and class are inextricably linked (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). This is due to the apartheid history that dictated the kinds of spaces, resources and opportunities different people had access to in relation to their racial category (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). Post-1994, race remains significant, however, levels of education and class complicates the dynamics that form within interracial relationships. The role that class plays is supported by Khunou (2015) who suggests that historical privilege in relation to race remains important despite class mobility for some Black South Africans. Class may, therefore, be used as a cultural capital or a significant factor in forming interracial relationships in the South African context (Bourdieu, 1986). These factors also play into issues of education and schooling and the privileges certain racial categories may have in the South African context. The concept of White privilege is important to consider within interracial relationships as it not only affects the dynamic of the relationship, but also the identity of particularly the White individual within the interracial relationship, and how that

plays out in different spaces (Gruenes, 2018). This concept can be simply understood as the benefits that White individuals receive as a result of being White (Bohonos, 2019; Gruenes, 2018). The level of White privilege one possesses may be dependent on various factors such as social class and gender. Although racial differences may be quite prominent in interracial relationships, class plays an important role in possibly bridging the gap between these differences. Through spaces of education and the type of education that individuals in interracial relationships receive, it is evident that class may appear to be a significant factor in bringing these couples together. This theme, therefore, focuses on how contemporary class hierarchies and the historical privilege of whiteness, create important power dynamics within interracial relationships.

1.1. Whiteness and Privilege

In the extract below, Antonio expresses his discomfort with being around White Afrikaans people from a higher social class than his, and how this causes him to feel disconnected to the whiteness these wealthy White Afrikaans people possess.

> *Antonio: Afrikaans culture is weird. I was a nerd, so I didn't...I was the most nerdiest nerd you could ever find. And everyone there wasn't. And I don't know, there's a huge amount of culture shock of that excessive amounts of Afrikaans, because Afrikaans school in Germiston was still grounded in the fact that it was Germiston, and no one there was richer than a certain point. Afrikaans people in Hartbeespoort on the other hand, oh, my word, they are excessively rich. Most of them have so much better lives than where I came from in Germiston, that I like I couldn't relate to anything about their whiteness if you want to call it that. Yeah, very, very weird. And it never went away until like...it's it's kind of still there, to be very frank. It's very weird, but yeah.*

Antonio expresses feeling unable to fit in or relate to wealthier White people. This speaks to how race and socioeconomic status interrelate to create a particular type of identity for individuals. Furthermore, this speaks to relationality and how individuals within interracial relationships may experience their own identity as a raced being, and how this inability to completely relate to people of the same racial category can create an openness within them to form relationships with people across racial lines. Because White privilege encompasses the benefitting from a system or institution that may disadvantage others, Antonio may feel that he is unable to relate to those who directly benefit from this system as he may feel that he does not experience the same level of benefits as other White people due to his socio-

economic status, and attending a historically Black university (Gruenes, 2018; Steyn 2012). Because privilege is also about power, Antonio may not relate to other White people who appear to have a certain level of financial power that he does not have (Gruenes, 2018; Green et al, 2007). Inequality is a defining factor within the South African context (Green et al., 2007). This means that although Antonio may feel disadvantaged in relation to wealthier White people, it is still important to acknowledge that he attended a suburban White school, and was once a university student, affording him certain privileges that the majority of South Africans do not have. Consequently, others in his context identify him as 'White' and assume all of the attendant privileges of whiteness as he is not seen as Black and is not seen as poor despite his narrative of self.

In the extract below, Antonio elaborates on how he identifies himself.

> *Antonio: Yeah, I believe...I believe that culture's a lot bigger, but I also know that I have no culture that I very specifically adhere to. You know, like I... I would...like in terms of culture, I do identify as like a [name of university] student. You know, if we have another FeesMustFall protest, holy shit, I'm in the front line and I will throw the teargas back at the people, you know. Like that's something I would identify with, identifying with a certain degree of poverty. Absolutely. No question. If poverty was a culture, yes, I would be there. If being a...Joburg was a culture, I would be there. If you know, all of these things were a culture as a sort of...hell, I don't even want to call it post-racial or anything. I just like...race isn't part of how I see stuff. You know, it's like...it's like meh doesn't...it just doesn't matter.*

Antonio talks about his experiences that do not align to the experiences of whiteness, causing him to dissociate himself from White privilege, and being seen as a White person. Antonio claims to identify with experiences of 'poverty', making him feel alienated from more privileged white peers and increasing a sense of identification with his fellow students at the historically Black university that he attended. Antonio, therefore, constructs his narrative identity in relation to his social class and being around Black people at the university he attended. Although Antonio may perceive himself as poor, it is important to recognize his position of privilege as a White Afrikaans man in South Africa as a result of the apartheid regime which privileged White people. Essentially, Antonio's experience of not relating to whiteness may have influenced him to date outside of his race in order to completely dissociate himself from the privileged identity that he automatically fits into.

The extract below illustrates Shaun's understanding of his identity and position as a White South African man, and how dating a Black woman has forced him to understand the experiences of Black people.

> *Shaun: I think especially when we had, like, just after Fees Must Fall and stuff like that. Then it's like...When you learn to understand White privilege, it's a difficult process because you have to in a sense see yourself as a bad guy, which is like tough because I don't think any child grows up seeing himself as a bad guy...you used to always see yourself as a hero in the story. And I think it's like...it's difficult because then you like...you know you have to work on things, you feel like you're working on things and then like those things aren't necessarily acknowledged. So I mean, like that was a tough period. So, obviously I feel like I've grown a lot in those areas. I said to my friend Mpho yesterday, I said I would have loved to have done my LLB over again to do jurisprudence over again because of the understanding I have now all of the role that I have to play as a White person in South Africa. And I have to say that dating someone who is Black forces you into their shoes, directly into their environment. Especially like being as close as we are, you feel the emotions with them, you feel everything like that, you understand. And I think for me that has helped me grow as a White South African, and also I think to a certain extent, that's why. I also like I sympathize with White South Africans who are still arrogant about certain things. Because I understand, I understand that you don't understand (laughs).*

Shaun is reflexive and recognizes how much he's had to think, grow and change in his own position as a White man in South Africa. He expresses the conflict in his identity as a White man as he has had to come to terms with the pain that his own privilege has caused Black people. He has learnt this as a result of him being in a relationship with a Black woman who has helped him grow to see things from her perspective. Shaun, therefore, constructs a narrative identity that places time and his relationship with Tshego as an integral part of his growth and process of understanding his own racial identity and recognizing his historical privilege. Gruenes (2018) suggests that many White people tend to only recognize their whiteness later on in their life as a result of being frequently exposed to whiteness, thus, perceiving it as the norm. This may be evident in Shaun's above extract as he expresses how he grew up seeing himself as a 'hero' within a certain narrative, only to realize later that this was not the case in the South African context. This may speak to Melissa Steyn's (2012) discussion of White ignorance as a tool used to maintain privilege by taking for granted one's

unearned benefits at the detriment of Black people, in order to keep a level of comfort and convenience for the White self.

1.2. Schooling and University

Spaces of education or academic environments play a large role in influencing and shaping individuals' perceptions and understanding of what race means to them (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Furthermore, spaces of education also play a role in socializing people in typically racialized or "atypical" ways in relation to South Africa's apartheid history (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Yancey's (2002) study of American men found that those who are most likely to date interracially are people exposed to particular types of racially diverse schools, come from a specific socio-economic status, and have a certain level of education. Although South Africa has moved away from systematic racism post-1994, many people still have very real and significant racialized experiences, perhaps particularly in schools, that impact on the way they see the world (Long, 2013). Essentially, this theme focuses on individuals' experiences of schooling and university experiences in shaping and influencing perceptions of race and understanding, and being open to dating others that are not in the same racial category as prescribed by the apartheid laws.

Jennifer's extract demonstrates how her experience of the school environment as integrative and neutral allowed her to create relationships with those outside her race in a way that felt common or conventional within her specific school context.

