

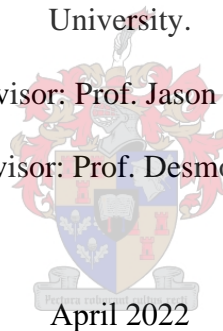
**Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South
African university**

Nombasa Mbatyoti

Research thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Psychology (by dissertation) in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch
University.

Supervisor: Prof. Jason Bantjes

Co-supervisor: Prof. Desmond Painter



DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

It is public knowledge that the foundation of South African higher education (HE) is primarily laid by colonial and apartheid policies, particularly in historically white institutions (HWI's). In this research literature, whiteness was used to unearth the historical conduct of HWI's and exclusion of historically marginalised students. It is within this context that I sought to investigate the lived experiences of Black female first-generation postgraduate students in an HWI to understand perceptions of gendered and racialized microaggressions and/or institutionalized exclusionary practices, strategies employed to negotiate the university system, and expressed support needs. Located within an interpretivist research paradigm, I used a qualitative research method, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to examine the lived experiences of three Black students who identify as Black African, female and first-generation. Phenomenology was used as a theoretical lens to interpret findings. Findings revealed the experience of culture shock, vulnerability to gendered racism and pressures of being a first-generation student. Ultimately the tensions of navigating intersected and marginalised social identities at an HWI was elucidated in the findings. As a result of navigating these tensions, participants expressed an impact on their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Despite it all, participants found ways to resist marginalisation by employing coping mechanisms, exercising agency and staying woke. The expressed support needs highlight the need for urgency in transformation and representation of Black African female academics. To conclude, the research suggests a holistic transformation approach that understands the experiences and needs of students with intersecting and marginalised identities. That transcend the idea of diversifying numbers of historically marginalised students as the only form of transformation.

Keywords: campus culture; first-generation students; gendered racism; historically white institution; intersectionality of historically marginalised identities; transformation

OPSOMMING

Dit is algemene kennis dat die fondasies van hoër onderwys (HO) primêr deur koloniale en apartheidse beleid gelê is, spesifiek in historiese instellings (HWI). In hierdie navorsing is die konsep witheid gebruik om die historiese optrede van HWI's en die uitsluiting van historiese gemarginaliseerde studente aan die lig te bring. Dit is in hierdie konteks wat ek gepoog het om die geleefde ervarings van Swart vroulike eerste-generasie nagraadse studente aan 'n HWI te ondersoek, ten einde die volgende te verstaan: persepsies van geslags- en rasgebaseerde mikro-aggressies en/of institusionele uitsluitende praktyke, strategieë wat gebruik word om die universiteitsstelsel te navigeer, en uitgesproke ondersteuningsbehoefte. Binne 'n interpretivistiese navorsingsparadigma het ek gebruik gemaak van 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodiek, semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude, en tematiese analise om die geleefde ervaring van drie Swart studente ondersoek wat identifiseer as Swart Afrikaan, vroulik en eerste-generasie. Fenomenologie is as teoretiese lens gebruik om bevindinge te interpreteer. Bevindinge het die volgende aan die lig gebring: ervaring van kultuurskok, weerloosheid ten opsigte van geslagsgerigte rassisme, en die druk daarvan om 'n eerste-generasie student te wees. Die spanning daarvan om oorvleuelende en gemarginaliseerde sosiale identiteite aan 'n HWI te navigeer is deur die bevindinge toegelig. Een van die gevolge daarvan om hierdie spanningsveld te navigeer, is negatiewe 'n impak op die emosionele en sielkundige welstand van die deelnemers. Ten spyte daarvan het deelnemers ook maniere gevind om weerstand te bied teen marginalisering. Die uitgesproke ondersteuningsbehoefte aksentueer die dringendheid vir transformasie en representasie van Swart vroulike akademië. Om saam te vat, die navorsing suggereer 'n holistiese transformasieproses wat die ervarings en behoeftes van studente met oorvleuelende en gemarginaliseerde identiteite voorop stel.

Slutelwoorde: kampuskultuur; eerste-generasie student; geslagtelike rassisme; historiese wit instellings; intwarseksionaliteit van historiese gemarginaliseerde identiteite; transformasie

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*Ndiyabulela Mvelinqange ngokuthi undithwale koluhambo. Nditsho ndicenga kwaye
ndicamagusha kooKhokho ngondikhanyisela indlela.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| DECLARATION | ii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iii |
| OPSOMMING | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | vi |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | 0 |
| CHAPTER ONE | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 1.1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 1.2. Research context | 4 |
| 1.3. Rationale of the research..... | 9 |
| 1.4. Definition of key constructs..... | 10 |
| 1.5. Overview of thesis | 15 |
| CHAPTER TWO | 17 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| 2.1. Introduction..... | 17 |
| 2.2. Interlaced tapestry: Historical establishment, whiteness and exclusion in HWI's ... | 17 |
| 2.3. Whiteness..... | 19 |
| 2.4. Challenges of Black female first-generation students in HWI's | 28 |
| 2.5. Dynamics of transformation in HE | 37 |
| 2.6. Phenomenology..... | 38 |
| 2.7. Conclusion | 40 |
| CHAPTER THREE | 41 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | 41 |
| 3.1. Introduction..... | 41 |
| 3.2. Research aims | 41 |
| 3.3. Research design | 41 |
| 3.4. Research paradigm..... | 42 |
| 3.5. Sampling | 44 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 3.6. Data collection | 48 |
| 3.7. Data management..... | 49 |
| 3.8. Data Analysis | 50 |
| 3.9. Personal reflexivity | 52 |
| 3.10. Improving trustworthiness and rigour..... | 54 |
| 3.11. Ethical Considerations | 56 |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | 57 |
| FINDINGS | 57 |
| 4.1. Introduction..... | 57 |
| 4.2. Description of participants | 57 |
| 4.3. Themes | 58 |
| 4.4. Conclusion | 94 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 96 |
| DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION | 96 |
| 5.1. Introduction..... | 96 |
| 5.2. Discussion | 96 |
| 5.3. Conclusion | 107 |
| 5.4. Limitations and contributions | 107 |
| 5.5. Recommendations..... | 109 |
| 5.6. Implications..... | 110 |
| References..... | 113 |
| Appendix A..... | 137 |
| Appendix B | 138 |
| Appendix C: Participant recruitment poster | 139 |
| Appendix D: Semi-structured interview schedule | 140 |
| Appendix E: Symbols on transcripts and extracts | 144 |
| Appendix F: Ethical approval | 145 |
| Appendix G: Institutional permission..... | 148 |
| Appendix H: Latest amendment approval | 157 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Appendix I: Annual progress report | 160 |
| Appendix J: Protocol deviation..... | 163 |
| Appendix K: Participant consent form | 166 |
| Appendix L: Welgevallen community psychology clinic | 168 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

During apartheid universities in South Africa (SA) were mostly restricted to “elite wealthy white males” (Collins & Millard, 2013, p.71), and across all levels education was classist, racialised, gendered and ableist. Collins and Millard (2013) argued that current higher education (HE) systems in SA lack a level of effective urgency towards many Black disadvantaged groups of student experiences, which in turn could promote bias and perpetuate marginalisation. Kiguwa (2014) says the process of redress and integration in historically white institutions (HWI’s) has placed too much attention on increasing the numbers of historically marginalised social groups, without placing enough focus on addressing practises and attitudes which continue to marginalise particular groups of students. As important as it is to increase representation, it is equally important to consciously address issues of race, gender, class and culture that persist within institutions that have been “transformed” in terms of numbers (Kiguwa, 2014). The higher education (HE) transformation agenda in SA was established to develop equity, obtain access for historically marginalised social groups and to redress historical inequalities (Department of Education, 1997; Soudien, 2008). However, there are persisting inequalities in HE that negatively impact Black students (Collin & Millard, 2013; Kessi & Cornell, 2015; Kiguwa, 2014). Only 5% of Black and Coloured students graduate from university, pointing to the need to develop innovative approaches to address student attrition amongst historically marginalised students and the need to understand these students’ lived experiences and factors which contribute to their academic challenges (Moodley & Singh, 2015). Mama (2003, p.101) says Africa’s pattern of enrolment of female students and academic in university is slow and unfair,

pointing to “institutional and intellectual cultures of African institutions are, in fact, permeated with sexual and gender dynamics.” International research submits that female students are faced with marginalisation that flows from both racial and gender discrimination (Winkle-Wanger, Kelly, Luedke & Reavis, 2019). Furthermore, first-generation students encounter academic challenges, mental health issues (Stebbleton & Soria, 2013) and high student attrition (Letseka, 2009). While the aforementioned challenges are true for most Black female first-generation students, this research also looks into factors that contribute to those possible outcomes. According to Ives and Castillo-Montoya (2020, p.140) “teaching and learning are not neutral acts” and therefore sociohistorical and sociocultural factors that influence learning environments and learning are to be carefully attended to, specifically for students with various marginalised and intersecting identities. It is within this context that I seek to investigate the lived experiences of Black African female first-generation postgraduate students in an HWI to better understand perceptions (if any) of gendered and racialized microaggressions and/or institutionalised exclusionary practices, strategies employed to negotiate the university system, and expressed support needs. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be relevant to the debates concerning transformation in HWI’s.

1.2. Research context

In this section, I will describe the political and cultural climate under which the university was established. Stellenbosch University (SU) is one of the longest standing and reputable white Afrikaans universities in SA. Founded in 1910, the university is also “considered to be the birthplace of Apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism” (Williams, 2018, p.2). On the former, apartheid in SA was a law that sanctioned racial segregation and promoted separate development (Landis, 1961). Separate education policies ensured the oppression of Black education and lack of development of African languages, as was evident in the poor resources

allocated to Bantu Education (Potgieter & Anthonissen, 2017). Due to the strong segregationist ideals of the National Party in the 1950s, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 systematically controlled education for Black people (Christie & Collins, 1982). House of Assembly (as cited in Williams, 2018, p.9) notes Hendrik Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs in 1953 who later became Minister of Bantu Education expressed: “When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them.” This Bantu Education Act policy was a political strategy to restrict Black people to labour jobs required for a capitalist system (Christies & Collins, 1982). The policy was later implemented into universities, as the Extension of Universities Act of 1959, which prevented the enrolment of Black students in white universities and developed separate universities for Black students (Christie & Collins, 1982).

It is thus noteworthy to mention that for many years SU has had strong associations with the power structures that laid the foundations of the apartheid system in SA (Brink, 2006). The following are apartheid figures who had ties with SU: DF Malan, who was the first apartheid Prime minister studied at SU, Hendrik Verwoerd was a former academic at SU, John Vorster was involved in student leadership at SU who later was a Prime Minister and SU Chancellor, and lastly, former president PW Botha was the Chancellor of SU at the rise of his political career (Brink, 2006). Given the extent of involvement former SU leaders had on the enforcement of the apartheid system, William (2018, p.11) states that SU became the “intellectual source of apartheid.” Dubow (2015) mentions apartheid politicians and ideologists were not only concerned with racial segregation but also with maintaining culture and ethnic social group differences. Afrikaner nationalism involved the strategic promotion, loyalty and identification with the Afrikaner ethnic social group (Webb & Kriel, 2000). Afrikaner nationalism was also a response to the threat of British colonisation and the Black

community that strongly opposed subjection (Mhlauli, Salani & Mokotedi, 2015). It emphasised the exclusion of “‘foreign’ elements’ that included Black, Jews and English speaking South Africans” (Dave, 1997, p.161). The aforementioned political and cultural stance shaped SU over the next number of decades until apartheid came to an end in the early 1990s, impacting on academics, language policy, demographics, gender profile and campus space at SU.

In academics, SU’s political affiliations permeated to the academic curriculum. For instance, the *Volkekunde* (Afrikaans Anthropology) Department at SU, introduced by Werner Eiselen (Sanders, 1998) emphasised cultural differences by classifying people in terms of race, language and used physical difference to support the thinking (Van der Waal, 2015). Subjects like eugenics were seen to offer “scientific” support for racial categorisation and segregation, and this became instrumental in laying the basis for the institutionalisation of apartheid in SA (Naiker, 2012; Walters, 2018). The belief and justification behind this way of thinking was that humans belong to a social order, with white people occupying the apex position (Rich, 1990). SU adopted ‘scientific’ instruments between 1925-1984 to measure human biological features such as eye colour, hair colour, skin colour and later, skull instruments to justify racism (Walters, 2018).

A monolingual language policy was established in the 1930s at SU and Afrikaans became the primary language of instruction (Williams, 2018). The Ministry of Education (2002, p.2) states that during the apartheid era the Afrikaans language was used “as an instrument of control, oppression, and exploitation”. Against this background it is noteworthy to mention that the first multilingual (Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa) language policy was implemented in 2016 at SU (Stellenbosch University, 2016). This is after SU had previously implemented bilingual (Afrikaans and English) language policies in the year 2002, which was altered in 2007 and 2014 (Stellenbosch University, 2002; Stellenbosch University, 2007;

Stellenbosch University, 2014). The policies openly stated its “commitment to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in multilingual context”

(Stellenbosch University, 2002, p.1; Stellenbosch University, 2014, p.1). In effect, this

slowed down the progress of transformation, multilingualism and inclusivity at SU.

Currently, the latest language policy promotes multilingualism and incorporates isiXhosa as a developing language in academics (Stellenbosch University, 2016).

The campus culture in HWI’s had a “lingering racist and sexist conduct” post-apartheid (Badat, 2011, p.144). At SU this was evident in the demographic profile of 69% white students compared to a mere 7% of Black African students in the year 2008 (Cooper, 2015). There was a slight increase in the enrollment of Black African students in 2012, with a percentage of 15.5% compared to 66.9% of white students (Stellenbosch University, 2012).

In 2018, SU enrolled 58.1% white students and 20.1% was Black African students

(Stellenbosch University, 2018) and in the year 2020 Black African students composed of

21.8% and 55.5% of white students (Stellenbosch University, 2021). Furthermore, in the

years 2007-2016 Black African female students enrolled for postgraduate programmes at SU had noticeably lower numbers than Black African males (see Appendix A) (Stellenbosch

University, 2012). An increase of Black African female postgraduate enrollment started to

show in 2017 and has since generally outpaced Black African males (see Appendix B)

(Stellenbosch University, 2012; Stellenbosch, 2018). This research finds it important to take

this pattern of intake into account because there is very little known about how Black African female postgraduate students navigate the dynamics of transformation, specifically in HWI’s.

This is particularly relevant since there are concerning reports of alienation among Black female students (Santos, Spesny, Klientjies & Galvaan, 2019) and unpleasant experiences

that lower their sense of belonging and undermine their efforts, especially Black female

postgraduate students (Alabi, Seedat-Khan & Abdullahi, 2019). Transformation is far deeper

than increasing numbers of historically marginalised students, intersected and marginalised identity needs such as being Black African female student must be taken into consideration at an HWI's.