> *Jennifer: Yah,I think so, because I think like once you're exposed to it, you don't think like oh I'm being exposed to it now, especially when you're like smaller and stuff. Then like you don't think about it too hard. And like your parents aren't saying like, stay away from these people, stay away from those people. So like, yeah, I think being in it where you're not thinking about these things and not thinking about like social issues and political issues, racial issues. When you're like super young, and those thoughts don't come to mind. I think like being immersed in that helps a lot to like not think too hard about it once you're out of school. So like...cos we went to Eagle Creek High School...that's where we went. Yah like...we didn't think too hard about it. It's just like the people you interact with, like every single day and you met them when you were like seven. So you don't think like too hard about like their racial identity and everything. That did help a lot, and I'm glad for it.*

Jennifer's racially diverse school may act as a new space that provides the possibility to not "see" peers as different raced bodies. Jennifer perceives her high school context, and the lack of need to think and speak about people in racialized ways within this context as positive and helpful for her in shaping her perceptions of the race and identity of her peers. Jennifer's positive attitude towards being in an interracial relationship can be explained by Amoateng and Kalule-Sabiti (2014; Joyner & Kao, 2005) who state that individuals who attend or have attended schools with more racial diversity show more interest and higher positive attitudes towards interracial dating or relationships. By talking about how her school context affected her understanding and engagement of race, Jennifer reflects on her growth and development by moving from talking about her past to talking about her present. Freeman (1993) indicates that this process is important in fostering personal growth, and in making sense of one's sense of being across the past and the present. However, it is also important to acknowledge the implication of colourblindness, the inability to see people as raced bodies (White, 2002), in Jennifer's high school. White (2002) suggests that colourblindness allows for the ignorance and lack of acknowledgement of the privilege one may possess as a raced being.

The extract below illustrates Jennifer's shift and change in thinking and talking about racial and political issues within her university context, which she previously did not do in her high school.

> *Lorenca: Hhmm. Has there ever been a time when you did think about it a lot or were kind of forced to think about it a lot...like race and stuff?*
>
> *Jennifer: Yeah, that was like university status. Like when we started doing FVPA and some like philosophical subjects and everything, then like I started thinking about it a lot. And like all of these artistic subjects, and these expressions of like identity and everything. But I never thought about it like before. But like now obviously, like things go down in this country so like you can't ignore it. And you've got to think about your position and like everyone else's position. And you've got to be a lot more careful with what you say and do. And I think like that consideration came along in varsity.*

Jennifer expresses her change in perception of race and identity as a result of being in a university context, where the subjects she studied forced her to think about racial identities and the positions people occupy within the South African context. This change that came about in her university in contrast to her lack of engagement with racial and political issues within her high school environment, highlights the different influences and roles that the

spaces of education may have on young people and their perceptions and engagement with race issues within the current South African context. By talking about how the different spaces of education affected her understanding and engagement of race, Jennifer reflects on her growth and development by moving from talking about her past to talking about her present.

Joslyn's extract below also illustrates how being part of a racially diverse school can impact on one's experiences of people from different races, as well as influence the way different people of different races and culture may interact with each other.

> *Joslyn: Very so we like...we go with the flow. Yeah. Uhm. Yeah. We both like private school kids, we both went to varsity, and both like you know... I don't know if that makes sense in terms of what I'm trying to get at.*

Private schools in South Africa now tend to be characterized by racial diversity (with a lack of diversity in social class) while many public schools remain less mixed, particularly township or rural schools that are often homogenously Black. However, the elite nature of these expensive private schools means that they provide particular ways of socializing young people in relation to race and culture that tends to support the status quo and entail assimilation to whiteness, and towards monolingualism in the dominant language of English (Kennedy, 2019). By indicating that herself and her boyfriend both attended private schools, Joslyn also implies that she has been exposed to particular ways of being socialized that may be more accepting of interracial relationships than the general South African community.

Tshego's extract below also illustrates how individuals who attended racially diverse schools may come together by focusing on their similarities opposed to their racial and cultural differences.

> *Tshego: ...So I think we both had that from the beginning because obviously the res that we stayed in was multiracial, and the schools we went to were multiracial. So it's not like being around a White person or a Black person was a brand new concept.*

Herman and Campbell (2012; Yancey, 2002) found that level of education played a big role in people's attitudes towards interracial relationships; the more educated individuals were, the more likely they were to have positive attitudes towards intimate interracial relationships. This is a probable notion to consider in this current research study as all the participants currently are or have been university students at some point in their lives, indicating that

having diverse experiences within high school as well as experiences within higher education may play a role in attitudes towards interracial relationships within these specific participants. Therefore, relationality is significant in understanding how school contexts influence people to date interracially.

The extract below by Antonio demonstrates his reflexivity on his past schooling contexts, and how these contexts have changed him in different ways. Antonio recognizes himself as a changing and developing person by highlighting the importance and the role of temporality in the process of becoming his current self.

> *Antonio: ...My parents very actively tried to not raise me like that. Even though I went to an Afrikaans school, which I still to this day kind of regret.*
> *Lorenca: Why?*
> *Antonio: Because before, before primary school, I could speak fluently IsiZulu, Afrikaans and English, and I had a very good perception of my surroundings. Going to an Afrikaans school where like maybe less than 1 percent of the attendees are not of...are not first language Afrikaans, it shifts your perspective in an irregular way that doesn't make sense. Yeah, I wouldn't do that again. I mean, there's some nice things, I met nice people that I'm friends with to this day, but there's a lot of stuff that just eh eh. It would have...it would have been nice to be in a school that was more diverse. But then high school that changed quite a bit, and then studying at [my university] that changed immensely. And it's made me a way a better person. But I yeah, I've never. In fact, in high school, I felt weird around White people for a very long time. Yeah. Yeah. Because I moved to Hartbeespoort, which I don't know if you know, but it's super Afrikaans and it was just very weird.*

Antonio's movement from a school with predominantly White Afrikaans children, to a university with predominantly Black people, helped shift his perspective on race, as he was exposed to different languages in different educational spaces. This shift indicates that being exposed to racially diverse spaces not only influences people's perspectives of others, but also influences the kinds of people one may feel comfortable to be around. Antonio suggests his discomfort with being around Afrikaans people, despite being Afrikaans himself. This may have been as a result of his educational context as a child, where he was able to learn isiZulu fluently, and also may have been as a result of his university context, where he was surrounded by more Black people than 'people like him'. This speaks to Durrheim and

Dixon's (2010) research findings that state that despite the increase in racial contact in the current South African context, South Africa may still not be very racially integrated as cross-racial contact may still be severely limited. In essence, Antonio is able to reflexively give a narrative account of his changing sense of self and the shifts in his own perceptions of his experience with Afrikaans people and with Black people due to his movement between two different educational environments.

2. Race and Gender

Patriarchy is a phenomenon that extends past race and culture (Gottfried, 1998). Mama (2001) posits "that gender, in all its diverse manifestations has long been one of the central organizing principles of African societies, past and present" (p. 69). This is important to consider in the South African context due to the many cultures that do exist, and how many of them may be painted by gender and patriarchy. Intersectionality describes how various parts of people's identities such as race and gender play out differently depending on the different spaces that people occupy (Crenshaw et al., 2012; Ndlovu, 2012). This theme focuses on how gender and race intersect within these heterosexual relationships in a way that brings light to cultural differences and gendered power dynamics. This theme also speaks to how each individual's body may be perceived and experienced as a result of their race and gender. The way we perceive ourselves and may be perceived by others may be determined by how our bodies are conditioned and interpreted by society (Violi, 2008). Therefore, this theme also focuses on how one's body may be seen in raced and gendered ways that may impact on how one's identity is experienced.

2.1. Intersectionality

In the extract below, Lucy expresses her resistance to the patriarchy that exists in both her and Bandile's cultural worlds.

> *Lucy: Some things I don't like about both our cultures, like the patriarchal thing, you know. Women stay at home and men go...hhmm, I told him I'm not about that. And...oh yeah! That's another thing I'm nervous about in his family. Like the whole lobola (bride price) situation, I don't know how that's going to work in the whole, you know. That thing where makoti (bride) stays at home and cooks for the family, I'm like I'm not about to be that. I need to go out and work, I can't stay at home. So that's...I'm a bit nervous about that too.*

Although Lucy and Bandile are from different cultural traditions, their cultures intersect in their practices of patriarchy. Lucy refuses to perform certain traditions in both her and Bandile's culture on the basis of gender and patriarchy. Her narrative consists of issues such as gender and patriarchy as she projects into the future with the attempt to manage and navigate around these issues within her relationship. However, in his interview, Bandile does suggest that his family will be more lenient on Lucy in terms of traditions as a result of her being Chinese. Therefore, this suggests that despite having differences in cultural practices, interracial couples and their families may at times compromise and accommodate the cultural differences within the relationship, and this may create opportunities for challenging sexist practices.

Tshego's extract below expresses how important it was for her that Shaun performs wedding traditions that are meaningful to her as a Black woman and illustrates the differences in cultural beliefs between the two of them, and how much conflict these conversations have caused.