Campus space and configuration contributes to the inclusion or exclusion of certain students (Cabrera, Franklin & Watson, 2016). Harrison and Tatar (2008) submit that space constitutes of meaning, which mostly is influenced by social constructs. Simply put, spaces are not impartial, they embody social constructs that are uniquely experienced by different people. Brunsmma, Brown and Placier (2012, p.721) also submits that space is “both material and cognitive”. For example, Mpatlanyane (2018, p.9) says SU's infrastructure “suggest a sense of nostalgia that negates the diversity in experiences, livelihoods and histories of the people that constitute the space.” Kamanga (2019) mentions that the Wilcocks building commemorates R.W. Wilcocks. Wilcocks and Verwoerd, research interests focused on white poverty in the 1920s and 1930s and supported a “legal colour bar in certain jobs and residential areas” (Louw & Foster, 1991, p. 66), which laid the early foundations for more elaborate apartheid policies of segregation.

In effect, the historical establishment of SU as a space, was cognitively modelled on white cultural ways of thought, tastes and behaviour and was materially reflected in academic syllabi, language policies, demographics, gender profile and infrastructural features. This research argues, for transformation to be a success and fully inclusive of a diverse student body, with unique intersecting identities, deeply entrenched exclusionary practices and attitudes within the space that promotes white homogenous norms and in so creating the ‘othering’ of social identities must be addressed appropriately.

1.3. Rationale of the research

This thesis foregrounds the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students in an HWI. In the USA, Shahid, Nelson and Cardemil (2018) state that there is extensive research on Black students however Black female experiences in HWI's remain underexplored by researchers. Winkle-Wagner et al. (2019) assert that part of the problem is researchers often study Black students as a homogenous group, further stipulating that as much as identity politics unites people with similarities it can assume that all Black students' lived experiences are the same. In the context of SA's history, it is known that Black Africans were subjected to the most inferior education, on all stages of education, compared to people classified as "Coloured", "Indian" and "White" (Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss, 2003). To fill the gap in SA literature I magnify the lived experiences of students that identify as Black African, female and first-generation students' at HWI's. In doing so, this research acknowledges the complexities of navigating HWI's with marginalised and intersecting identities. It also shows the diversity in experiences related to race, gender and class discrimination among Black students. Considering the historical conduct and establishment of SU, this research is interested to investigate the challenges Black African female first-generation postgraduate students encounter in the space. Bazana and Magotsi (2017) posit that Black students often have to conform to whiteness in HWI's. In that, this research holds the assumption that this potentially impacts Black female first-generation students' academic performance, mental health and sense of identity. This research is specifically concerned with postgraduate students because little is known of how Black female first-generation postgraduate students feel, think and navigate the dynamics of transformation in HWI's. Equally important, and perhaps more so, the tendency for transformation to focus on numbers of historically marginalised students and not adequately addressing exclusionary practices (Kiguwa, 2014; Soudien, 2010).

The research hopes to inspire appropriate representation in physical space (i.e. infrastructural designs, statues, names of buildings), campus culture, language and academic curriculum. Implement appropriate measures that are supportive of all social identities, particularly students with marginalised intersecting identities such as Black African, female and first-generation. This research is also aware that there are other social identity groups with intersecting identities, that experience discrimination and prejudice in HWI's. However, considering the limited scope of a master's thesis I will be unable to focus on all the groups that experience discrimination.

1.4. Research Aims

I aimed to explore Black female first-generation postgraduate students'

- i. lived experiences of attending an HWI,
- ii. perceptions (if any) of gendered and racialised microaggressions and/or institutionalised exclusionary practices,
- iii. strategies employed to negotiate the university system, and
- iv. expressed support needs

These aims are achieved using a qualitative research design. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews via Microsoft Teams. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis. These methods are fully described in Chapter Three.

1.4. Definition of key constructs

This research is focused on the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students at an HWI. In this section I explain how the following terms are defined for this research:

Black, female, first-generation, historically white institution, postgraduate students, apartheid,

transformation and white people. I also acknowledge that some of these terms are hotly contested and are used differently by different scholars.

1.4.1. Black and the politics of race in South Africa

In SA, the Population Registration Act implemented in 1950 contributed significantly to the rigid conceptualisation and legalisation of race and racial differences (Posel, 2001a; Posel, 2001b). This created the idea that SA constitutes of distinct population groups: Black “Africans”, “Coloureds” “Indians” and “Whites” (Posel, 2001b; Sennett et.al., 2003). Racial categorisation was used to allocate resources, opportunities and set racial dividing lines of social interaction (Posel, 2001b). At the apex of racial classification privileges were assigned with being “White” in that apartheid policies were used to support systematic privileges for white people (Cooper, 2008). As a result, there are persisting differences in opportunity, education and socioeconomic status (SES) between racial groups (Smedly & Smedly, 2005).

The concepts of ‘race’ and ‘racial groups’ are complex and these terms can be used in multiple ways such as a measure of physical differences, social prestige and culture (Aspinall, 2007). In this research the concept of Black is used interchangeably with Black African. The former is used when reporting on research that studied Black students as a homogenous group in SA and the US. Kessi and Cornell (2015) states that Black students in SA, under the apartheid regime included “African”, “Coloured”, “Indian/Chinese” students. Posel (2001b) also states that under the Employment Equity Act for instance, Black usually refers to “African”, “Coloured” and “Indian”. This research specifically focuses on Black African to signify a group of people that were subjected to the least amount of privileges and human dignity due to apartheid's racial hierarchal order of ‘social value’.

I use the terms not as a way of perpetuating essentialist ideas about race but rather to mark the need to redress historical inequalities and promote appropriate inclusion in HE, specifically HWI's. The term Black and Black African are capitalised throughout the research as way of reclaiming respect.

1.4.2. Female

In a constantly changing contemporary society, defining the concept of gender and sex is challenging and is conceptually complex (Jenkins, 2000). Lorber (2001) describes gender as a social order that imposes a set of attributes and identities on people, to create and sustain unequal groups of “man” and “woman”. Furthermore Jenkins (2000, p.472) explains gender as “internal self-perceptions, or spiritual concerns, others external behaviour style, or role choices, or conduct within relationships, or choice of relationship partners, or response of others to the individual, or position in a social structure”. In essence, gender is a social construct that prescribes gendered social identities and behaviours of interaction by virtue of being “man” or “woman”. Gender has been contested for years, asserting that it sustains gender differences that are exclusionary (Cole, 2009; Jenkins, 2000). Pertaining to this research, female is used to refer to the sex of an individual. Lorber (2001, p.15) describes the term as “a complex interplay of genes, hormones, environment and behaviour with loop-back effects between bodies and society”. The term sex refers to intersex, male and female individuals (Lorber, 2001). Lastly, gender discrimination and sexism are used interchangeably to refer to discriminatory acts targeting one's gender or sex (Bethelemy, 2016). Sexism is used to refer to the “discriminator and their discrimination” (Harpur, 2009, p.163). This research acknowledges that sexism also impacts other identities but for the purposes of this research I focus on people who identify as female.

1.4.3. First-generation students

First-generation students are students whose parents or guardians do not possess experiences of tertiary education (Letseka, 2009; McConnell, 2000). First-generation students are a diverse group, however students from a low socioeconomic (SES) family background that also identify as students of colour often find it more challenging to access and transition into university (Green, 2006). This research seeks to understand how postgraduate first-generation students maneuver the HE system without a blueprint, specifically in HWI's.

1.4.4. Historically White Institutions (HWI's)

HWI's are universities that only enrolled white students during apartheid and where English or Afrikaans were the mediums of instruction (Brown, 2016). Brunnsma et al. (2012, p.719) captures HWI's as learning institutions that have "histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum, and processes that were all designed by whites, for whites, to reproduce whiteness via a white experience at the exclusion of others who, [since pre-1994], have been allowed in such spaces". This research is interested in understanding the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students at SU. This is motivated by concerns of how and if the transformation agenda is implemented appropriately in a space that was historically established for white students.

1.4.5. Postgraduate students

Postgraduate students are students who are pursuing or have pursued a qualification to progress their undergraduate qualification (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.; Merriam-Webster, n.d.) into a postgraduate diploma, honours, masters or doctorate qualification.

1.4.6. White people

According to Bonnett (as cited in McDermott & Samson, 2005) white is generally used to refer to people who are of European descent. McDermott and Samson (2005) explain that definitions of white differ according to the racial climate of a community or region. In relation to SA's history, this research uses the term white to refer to European descendants or "obviously white" people in terms of skin tone (Posel, 2001b, p.66) and those who occupied the apex of racial privilege during apartheid (Cooper, 2008).

1.4.7. Afrikaner nationalism and language politics

In this research Afrikaner refers to people who speak Afrikaans as a first language, practice Afrikaner cultural norms and are of European descent (van der Waal, 2012). While there are other racial groups that speak Afrikaans as their first language, I refer to the aforementioned group for the purposes of this research. Afrikaans was instrumental in the "structural violence of the colonial past" (van der Waal, 2012, p.449). It was also used to mobilise Afrikaners against the English, under the rule of Cecil John Rhodes and the British colony (Mhlauli et.al., 2015). Edward (2009) offers insight on language politics and describes language as an attribute to social identity that is shaped by politics and the economy. Consistent with that submission, van der Waal (2012, p.455) posits that the "language 'struggle' at Stellenbosch University exemplified a whiteness defending the place of white Afrikaans speakers in higher education and ultimately their access to work opportunities, networks of economic power and the protection of symbolic power in the face of the demands for transformation and access for all to higher education institutions."

1.4.8. Apartheid

Apartheid is an Afrikaans word for “separateness” and was formally implemented by the Afrikaner Nationalist Party in 1948 (McLean & McMillan, 2009). Apartheid was an institutionalised system and ideology that promoted racial segregation between white and Black people and was supported by a series of laws to ensure social, economic and political divide (Mhlauli et al., 2015).

1.4.9. Transformation

Soudien (2010, p.4) speaks of transformation “as an ideological process, which needs to interrogate the nature of privilege, the distribution of power in society and the process through which social exclusion is maintained”. In relation to this research, this description of transformation is relevant as I hope to inspire discourses related to race, gender and class discrimination, informed by the historical establishment of HWI’s are appropriately addressed by the transformation.

1.5. Overview of thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters that provide detailed research findings and a gap in the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students’ in HWI. The following is a summary of each chapter:

Chapter 1: This chapter briefly outlines the context of the research, rationale of the research, research aims and definitions of key constructs.

Chapter 2: This chapter presents extensive literature discussing points relating to the research. Those include a contextual and interlaced discussion of history, whiteness and exclusion in HWI’s, challenges faced by Black female first-generation students, and lastly,

the dynamics of transformation. This is followed by an explanation of the theoretical framework used as a lens to make sense of the data

Chapter 3: This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this research. This includes a statement of research aims, the research design, the research paradigm that informs the data collection and the method of data analysis. Additionally, strategies for improving the trustworthiness and rigour and ethical considerations guiding the research are discussed.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents findings from the data collected which includes themes, participants' lived experiences and quotes as evidence from interviews transcribed in full verbatim.

Chapter 5: This chapter discusses and concludes on the presented findings in Chapter Four. The reader will also find limitations, recommendations and potential implications of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I provide a critical discussion of the research about the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students' in an HWI's. I will cite research from SA and international literature from countries that have experienced a similar history of segregation. I present the interlaced relationship of the historical establishments of HWI's, whiteness and exclusion on campuses, followed by challenges encountered by Black female first-generation students related to issues of race, gender and class discrimination in HWI's. With this I try to magnify the little that is known about the postgraduate experiences of this population. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of phenomenology, which is employed as a theoretical framework to make sense of the data.

2.2. Interlaced tapestry: Historical establishment, whiteness and exclusion in HWI's

The foundation of SA's education system was primarily laid by colonial structures from the early 20th century (Collins & Millard, 2013). During the apartheid era political and cultural ideologies shaped the education system further and now the current education system is struggling to accommodate a diverse student body (Collins & Millard, 2013). Stephen (Steve) Biko, a Black liberation activist, described the education system in SA as one that nullifies the "values, customs and practices of the Black community" (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017, p.4), and arguing further that HE was designed for white students and the lingering dominant white cultural ethos currently assumes conformity of Black students to this culture (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017). Kuh and Witt (1998) submit that the historical establishment of HE institutions underpins the campus culture practices, in that viewing HE as "cultural

enterprises” is instrumental in understanding how campus culture curates the exclusion of people based on race, gender, class and age (Kuh & Witt, 1998, p.9).

The campus culture in HWI’s embodies a white culture (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017; Cabrera et.al., 2016). Vincent (as cited in Bazana & Magotsi, 2017) describes campus culture as the way in which HWI’s execute things, that includes things that are perceptible to touch (material) and imperceptible to touch (discourse). The material manifestations of campus culture are found in academic curricula, language of instruction, symbols, campus infrastructure, parables, practices of rituals and social events (Kuh & Watt, 1998). In ways that is imperceptible by touch for instance, Kuh and Witt (1998) mentions the process where campus culture influences the interactions amongst individuals, social groups and institutions. In the context of HE, a homogenous white campus culture assures the comfort and representation of the identity of white students (Cabrera et al., 2016). Black students often maneuver conscious that there are particular spaces (e.g. language, culture, physical space) that are not receiving of them (Cabrera et al., 2016).

This is especially challenging for students who had no or minimum encounters with white culture (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017). Moreover, first-generation students lack the social support that will offer archives of experiences of HE (Letsaka, 2009). Black first-generation students are often forced to assimilate to a “privileged white minority’s education system” in order to attain success (Collins & Millard, 2013, p.71). Lastly, because Black females hold two intersecting and marginalised identities (race and gender) they are faced with pressures of how to exist in university context (Winkle-Wanger et.al., 2019). The cultural shock and presumed adjustment to white culture in HWI’s is isolating, challenges the social identity and academic performance of Black students (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017). White culture in HE expects students of different cultural identities to conform to a culture that was primarily made for white students (Collins & Millard, 2013). In addition, it encourages the exclusion of

other racial groups (Cabrera et al., 2016) and promotes an “inferior Black” and “ideal white” ideology (Bazana & Magotsi, 2017, p.11).

It appears that a homogenous white campus culture in HWI’s consists of properties that may instigate expressions of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudices on campus. I will also discuss how white culture is inextricably tied up with the concept of whiteness that is situated in structures of HE (Cabrera et al., 2016) such as physical space and race, campus culture and racialised interactions, the construction of gendered racism and lastly language and academic curriculum. These ideas are explored in the subsections that follow.