> *Tshego: I wanted to do them. I was like, listen...because he hasn't...he...that's the one thing we had the biggest fight over because he doesn't believe in lobola. I was like that's because you're White and you don't understand. Like for me, it's something that you look forward to as a Black woman, as a young Black woman when you get married. And yeah, sometimes I did feel like I wish I was having this discussion with a Black man, cos he'd understand. It wouldn't even be a...like something to discuss and negotiate over. But for him...like oh I cried about this a lot with him and I think after he saw how important it was to me, then he was like if it's important to you, I'll do it. Do I agree with it? That's debatable, but I can see that it's important to you, so I'll do it. Like I wanted that experience...as a Black child. Yah, that was important to me and I...yoh! That wasn't even...even negotiable.*
>
> *Lorenca: Hhmm. Sounds like it was really hard to like...having that conversation and coming to an agreement with him.*
>
> *Tshego: Yah it was a difficult discussion because he didn't get it. You know, he's got that...jurisprudence...yah lobola's outdated, it's like you're paying for like...he's got a whole feminist approach to magadi (negotiation od bride price). And I'm like that's not what it's about. And I'm just like if you...you need to speak to the right people because yes, the process has been abused, etc. etc. but you need to speak to the right*

people. And it differs from family to family. It's not...it's not even lobola in my language, let's start there. So I think for him, coming to understand that and just following process, that was important to me and I think he saw it because I legit cried. I was tears and snot. I was like, if you don't do this, we're not getting married. Like that was my ultimatum. And I think that like showed him that I'm really serious about this, and he was like okay.

Tshego's extract suggests that there may be certain aspects of culture that may not be negotiable for her. Furthermore, her extract disproves the common stereotype that interracial relationships foster a loss of culture or tradition (Jaynes, 2010). Tshego affirms her identity as a Black woman by wanting to take part in African traditions. She also seems to want to carry her identity as a Black woman, as well as her identity as a Black woman dating a White man, which may feel conflicting to both herself and Shaun at times. Therefore, she also illustrates that despite the idea that Black women who date White men may have inferiority complexes (Biko, 1987) and may try to please the White man, she is an independent Black woman whose cultural practices are meaningful and significant to her, possibly more than her relationship with her White male partner. Ultimately, Tshego's narrative identity as a woman is constructed in relation to her cultural context which may at times be in conflict with Shaun's cultural context.

2.2. Embodiment

Embodiment refers to how one's body may be inscribed with social constructs surrounding gender, race and sexuality (Waskul & Vannini, 2006). Hair can be used as an expression of one's identity, and is inextricably linked to race (Tate, 2007). This theme illustrates how hair has been a point of exploration and contestation within the identities of individuals within interracial relationships. In post-apartheid South Africa, whiteness or European 'aesthetics' are still used as a standard of beauty and are imposed onto Black people (Tate, 2007). These standards play a large role in affecting how Black women may perceive themselves, how society perceives them within the context of their interracial relationship, as well as how Black women or non-Black women in relationships with Black men may think about their children's hair. Furthermore, this theme explores how people in interracial relationships plan to navigate the differences in hair between themselves and their partners, as well as in the children they plan to one day have.

The below extract of Lucy illustrates these concerns:

Lorenca: Hhmm. And I'm just thinking because we were just speaking about children now and how...I'm thinking how your children will be half Black and half Chinese. And how do you think about that? How do you think you'll raise them? What do you think you'd teach them in terms of their identity and being in a country like South Africa, being like Blasian in inverted commas?

Lucy: Uhm, I don't know, to be honest. I haven't thought about that a lot, but I have thought about the hair. Like I ask my friends to teach me how to maintain Black hair, cos obviously, you do it differently. So I've thought about that, but I've never really thought of how I would raise them.

Ironically, Lucy expresses that she hasn't thought about the details of how she would raise her mixed children, but has thought about how their hair would be, or how she would have to maintain it. The fixation on hair speaks to racism in relation to what it means if people look a particular way. Consequently, interracial couples may try to raise their children in a way that may positively develop their children's identity so their children may have a sense of belonging (Caballero, Edwards & Puthussery, 2008). Therefore, by focusing on how she would maintain her children's hair, Lucy may be unconsciously worrying about how her children may be perceived by society and worrying about her children's sense of identity and belonging in relation to their father's race as a Black man. In this way, Lucy projects into the future and attempts to construct a future narrative of her children in relation to their embodied raced identities.

The importance of hair and identity seems to also be an important factor for families and community circles beyond the couple themselves. This is illustrated in Joslyn's extract below.

Joslyn: Uhm ooh, there was a bit of an issue with my mom's side of the family. Uhm, but a tiny one. I think. Uhm, they were just like being a bit weird about me being with him cos they...they Coloured and you know, Cape Malay. So they would just ask me about like uhm do I mind how the hair will uhm (deep breath in). And I had to be like whoa (laughs). Chill guys let's not do that, it doesn't matter. Why is this even like a thing, and I had to like (inaudible) wait, why is this a thing, why do you...but yah. Yah.

Joslyn's family comments on the possibility of her and Bheki's children's hair looking a particular way and implies the undesirability of 'Black' hair. This racist construction of Black

hair as ‘bad’ hair is challenged by the natural hair or afro community (Tate, 2007). Good hair tends to symbolize a closeness to whiteness or White standards of beauty, requiring the afro to be less curly, and with a looser texture (Tate, 2007). Although Joslyn wears her hair in an afro, the texture of her hair may be perceived as ‘good’. Consequently, these differences in hair may cause complexities in how interracial children are perceived and accepted by the families of the interracial couple. This suggests that such couples may have pressure from other people to be a certain way or perform their identities a certain way within their relationship and manage their children’s identities in particular ways that may seem acceptable to them. Moreover, this illustrates how people outside interracial relationships may project into the future in order to manage the identities of mixed children in relation to what is deemed acceptable in the present, particularly in ways that approximate whiteness. However, this management of identities in order to construct more whiteness may also at times be experienced within interracial relationships.

In the extract below, Chloe speaks of her experience with a previous partner who was also White, and how the issue of hair affected her identity and self-esteem.

> *Chloe: Yeah, in university there was this girl, very radical girl, she was like you're too beautiful to be with a White, you know. That was university I think, and at the time I was in another interracial relationship, which was uhhh...yeah again, that relationship was emotionally abusive because I was in a position where he was degrading me, he was making me feel less...he was putting me away from my Black self, you know. Don't have natural hair, rather have weaves wawawawa.*

Chloe describes her experience as a Black woman in a relationship with a White man who put her down as a result of her Blackness and because of her expression of that Black identity by wearing her hair natural. Historically, Black natural hair such as the afro has been symbolic of Black power, causing it to be a political statement (Kelley, 1997). Therefore, by degrading Chloe’s hair and insisting that she is to wear weaves, may have caused Chloe to feel a sense of powerlessness in her Black identity. As a result of the White standards of beauty placed on Black women, wearing afro’s or wearing one’s hair in a way that may be considered ‘Black’ can be a political statement to deny and liberate oneself from those standards of beauty that may be experienced as quite oppressive to women who are not White (Slatton, 2012; Johnson & Bankhead, 2014). Chloe, therefore, reflects on her difficult experience of identity and hair with her previous partner in a way that shows appreciation to her current relationship.

Shaun's extract below expresses his shock and initial fear of Tshego's hair, and the process it took for him to love her afro.

> *Shaun: Yah, and I think also...cos my mom said to me...because I love...I like always run my hand through her hair and even when we were good friends always do it like that. My mom said Shaun one question I have for you, rubbing her hair, what would you do? And I was like, no you do. But I have to admit like when we started dating, I was scared of Tshego's hair. Because it's so different like...it looks more coarse. So you know, I think like...okay. So...yah. But then...especially her afro...I loved her afro to bits. (Inaudible). *laughs. But I have to say, since she has short hair, I don't like it as much, I'm still adjusting to it. It was a shock to my system.*

Shaun admits to initially being 'afraid' of Tshego's hair and struggling with differences between their hair. This illustrates that interracial couples have to navigate the physical differences, which may sometimes be a struggle. The normalization of whiteness and White standards of beauty has framed society's perceptions of what is beautiful and desirable (Slatton, 2012). Shaun's fear of Tshego's hair may come from his initial mindset of the type of "skinny sporty White girl with blonde hair" (Shaun's words) that he envisioned himself to date and marry, as a result of the standards of beauty prescribed within society not only for women, but for the types of women that White men should be with. In a research study conducted on White men's perception of Black female beauty, it was found that White men who reported to not being physically attracted to Black women used words such as "coarse" and "nappy" when talking about Black women's hair, and "dark" when talking about Black women's skin (Slatton, 2012). Shaun expresses his initial attraction to White women only and 'fear' of Black hair by calling it coarse and suggests his struggle in the process of being attracted to Black females since he began dating Tshego. Through this narrative Shaun reflects on his past perceptions of beauty and suggests how his relationship with Tshego has shifted his perspective (in some ways) to what beauty is in the present. Shaun's reflection of his perceptions of beauty also reveal a fairly honest expression of racist stereotypes of standards of beauty in relation to race.