2.3. Whiteness

Frankenberg (as cited in Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007, p.390) explains whiteness as “the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage.” Simply put, whiteness is understood to denote white privilege, dominance and comfort (Cabrera et al., 2016; Green & Sonn, 2005). Pattman (2007) says in relation to other racial identities, there is little to no research done on whiteness. Locating whiteness in this research deepens the understanding of racism much further than typical understandings and unveils nuanced practices that are perceived as ‘normal’ (Green et al., 2007) but exude racial, gendered and classed marginalisation.

In the context of HE, locating whiteness is essential to identifying how exclusion is manifested in various ways (Green et al., 2007). In addition, the concept of whiteness contests white dominance and shows how white identities participate in the reproduction of whiteness (Brunsma et al., 2012; Cabrera et al., 2016; Green et al., 2007; McDermott & Samson, 2005). Exploring this concept is critical in understanding the contemporary nature of racism, gendered racism and classism. Whiteness influences almost all facets of HE (Cabrera et al., 2016) and “often bolsters them through curricular and extracurricular experiences,

residential and disciplinary isolation, institutional symbols, cultural reproduction, and everyday practices such as grading and classroom interactions” (Brunsma et al., 2012, p.718). Perhaps more so, interrogating whiteness will help transformation attempts to affectively address manifestations of exclusion on campus.

Having located whiteness, I will expound on ways whiteness proliferates exclusion. To better understand this phenomenon, I will refer to HWI’s and predominantly white institutions (PWI’s in the USA) student protests and occurrences that communicate the dissatisfaction and marginalisation of Black students with intersecting marginalised identities in SA and USA as a country with a similar history of segregation.

2.3.1. Whiteness, physical space and race

The spatial configuration in HWI’s curate and communicate the inclusion and exclusion of students (Cabrera et al., 2016). I will use the example of statues in HWI’s to explain this occurrence. In the USA, Neuman (as cited in Cabrera et al., 2016) reported on the removal of a statue of Jefferson Davis at the University of Texas, Austin, because it symbolised racial oppression and slavery. Similarly, 2015-2016, SA witnessed high volumes of student protests. University of Cape Town (UCT) students organized the RhodesMustFall (RMF) movement to address symbolic manifestations of exclusion on campus, such as the Cecil John Rhodes statue, who was a colonist and supporter of racial segregation (Nyamnjoh, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2017). Laband (as cited in Nyamnjoh, 2017, p. 260) affirms that RMF and Black students “seek to interrupt the normalisation of colonial and apartheid symbols and practices, anchored in racism and manifest as injustice and oppression”. The RMF movement at UCT set motion in other HWI’s, inspired by RMF students from Harvard Law School (HLS), USA, wrote an open letter to their dean expressing that the HLS’s shield has a resemblance of slaves carrying wheat on their back, essentially commemorating slavery and the Royall

family's contribution to slave trade (Mack & Biele, n.d.). Students orchestrated a Royall Must Fall movement and the shield was removed (Mack & Biele, n.d.). SU was no different. Apartheid figures displayed on campus (i.e. Hendrick Verwoerd and DF Malan) either as statues or as names of buildings have been removed since the protests (Kamanga, 2019). Recently, in the year 2021, the R.W. Wilcocks building, which hosts the Departments of Psychology and History, was renamed to Krotoa. R.W. Wilcocks was a professor of psychology who proposed stricter laws on racialised residential areas, limitations on Black African employment (Pinto de Almeida, 2015) and interracial marriages. The Wilcocks commission further studied the "Cape Coloured" community and formulated stringent differences between "Coloured" and "White" people (Walters, 2020).

Physical depictions and infrastructures on campus that convey messages of slavery and racism suggested an evasion of a painful history of Black people, experiences of Black students in that space and a lack of confrontation of the residues of whiteness in HWI's campuses. Moreover, it portrays a sense of entitlement of who 'deserves' to occupy certain spaces (i.e. HE) pointing to the historical issue of white entitlement to space (Cabrera et al., 2016).

2.3.2. Whiteness, campus culture and racialised interactions

Kuh and Witt (1998, p.6) describe campus culture as "persistent patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that shape behavior of individuals and groups in a college or university." Kuh and Witt (1998) also submit that campus culture is instrumental in understanding the lived experiences of underrepresented students. At SU events such as Huisdans are described as asserting an Afrikaans culture and history that excludes other cultures (Kamanga, 2019). Brink (2006, p.133) highlights the problematic nature of campus culture and ongoing history of initiation used to assert "spirit and culture" at SU. In that, I

argue some initiation practices may not be applicable to students who are unfamiliar with the white Afrikaans culture, in turn impact their sense of belonging. Furthermore, Macupe (as cited in Bazana & Magotsi, 2017) contests the cultural significance of eating in dining halls, long tables, using a fork and knife for Black students who are originally from rural areas studying at Rhodes University (RU). Schrieff, Tredoux, Finchilescu and Dixon (2010) mentions researchers that have indicated that sitting in a dining hall in university as instrumental in integrating students with different social identity groups to enhance intergroup relations. However, opposite to that viewpoint, Schrieff et al. (2010) research on the seating patterns in first year dining halls at UCT illustrated that students prefer sitting with same race friends (81.27%) based on perceived comfortability and similarities. This shows a significant separation, along the lines of race among students (Schrieff et al., 2010). Cabrera et al. (2016) reports that same race friendships are more notable amongst white male students.

Racialised interaction amongst students, draws this section on Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus is described as a process of socialization (Nash, 1990; Bonilla-Silva, Goar & Embrick, 2006) that influences "patterns of behaviour, thought and taste" (Brunsma et al., 2012, p.722). Brunsma et al. (2012) coins the term White habitus to explain the link between white space and white cognition. For example, students' 'disposition' of "wanting to be 'with their own kind' in spaces such as dining halls, student unions, and student organizations" with little to no racial intergroup interaction (Brunsma et al., 2012, p.721). Cabrera et al. (2016) affirms that there is a concerning pattern of white students interacting in highly segregated spaces from other racial groups in PWI's. With that, this research holds the assumption that there are mutually reinforcing properties of whiteness embedded in legacies of a white campus culture and students internalised white habitus that normalise patterns of racialised interactions (e.g. same race friendship groups).

2.3.3. Whiteness and the construction of gendered racism

The term “gendered racism” was established by Philomena Essed as a concept to describe the double-folded oppression of racism and sexism many Black females encounter (Essed, 1991; Lewis et.al., 2013). In SA history, apartheid policies were dynamic: not only were they oriented to white power and the oppression of Blacks, but they also operated according to gender differences in support of patriarchal ideals privileging white male identities (Shefer, 2010). During colonisation white women’s social role expectation was to personify whiteness (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007). This also explains the violent and divergent perceptions of respectability, beauty and proficiency based on one’s race and gender. Dreama Moon (as cited in Green et.al., 2007, p.393) says whiteness in relation to history, gender and class, the “‘respectability’ of women, determines who becomes and remains white” and who attains the “‘good (white) girl’ status”. For example, in procedures of attaining a nationalist identity for white Afrikaners during apartheid, the Afrikaans language was portrayed as a ‘boerenooi’ which is described as “a white farm girl, symbolising beauty, resilience and youth” (Van der Waal, 2012, p.449). In contrast “African women were (are) viewed as hypersexual and their sexual violation trivialised” (Gouws, 2018, p.5), similar to how in the USA Black women are negatively stereotyped as “strong, hardworking, dominant, welfare queens and sexually promiscuous” (Lewis et al., 2013, p.53). Colonial policies such as the 1927 Immorality Act were used to control sexuality, mostly women’s sexuality in SA (Green et al., 2007). For instance, white men that transgressed the Immorality Act by having sexual engagements outside their racial identity were confronted with minimal consequences compared to women (Green et al., 2007). In addition, apartheid policies such as the 1950 Population Registrations Act and the 1949 Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act were also used to control sexuality (Gouws, 2018). A social activist and feminist, Bell Hooks (as cited in Shahid et al., 2018, p.5) argues that instances that portray Black women as “strong, independent and resilient”

dilute the maltreatment Black females' experience. Here I argue that although the enforcement of segregationist policies is removed, residues of whiteness on the construction of gendered racism are still salient in marginalising Black female social identities in HWI's (PWI's in the USA).

A study conducted in the USA found that Black female students with a low self-esteem and social identity are likely to internalise Westernised standards of beauty and report high risks of eating disorders and body image discontentment in PWI's (Hesser-Bibber et al., 2010). Contrary to that, Black females in predominately Black institutions (PBI's in US) report lower risks to eating disorder and body discontentment (Hesser-Bibber et al., 2010). The differences in Black female experiences of body image in PWI's and PBI's speak to the exclusionary nature of whiteness towards other identities. Nathan (2017) presented a paper at a PWI, Indiana University (IU), expressing how whiteness and the slavery history in the US negatively influences perceptions of beauty that are strengthened by beauty pageants such as Miss IU. Nathan (2017) observed two Black crowned winners of 1959 and 2016 and found their features closely resemble whiteness. West (as cited in Nathan, 2007, p.7) says "beauty standard aligned with whiteness, false beliefs in the biological differences between Black and White people affected the perception of Black beauty" is strengthened. The historical distinctions of body, hair and skin tone painted Black females as below 'standard levels' of beauty still "haunt the existence and psychology of Black women" (Patton 2003, p.24).

At UCT, during the RMF movement, Black women, feminists and queer students experienced hostility (Pereira, 2017). Diverging views of gender and sexuality politics in the movement often undermined the intellectual contribution Black women, feminist and queer students attempts in implementing feminist transformation at the university (Pereira, 2017; Ramaru, 2017). Additionally, women were often described as "supporters of the revolution, as nurturers and not as active participants" mirroring a history that invisibilised the

contribution of Black women, Black feminists and queer people in historical movements (Ramaru, 2017, p.91). Ramaru (2017, p.91) asserts that Cecil John Rhodes statue and the university by association, resembles what Bell Hooks conceptualised as “White supremacist capitalist patriarchy” for example, during apartheid HWI’s white men were chief producers of knowledge (e.g. professors, lecturers, researchers) that upheld the colonial and Westernised education systems. In 2018, SU reported a mere 8.3% of Black Africans compared to 74.8% Whites occupying positions of researcher and lecturer and 14.6% Black Africans compared to 4.2% Whites occupying positions of in-service work (Stellenbosch University, 2018). A considerable body of research, locally and internationally, affirm that a representation of Black female scholars has been underrepresented in HE (Howard-Vital, 1989; Naiker, 2013; Ramnund-Mansingh & Seedat-Khan, 2020; Stockfelt, 2018; Swingler, 2019). Furthermore, disproportionate occupation of specific work positions between Black and white people racialise, gender and class specify work positions (Walkington, 2017). In context to SA, HE and occupation positions, Naiker (2013) says this is mostly attributed to patriarchal ideals that mostly support white male privilege and success in academia. Walkington (2017) says Black female postgraduate students perception as potential researchers and lecturers is negatively impacted as less capable due to racialised and gendered work positions in PWI’s. It appears that Black African female student identities encounter opposition in HWI’s and PWI’s, be it on grounds of phenotype or capability.

2.3.4. Whiteness, language and academic curriculum

Most aspects of SA’s education system have been under contestation for years. Dating as far back as the 1976 Soweto student uprising that challenged the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in education. In context to HE, specifically HWI’s, SA witnessed a preponderance of student protests between 2015 and 2016. The Luister (Listen) documentary

released in 2015 featured 32 students and a lecturer sharing their lived experiences as Black people of overt and covert racist insults at SU, arguing that the preference for Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in knowledge engagement settings is exclusionary (Stroud & Williams, 2017). Black students recalled encounters at SU and around Stellenbosch that implied that they do not belong there because they are not white, nor do they speak Afrikaans (Stroud & Williams, 2017). The *Luister* documentary formed part of the Open Stellenbosch (OS) campaign that was set to foreground experiences of Black students with discrimination, that was racist in nature, in that it was argued to be mediated by the dominating white Afrikaans culture and language ethos at SU (Mpatlanyane, 2018; Stroud & Williams, 2017). This research holds the assumption that the reason for contention was that the medium of instruction and campus culture closely resembled past apartheid ideologies of Afrikaner Nationalism. Language and identity are inextricably tied (Leibowitz et al., 2005; Ndimande, 2004) with that an imbalance in representation and utilisation of languages in HE, as far as SA's history is concerned, propagates a racialisation that marginalises perceived outgroup identities on campus.

Transformation efforts in SU's language policies have since been made, the latest 2016 language policy promotes multilingualism (Stellenbosch University, 2016) and it is also currently undergoing revision. Multilingualism for the most part is good in promoting inclusivity of language and cultural representation; however, it can also be used to imply systems of hierarchical value of languages (Stroud & William, 2017). For example, African languages tend to be assigned to practical and temporary utilisation compared to metropolitan languages are used (Stroud & William, 2017). African languages are often perceived as less useful for SES mobility (e.g. getting a job) and success, this is largely as result of the dominion of English in education systems set by British colonisation in SA and some other African countries (Ndimande, 2004). Bazana and Magotsi (2017) assert language barriers and

academic performance as having positive association. For example, Moodley (as cited in Bazana & Magotsi, 2017) research found students with African accents are often perceived as less than smart and with that, some are hesitant to participate in class even if it counts for marks. Stroud and Williams (2017, p.168) says “In these ways, multilingualism has predominantly served to silence, invisibilises, and sort speakers and languages hierarchically. It has comprised a site for ‘othering’ and, in colonial contexts, including the South African, the ‘othering’ has invariably been racialized.” I argue that it is the responsibility of universities to ensure multilingual language policies disrupt and not contribute to hierarchal orders of linguistic knowledge engagements in HE.

In the academic curriculum, Dirk and Gelderblom (2017) recounts the plan to transform the Bachelor of Education (BEd) at a previously Afrikaans HWI and highlighted disputes that questioned the philosophy of Fundamental Pedagogics and its close resemblance of Afrikaner Nationalism ideologies in the academic curriculum. During the RMF and Fees Must Fall (FMF) movements, the need to implement measures of decolonisation and transformation was strongly communicated (Nyamnjoh, 2017). In 2015 the UCT RMF and FMF student led protests proposed that the then Vice-chancellor (VC) creates a team to facilitate discussions and develop alternative ways to disrupt the “academy’s continued and uncritical use of traditional epistemologies, theories, methodologies and ideologies which reproduced the status quo in ways that are socially unjust, exclusionary and limiting” (University of Cape Town, 2018, p.7). A Curriculum Change Working Group (CCWG) was established in 2016, consisting of academics, students, then Deputy VC and VC at UCT (University of Cape Town, 2018).

In summary, as a result of the historical establishment of HWI’s in SA, whiteness in physical space, campus culture, constructs of gendered racism, languages of instruction and academic curricula has left residues in HWI’s well into the years of the post-apartheid era.

This research acknowledges that there have been noticeable and commendable improvements regarding transformation. These include “the definition of the purposes and goals of higher education; extensive policy research, policy formulation, adoption, and implementation in the areas of governance, funding, academic structure and programmes and quality assurance; the enactment of new laws and regulations; and major restructuring and reconfiguration of the institutional landscape and of institutions” (Badat, 2008, p.2). However, Caplon and Ford (2014, p.31) argue that certain US historical occurrences have shown that structural and policy changes on its own, give way to the persistent and subtle forms of prejudice. Hence, this research submits, for transformation to be affective properties of whiteness that propagate subtle forms of contemporary race, gender and class discriminatory acts are to be addressed.

2.4. Challenges of Black female first-generation students in HWI's

2.4.1. Black female

In the US, Black students' incomplete academic careers, specifically in PWI's, is impacted by racial discrimination and low social support (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). Shahid et al. (2018) say Black students experience racial discrimination and culture shock that often impact academic progress, mental health and adjustment in PWI's this is in addition to usual student stressors such as finance, academics and relationship stressors. Moreover, Black students in PWI perceive the racial ethos to be negative compared to their white counterparts (Lo, McCallum, Hughes, Smith & McKnight, 2017) which speaks to the comfortability of most white student identities in spaces that embody whiteness (Cabrera et al., 2016).

Similarly, in SA Kessi and Cornell (2015, p.7) describe the negative impact of racial exclusion of Black students in HWI's as “an environment where racial identity is salient leads to a sense of isolation, a lack of belonging and low self-esteem amongst black students who

are left to grapple, often for the first time, with the reality of what it means to be black in South Africa today.” In SA, the transformation agenda’s tendency to focus on increasing numbers of historically marginalised students, creates a negative stereotype that Black students are unfairly prioritized during admission and so lack academic competence (Kessi & Cornell, 2015). Cornell and Kornell (2017) submits that if such negative stereotypes are internalised, Black student’s report self-doubt or overwork themselves to prove a point which in turn impacts their emotional and psychological wellbeing. In Africa there has been a noticeable increase of females enrolled in HE, however there is a prevalence of gender discrimination that manifest as campus and intellectual culture and disadvantages Black postgraduate female students (Alabi et al., 2019; Mama, 2003). Magano (2011) found Black female postgraduate students experiencing strenuous difficulties and challenges, such as issues of power dynamics between supervisor and student being overpowered to take on particular research topics, Western research paradigms being promoted as the only significant way of doing research, facing personal issues and some universities lacking the necessary support structures for postgraduate students. Nkambule (2016) reflects on personal encounters of exclusion as a Black African female undergraduate and postgraduate at one of SA’s renowned university and recalls instances where a white female tutor, old white male tutor and white male lecturer expressed the following:

“My experience is that students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds struggle with psychology. Are you sure you want to do psychology, considering your school background?” (p.2005); “English is a difficult course. You need to have good English language background to pass it. You are from a township school and you need to think seriously if you want English to be your major.” (p.2006); “Are you sure you want to major in English? You can have Xhosa as your only major.” (p. 2006); “You know Thabi, I know you attended a disadvantaged school, students from the

previously disadvantaged background struggle with research because of language and writing skills. I don't know whether you will succeed, maybe you should only focus on the diploma at Masters level." (p.2007).

While it may be true that students who attended previously disadvantaged schools tend to struggle to transition academically, it is problematic to undervalue previously disadvantaged students' academic competence and success instead of assisting students in transitioning to "university's codes and conventions" (Nkambule, 2016, p. 2010). This essentially invalidates the inferior education that many Black Africans were subjected to during apartheid (Sennett et.al., 2003). This matter also points to the likeliness of students from a low SES (poor and working class) to experience classism in HE (Langhout, Drake & Rosselli, 2009) and encounter lecturers and universities that are underprepared in dealing with students from different backgrounds (Nkambule, 2016), particularly class disadvantaged students (Nel, Troskie-de Bruin & Bitzer, 2009). Nkambule (2016) also expresses how certain modules such as English seemed exclusive because it was made to seem near impossible for a Black African student from a township school to pursue an English course. Arguably, the tutor's comments may have come from a place of concern but devaluing academic competence on the basis of social determinants is problematic.

Similarly, Shahid et.al. (2018) mentions that Black female students in PWI's in the US tend to report on a low sense of belonging and support, lacking committed mentors and feeling undermined by counterparts and lecturers. Harvard University compiled a paper reporting on both covert and overt manifestations of racism and sexism directed at Black African American female student's on all campuses, that impact their academic performance and graduation success (Caplan & Ford, 2014). To unpack aspects of gender discrimination and sexism, this research uses Connells and Messerschmidt's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity refers to social practices that prescribe roles or identities

that promote the dominance of “men” and submission of “women” and is mediated by “ascendency achieved through culture, institutions and persuasion” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.832). I will discuss the relation of hegemonic masculinity, institutions of learning and culture. HE is generally dominated by males, crèche and primary school by females (Connell, 2002). There is also a proneness to associate “masculine” subjects with physical science, mathematics, technology and non-academic activities such as sports (Connell, 2002). Bethelmy, McCormick and Henderson (2016) conducted research on postgraduate female students’ experiences in physics and astronomy. Majoring reported on the following experiences: subtle acts of gender discrimination where their intellectual input was dismissed, male counterparts withholding access to academic material and explicit acts of discouragement, sexual victimisation and being assigned to gender stereotyped roles such as cleaning or planning in group work. In non-academic activities such as sports, Grindstaff and West (2011) affirms that sport plays a profound role in the production of hegemonic masculinity and is also coupled with undertones of racism, classism and heterosexualism.

Moreover, students with disabilities encounter exclusionary social barriers in HE (McKinney & Swartz, 2020). Especially Black students, who as a result of apartheid policies “inferior education in special schools” with poor resources were reserved for Black children and that resulting in poor readiness for HE (McKinney & Swartz, 2020, p.4; Matunga, 2017). The Council of Higher Education has since reported on hindrances that interfere with the access and success of disabled students in HE as the continued legacy of exclusion in all educational phases, lack of dependable data of students with disabilities, stereotypes maintaining the marginalisation of disabled students and the lack in implementing effective policies and services (Matshediso, 2007). Recently, the SA Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2018) released a paper called Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System, that acknowledged changes in

relation to the major pillars of HE transformation is moving slow and presents plans to address inequalities that affect the success of students with disabilities.

The above experiences suggest Black females with marginalised and intersecting identities find navigating HWI's challenging. For the most part it appears students who do not embody or conform to the properties of whiteness that HWI's tend to represent, experience hostility. Williams, Neighbors and Jackson (2003) identified a positive correlation between racial discrimination and physical and psychological distress, including generalized anxiety disorder, early use of substances, major depression, psychosis and anger. Bantjes et al. (2019, p.3) also notes that forms of discrimination like "ageism, sexism, ableism, classism and heterosexism" contribute to psychological distress. Cabrera et.al. (2016) identified microaggressions as the most usual form of racial discrimination in HE. As such, marginalised students often use copious amounts of energy defending their social identities, establishing allies and their own group of people (Dolmage, 2017). Sue (2010, p. 5) explains microaggressions as a "brief and common place daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group". Simply put, it is subtle insults that are deeply seated in the offenders unconscious or conscious and is exercised institutionally or during personal encounters to marginalise 'othered' identities.

In as far as SA's history is concerned, this research holds the assumption that many Black African students with intersecting and marginalised identities experiences of discrimination are pronounced, especially in HWI's. To support this sentiment, Sennett et al. (2003) affirms first-generation students are likely to be Black African due to the social, economic and educational injustices enforced by SA's apartheid history. I will discuss first-generation student experiences in the below subsection.

2.4.2. First-generation

HE is a path to consider social mobility that is generational, with that are campus structures and cultures that bring unjust outcomes for poor and working-class students (Rodini, 2016). Most first-generation students come from an underprivileged SES background (Hand & Payne, 2008; Letseka, 2009; Sennett et al., 2003). Lee and Kramer (2013) describe a low educational background or low income as a class disadvantage. In cases where class disadvantaged for example first-generation students, Lee and Kramer (2013, p.18) says they undergo a process known as social mobility where the “process of learning elite mannerisms, behaviors and ‘rules of the game’ as it is the process of gaining credentials knowledge, or wealth”. In that case, class disadvantaged encounter pressures to assimilate to the dominant campus culture due to perceived “mismatch of symbolic capital”, feeling less ready academically and finding less commonalities with counterparts from high SES (Lee & Kramer, 2013, p.19).

I will use Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital to explain differences in socialisation, life chances (Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2010) and why some students are familiar with education culture (Sullivan, 2001, p.893). David Swartz (as cited in Dumais & Ward, 2010, p.246) defines Bourdieu’s proposed theory of cultural capital as “verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials”. Sullivan (2001) submits education systems often assume the ownership of cultural capital which is challenging for class disadvantaged students to succeed. Kraaykamp and van Eijck (2010) expounds on Bourdieu’s proposed theory of cultural capital as one that includes the following elements:

- i. Embodied form of cultural capital refers to a process of socialisation that shapes the disposition of the body and mind, for the most part it takes place in the unconscious. For instance, word pronunciation discloses place of origin or social

class that is largely shaped by the socialisation that one is conditioned to by the parents. This form of cultural capital is imperceptible to touch, which makes its reproduction more robust.

- ii. Institutionalised form of cultural capital refers to students whose family educational background offers the attainment of cultural capital, that is transferred through family resources and interacts with an education system that privileges, to some extent, cultural capital agents a more successful school career. Bourdieu and Passeron state that “school success is strongly determined by the embodied cultural capital students bring from their families of origin.” (p.210). In instances where agents of cultural capital interact with the education systems “education system manages to impose recognition of an agent’s cultural capital, which makes agents comparable, if not exchangeable.” (p.210). Simply put, educational systems tend to recognise academic competence and success with an attained socialisation of a particular social class.
- iii. Objectified form of cultural capital refers to the exposure one has to cultural goods such as learning material (e.g. dictionary, musical instrument, books) that are transferable goods from parent to the child to attain symbolic cultural capital that is resourceful in educational pursuits.

Given the positive association of cultural capital recipients, the expected possession of cultural capital in education sectors and the chances of success in academic pursuits, students who possess little to no cultural capital may find HE extremely difficult. This is especially compounded for first-generation students who identify with various intersecting identities that are marginalised (Ives & Rodini, 2020). Booi et al. (2017, p.6) submits that white middle-class students are probable to have established social networks “from which they could make capital withdrawals” that situate them at a more comfortable place in HE. In

effect HE, particularly HWI's historical ways of doing things in academics, contribute to the manifestation of social class exclusion and inclusion, where certain students' mind and body dispositions accumulated in white systems of learning (e.g. Former Model C) are recognized as academic competence (Booi et al., 2017), instead of viewing academic competence as a deterrent, to a large extent, of social class (Kraaykamp & Ward, 2010). As such Black students and lecturers experience marginalisation in HWI's, especially those with a class disadvantaged background (Booi et al., 2017). With support from recent research, I will discuss first-generation students' vulnerability to mental health concerns, student attrition and reduced support network.

There is a prevalence of common mental disorders (CMD's) in SA among students in HE, namely symptoms of depression and anxiety (Bantjes et al., 2019). In that, first-generation students often present significant symptoms of depression, stress and have little utilisation of mental health services on campus (Bantjes et al., 2019). Otu and Mkhize (2018) submits that the increase of Black African students for transformation purposes, has been met with high rates of student attrition among Black African students. Motsabi, Diale and Van Zyl (2020) affirms that majority of first-generation students are Black African and mostly speak a different home language compared to the primary language of instruction in HE, most come from low SES backgrounds and uniquely different experiences compared to their counterparts. Therefore, their transition into HE is likely to be met with high chances of academic difficulties and student attrition (Motsabi et al., 2020). First-generation student attrition is also linked to unexpected academic demands and psychological pressures (Moodley & Singh, 2015).

In research conducted in the US, significant stress among first-generation students was found in areas of working hours, academics and finance compared to non-first-generation students (House, Neal & Kolb, 2020). First-generation students, parent's

inexperience with HE limits parent's capacity to offer effective academic support, especially those from a low SES background, in turn first-generation students' academic expectations and demands of HE may be limited (Rondini, 2016). In that, challenges of navigating between two divergent spaces of "nonwhite home community into elite, predominantly white institutions through upward social mobility" is likely to weaken the bond between family and friends from home and possibly reducing their social support network (Lee & Kramer, 2013, p.19). In addition, Ives and Castillo-Montoya (2020) submits that family relationships are likely to be weakened due to different identities that may cause feelings of guilt in their achievement or like an imposter as a first-generation student, making them vulnerable to symptoms of depression and low self-esteem. To put this in the SA context, many Black African students come from rural areas or townships (Motsabi et al., 2020; Senett et al., 2003) and face severe social adjustment challenges and possible reductions in social support networks due to major social and geographical changes (Sennett et al., 2003). However, despite all odds, many first-generation students show resilience and success in their academic pursuits.

In ending, the direction taken here is to show that despite the known and extensively studied challenges that first-generation students are vulnerable to (e.g. student attrition). It is critically important for universities to take into account their intersectional marginalised identities such as race, gender and social class. It is hoped that research and intervention programmes for first-generation students will be in context to "sociocultural processes involved in disciplinary knowledge acquisition, production, and application" in teaching and learning (Ives & Castillo-Montoya, 2020, p.140).

2.5. Dynamics of transformation in HE

The aim of SA's transformation agenda is to address social inequalities in HE (Otu & Mkhize, 2018). In sectors of government the Education White Paper 3 was established to set fundamental practices and values in addressing "inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography" in HE (Department of Education, 1997, Needs and challenges section, para.2). The plan of action behind HE transformation is commendable, with that there have been noticeable improvements. However, the reality is that the process has been "notoriously contentious, uneven and emotionally charged" (Dirk & Gelderblom, 2017, p.342). Additionally, scholars have noted implication that hinder the effectiveness of transformation in HE. Kessi and Cornell (2015) noted transformation stereotypes that paint Black students as lacking in academic proficiency and as ineligible for academic admission. In recent research, Cornell and Kessi (2017) also reports transformation stereotypes that pressure Black students to constantly prove their competence and admission. Similarly, Nkomo (2013, p.9) noted that majority of Black female student experiences are "far from pleasant and therefore undermine their optimal academic performance." Black female students often encounter experiences that are racist, sexist and classist in nature (Akala, 2018).

To put it bluntly, transformation is struggling to redress inequalities that are uniquely experienced by a diverse student body with intersecting and marginalised identities. In this regard, this research is interested in Black African female first-generation students lived experiences and hopes to get insight on the progress, if at all, of transformation regarding discourses of race, gender and class.