Chloe's extract below illustrates the internal conflict that individuals within interracial relationships experience in terms of their race and gender, and how they understand themselves to be perceived by others. Furthermore, Chloe indicates the cognitive dissonance (Aronson, 1969) that can occur as a result of being in an interracial relationship.

Lorenca: Yeah, so having a White man, who is...who has like Afrikaans heritage. Do you think that has kind of influenced the way you see yourself or, you see the world as like an African Black woman?

Chloe: Look, I think like from a theory standpoint, my radical feminism would be like girl, what are you doing? Why are you with the oppressor, you know? But to me, it just goes to show that you could be a multi-faceted individual and that irrespective of your standpoint or viewpoint, if you're really attracted to someone, if you really love them, if you really care for them, irrespective of that, their race, their creed or whatever then you would...you would be with them. And I mean, we always have the discussions where we're like...I don't like people saying that when you are in an interracial relationship, you've defeated racism. Because in fact when we are in a relationship, we do experience racism. So racism doesn't go away because we are in an interracial relationship, it still exists you just experience different forms of it. So for me, it's like I just...I just get over that whole mental block of saying you know, he's White, he's Afrikaans and I see other Afrikaans people being racist and then I'm like oh Antonio's like that, and I realized he's not. He's proved it to me that he isn't like that.

Chloe speaks of the idea of claiming different parts of one's identity, and asserting them at different times (Ndlovu, 2012). She illustrates the complex embodied identity issues that may arise for her for dating a White man with Afrikaans and German heritage, as a Black woman within the South African context. She expresses the tension she experiences in both race and gender terms, and experiences an internal conflict in her own identity as a Black feminist woman while dating an Afrikaans-German White man. Therefore, through creating a narrative about her realizations of the differences between Antonio and other Afrikaans men in South Africa, Chloe may reach a resolution in her relationship that does not contradict her views as a feminist Black South African woman, as Antonio appears to be different from the "oppressor". And although she perceives him to be different from what she fears in White Afrikaans men, she still is able to think critically about race and patriarchy as analytic categories. The idea of embodying one's identity and asserting different parts of one's identity discussed above may also be linked to the concept of forming a new identity as an individual within an intimate interracial relationship. This supports the idea of relationality within interracial relationships.

3. Forming New Identities

In the context of South African history, when talking about identity, race must always be taken into account (Afful et al., 2015; Posel, 2010). Although the current generation is growing up post-Apartheid, their experiences are not post-race, and the Apartheid categories of Black, White, Indian, Coloured are often still invoked. Interracial relationships challenge these categories both for the participants and for society. Furthermore, although difference of racial categories (as prescribed by apartheid) between two people determines whether their relationship is interracial or not, these categories are not sufficient in determining differences, similarities or compatibility between people (Custer et al., 2008). Because 'race' is a social construct, individuals may shift between various racial identities in relation to different people and in different contexts (Hill & Thomas, 2000; Appiah, 2018; Fishbane, 2001). This is important to consider as interracial couples may find themselves in different spaces, with different people as a result of their relationship, causing them to manage and navigate their racial identities. In essence, this theme speaks on intersectionality as one's race and their relationship with their partner, and other people influences and impacts on their own sense of self, and identity (Crenshaw, Delgado & Stefanic, 2012; Ndlovu, 2012). Furthermore, this speaks to how individuals in interracial relationships may come together to manage not only their differences in relation to social categories of race, class and gender but also work through the usual dynamics of making intimate relationships work. Despite the effects of apartheid on the identities of young people Post-1994 that still remains in their narrative unconscious, many young people seem to be in the process of recreating themselves, their relationships and the way they live in the world. This means that although race is still a significant part of their identities and ways of being, young people may be actively resisting the segregationist history of apartheid and are trying to create something new for themselves.

3.1. Fluidity of Identity

Because race is a social construction and because it intersects with other dimensions of identity such as gender, and socioeconomic status, identity is not fixed or rigid (Afful et al., 2015; Posel, 2010). As people move into different spaces, their experiences and performances of themselves or of their identity may shift and change in relation to the spaces they occupy, and the people they are around (Onorato & Turner, 2004; Appiah, 2018). Individuals within interracial relationships may experience their identities as more fluid than static as a result of occupying different spaces and contexts due to their relationships. This may impact on their

sense of self as society, particularly a highly racialised society such as South Africa, places assumptions and judgements on them concerning the 'authenticity' of their racial identity.

The extract below illustrates Tshego's internal conflict about her Blackness since she began dating Shaun.

> *Tshego: ...And I think it takes a lot for me to pull myself towards myself, because, like, I look in the mirror and I'm just like (inaudible), I'm still as Black as I was when I was dating Black men. And I'm still as Black...like my favorite thing about Shaun is that he doesn't make me feel uncomfortable about being Black. I still laugh loudly. I still use my acronyms. I still use that...the expressions that Black people use. And I love that I can be myself. Like if I couldn't be myself around Shaun, I wouldn't be dating him. My Blackness is a part of who I am, so there are times where I have questioned it and just like, am I or have I changed since I started dating him? I obviously speak English more because I'm around him more but have I changed? Like fundamentally, have I changed? And I always have to bring myself to ask myself that question when I'm feeling like I don't know where I fit in right now. And I realized the problem isn't with me, it's with them, the people who are questioning my identity. They are the problem. So if I don't...if Black people treat me like that then I just move on to the next group of Black people. Like that's just how it works for me. Like I know who I am, I know who's image I'm made in. I know myself, I know how was raised. And your version of what it means to be black, that isn't correct.*

Tshego questions her identity as a Black woman, and wonders whether she has changed since she began dating Shaun. This speaks to the difficulty that individuals within interracial relationships experience with their identities when they enter intimate relationships with people outside their race. This difficulty may be a result of how interracial relationships may provoke new ways of thinking about race and the racialization of ourselves. As a result of being with Shaun, Tshego has moments when she feels that she doesn't fit in with other Black people. This speaks to the relationality and the fluidity of identity, and how one may tend to experience their race in different contexts, and different times. Furthermore, Tshego mentions the judgement she may experience from other Black people who question her identity and Blackness. In a research study conducted about the experiences of Black women in relationships with White men, it was found that many Black women were made to feel as if they were betraying Black people as a result of their intimate relationship with White men

(Hill & Thomas, 2002). It is also probable to argue that despite dating a White man, Tshego's identity as a Black woman may also be questioned because she speaks English in a particular way and has a university education, creating questions around the authenticity of her Blackness in South Africa. This places focus on the question of 'authenticity' and Whiteness which is dominant in this generation of young educated Black South Africans.

Tshego's extract below further demonstrates Black people's reaction towards her dating a White man.

> *Tshego: It's terrible. I think for me, like I said, I'm very proud of being Black. I love being Black, I'm not ashamed of my Blackness. And it's sad when all of a sudden there are levels to Blackness. So when you get a White guy, minus two points! When you speak in a certain accent, minus three! Uhm, and then before you know it, your own people have kind of like ousted you for being more educated, for being ah...uhm...what do you call it...for choosing to date, to choose...to date someone that you actually love. So you'd rather have me date someone that looks like me, but I don't love them. So why must I be unhappy to make other people happy? So, yeah, that's been really hard for me. I don't like feeling less Black, I don't because I'm not. If it came from a White person, it wouldn't touch me. The fact that it comes from people like me, we face that everyday from the White people at work, and know you want to do it to me to someone who's actually on my...you're supposed to be in my team. So that's really hard. Like I was told that you have a twang (accent), and I was just like okay so I speak English well, what does that mean? What is like...explain to me what that means. Does it mean I'm less Black? Because I can speak Tswana, and I speak Tswana well. I speak Tswana in a Tswana accent, it doesn't sound any different. When I speak English, I speak it the way that I was taught it. Like I don't understand that. But yah, that really hurts my feelings and it just shows how bad with thinking Black people are.*

Tshego expresses how her level of education and her interracial relationship work together or intersect to create a certain identity of whiteness that Green et al (2007) speak of, causing her to be othered by Black people. Tshego's ability to speak English fluently, and her current social class seem to disqualify her as Black. Furthermore, the questioning of her identity and what it means to be a Black woman who speaks English in a particular manner and has a certain level of education, is exacerbated by her intimate relationship with Shaun.