2.6. Phenomenology

The theoretical framework of this research is located within phenomenology. The theory originates from the philosophical work of Edmund Husserl and was further advanced by Martin Heidegger (Horrigan-Kelly, Millar & Dowling, 2016; Tuffour, 2017).

Phenomenology is primarily concerned with the structure of human experience and the meaning they construe from their social reality and encountered experiences (Tuffour, 2017).

Larrabee (1990) says at the essence, phenomenology is focused on the intricacies and nuances of human experiences. Similarly, Moran (as cited in Shinebourne, 2011, p.19) affirms that “phenomenology is seeking after meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity’s mode of appearing”. In other words, phenomenology unveils possible underlying meanings in expressed human lived experiences. I will explore the assumptions and starting points of the theory and provide evidence of recent research that has used the theory below.

Phenomenological today encompasses both descriptive and interpretive approaches (Sloan, Art, Bowe & Brain, 2014), also known as eidetic and hermeneutic phenomenological approaches (Lopez & Willis, 2004). The descriptive phenomenology approach is derived from the work of Husserl, who around the 20th century was set on moving away from a Cartesian philosophy with an “objective, empirical and positivist” perspective (Sloan et al., 2014, p.1294) and to establish a theory that takes into consideration humans’ consciousness, experience and perception of “objects of knowledge” (Sloan et al., 2014, p.1294). In other words, Tuffour (2017) says a descriptive phenomenological approach investigates the intrinsic nature or formation of experiences in the way that it manifests in consciousness. This approach encourages the researcher to focus on a phenomenon in isolation to what they know or their preconceived notions (Tuffour, 2017). Contrary to this perspective, Heidegger argued that it is beyond the bounds of possibility for a researcher to refrain entirely from personal perceptions, and developed an interpretive phenomenological approach (Tuffour,

2017). The interpretive phenomenological approach brings about the hidden meaning expressed in narratives, that may not be apparent to participants but is obtainable in their narratives (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Emphasising the inextricable tie between individuals' everyday experiences and social reality, Heidegger conceptualises this as *lifeworld* and uses the term *being-in-the-world* to point to expressed human narratives as implying meaning to their everyday experiences and not just subjectivity (Lopez & Willz, 2004). Subsequent phenomenological approaches emerged from Husserl and Heidegger classical version. Tuffour (2017, p.2) identifies contemporary phenomenological approaches such as "life world approaches, first person accounts, reflexive, relational approaches and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)." In addition to Heidegger's work, Hans-George Gadamer developed an approach to hermeneutics that submits a tie between understanding, interpretation and language (Slaon & Bowe, 2014). The continued developments of the theory point to the maturation and non-static nature of phenomenology.

Kiguwa (2014) used a phenomenological theory with a psychosocial approach to capture the detailed underlying meaning of Black undergraduate and postgraduate students' racial experiences and racialised habitus at an HWI in SA. In recent research, Robinson-Wood et al. (2020, p.2) conducted phenomenological research of postgraduate students with intersecting and marginalised identities, with particular focus on race, sexual and gender minority intersections. The research used resistance theory as a framework to understand participants' experiences with micro-aggressions (Robinson-Wood et al., 2020). Both researchers focus on understanding and construing meaning of the human lived experiences of their participants. Similarly, this research focuses on understanding postgraduate Black female first-generation lived experiences students at an HWI's using phenomenology as a theoretical lens. Additionally, the phenomenology theory is cohesive with the interpretive

paradigm that addresses the underlying philosophy of this research methodology. This is fully described in Chapter Three.

2.7. Conclusion

Chapter Two presents extensive literature on the interlaced relationship between the historical establishment of HWI's, whiteness and exclusion of Black female first generation students.

Lamenting the importance of interrogating residues of whiteness in HWI's that foster contemporary racism, sexism and classism post-apartheid. It also points to inadequacies in transformation in addressing discourses related to racism, sexism and classism in HE.

Moreover, it highlights that a one-dimensional approach, such as increasing numbers of historically marginalized students in transformation does not account "the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (Collins, 2015, p.2). In relation to Black female first-generation students in HWI's, especially Black African students, I argue that they encounter pronounced discriminatory experiences on campus that negatively alter their mental health, academic performance and social identity because of navigating with intersectional and marginalised identities in HWI's. Arguably, SU currently reports 22.5% Black African, 18.0% Coloured, 3.4% Indian students and 55.6% female students (Stellenbosch, 2021). This research posits that an increased number of historically marginalised groups does not guarantee inclusivity, nor does it disrupt whiteness residues in HWI's campuses. Especially when race, gender and social class identity, as far as SA is concerned, shapes experience and life chances. Lastly, the employed phenomenological theory in this research offers a well-developed approach to understanding participants lived experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methods and practicalities used to gather and interpret data for this research. A qualitative research methodology was considered appropriate in meeting the aims of this research, as I intend to capture rich descriptions and understand Black female first-generation students' lived experiences in an HWI. Specifically outlining the following: the research aims, the research design, the research paradigm that frames data collection and analysis of findings, issues related to the trustworthiness and rigour of the study, and finally the ethical considerations for the research.

3.2. Research aims

I aimed to explore Black female first-generation post-graduate students'

- i. lived experiences of attending an HWI,
- ii. perceptions (if any) of gendered and racialized microaggressions and/or institutionalised exclusionary practices,
- iii. strategies employed to negotiate the university system, and
- iv. expressed support needs

3.3. Research design

I have employed a qualitative research methodology that involves a detailed examination of the participants' lived experiences at SU. A qualitative research methodology was found to be suitable because it allows a rich understanding of participants' experiences from the perspective of their social realities (Weiten, 2018). Given (2008, p.xxix) says a qualitative

research design is for the researcher to see how “individuals see and experience the world” in association with the research. Similarly, Hlatshwayo and Fomunyam (2019) affirms that a researcher’s role in a qualitative research is to interpret the way different individuals understand and process their social realities. In this research, a qualitative research design supported the understanding of the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students’ at SU. In-depth insights on experiences and opinions that range from language policies, campus culture, discrimination, navigating the transformation and historical dynamics of an HWI’s, among other experiences, were explored.

3.4. Research paradigm

A paradigm consists of components of “basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Simply put, a paradigm can be understood as “a way of thinking about or viewing the world” (Killam, 2015, p.5). This researches design, data collection and data analysis is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. This means this research is concerned with how participants interact and construe meaning of their lived experiences in relation to their social realities (Hlatshwayo & Fomunyam, 2019). A paradigm provides the researcher with critical pointers to reflect on the significant nature and context of the research (Alharahshe & Pius, 2020).

In this section I will explain the interpretivist paradigm and how it is applied in this research in terms of issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology assumptions are focused on “what constitutes reality” (Scotland, 2012; p.9). Ontologically the research assumes the psychological significance of subjectivity and in particular focuses on the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students’ at an HWI.

Epistemology concerns the nature and production of knowledge (Scotland, 2012). In its essence Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.108) say epistemology asks the question of “what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be-knower and what can be known?” In research situated within an interpretive paradigm, knowledge is co-created between an active researcher in dialogue with participants. The researcher thus plays a fundamental role in the process of analysis, interpretation and reporting of data. To not get stuck in the subjectivity of the researcher and to improve the rigour, trustworthiness and transparency of the research I engaged in personal reflexivity to acknowledge my contribution to the knowledge produced and to clarify and address my potential influence on the data. Researcher subjectivity, in an interpretive study, is not necessarily something negative. Indeed, Gough and Madill (2012, p.374) argues that subjectivity in psychology research can be beneficial to the “research experience and production of knowledge.”

The coherence of an interpretivist paradigm and the aims of this research informed the use of an exploratory qualitative research methodology. A qualitative research methodology consists of research procedures such as in-depth interviews that seek expressed rich descriptions, meaning and in-depth understanding of human lived experiences in relation to their social realities (Seidman, 2006; Weiten, 2018). The purpose of this research is not interested in testing a hypothesis, attaining generalisable findings or making predictions (Seidman, 2006). With that said, a qualitative methodology was found to be appropriate for the purpose of this research and it is considered exploratory qualitative research because little is known of how postgraduate students with uniquely marginalised and intersecting identities such as Black female and first-generation feel, think and navigate HWI’s in SA. This research will hopefully encourage a well-rounded approach of transformation in HE, specifically HWI’s. That take into account intersecting identities such as race, gender, educational background and class (Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019).

3.5. Sampling

3.5.1. Participant sampling strategy

The research recruited participants with a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique is the deliberate recruitment of a group or individuals based on the experience or insight they can offer (Etikan, 2016). Snowball sampling is a non-probability and convenience sampling method that is achieved through chain referrals (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Heckathorn, 2011). In other words, participant(s) or researcher refer participants who meet the inclusion criteria of the research amongst their associates. Convenience methods, such as snowballing, allowed for an easier accessibility to participants based on willingness to participate, availability at the time and being reachable in terms of proximity to the researcher (Etikan, 2016). A snowball sampling technique is useful for hard-to-reach social groups and research that is sensitive in nature (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Biernacki & Waldork, 1981). Relative to that, Black African female first-generation students are generally a smaller population than the general population at SU. Additionally, the nature of this research evokes emotions and memories that require one to reflect on sensitive and personal experiences that would otherwise not be disclosed in a non-confidential or unsafe setting.

3.5.2. Participant recruitment procedure

A purposive sampling technique was used when postgraduate students from the Department of Psychology at SU were invited to participate in the study. The participant recruitment poster had a detailed explanation of the research, inclusion criteria of participants, participants procedure, contact details and an invite to refer associate who meet the inclusion criteria, see recruitment poster (Appendix C). I sent the poster to the psychology department

administrator via email. Attached to the email was the latest ethics approval letter and an institutional permission letter as proof that necessary ethical procedures to conduct the research would be upheld. Once the department administrator approved the request, an email to all Psychology postgraduate students with the aforementioned attachments was sent via email as a call to participate in the research. Thereafter, a snowball sampling technique was executed when willing postgraduate students sent the recruitment poster to associates who meet the inclusion criteria of the research. This phase of participant recruitment procedure was ineffective.

Heckathorn (2011, p.356) submits that “chain-referral of a hidden population begins with a convenience sample of initial subjects.” The three participants were finally obtained through convenience, when an acquaintance who was close in proximity in terms of contact agreed to snowball the recruitment poster, offered to participate and referred two willing participants to the research. The two participants offered their WhatsApp contact details and I sent a message thanking them for their willingness to participate and asked for their email addresses to proceed further communication on emails. The email proposed a time and day of the semi-structured interview, the time was flexible depending on availability of participants. Attached to the email was a consent form for participants to read and sign before we would meet for interviews. There were three more participants that volunteered to participate; of those, two didn't end up signing the consent form and the other one signed the consent form but discontinued communicating thereafter. I continued to post the recruitment poster on social media platforms such as LinkedIn and WhatsApp status to recruit more potential participants and associates volunteered to snowball the poster to no avail. This suggests that snowball sampling is mostly effective amongst marginalised social groups, especially in conflicting environments where referral is from a trusted individual within their social network (Cohen & Ariel, 2011). Kriesberg (1998, p.2) describes a conflicting environment as

having “two or more persons or group manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives”. Simply put, social conflicts are environments where individuals or organisation needs or goals are in discordance with their community or personal needs or goals (Kriesberg, 1998).

Furthermore, a specific and narrow inclusion criterion was stated on the recruitment poster and had to be met by potential participants: (i) Identify as a Black African female first-generation student, (ii) South African citizen, (iii) 18 years of age or older and (iv) postgraduate student and (v) currently enrolled or previously graduated (between the year 2019-2021) at Stellenbosch University. Participants were excluded based on not identifying as Black African female first-generation postgraduate student, is younger than the minimum age required, is not a South African citizen and was not currently enrolled or enrolled on the stated years at SU. Preceding the semi-structured interview, participants were asked if they identify as Black female and first-generation student. I discussed with each participant, for clarity purposes, the main points on the consent form, this opened a space for any questions or uncertainties to be expressed regarding the information on the consent form.

The total of three in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in English. The time duration ranged between 59 minutes and 55 seconds to 1 hour and 42 minutes. It may be argued that the sample size of the research is relatively small therefore to substantiate the appropriateness of sample size for this research an “information power” pragmatic model by Malterud, Siersma and Guassora (2016) was used to assess it:

- i. Aim of the study- narrow or broad: This research is not focused on correlations, generalizability or attaining predictions. It is focused on understanding the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students at SU. It is thus concerned with very specific experiences and inclusion criteria that limits the numbers of eligible participants.

- ii. Sample specificity- sparse or dense: This research sample specificity is dense because it holds highly specific characteristics for the inclusion criteria and research aims. In this case, a less extensive sample is needed to offer sufficient data compared to a sample specificity that is sparse.
- iii. Established theory- applied or not: This research applied phenomenology as a lens to understand the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students at SU. The theory synthesizes the phenomena of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice between social groups. In this case, a research with a small sample and a theory enlarges its knowledge base beyond the interview data.
- iv. Quality of dialogue- weak or strong: The quality of the in-depth interviews was achieved through clear, reciprocal and compassionate communication that was aided by an interview schedule. In addition, there was rapport between the researcher and participant because of perceived similarities in social identity that allowed for an in-depth and trusting conversation.
- v. Analysis strategy- case or cross-case: Unlike a cross-case analysis that needs a large number of participants, this research is concerned with in-depth analysis of experiences and identifying themes relevant to the research that are case specific.

In summary, Malterud et al. (2016, p.1756) says “a study will need the least amount of participants when the study aim is narrow, if the combination of participants is highly specific for the study aim, if it is supported by established theory, if the interview dialogue is strong, and if the analysis includes longitudinal in-depth exploration of narratives or discourse details.” Baker and Edwards (2012) conducted a research with a compilation of scholar opinions answering the question of “how many qualitative interviews is enough?” they submit that the appropriateness of a sample size is guided by the nature and aim of the research that constitutes of the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions

and practicalities of the research. A research sample requires the slightest amount of participants if the aim of the research is narrow, if it includes participants with extremely specific characteristics, if it is supported by a well-developed theoretical framework, if the interviews are quality and finally, if the analysis is case specific (Malterud et al., 2016).

3.6. Data collection

I collected data with the use of an in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interview. In the following section I will discuss the research instruments employed to collect the data and explain the limitations of the employed instruments for this research.

3.6.1. Semi-structured interview

An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted with the use of an interview schedule (Appendix D). The schedule consisted of prescribed questions and probes that were used to elicit detailed data on the research (Weiten, 2018). Additionally, detailed responses were motivated by words such as “what, who, where, when or how” in the interview (Kallio, Pietillä, Johnson & Kangasneimi, 2016, p.2960). The significance of having an interview schedule for a semi-structured interview is to ensure open-ended, comprehensible, one sided and non-leading questions are used to elicit rich data (Kallio et al., 2016). In this research, open-ended semi-structured interview allowed the participant to relay their lived experiences in a way that is meaningful to them (Kallio et al., 2016).

Longhurst (2003) explains the practical engagement of in-depth semi-structured interviews as a process of verbal exchanges between the participant and interviewer, in an attempt to elicit data for the research. Seidman (2006) expounds on a powerful and relevant argument that explains in-depth semi-structured interviewing as not merely getting answers to questions but to understand the lived experiences of participants and the meaning they

construe from those experiences. Similarly, Rubin and Rubin (2011, p.29) affirms that in-depth interviewing elicits “examples, narratives, histories, stories, and explanations”. As much as there are advantages of using an in-depth semi-structured interview there is also a limitation relevant to this research. Participants may provide, to some extent, information that is desirable to the researcher or research. To combat those biases, I used follow up questions and ensured that my interview questions are not leading the participants’ narration.

3.6.2. Interview setting

Following the presidential regulations for Covid-19, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams online. Alternatively, interested participants with no internet at the time had the option to undergo face-to-face semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted online at a time that was suitable for the participants and in a space they considered comfortable and private to have the interview.

3.7. Data management

The data was audio and video recorded on Microsoft Teams online, which was stored in an external hard drive that was securely kept and for backup purposes was stored in Microsoft OneDrive on a laptop that is password protected. The audio recorded data I transcribed in full verbatim. In that, non-verbal forms of communication such as crying, laughing, sighing, natural and abrupt pauses were included in the transcriptions, see transcription symbols (Appendix E). Initially, I was going to use professional transcription services available for researchers in the Department of Psychology but engaging with the data while transcribing bettered my understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. To support this sentiment, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) affirms that immersing yourself in data propels the researcher to be more familiar with the data and polishes the quality of the data analysis.

The arrangement and analysis of the collected data was aided by ATLAS.ti™, which is an analyses software (Paulus & Bennett, 2017). It is fully encrypted meaning the transcripts I uploaded to analyse data are protected. When presenting the findings in Chapter 4, I use pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes and to ensure participants' sensitive information remains private.

3.8. Data Analysis

Preceding the analysis, the recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed in full verbatim. The thematic analysis method was applied to identify, analyse and present identified patterns that generated themes in the data gathered (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The selected form of analysis systematically guided the data analyses aspects of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The six phases of analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed to appropriately analysis collected data:

- i. Familiarising yourself with the data: This phase of analysis began in the process of transcribing data; it presented an opportunity to immerse myself in the data as a researcher. I noted down potential concerns, listened to the recording and re-read the transcribed data with the interview audio.
- ii. Generating initial codes: The potential patterns and interesting points I noted down in the first stage aided the phase of generating initial codes. I used those notes to guide me as I labelled sentences and phrases that capture points to consider or ideas pertaining to the research aims. In the process new ideas emerged that were useful building blocks to generate new codes. Sentences that collated with a particular code was labelled accordingly. This phase was the beginning stage of organising

- meaningful data into codes that will potentially generate themes for the research with the help of ATLAS.ti™.
- iii. Searching for themes: At this stage the themes were generated using the identified codes and codes were labels that were used to link sentences with an idea, issue, thought or concept. This phase also involved expanding the codes by collating them into themes and assembling data under a relevant theme. This stage was aided by ATLAS.ti™. Braun & Clarke (2006) advice that one can also draw up a table or mind-map to organise data into themes and subthemes. I found this helpful too, I drew up a table to build meaning of the themes and the relationship they have with the generated codes and research aims. Lastly, ATLAS.ti™ also aided the arrangement establishing groups from codes by splitting or merging them into groups (themes and subthemes) and assigned matching colours to each group.
 - iv. Reviewing themes: To ensure consistency within the identified themes, I reviewed the transcripts and aims of the research. This was to inspect if the themes fully represent the data on the transcripts and if the identified themes align with the aims of the research. With the aid of ATLAS.ti™ I generated an output report of coded data, groups (themes and subthemes) and reflections for further examination.
 - v. Defining and naming themes: During this phase the themes were defined and refined at the segmentation and coding stage. In addition, to create distinct differences between the themes, I wrote reflections on each sentence, quotation or segmentation while coding and the meaning of each the group label (theme) on the comment sections on ATLAS.ti™.
 - vi. Producing the report: The results were presented with a combination of extracted quotations from the data, supported with literature. The presented extracts of data are used to capture the lived experiences of each participant for each theme. Braun and

Clarke (2006, p.93) submits that this phase must be presented in a “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell”.

A thematic analysis is useful in “examining different perspectives of research participants, highlighting similarities and differences and generating unanticipated insights” (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, p.2). While there may be advantages to using a thematic analysis, it is equally important to acknowledge the disadvantages of this analysis. Due to the flexibility of a thematic analysis lack of consistency with the themes extracted from data may potentially occur (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). To combat lack of consistency in data, I closely followed the step-by-step thematic analysis procedure by Braun & Clarke (2006).

3.9. Personal reflexivity

In this section I reflect on my identity, beliefs prior to conducting the research and interpersonal experiences that occurred during interviews. By explicitly addressing my positionality, I hope to enhance the credibility and transparency of the research (Dodgson, 2019). Berger (2015, p.220) affirms that a sensitive researcher will carefully “self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs and personal experiences on their research”. Moreover, it ensures that all phases of research, from constructing the research question, data collection, data analysis and reaching a conclusion are not informed by subjectivities (Berger, 2015).

I identify as a 25-year-old, Black female first-generation student, who has attended a predominantly Black university for their undergraduate degree and furthered their studies in an HWI. I encountered challenges with my transition into the HWI; I experienced a low sense of belonging and had difficulty establishing a new social network, something which I had never struggled with previously. My low sense of belonging, and the challenge I faced in establishing new social networks was exacerbated by the unfamiliar campus culture, arriving

in postgrad where most people have established their networks and friendship circles, a different academic way of doing things, building names and styles that resemble an oppressive history, and lastly, unwelcoming personal encounters. Yuval Davis model explains belonging as “social locations, people’s identifications and emotional attachments to various collectives, and the ethical/political value systems and symbols by means of which people evaluate their own and others’ belonging.” Carolissen (2012, p.365). I personally cannot say I have felt a sense of belonging at SU or around the Stellenbosch area. Instead I was faced with feelings of wanting to graduate and leave the space. I recall a time where we, a group of white female students and I were casually conversing while waiting outside a classroom venue and what seemed to be an Indian male student arrived and personally greeted every single one of them besides me and went on to hug every one of them. I personally do not mind the latter but I will say it was a rude awakening to remember my position as a Black African female student in this university. Witnessing someone enter a space and select who to acknowledge and blatantly ignore, and to be at the receiving end of being invisibilised was gut wrenching to say the least. One of the white female students stared at me, almost in anguish of what transpired but continued as normal, I guess it’s not her struggle (no pun intended) to address.

Prior to conducting this research, I maintained the belief that Black female first-generation students social identities are marginalised and that they encounter challenges that continuously undermine their efforts to feel a sense of belonging in the university, which in turn impact their academic performance, mental health, social identity and self-assurance. I believe that these challenges are exacerbated in HWI’s. I have read widely on issues of race, gender and class inequalities amongst students in HWI’s, and I have come to the realisation that the aforementioned factors shape the lived experience and subsequent effects on Black female first-generation students. I am personally invested in this research topic and motivated

by concerns of how and if the transformation agenda is implemented appropriately, specifically in HWI's.

Furthermore, I will critically discuss how my positionality serves as a strength and a problem in this research. On the former participants may feel a sense of ease and comfort in communicating their lived experiences with someone they can relate to because of perceived similarities of our social identity and possibly our lived experiences. With that said, this inspires a more in-depth interview where participants are possibly inclined to openly express themselves without concerns of fear of judgement, victimisation or pretentious understanding. However, because there are similarities in experiences such as perceived social identity, age group and level of study. I had to avoid overly expressing agreements of the shared experiences in case it influences a participants need to modify their stories to get my acknowledgement or validation as a researcher. On the latter, I am aware that internalised biases that are shaped by my positionality and social perceptions may pose as a problem on my research analysis and to eliminate any subjectivities, I have implemented personal, methodological and theoretical reflexivity's to improve the rigour and trustworthiness of the research as seen below.

3.10. Improving trustworthiness and rigour

I will make use of the following strategies to improve the trustworthiness and rigour of this research:

- i. Personal reflexivity: I have explicitly acknowledged my positionality as a researcher. Shaw (2010) affirms that the role of reflexivity is important to ensure how a researcher impacts the interpretation and analysis of research. Shaw (2010) further stipulates that humans can never fully escape subjectivity because we experience and interpret situations from a particular social perspective. Considering my social

identity (Black female first-generation student in an HWI) I am aware that implications in how data is interpreted and analysed may be subjective. To eliminate any subjectivity, prejudices and biases my supervisor reviewed the codes and segmentation phase of my data analysis of one transcript and held a meeting to discuss in-depth the meaning of each code before continuing with rest. That helped to eliminate subjectivities and enhanced the trustworthiness of the results

- ii. Method reflexivity: The nature of a qualitative research method and the analysis of the results are dependent on the interpretation and expertise of the researcher (Mays & Pop, 1995). The transferability of results was achieved through in-depth descriptions of key definitions of the research and the research context in which the research took place. The sampling technique used to select participants (combination of purposive and snowball sampling) was to widen access to Black female first-generation students who meet the inclusion criteria of the research since they were a hard-to-reach population at the university.
- iii. Theoretical reflexivity: Phenomenology is a mature theory that has been developed over the years that still basis its developments on the classic foundational concepts of descriptive-interpretive approach. To prevent the ongoing homogenous study of Black students (Winkle-Wagner et.al., 2019) I closely investigated and acknowledged the multiple social identities Black female first-generation students to understand their lived experiences at an HWI. Lastly, the interpretivist paradigm is used to acknowledge the underlying philosophy informing the research methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.11. Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the research, the research proposal was reviewed by the Psychology Department Ethical Screening Committee (DESC). After the required ethical modifications, the final notice of approval was granted by SU's Research Ethics Committee (REC) (Appendix F). Thirdly, Internal Institutional Permission was granted to ensure the ethical agreements regarding the confidentiality of personal information of SU students is upheld (Appendix G). Due to presidential regulations relating to Covid-19, the initial approval had to be ethically amended several times to ensure the safety of participants is prioritised and data collection procedures are amended for online purposes, see the latest amendment (Appendix H). An annual progress report was submitted to the REC and approved (Appendix I) since the initial approval date expired for the continuation of the research. Lastly, a protocol deviation was granted to cancel the second part of the research which was a focus group discussion and to include a co-supervisor in the research (Appendix J).

The research proceeded after all the mentioned divisions approved the research. In upholding the ethical guidelines, participants remained anonymous with the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, a signed participant consent form (Appendix K) granted as permission to participate in the study in full knowledge of the study procedures, which was issued to participants to sign prior to data collection. The study was based on voluntary participation, which means that participants had the free will to be a part of the research or withdraw. If it happened that participants encountered any ethical concerns or psychological distress in the duration of the research, Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic confirmed to provide services (Appendix L) to participants that will need support for this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reports findings with the intention of understanding the lived experiences of Black African female first-generation students' at SU. The findings suggest that participants report facing tensions in navigating intersected and marginalised social identities at an HWI. The findings from the semi-structured interviews that I transcribed in full verbatim are located within an interpretivist paradigm.

In the following section I will provide a brief description of each participant, including the pseudonyms that I allocated to them to protect their identities, province of origin and postgraduate level of study. The last two particulars were shared during the semi-structured interviews. Lastly, I will present themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis procedure.

4.2. Description of participants

The participants are three postgraduate students that self-identify as Black, female first-generation students. These social identities were confirmed before the commencement of each semi-structured interview. The following is a brief description of each participant:

Thandeka. Thandeka is a doctoral (PhD) candidate who is originally from the Gauteng province. Upon sharing her background, she mentioned that her academic journey began at University of Witwatersrand (Wits) before she left to pursue a different degree at SU. She shared that she didn't know about SU until she started looking around: *"...first of all I didn't even know about Stellenbosch University until I was like looking around (chuckles) you know. So...basically, I never had a preconceived idea of what this university is like."* She

has spent 8 years at SU and spent her undergraduate years at Stellenbosch main campus and her postgraduate years in Tygerberg campus.

Azania. Azania is a master's candidate who grew up in Gauteng, Johannesburg but her family is originally from the Mpumalanga province. Her academic journey began at Stellenbosch main campus in 2014 and she completed her BSc undergraduate degree in 2017, following which she went on to pursue her postgraduate degrees at the Tygerberg campus. She explained her arrival at the university as exciting: *"I think it was quite exciting cause obviously finishing high school and sort of being away from family and experiencing a new environment."* As her narrative unfolds, she later expressed how shocked she was to learn of the racial tensions at SU.

Mandisa. Mandisa is a master's candidate who is originally from a village in the Eastern Cape province. She recalls her first arrival at the university as a difficult moment, especially having to leave her home for the first time. Mandisa pursued her undergraduate degree at Stellenbosch main campus and postgraduate degree at Tygerberg campus. She describes her overall experience as a student at SU as *"Uhm. My experience as a student in Stellenbosch University, I feel like, I don't know, I feel like, it's a l- sort of like a love hate relationship. I'm not gonna lie, it is. Uhm, I feel...like I- don- I- I- I can't just say it's good or it's bad, it's like both."* In retrospect, Mandisa describes her experience as both good and bad as a student at SU.

4.3. Themes

I identified six main themes that capture my understanding and interpretation of the lived experiences of the three participants. Coupled with that are several subthemes that further elaborate the nuances of the main themes. I have provided a summary of the identified

themes and subthemes in Table 1 (page 93). In this section, I will present the themes and subthemes with quoted extracts from the analysed data as illustration.

4.3.1. Culture shock. This theme encompasses the unfamiliar campus culture and participants' adjustment to an environment that is socially and culturally different from their place of origin and socialisation. The quoted extracts capture Lee and Kramer's (2016) account of the challenging experience of navigating between two divergent spaces that require different dispositions or habitus. Participants expressed experiences of subtle insults that convey a message that the dominant campus cultural ethos lacks inclusivity of the full spectrum of cultural identities represented at the university, in this case specifically Black African cultural identities. This theme potently reveals participants' low sense belonging at the university. The nuances of the theme are captured by the following subthemes: i) Geographical and social changes; ii) Diversity vs Inclusivity; iii) Language exclusion, and iv) Microaggressions.