3.2. Culture and Beliefs: Constructing New Versions

Interracial couples tend to create their own ways of doing things and focus on their similarities in order to avoid focusing on issues that may be potentially divisive (Killian, 2012). This may also be experienced as liberating to interracial couples (Killian, 2012).

In the extract below, Shaun expresses the advantages of being in an interracial relationship, and the kinds of cultural challenges that they experience as an interracial couple.

> *Shaun: The thing is about interracial dating, is that you bond so much closer because of the persecution you face. In a sense because you're compromising and meeting each other's...having one culture in the middle in a sense. You not dissociating yourself with other two, obviously you still...both sides are still your family, but in sense you're creating your own culture the middle and it's literally you two against everyone else. So you become so much...I think that's the advantage of interracial dating is how close you actually become because you sharing this pain in a sense with someone else...that you feel like only the two of you can understand. So I think, yah...just like as in general as human beings, I think, obviously there are challenges but there's so much advantages to it because it teaches you so much about life. It forces you to draw so much closer together, and ultimately, you want to have...if you intend of spending the rest of your lives...then you want to have that strength in a relationship. So I think obviously it makes you a lot stronger as a couple.*

Shaun's narrative of being in an interracial relationship is filled with ideas of over-coming racial and cultural obstacles, creating an intimate bond and closeness within the relationship. Shaun narrates his interracial relationship as a learning curve, and as a way of learning different life skills that he may not have learnt in an intraracial relationship. In essence, he gives a different meaning to his relationship than the dominant negative and pathologizing mainstream understanding of such relationships as dysfunctional (Troy, Lews-Smith & Laurenceacu, 2006).

Tshego's extract illustrates how she and Shaun used Christianity as a way to remain united within their relationship despite potential disagreement from others such as family.

> *Tshego: But I think we both wanted our relationship to be based on Christian values. So that's something that we, we really wanted to...things like no sex before marriage. We tried to avoid kissing as long...as long as possible but we failed at that but it's fine. Also,*

like if we getting married trying to move the ancestral aspect out of the magadi situation as well because obviously that's just not part of our beliefs. Yah, we're just going to see how that's going to go because I don't know. Cos you know how Black people are more of the opinion that ancestry and Christianity can coexist. Yah, that's gonna be interesting to see...like rolling out over the next couple of months.

Despite racial differences, interracial couples choose to focus on the common beliefs between the two individuals as a way to stand on common ground and feel a sense of unity and agreement within the relationship (Killian, 2012). By ascribing to religious practices that differ from her ancestral background, Tshego chooses to redefine her identity, and distinguish herself from her religious background, and associate herself with her boyfriend, Shaun. In this sense, Tshego creates a diachronic identity in which her identity changes over time in relation to her religious beliefs from identifying with ancestral traditions to aligning herself with more Christian beliefs which defines her relationship with Shaun (McAdams, 2001).

Tshego's extract below illustrates the meaning that Christianity adds to her relationship with Shaun.

Lorenca: And you said that when you...a few months before you started dating, that's when you became a Christian. So how has it been for you, like, your journey into Christianity, when he...you said he was like already established, and had these values that you were really not sure about?

Tshego: I think it was good because, I lived life guys. I went out, I partied. By the time Shaun came to varsity, he hadn't listened to secular music, had never had a sip of alcohol in his life. So I think it was more challenging for, him coming into that space where everyone's drinking...I don't know what to do. Whereas for me, I was just like mxm, nah, I'm over that. Been there, done that, type of situation. So he had...a lot of the times he sought counsel from me about how to handle those type of situations and he started to experience...experiment more, listening more to secular music. And he was like oh okay, so maybe it's not that bad or started drinking alcohol and he was like oh okay, it's not terrible. So I think...he...we different that I've have done life, and I say that inverted commas, but then...and he hasn't. But then it's just...it's easy for him to teach...for me to teach him, and for him to teach me. So I think that we've been really good in that regard. Yah.

Tshego admits to "living" a life that didn't ascribe to the Christian principles that she now lives by and associates a positivity to her having lived a different lifestyle as it allowed her to teach her boyfriend about the "life" that he missed out on. In this way, Tshego and her boyfriend act as teachers towards each other as Tshego taught him how to "live", while he teaches her how to ascribe to certain Christian female roles. Tshego uses her past lifestyle, which differs from her current lifestyle as a Christian, in a way that creates a function and purpose in her present relationship with Shaun. Through narrating her life, Tshego makes sense and gives meaning to her past in relation to her present, as well as to Shaun's present life.

Joslyn's extract expresses her similar religious views to Bheki, her boyfriend, despite being raised within different religious beliefs.

> *Lorenca: You mentioned that your dad is a pastor and that Bheki's mom is Catholic. Do you...are you also like following your family's religion and him, his mom's religion?*
>
> *Joslyn: I mean we both grew up in our respective households but I think we both developed our own like set of uhm...what you call it...Let me rather say I'm...I don't like identify as a Methodist. I do believe you know there's a higher power of course, I'm not Atheist. Same with Bhe, we both feel the same like...I mean I just, I just see a lot wrong with religion itself as like a construct. You know, I'm more inclined to lean towards spirituality and so does he so...so what are the chances?*

In different studies conducted by Herman and Campbell (2012) as well as Bonam and Shih (2009) it was found that despite being comfortable with interracial dating, many people were less comfortable with interreligious dating. However, in a study conducted by Custer et al (2008), it was found that some interracial couples tend to see religious differences as less important than similarities that they do share, thus, preferred to speak more about their similarities in order to counter society's beliefs that there is too much difference in interracial relationships. Joslyn illustrates that despite having different backgrounds and religious upbringings, her and Bheki were able to find a shared spiritual belief that differs from what they were both raised with, creating a spiritual intimacy and closeness between them. This idea of creating new spiritual beliefs between two individuals may differ from society's ideas of how and what interracial couples may believe, as much research focuses on the differences within such relationships. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) postulate that "powerfully written

stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity" (p. 50). Joslyn's extract illustrates the common humanity between her and Bheki despite their differences in upbringing and illustrates how two people from different backgrounds and religions are able to come together and form their own set of beliefs. By focusing only on spirituality instead of institutionalized religion, Joslyn and Bheki construct their own spiritual beliefs within the relationship that go beyond the beliefs that they were raised with, creating union and closeness between the two of them. Joslyn reflects on her and Bheki's past religious upbringing in order to give meaning to their current shared beliefs.

Chloe's extract below illustrates how religious differences are navigated and managed within her relationship.

> *Chloe: Like I said with people who comment on our relationship and saying what you're doing is wrong. I don't...I don't engage. Because...because I'm Roman Catholic, I know that my God is a loving God, and irrespective of who I'm with he wouldn't cast down on me because I'm with a White person. And sometimes people tend to take things out of context from the Bible. Antonio's background is very interesting because I think he is also Catholic, but he doesn't go to church regularly because his church is like NG Kerk or something. And so that experience for him was very problematic. So I mean, for the two years that we've been together, I think I've taken Antonio to my church 3 times. And we've been having a discussion about you know, if we had to have a church wedding, would he be fine with that and in the beginning he wasn't okay with it, but now I think he's slowly opening up the idea of it. But I still feel uncomfortable having to be like let's have a church wedding, and put it on him. I'd rather just have like a...is non-partisan, non-religious the right word? But we definitely agreed that we would want our kids to have the option. So we'd baptize them, let them have their first communion and then we they get to high school, then they can decide whether they want to do confirmation or not, but at least we're just establishing the foundation. Yeah.*

Killian (2012) posits that interracial couples choose not to focus on issues that could potentially cause division within the relationship. Although Chloe is Roman Catholic, while her boyfriend Antonio seems not to be religious, she appears to want to compromise on her religious practices when it comes to important events in their relationship such as their

wedding, in order to maintain happiness for both herself and Antonio. Furthermore, despite his "problematic" (Antonio's words) experience with religion, Antonio also appears to be open and willing to compromise for Chloe by baptizing their future children and allowing them to have their first communion. This suggests that despite differing beliefs, relationships may try to reach a space of agreement or compromise in order to maintain their relationship. This idea is in contrast to the usual depiction of interracial couples as constantly in conflict or disagreement with each other.

Although religion can be unifying, interracial couples may experience difficulty with negotiating religion at the beginning of their relationship. Tshego's extract expresses how she felt caught off guard by Shaun's religious expectations of her when they began dating.