Geographical and social changes. This subtheme captures adjustment challenges encountered by participants due to drastic differences of socialisation and distance between their communities of origin and the community of study they relocated to, that both expect a different disposition. Mandisa says first year was her worst year in terms of transitioning to university, mainly because of the culture shock involved in moving from her village community to Stellenbosch for the first time. The expressed culture shock points to the difficulty of manoeuvring into a new and unknown environment, one that functions at a different pace. This is indicated when she says, "*there was just so many things going on*". She further expresses that if one is not outgoing one will feel left behind, signifying the expected assimilation to normalised dispositions in order to belong.

Girlie! It was the ghetto. Like I'm so sorry (chuckles). I'm not sure if that appropriate language but it was bad. I'm not gonna lie. First year was the worst year. Because first of all I'm from the Eastern Cape, I'm from [inserts name of village], ezilalini [village], I'm a village girl. And so, leaving home and coming to Stellenbosch was the first time I ever left home, so...like it was such a culture shock and there was just so many things going on. And so, it's almost like in first year, two things happen, if you not like outgoing and out there then you know, you just going to be left behind. And that's what in most cases that I found, and you can't really sort of find your space because I mean the space that I am used to is not this one.

Faced with the difficulty of not knowing how to present herself at SU, Mandisa also says the experience may be different for students who attended school in town. I presume this refers to private and former Model C schools. This sentiment suggests that students who have previously been exposed to white culture are more likely to be able to impersonate it for an easier transition. Indicating an assumed assimilation to whiteness in HWI's, that makes it difficult for students from different cultural and class backgrounds to adjust. In this regard, Mandisa says the following:

So, I don't know how to, sort of present myself here, I don't know how to carry myself, I don't- like it's not my space. I don't know if its people who went to schools like towns or whatever it's different but for me it was bad, like I don't wanna even lie. Like uhm, of course like staff and all that lecturers if I went to them and ask questions after class, they would explain ta-da-da. But sitting in class, and you know, I have a Genetics lecturer with a German accent. First of all, I'm still having issues with uhm general English, that's one and second of all this man is trying to lecture me in this

dense accent and I can't, its- it was difficult, it took a ti- quite some time for me to uhm transition.

Thandeka recounts the difficulty she experienced moving between two divergent environments and connecting existing support networks in a new environment that requires a new understanding or know-how. It appears that such differences affected her extended family's support. For example, Thandeka shared the rest of her family's perceptions ("...*look at you being better than us*") since she attended university. Ives and Constillo-Montoya (2020) say there is potential for family relations to become strained when one is the first to attend university due to perceptions of incompatible identities. The only support she received was from her Mom, and even then, it was limited due to the unattained know-how of her mental diagnosis to be able fully support her in that regard:

Ha! No support whatsoever. The only support I have had is my Mom, uhm in that I can always call on her and tell her what I am struggling with. But that's the other thing I can't tell her everything because she doesn't understand. It's like, you know, I don't get it, you know, even when, so when I started my PhD I actually went to go see a psychologist uhm here on campus and that's when they gave me an official clinical diagnosis of depression and... even though I had already known like I had the symptoms. So, when I told her about it, she still didn't understand it. I don't know what it means, you know. So, she has no way of supporting me because she doesn't understand it. And for the rest of my family, honestly, girl I don't know about your family but being Black like, when you leave and you go to varsity it's like, oh okay, look at you being better than us. And yeah, you know, so yeah, I wouldn't say I got any support from my family.

Azania points to the distance between her and family from Johannesburg and Mpumalanga, explaining that the physical distance is what made her transition hard. Azania's shared experience also signifies concern of a reduced family support structure (i.e. safety) near the Western Cape:

I think something that made it harder was just the distance because obviously growing up in Joburg and my family is originally from Mpumalanga, the Western Cape is quite far. Maybe they worry about safety and just how far away I am from any family, that is something that has made it harder.

Arguably, most students experience geographical and social changes, however, in the above extracts, it appears more pronounced for these three Black African first-generation students who encounter a challenge of having to negotiate their cultural identity with a dominant campus culture for an 'easier' transition in HWI's. Equally challenging and perhaps more so, is manoeuvring between two spaces that embody different dispositions and face the possibility of weakened support structures because of the differences in socialisation or geographical distance.

Diversity vs Inclusivity. In this subtheme, participants highlight the diversity of students at SU and the inconsistency of African cultural inclusivity and representation in campus programmes and activities. The quoted extracts point to the cultural marginalisation the Black African participants experienced at the university.

All participants share similar sentiments, where they mention a mismatch between the diversity of students admitted and the lack of inclusivity in the space. To support the sentiment, Azania suggests the university looks into creating an inclusive space. Similarly, Thandeka points to the need to structure programmes to be accommodative of all diverse

student backgrounds and highlights possibility of that happening is if the decision makers are as diverse. Mandisa points to the discrepancy of the university advertisement of diversity but lacks the openness to being inclusive. Participants express the following:

Azania: And then obviously moving forward I think the university can look at ways to actually create a more inclusive space and not just saying that at Stellenbosch University is open to everyone whereas when you get here the experience doesn't really uhm translate to that.

Thandeka: But I feel like Stellenbosch University in itself, because they are trying to attract people from diverse backgrounds, structure your programs in such a way that is inclusive and its accommodating of all the students that are going to be coming in and the only way that can happen is if you have a diverse group of people making these decisions.

Mandisa: Stellenbosch has mastered the art of doing just enough to appease the masses, you know (chuckles). And like to keep people pacified. I feel like, like again it's the example of diversity and inclusion. You know they will a- a- advertise being diverse, but they are not really open to being inclusive.

Mandisa recounts an experience that illustrates her perception of the lack of inclusivity at SU's first year welcoming programme. Highlighting a lack of representation of African cultural identities, the dominance of one particular culture and class specific campus activities. The latter is indicated when she describes the campus activities as activities for people with "defined 'palates'", almost questioning their applicability to a Black African student coming from the rural area adjusting into the space. The extract below indicates the low sense of belonging Mandisa experienced as a Black African student with little to no

contact with the campus culture the university represented. This also signifies an environment that assumed an assimilation to culture and class specific campus activities. Mandisa says the following:

Mandisa: They could in their first year, in, in their welcoming programs have a day or activities where it's about African cultures, right. So now the kids that you know, are from ezilalini [the village] or whatever they also feel heard, they feel represented. And not have the whole week filled with me doing exercises or uhm activities like people with defined 'palates' you know like they are used to. Of course, it's fun paintball or shooting what, what or to go I don't know like picking strawberries or whatever, cool fine. But like I feel like try and see how can you make...the people, like how can you make each and every, not each, I mean you can try to look at the different groups and how can you accommodate them.

Participants' experiences illustrate that the Afrikaans campus cultural ethos invisibilises Black African cultural identities in campus activities. This is implied when Azania states that the only time she sees her own culture represented is on Heritage Day, further expressing her experience of Afrikaans campus activities:

Uhm...I'd say no, I think the only (chuckles) time I got to see my culture is on Heritage Day. When we had the events and everyone would dress up. So that's when we got to see other people's cultures. But at things like vensters and what is that? Lees. That reading. What is it? Kerkfees. [...] Or something about like- it was like a festival that used to happened at Stellenbosch. It was like in Afrikaans, so...I never felt...represented there.

Similarly, Mandisa speaks of the lack of inclusivity in the welcoming programme, which she expressed is designed for white students. She further points to the Afrikaans culture *sokkie* night event, where if a Black student is not aware of the Afrikaans culture, he or she will feel alienated. The following is said:

From like their welcoming programmes, you know, it's designed for white students, it is. [...]. Like things such as a, like a maybe sokkie night, if you don't know the Afrikaans culture that means as a Black student the entire night, you'll be sitting in the corner there. You know what I mean?

For Thandeka, the quick and straightforward response when asked if she feels a sense of representation of her heritage, culture and language, captures the lack thereof very effectively:

Thandeka: *(Interjects) Nope (chuckles).*

Participants' quoted extracts signify unmet distinctions between diversity and inclusivity particularly in campus activities. The three participants' experiences suggest their cultural backgrounds is rendered invisible, or at the very least confined to the margins. Seemingly, the dominating white Afrikaans campus culture permeates a range of activities and marginalises the participants' Black African cultural identity needs and expectations, which may contribute to a low sense of belonging at the university.

Language exclusion. This subtheme captures experiences where all participants felt excluded from the preferred language of instruction and the safeguarding of the Afrikaans language at the university. Participants expounded on the exclusionary nature of utilising one language (Afrikaans) in classroom knowledge engagements during the monolingual/bilingual period at SU. Recently, the language policy has been revised to one which embraces

multilingualism, but in this regard Mandisa spoke of her dissatisfaction with the way isiXhosa is utilised.

Thandeka's experiences of the time when Afrikaans was still a primary language of instruction at the university indicates that non-Afrikaans speaker were subjected to second-hand information through the use of interpreter devices in class. The use of an interpreter device for non-Afrikaans speakers is and in itself exclusionary; it conveyed a strong message of who "deserves" to be at the university participating in knowledge engagements and who is excluded. To support that sentiment, Thandeka says: "*all the Afrikaans kids ask questions*" in class, which implies non-Afrikaans speakers were linguistically excluded from fully and effectively participating in class. Thandeka recalls a lecturer purposefully responding in Afrikaans when asked a question in English, signifying an assumed possession of dominance over other languages and the blatant dismissal of language diversity. Thandeka says the following:

But it was still really hard because Afrikaans just speaking it and actually studying it and you know some terminology is like hella difficult you know so (chuckles)...and then they tell you there's uhm interpreters, you know but then the interpreters aren't really interpreting exactly what the lecture is saying so you missing out on a few key points that the lecturer is mentioning first of all. Second of all because you are not Afrikaans speaking or whatever, you, you do tend to realize how the lecturer, I'm not gonna say doesn't really care about you, but isn't very understanding because you know, he or she is lecturing in Afrikaans and all the Afrikaans kids ask questions and yeah he or she will answer in Afrikaans. And then you ask in English and it's like uh... some lectures will even respond to you in Afrikaans even though you asked in English (chuckles). So, yes that was a little difficult for me in first year, I think it got

better in second year where it became more English and by third year, I think most of my classes were all in English. So yeah...

Azania describes a similar classroom experience. She particularly recalls the barrier of having to use interpreters while trying to participate in class in real time and the lecture would be moving on:

But I think it was Duals, so some sessions uhm he would speak in Afrikaans and then we would listen on the- those earphone things in English. And that was hard to follow, yeah so, I thought that was, it was hard to engage in the moment cause you tryna listen and like his moving on. Like I found that quite, quite distracting to do. That was the only, sort of academic uhm barrier with the English and Afrikaans.

Mandisa, in turn, highlights the complete underutilisation of isiXhosa, asking the question of where in fundamental areas of learning and communication the language is ever applied:

[...] because they decided to add Xhosa as a third language. Uhm which I found very hilarious because...okay its added where...like of importance? Right. Are there emails in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa? No, it's still Afrikaans and English. Is there gonna be Xhosa classes? Is there, like where is it "added"? You know what I mean, really.

Mandisa's comments suggest that multilingualism is a possible ground for the dominant utilisation of particular languages (i.e. Afrikaans and English) and an invisibilised utilisation of African languages (i.e. isiXhosa). A dominant utilisation and safeguarding of one language in a university setting essentially instigates segregation along the lines of culture, ethnicity and race due to the inextricable tie of language and social identity. The

three Black African participants' shared experiences of language exclusion at the university closely resemble an apartheid history of language discrimination within the HE context.

Micro-aggressions. All participants recall instances where they experienced subtle non-verbal behaviour that made them feel a sense of estrangement and insult based on their social identities. Micro-aggressions constitute of three subcategories: Micro-assault, micro-insult and micro-invalidation (Sue et al., 2007). The participants' shared experiences illuminate the concept of micro-assault. Sue et al. (2007, p.274) describes micro-assault as an "explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions." Specifically, in this research micro-assault is epitomised through avoidant behaviour and is also tied to gender (as evident in Azania's case). Participants respectively expressed the unacknowledged presence of Black female bodies at a university event, the trauma experienced at the same university event when white and Black students would interact in isolation, unwelcoming stares around campus and racialised classmate and friendship interactions.

Azania describes the shock she experienced when she came to witness the racial tension at Stellenbosch campus. She recounts the racial tension experienced at a skarkles social event where she noticed: "*as a Black person we would always be in these groups with just the Black people and white students will be interacting with each other*" indicating the segregated interaction between white and Black students. Further stating "*the guys would approach the white girls*" signifying the double-folded racial and gendered microaggressions that ostracised Black females presence at a campus event. Azania says the following:

I think something that was a shock for me was just coming from Joburg and not really experiencing a lot of the...I guess the racial tension that Stellenbosch campus sort of

has. So, for me that was a shock. Along with like the skarkle stuff we do as part of res, like honestly it felt like sometimes we were... like as a Black person we would always be in these groups with just the Black people and the white people will be interacting with each other. Like even when we had events at the guy reses the guys will approach the white girls and we'd be sitting there just in a group with like us Black girls and like our coloured friends. So, I think that was my first introduction to sort of the...racial differences which I hadn't really accounted growing up, uhm in Joburg.

Similarly, Thandeka says she never felt welcomed as a Black person at Stellenbosch, instead she felt tolerated, in that she recounts an unwelcoming and traumatic experience at the skarkles event. Thandeka also mentions frequent stares that question her presence in particular spaces, this suggests the 'exclusiveness' of certain spaces to certain identities at the university. The following is said:

Tju...! Wow (looks away) at Stellenbosch, first of all, when I was doing my undergrad. As a Black person honestly, most of the time I felt unwelcomed (shakes head). And like I said, this is all in retrospect, during the time I didn't feel that way. But as I look back now, I'm like whoa... was I even welcomed? I feel like people were just tolerating me not really welcoming me and especially from skarkles like I said I have PTSD from skarkles, you feel this sense of you not supposed to be there. You know. And yeah, a lot of the times you enter into a space and you can see just how a lot of people staring at you and it's like: What are you doing here?

Two participants highlighted the racialised interaction that is also evident in classmate interactions and friendship circles. For example, Mandisa described an experience that points to the low racial intergroup interaction between white and Black students at the university:

Here's the thing because I feel like I never truly engaged with my white classmates.

Like I- I feel like again we all just stuck to the clicks that we know.

Similarly, Azania describes the experienced discomfort when establishing friendships with white counterparts at Stellenbosch, which to her surprise was not an issue for her back home in Joburg:

Uhm. I think again I would go to the whole culture shock. Just cause growing up in Joburg, most of my friends were white, so it was never like I had a problem with being friends with white people, interacting with white people. But when I came here...it sort of felt odd.

The above extracts suggest a normalised cognitive perception that supports separate racial interactions exhibited in the non-verbal behaviour of racialised interactions in campus events, classmate interactions and friendship circles among SU students.