> *Tshego: Yah, that was very hard. I think it's also because of the way I was raised as well. I think after...Shaun comes from a very...both his parents are pastors, his grandfather's a pastor, his brother's a pastor. So he comes from a very strong Christian background where the woman's roles are very clearly defined and uhm...and for me, I come from like, my mom's a single mom and she was raised...we were raised to do our own thing. To always, you know...never let a man take the lead when you...when you can. So I've always been very very strong leadership, very very strong personality because of that. And when we started dating...and he just expected...because I...let's say two years before we started dating. No, the year I met him, I got saved as a Christian. So I think when we started dating, he just expected me to just like fit into that role.*

Although Christianity serves as a unifying factor within her relationship with Shaun, Tshego seems to have experienced some discomfort and pressure to behave in a way that felt foreign to her. Tshego reflects on her upbringing as a child with a single parent and positions herself and makes sense of her identity now as an adult, through a different lens than what she understands an adult woman is, in her boyfriend's background. Josselson (2011) posits that narratives play a significant role in allowing people to make sense of their identity and "distinguish" (p. 2) themselves from other people. Although Christianity is a shared faith between Tshego and her boyfriend, Tshego recognizes the differences between them, and distinguishes herself as an independent woman by choosing not to ascribe to the roles defined for women that Shaun may expect from her. By looking back into her childhood, Tshego links her being raised by a single mom to her strong personality as an adult, giving meaning

to the religious differences that Tshego and Shaun have. This also speaks to the gendered positions in religion that may also come from one's family history.

Lucy's extract below describes her positive experiences of learning Bandile's culture, as well as teaching him parts of her culture.

> *Lorenca: No it's okay, it's okay. Uhm, and I'm wondering. Have you guys ever experienced any cultural differences between the two of you? Because I mean, besides race, you are like a different culture as well.*
>
> *Lucy: I don't know, I feel like the fact that we're both open to learning...maybe food we're different. But it's it's always easier for me, I feel, because I've been exposed to his culture. Whereas for him, he's never really been exposed to my culture, so I have to teach him about a lot of things. And with food, I gotta show him my food, and show him chopstick, you know, stuff like that. But it makes it very easy because we're both open to learning. Like when he teaches me, I'm open to learning and yeah, it's just fun. I find it really interesting to learn about people's cultures, and I feel like he feels the same. Well, there are some things that he won't like, like the food, some food he won't like and yeah.*

As part of a minority group in the South African context, Lucy has been exposed to Bandile's culture more than he has been exposed to her Chinese culture. This speaks to the cultural dynamics within interracial relationships involving minority groups, as minority groups may be side-lined within the greater South African community, forcing them to learn more about native South African cultures (Liu, 2015). Although Lucy enjoys learning about Bandile's culture, and teaching him about hers, conflict does arise at times. This is illustrated in Bandile's extract below.

> *Lorenca: So how do you guys work through those cultural differences?*
>
> *Bandile: We first sit down and talk to each other, we listen to each other's (inaudible) on the culture and then like, ok. So this is...this is how it's done, you know, so let's just try it though. Next time we can avoid an altercation, fights or anything like that. So we just make each other listen to each other about the culture, and we make each other understand that yo, this must be done and like ok yeah, cool. We can definitely give it a try. But then if we can't really settle it, then it's not like the end of the world,*

it's just something that we'll drop there and then. And then next time she'll do it in her culture way, and then I'll do it in my culture way. Yeah.

Lorenca: Hhmm. It's kind of like a compromise.

Bandile: Yeah. Yeah.

Bandile appears to emphasize the importance of communication within interracial relationships for when differences arise. This emphasis on communication also highlights the 'normalcy' of interracial couples as they use communication as a way to deal with conflict as intraracial couples do. Despite being interracial, couples may experience the pressure of performing certain cultural practices for their respective families of origin. Bandile's extract below expresses his fear about the cultural expectations and differences that could be placed upon him and Lucy by their families.

Bandile: I'm terrified because like she told me that her parents are strict and like, of course she's Asian. And like the Asian culture's just so strict... don't want to say uptight but they so super, super strict. So I'm afraid of doing something that's wrong, like say that we having traditional food with them. And then I put like tomato sauce on my food and that's disrespecting their culture, and that that gives a bad perspective of me. And first impression is just terrible from the jump. So that's actually frightening..

Shenhav, Campos and Goldberg (2017) state that people that are from collectivist cultures in terms of strong family involvement, may find familial disapproval of their choice in partners quite stressful. Although both Bandile and Lucy come from different cultures, Bandile still finds it quite important for him to be accepted and welcomed into Lucy's family. This probably may be influenced by his strong bond with his own family and the value placed on ancestral family bonds in African cultures. This illustrates that although interracial couples may create their own ways of engaging with each other within their relationship, respecting and practicing each other's cultures may also be important to them. In this sense, individuals in interracial relationships experience a hybrid identity as they have multiple cultures they perform and practice. Furthermore, intraracial couples may also experience cultural differences that may or may not be important or significant parts of the relationship, causing them to try find possible ways of managing and navigating around these differences (Custer et al., 2008). This speaks to the relationality in cultural practices within interracial relationships.

3.3. Negotiating Language and Family Relationships

Antonio's extract below demonstrates his initial confusion about Chloe not speaking an African language, and how this helped him change his thinking around Black people and what languages they may or may not speak.

> *Antonio: ...Because I studied at [name of university] right, so if...if...it's weird what perception does and like...I wouldn't say judgmentalism. But like perception does some weird stuff where you kind of go, okay you're Black, so Setswana, Sepedi or IsiZulu. Where are we going in like in terms of language, And Chloe doesn't speak any other language other than English and some bits of French. So I was like, hang on. It was a very weird like it was...it was culture shock in a way that I've never experienced.*

Antonio admits to having certain assumptions surrounding what languages Chloe speaks as a South African Black woman. As a result of growing up in South Africa and interacting with most Black South Africans who don't speak English as their first language, Antonio may have made assumptions about Chloe's first language in the context of living in Gauteng. Freeman (2010, as cited in Frankish & Bradbury, 2012) describes the "narrative unconscious" as a type of knowledge embedded within our minds, indirectly obtained from the past experiences of older people around us. As part of the "hinge generation" (Hoffman, 2004, as cited in Frankish and Bradbury, 2012), Antonio may have not directly experienced apartheid, or may have been too young to remember being a part of the apartheid era, however, the "implicit knowledge" (Freeman, 2010 as cited in Frankish & Bradbury, 2012, p. 2) from apartheid about language and race may have influenced his perceptions of Chloe. This also tells us how social class influences people's perceptions of others in relation to race, and how social class can be used as a tool to go against racial stereotypes, evident in Chloe not speaking an African language.

Bandile expresses his fear of not being able to communicate with Lucy's parents as he is not fluent in Cantonese or Mandarin, and they are not fluent in English.

> *Bandile: But on my end, I must say that I am a little bit terrified because I am trying to learn Cantonese and Mandarin right now. And I'm just trying to impress her parents just in case like they don't really know that much English. I know that her parents do speak English. It's just that whenever she's interacting with her parents in a conversation, she always speaks in Cantonese. She's always talking to them and*

replying to them in Cantonese, so I'm trying to get the same comfortability around them where I can also speak to her parents and her family in Cantonese to make everyone's lives easier for herself.

Bandile expresses his anxiety about the language barrier between himself and Lucy's parents, causing him to want to learn Cantonese and Mandarin. Because language within interracial relationships could be used as a way to exclude a certain partner, it appears that Bandile fears being excluded and seen as not belonging within Lucy's family as a result of his inability to communicate with her family (Brooks & Brooks, 2016). This illustrates the challenges of interracial dating in the South African context as language may differ across race, thus, challenging individuals in such relationships to learn new languages which may be a difficult task. However, it is interesting to see that Bandile's anxiety is for him to learn to communicate with Lucy's family, but he does not express the same anxiety for her to be able to communicate with his family in Siswati. This may be a result of the narrative unconscious filled with apartheid ideas of Black people having to assimilate into a White or more English way of being. This speaks to relationality as Bandile wants to add more meaningfulness in his relationship with Lucy by being able to communicate with her parents.

As a result of experiencing the challenge of communication between families, Bandile desires that his children be multilingual. This is expressed in the extract below.

Lorenca: Hhmm. And have you guys talked about like how you'll raise them in terms of like culture.

Bandile: Oh, yeah we actually have. The biggest one that we speak about is actually our language; how they gonna know multiple languages. Like currently my partner, she's okay...she already knows Cantonese and Mandarin, but she's also studying Spanish and French, and then I know Siswati and Zulu, and a bit of Afrikaans so we're definitely gonna make our children multilingual. They will definitely speak a lot of languages, and I hope that they can use it to their advantage in life.

In essence, people in interracial relationships hope that their own children will be multilingual in order to access opportunities and advantages that they themselves did not have as a result of not being able to speak multiple languages fluently (Brooks & Brooks, 2016). Although this may be a genuine desire and hope, it may be quite difficult for them to practically implement this when children are involved as the couples will need to

communicate with each other and with the children in fluent languages, which may be a difficult task considering their current communication and fluency difficulties. This also speaks to social class in the South African context, as fluency in English is vital "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986) whereas multilingualism in African languages carries less social recognition.

In the extract below, Lucy expresses her frustration with not being able to speak Bandile's home language, Siswati, and how this may cause her to feel insecure at times when she is around his family.

> *Lorenca: And with the language barriers, cos you said sometimes they'll speak Swati, and you don't know. How do you kind of navigate that, like being around them and them saying things you don't understand?*
>
> *Lucy: In the moment I'll just kind of sort of like sit there and I feel kind of bad, because I can't even learn from Bandile because he doesn't know much either; he speaks mostly English. So I try to learn from my friends, like if I see a word I don't understand I try to learn it. But there are some words that I catch here and there, you know, since I grew up here. But I also don't like assuming like...eish, it's very hard not knowing if someone's talking bad about you or not, so kind of like kind of like shut it off. Yeah, so I don't think about it. Yeah. Or like one time when his brother was saying something and I felt like he was saying something about me cause, you know...you know when people make it obvious, like they stare at you, you know, or they point to something. So I just approached him, I'm like hey I don't like it when you speak about me in a different language right in front of me. Like if there's something wrong I'd appreciate it if you could just communicate about it. And then like we spoke about it and everything was fine. Because I'm a big communication person. So, yeah, we just moved on from that.*

Lucy expresses the frustration she commonly feels about the language barrier and communication challenge she experiences when she is around Bandile's family. Furthermore, although she tries to learn Siswati, it appears that she finds it difficult because Bandile is not as fluent in Siswati either. This, therefore, demonstrates how language barriers within interracial relationships may affect relationship dynamics between the couple and their families. Mojapelo-Batka (2008) found in her research that the inability to understand one's partner's language can create feelings of isolation and suspicion of what is being spoken

about. In her extract above, Lucy implies that not being able to understand Siswati has caused her to be quite hypervigilant when Bandile's family speaks Siswati around her as she fears that they may be talking about her without her knowledge. This, therefore, raises questions on how interracial couples are able to teach their children both their languages fluently if the couple themselves aren't fluent in both languages. Furthermore, this raises questions on the type of relationships the couple may have with their partner's family while being unable to communicate with them in the family's home language.

In essence, for interracial couples in the current South African context, social-class and intersecting factors such as one's level of education, the type of education as well as the languages one is able to speak appears to be more important than the fact that their partner is socially identified in a different racial category. This suggests that class shifts racial dynamics in interracial relationships. Furthermore, race and gender are also other important factors in such relationships which reinforce each other and create a powerful dynamic within interracial relationships. Embodiment and the way each individual experiences their own raced body as well as the way they perceive their partner's raced body may at times be troublesome, particularly for Black women in relationships with White men. Finally, although participants repeatedly assert that race is not as important as other factors in their relationship, they do understand the prominence of their racial differences in the South African context. This understanding pushes these couples to try work out the differences that come with being differently raced and to develop ways of negotiating these differences in relation to each other and others, particularly in families and cultural / religious communities. Through learning from each other, creating new ways of doing things and thinking about things, as well as compromising on cultural and religious practices and beliefs, individuals in interracial relationships are able to imagine a future with each other that is less focused on differences and more focused on similarities.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This chapter highlights the key findings of the thematic analysis of participants' narratives of intimate inter-racial relationships and links this empirical work to the theoretical literature. The current research study focused on the experiences of young people, seen as the 'hinge generation', who identify their heterosexual intimate relationships as interracial in the post-apartheid South African context. Interracial relationships have been hyperacialized and characterized as lacking intimacy and affection, dysfunctional and abnormal (Troy, Lews-Smith & Laurenceau, 2006; Ratele, 2003; Steyn et al., 2018). A large portion of this research on interracial relationships pathologizes these relationships by comparing them to intraracial couples and highlighting differences as dysfunctional (Killian, 2012; Negy & Synder, 2000; Troy et al., 2006). To counter this narrative, this research study focused on a wholistic exploration of the experiences of young people in interracial relationships in their own terms. Participants told narratives of how they navigate their racial identities, language, culture and family relationships. The study collected personal narratives but there is an emphasis on how these individual stories are connected not only to those of their intimate partners but also to relationships in the wider social context, as well as to the narrative change and the growth that has occurred overtime in themselves as well as in their relationships. Due to the nature of narrative studies, the researcher of this study and the participants co-constructed these experiential narratives in the interviews. The chapter will draw attention to the participants' experiences of being in an intimate interracial relationship through the following themes: 1) race and class, 2) race and gender and 3) forming new identities.

Race and Class

It is evident that the experiences of individuals within interracial relationships are influenced by social class, which in the South African context, is inextricably linked to race (Green et al., 2007; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Khunou, 2015). Participants revealed their ability to communicate about issues of White privilege and race within the relationship and their ability to call each other out on specific negative racial behaviors. This indicates that the narrative unconscious of race and racism in the apartheid period plays a role in how couples may perceive and interact with each other (Freeman, 2002, as cited in Bradbury & Clark, 2012). Furthermore, participants reflected on their own growth in understanding their racial identity in relation to privilege, as well as obtaining a better understanding of their partner's racial

identity and classification. In this way, participants were able to give meaning to their relationship, and the impact their intimate relationship had on their own identity across time. Participants' "narrative unconscious" (Freeman, 2010) of the apartheid period were shared in the expression of their experiences with their partner in terms of language, culture and race. Narratives of language were central to questions of race and class with all participants speaking English fluently, and using it as a lingua franca in their relationships and beyond. Participants asserted that social class and the types of spaces they occupy played a significant role in facilitating their interracial relationships. Even in contemporary South Africa, race and class hierarchies remain significantly related, while the apartheid history still remains important in negotiating race and class in these relationships. Khunou (2015) posits that being Black and middle class differs from being White and middle class even in the current South African context, and thus, these multiple identities may be quite complex, therefore may create a complex dynamic within interracial relationships.

Certain spaces such as school or university may influence or impact people's perceptions and experiences of race, language and culture in informing identity (Meier & Hartell, 2009). Participants shared narratives of school that expressed the key role that they feel these earlier school experiences played in creating an openness and a positive attitude towards interracial dating as most of the participants attended racially diverse schools and universities (Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2014; Joyner & Kao, 2005). This highlights the significance of both recollected experience and relationality in the construction of narrative identities. Some participants expressed how being within a more diverse academic context such as university has assisted them to engage more with racial issues of the South African context. Participants told narratives of similarities in the type of schools and universities they and their partners attended, and how that made it easier for them to connect with their partners. This speaks to relationality in the sense that schools and universities socialize young people in particular ways that influence the way they live their lives and the types of relationships they form (Kennedy, 2019; Meier & Hartell, 2009). Level of education has been seen to impact on people's attitudes towards interracial relationships (Yancey, 2002). The participants in this study are all university students or graduates, suggesting that for these particular participants, level of education does play some role in interracial dating in this country as this may also be linked to one's ability to speak English fluently and use it as a lingua franca in order to communicate with their partner. Participants also shared narratives of the challenges that come with communicating with their partner's family. This speaks to the complexities of

class in relation to race in interracial relationships as the families of interracial couples may not speak fluent English even as a lingua franca.

Race and Gender

Race and gender reinforce each other in that they intersect to create a powerful dynamic in which one's body serves as an indicator of how one will be perceived and experienced. Participants shared narratives of asserting their own racial (and cultural) identities, their identity as individuals within an interracial relationship, as well as their gender, suggesting how gender influences one's narrative (McAdams, 2001). Within the study, the women spoke more about issues of gender and how race and gender may intersect. Female participants shared stories of resisting and challenging sexist cultural practices not only within their own cultures, but also in their partner's culture where they felt expected to be a certain way as a woman, which at times felt intersected with the expectations held of them within their own cultures. This speaks of the centrality of gender and patriarchy, and how these power dynamics in heterosexual relationships intersect cross-culturally and cross-racially. The Black women in the study shared narratives of the body and hair. The way they wore their hair was important for them as it acts as both a political statement, and a means to embody their Black identity and notions of feminine beauty within their identity of being in an interracial relationship. However, although these Black women were in intimate relationships with men outside their racial category, it is significant to note that their bodies may be (or have been earlier in their relationships) experienced as 'troublesome' even for the White men who love them, and the women offer spirited resistance to these denigrations of black bodies and hair. Asserting one's racial identity and what it means to identify as a particular race seems to be important to some participants in order to construct and maintain their own identities as individuals as distinct from their partner, whereas other participants did not perceive asserting their racial identity as important to them (Ndlovu, 2012). Female participants felt more of a need to assert their racial identity than male participants did; indicating the relationship between gender and race.

Forming New Identities

Participants experienced complexity in their racial identifications as a result of being in an interracial relationship. Their narratives revealed that being in an intimate relationship with someone outside their racial category may at times bring internal conflict, particularly for Black participants who are committed to notions of Black consciousness, and may find it

difficult to manage their own racial identities while being in a relationship with a White partner. This speaks to how identity is not individualized but is relationally constructed in one's social context (Hill & Thomas, 2000; Appiah, 2018). These difficulties also highlight the temporal and historical character of identity and how the apartheid history of the country may travel into the present and the future, and have an impact on how individuals make sense of their present racial identity and as well as the racial identities of other people around them. Furthermore narratives of multiple identities, and asserting different parts of one's identity were shared. It was also found that perceptions of racial identity and interracial relationships were particularly complex for mixed-race individuals. This, in essence, illustrates that 'race' in and of itself is not a real thing, but rather a social construction (Afful et al., 2015). All participants asserted that their racial differences are not an indicator of their compatibility, and emphasized questions of class, religion and personality traits (Custer et al., 2008). However, while participants spoke of experiencing a level of comfort and authenticity with being with their partner, they experience an 'othering' (Appiah, 2018) by people of their own racial category. This speaks to relationality and how individuals within interracial relationships are policed in their identities as raced bodies within an interracial intimate relationship (Ratele, 2009a).

Participants shared narratives of trying to learn each other's languages in order to communicate with each other's families in their home language, and also to ensure that their children will be multilingual in the future. This indicates that the participants not only construct a relational narrative between themselves, but also engage with the older generation and project into the future, and attempt to construct narratives for their unborn children that are based on their own experiences. This suggests that despite the racial and cultural differences that these couples may have, they are committed to working them out in a way that also allows them to imagine a different future for their relationships and the families that they may want to start. Killian (2012) postulates that interracial couples create their own culture or their own way of doing things that may differ from how they were brought up, which may be experienced as liberating and unifying for them, as it allows them to focus on similarities more than divisive factors and differences. This illustrates that interracial couples may experience a hybridity of culture within their relationship (Bhabha, 1994). Intraracial couples also have to navigate around their own cultural differences and family traditions, but it is likely that the intersections of race and culture or religion make these negotiations more complex in interracial relationships. Participants constructed narratives of growth, triumph

and learning due to being in an interracial relationship. In this way, participants constructed their relationships and gave them meanings that are different from the dominant narrative that pathologizes them (Troy, Lews-Smith & Laurenceacu, 2006). These newly constructed narratives by participants also speak to the importance of time or temporality as participants work with their own past experiences as well as their family histories, and move towards their present in reflecting about the growth and change that their relationship brought them (Brockmeier, 2000, Bruner, 1987 & Ricouer, 1991). Furthermore, participants were able to redefine themselves, and simultaneously assert their multiple identities through the exploration of culture within their relationship. Many participants pointed to the enriching experience of cultural differences, challenging literature that posits that such relationships foster a loss of culture (Jaynes, 2010).

When it comes to religion, most participants shared religious beliefs or agreed on compromising on certain religious practices. This compromise is also related to time as compromising and accommodating each other in the present not only benefits them now but is also done in imagining their parenting of future children. However, through the process of compromising and trying to construct a new culture, difficulties may arise, but these participants illustrated that their differences are not significant enough to end their relationship. Participants also spoke about marriage and wedding traditions, as well as raising children together, indicating an intentionality to get married. While this intentionality may not always eventuate in marriage, these conversations are nonetheless interesting in the light of the literature which states that interracial couples are less likely to get married (Joyner and Kao, 2005). Some participants shared that they enjoyed learning their partner's culture, and also teaching their partner their own culture. This speaks to the concept of relationality, and how individuals in interracial relationships construct their own narrative identity in relation to their partner's identity, culture and religion (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hill & Thomas, 2000). Therefore, this idea of relationality in culture may be about complicating, multiplying and intensifying culture rather than losing it.

The narratives of the experiences of these participants who are in interracial relationships provides South African society with insight on the factors that may influence young people to date outside their racial category, as well as the joyful and difficult experiences that come with such relationships. Furthermore, these narratives provide us with insight on the complexities of interracial relationships in South Africa as a result of apartheid, and how this history may play into the current South African context and into interracial relationships.

However, these narratives also illustrate that race is merely a social construct rather than a real and tangible thing and should not be used as a measure of compatibility in relationships. The hope of this study is that it gives a different perspective on race by helping people to see that interracial relationships are not abnormal or dysfunctional as they are often portrayed in the media and in literature. The study's wider social aim also had psychological implications, giving the participants some therapeutic relief and an opportunity to share and construct their own personal narratives about interracial relationships.

Limitations of the Research and Directions for Future Research

This current research study focused only on the experiences of young heterosexual individuals in interracial relationships. However, interviewing couples together in future studies may be beneficial in obtaining different types of data and in exploring the dynamics of interracial couples in the South African context. Furthermore, research studies could explore experiences of interracial relationships within the LGBTQI+ community in order to enrich the existing knowledge and research on interracial relationships in the South African context. This study was only able to interview individuals that identified as White, Black, Asian and Mixed, and was unable to access individuals who identify as Coloured or as Indian. It is important for future research to be more inclusive of multiple historical race categories in order to explore various experiences that do not only align with the Black-White binary which is the focus of much literature on interracial relationships. Further studies could explore the multiple lines of difference and identification within and across multiple race categories, incorporating complex and mutating forms of race and racialized experiences in post-apartheid South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Psychology

School of Human & Community Development

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050

Tel: 011 717 4503 Fax: 011 717 4559

Dear Participant

My name is Lorenca Sikonela. I am currently completing my Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) and am conducting research on the experiences of heterosexual individuals in intimate interracial relationships in the current South African context. I would like to interview South African individuals who have been in an intimate interracial relationship for atleast 6 months. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The study consists of an individual narrative interview, approximately an hour in length. Interviews will be held at a place of your choosing, and at a time convenient for you. Individuals will not incur any tangible benefits from participating in the study. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. Your responses will be kept confidential, and not shared by the researcher with anyone other than her supervisor. Any data used in the research report or in publications arising from the study will be anonymised by assigning pseudonyms. Data from the interviews will be kept and stored by the researcher for future purposes only with the consent of participants.

In the event of that you feel the need for support after the interview, psychological services will be made available at the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) and counselling services at Emthonjeni Centre if you are a WITS student. If you are not a WITS student, contact details of Lifeline counselling services will be given to you on the day of the interview.

If you would like to participate in this research please provide your informed consent by signing below, and contact me using my (Lorenca Sikonela) details for further information such as interview times and venue.

Thank you for considering to take part in this research study.

Lorenca Sikonela (researcher): slorenca@outlook.com

Prof. Jill Bradbury (research supervisor): jill.bradbury@wits.ac.za

Appendix B:

Consent Form for Participating in the Study

I ……..…….. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand that my participation will involve an interview of around one hour long. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I will not be benefitting materially from this study. I agree that my identifying information will not be used in the research report; and I agree that the interview may be audio recorded. I give my consent to participate in this study.

……..

(sign)

Appendix C:

Consent Form for Audio-Recording

I ……..…….. agree to participate in this research project. I agree that the interview may be audio recorded. I give the interviewer consent to record this interview for research purposes, and that my identifying information will be anonymised using pseudonyms.

……..

(sign)

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Race:

Partner's Race:

Length of Relationship:

Appendix E:

Consent Form for the Reuse of Data for Future Research

I ……..…….. Give my consent to the researcher to reuse my interview for future research. I agree that the researcher will keep my data stored securely for future use and that my identifying information will remain confidential in future research projects.

……..

(sign)

…….....

(date)

Appendix F:

Narrative Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me the story of how you and your partner met?

2. Can you tell me a story of meeting each other's friends for the first time? (explore language)

3. Can you tell me a story of meeting each other's family for the first time? (explore language)

4. What differences do you notice that you and your partner have?

5. Can you tell me of a time when race or racial differences had an impact on your relationship? (explore language)

6. Can you tell me of an experience with your partner, regarding your racial differences, that surprised you?

7. Have you ever thought of breaking up? (any racial aspects)

8. How have you worked through your issues?

9. What common interests do you share with your partner? (which spaces are easier to occupy together?)