4.3.2. Vulnerable. This theme illuminates the vulnerable position Black African female participants encounter in navigating the university with intersected and marginalised social identities. Participants expressed encounters of marginalisation that target their racial and gender identity. The nuances of this theme are epitomised in the following subthemes: i) Confronting racial and gendered negative stereotypes; ii) Manifestations of toxic hegemonic masculinity, and iii) Feeling safety is under threat.

Confronting racialised and gendered negative stereotypes. Participants recount experiences where they felt pressure to prove their eligibility and make an impression in areas of academia and presented opportunities. In Thandeka's case the experience is described using negative stereotypes associated with the university's increased quantity of historically

marginalised students for transformation, that create a perception that Black female students are admitted to increase quota.

Thandeka says she feels added pressure to make an impression to prove she is eligible and deserving to be at SU. She particularly feels the pressure among scientists, academics and researchers. The pressure is explained concurrently with the negatively held stereotypes of transformation that paint Black female students as figures to increase diversity numbers. The following is said:

Uhm...and because of the stereotypes you know, you probably are just here based on your skin colour or your gender, first of all. Secondly, to who? So, I am currently in academia and research and scientist are...wow. And it's funny because this is just not for being a Black female it's just that being Black female has that added pressure. But for all scientists, I feel like there's this, this idea that you have to constantly prove yourself. So, for me I would say to whom...? To academics, to researchers, to you know. Yeah academics, researcher's scientist to show that I am capable of...and deserving to be here and getting the degree that I am currently working on. So yeah.

Azania says there is a level of integration, however, she feels she has to “fight” to be seen and for opportunities. Suggesting she has to prove her value as a prerequisite to being acknowledged (seen) and receiving equal opportunities at the university. This may be a result of negative stereotypes that devalue the competence of Black female identities at the university:

Uhm so, I would say that we do have...we are moving towards integration but sometimes it feels like you sort of have to fight to be seen and be given the same opportunities [???

Similarly, Mandisa recounts classroom experiences where she would overcompensate by overworking herself in group work. Saying, “*if they’re like side eyeing me because of my colour, then they won’t because of my schoo- my work*”. The explained reason implies that this is a way to combat negative stereotypes and microaggression behaviours directed to her racial identity, that underestimate her proficiency. The following is shared:

Like I didn’t want the way that I did or like let’s say we are like placed in groups right. So, I would work extremely hard like I would go above and beyond because I felt like okay my colour is already there and you know if they’re like side eyeing me because of my colour, then they won’t because of my schoo- my work, you know. So, in groups I have always found myself like pushing more leader and just, just, you know, I feel like overcompensating (chuckles). I don’t know but yeah. But like I- uhm there were definitely microaggressions there and there uhm but like through- like throughout all that I always, always pushed myself and al- al- always worked hard because I am like no matter what you can’t say like I didn’t put 100%. You know what I mean?

Further pointing to the disparities of her as Black African student constantly proving her value academically and White bodies existing comfortably without having to negotiate their value. To support this sentiment, Mandisa says: “*I would feel I need to do more to be on their level*”. The following is expressed:

So, I- I- always felt this imbalance you know because white kids would do the minimum of- you know they would do what they meant to be doing and then you know that’s it. And then I would feel I need to do more to be on their level.

The above shared extracts elucidate the challenges faced by participants identifying as Black African and female at SU. Participants clearly convey a message that Black African female students' efforts in confronting negative stereotypes based on race and/or gender add pressure to make an impression, 'fight' to be seen and for opportunities, and lastly to overcompensate to prove a point. It also speaks to Black female participants capabilities being undermined and overlooked.

Manifestations of toxic hegemonic masculinity. This subtheme captures the assumed and toxic position of dominance that most males embody, that manifests as undermining utterances towards females in areas of academics, leadership and is upheld by symbolic practices of hegemonic masculinity. The latter is evident in uneven 'male sports' and 'female sports' support and residence rules. Participants were asked to recall instances, if any, where they felt their capabilities being underestimated by male counterparts or male academics based on gender. Mandisa expressed being intellectually undermined by male counterparts in academic settings (e.g. journal club) and she contends that it is based on both her race and gender identity. Similarly, Thandeka describes being Black and female as "*a survival struggle*", signifying a matter of having to negotiate her identity at a doubled extent to exist. She recounted her experience in a leadership setting, where males would undermine and somewhat subtly invalidate her intellectual input in ways that question her knowledge or opinion. Participants share the following:

Mandisa: *Uhm...Hmm...You know what this is a very complex one because I feel like a lot of the time it's a combination of gender and race, you know, I- I- like the line between those two is very thin. And so, in journal clubs we would have sessions [???] where people argue about the answers and people go back and forth. And you would find that a lot of the time (slight scream) the male people (chuckles) would the- there*

would be some e- e- e-, it's like a- again it's like the microaggressions man. Like there would be...like the way they would say stuff, it's almost like undermining or de-or, or, or looking down on or not trusting what you are saying. And so that's why I'm saying for me I don't know if it's because I am Black or it's because I am a female. So, like moments where I felt like that it's definitely in the academic space, it's definitely like stuff like journal club. Where you know, you present information and people try to debate what you have presented. So, it's more of like 'a fight of knowledge', so we would be debating and uhm there would be those moments where I am like uhm...sir I feel attacked. Uhm, are you doubting this because its coming from me personally or is it what I'm saying? So, it was in... definitely in academic settings.

Thandeka: *Girl (chuckles) like I said being Black and female is (exhales). Is uh...I have a friend who... there's a term she has for it (thinks). Anyway, it's a survival struggle, it's a survival struggle. A specific time that I felt this, I'm trying to think. But I would say that it also ties in with what I said, feeling the need to constantly prove yourself. For example, sometimes you will be in a meeting you know right, in the meeting, you raise a point and then you can see how the male response is often in a way that questions your...knowledge or you know, your, your opinion like you know, its undermining. Yeah! It feels kind of like its being undermined. So, you constantly have that need to make sure that you know your shit. Like you are, you know, perfectly confident in what you are saying.*

The above extracts reveal the undermining demeanor males showed towards Black female participants intellectual input or opinion, that signify an assumed position of male dominance and an expected subordination of Black female participants in areas of academics and leadership.

All participants describe drastic differences in ‘female sports’ and ‘male sports’ support which exemplify symbolic practices of hegemonic masculinity in sports activities at the university. In Thandeka’s experience, when she used to play female basketball, she felt they were hardly acclaimed for their accomplishments compared to ‘male sports’. Azania and Mandisa specifically refer to male rugby as the only sports that gets more recognition compared to ‘female sports’. Mandisa also says: “*you attack Stellenbosch rugby you attack Stellenbosch*” and stating that her friends who played first team female soccer and basketball always felt disrespected and undermined. The expressed may possibly imply the university’s maintained cultural identity in white Afrikaans and male dominated sports such as rugby that essentially exclude other sports such as female basketball:

Thandeka: For example, the female basketball team when I was playing back then we were amazing we won awards and stuff. Hardly recognized, hardly got any recognition for it. But if males were the ones to win? Oh my word, you would hear about it in the newspapers and stuff like that. So, there is definitely not an equal distribution of support between the two genders. Yeah.

Azania: Uhm I feel there’s always a hype around the rugby uh and I don’t recall any female sports that has gotten as much of a hype.

Mandisa: Girl! (laughs). Listen you attack Stellenbosch rugby, you attack Stellenbosch! Period! Uhm, this is very interesting because I have a couple of friends that are in Maties sport. First of all, I for one don’t play sport and I never went to watch the games, so I can’t really say a lot about that. But from their experiences of being in first team, first team ladies soccer, you know uhm and basketball. And they always felt so disrespected and they al- felt undermined.

Participants recall traditional practices in campus activities and resident rules that resemble patriarchal ideals. Thandeka's narrative illuminates the unequal gender roles and power dynamics that permeate in student committees, that expect women to fulfil the role of a scribe and for a man to lead. Similarly, Azania recalls a skarkles event where females will go to male residences and the males would approach them (females) to ask them to dance.

The following is shared:

Thandeka: And then like I told you I have been a part of a lot of committees and organizations and stuff, there is always this sense when you are in a certain group or a meeting that the women have to take the meeting minutes you know. [...] So, I feel like...that also needs to do away with like we need to get to a point where there aren't any gender roles like that where women are suppose to be the scribe or secretary and answer to a man and you know, the man has to lead. So yeah, certain practices like that.

Azania: Uh...I don't know if it's still happening like in Stellenbosch with regards to sort of like when we go over to the male reses. And it's like the males who approach us and sort of, if they want to dance, they ask us, but I don't know if it's still happening at the skarkles.

Participants also spoke of the differences in visiting rules in 'male residences' and 'female residences'. Males are said to be given leeway on who visits and for how long, while female students are restricted in that regard. Thandeka further mentioned a mixed gender residence that had a dedicated section for male students only. The shared extracts signify reserved privileges for males in visiting hours and dedicated male space at some campus residences. Thandeka and Mandisa say:

Thandeka: *Uhm, what other practices in res? I know in Stellenbo...mxa...in Tygerberg there- in [inserts res name] apparently there was a male section, there was (chuckles)...imagine this, in a mixed res, there is a male section. But I think uh...last year they totally like brought that down. Ooh! Another practice when I was in [inserts res name], is this thing of not allowing men in the res or whatever. Although, I understand that that can be protective for some females but I also feel like it also, you know uhm pushes this agenda of gender stereotypes because I mean men can have, you know, woman come into their res at any time. Why must woman not be allowed the same luxury? So...its certain things like that.*

Mandisa: *Whereas for the guys, you would find that guys would bring, like guy reses were very loose about the people that are supposed to be there at what time. Whereas female reses were very strict and so guy reses if a female is in a guy's room it's like yeah bru oh yeah, like you did the things. And so that to me was very disturbing because it's such a double standard.*

The above extracts indicate many males' demeanour, traditional campus practices and resident rules that sustain unequal gender roles that propagate male dominance and female subordination at the university.

Feeling safety is under threat. Participants recount experiences that expressed feelings of their safety as female bodies being under threat in and off campus. Thandeka says females are at a higher risk and recounts fears that females fear which strongly communicate fears of sexual violation (e.g. rape), sexual harassment and sexual objectification (e.g. cat calling) of females. Thandeka says:

Yes, I think it's...it's very common that as females we are at a much higher risk, I would say than males. So, I think as a female yeah, I'm always fearing being raped, being sexually harassed, being...you know being cat called, being (sigh) there's so many things we afraid of walking around as female.

Similarly, Mandisa describes feeling unsafe as a female off campus and being on campus is no exception, this is implied when she says *"I double check my doors are locked"* at her residence. The following is expressed:

Oh. Absolutely. Girlie, this is day to day (chuckles). Uhm, its, its female-. Girlie, its- I feel like at this stage it's not just on campus its everywhere. At the mall I feel unsafe. I feel, I double check my doors are locked. And so, campus is no different for me. Uhm, like Stellenbosch campus is fairly safe again but it doesn't change the feelings I have as female in this country. Uhm, you know so I definitely feel unsafe, I- I 100% do.

For Azania, when asked if ever she felt her safety under threat based on her gender. She recalled an incident where a male student physically assaulted a female student on campus. Azania expressed how that incident made her realise although she might feel safe it's not always a safe space:

Uhm, no not for myself personally. But obviously after what happened with uhm [inserts name] I think that was something that sort of came to my attention that even though I might feel safe it's not always a safe space.

Mandisa described a fearful encounter with a campus security officer who was *"hitting"* on her (an unwanted sexual or relationship advancement). Thandeka in turn, mentioned the lack of responsiveness security officers exhibited in a situation where a male

student physically attacked a female student on campus. The following are participants expressing the need for security officers to be trained:

Mandisa: But I feel like in this space the one thing I can comment on is, can they please train their people. Their security is absolutely unprofessional someone who is supposed to be keeping you safe. Is busy hitting on you and asking for your number and like you scared to say no to him because he's walking you and you don't know what's gonna happen and you just brushing it off the entire time. So, I feel like before we jump onto what more can they do, can they please make sure, first of all the people that they have are people of integrity.

Thandeka: I think, our...because I know that securities are outsourced so the university doesn't have much say in terms of their training, but I do think that our security needs to be trained on sensitivity towards gender-based violence. And I'm saying this because when there is an incident of gender-based violence, I feel like it's not taken as seriously as it should be. I mean, you probab- I don't know if you know but there was an incident here at Tygerberg of a male student who physically attacked a female student and he was still allowed here on campus for a while.

Participants shared extracts that signify a risk of being sexually violated, sexually objectified and physically assaulted based on their gender identity. Mandisa and Thandeka both mentioned some security officers' misconduct and lack of responsiveness in issues of gender-based violence on campus and highlighting the need for security officers to be trained to ensure that they are people of integrity and understand the seriousness of gender-based violence.

4.3.3. Breaking new ground. This theme encompasses participants' novelty in pursuing HE as first-generation students, not only for themselves but their families too. In this regard, participants recount experiences that signify added pressure to set an example to the upcoming family generation, meeting family expectations and the pressure to perform exceptionally academically. Thandeka and Azania also speak of the financial pressure they faced as first-generation students. The theme is coupled with the following subthemes: i) A novel experience; ii) Family trendsetter and pressure to perform, and iii) Financial pressure.

A novel experience. This subtheme captures the participants' novel experience as first-generation students in HE and the challenge of not having attained 'insider knowledge' from parents' experiences that are useful in enhancing ones expectations of HE demands and level of preparedness. Thandeka says:

And being you know a first generation; I am literally the first in my family to go to university. I didn't have anybody tell me, like you know, what to expect and you know how things will be like.

Similarly, Mandisa shares the novelty of journeying into university without any reference in the family, this is made apparent when she uses a metaphor: "you just sort of in the dark and just and just do what you can", implying the unclear anticipation of the demands and expectations of HE. She said the following:

So... for me...that's like I guess that's the direct definition, to be the first person to really travel down this road. You don't really have a reference to look at in your family of someone who has done it before. So, you just sort of in the dark and just (chuckles) and just doing what you can really. Uh, yeah, so that's what first-generation means to me.

For Azania it was hard to imagine herself pursuing a master's degree, suggesting that perhaps there was no immediate reference to aspire her to advance her degree as far as masters. She also points to the novelty of the experience, not only for herself but her family and the significance it holds in setting an example of how far they can go as a family:

(smiles) I think sometimes it's hard to imagine, because growing up I never pictured myself to ever doing like my masters. So, I think it means a lot, not only for me but also for my family just to seeing how far we can actually go.

Given the above quoted extracts, participants express the apparent newness in the pursuit of tertiary education for first-generation students. This also illuminates the challenging position first-generation students hold in trying to 'catch up' and adjust to HE demands with no immediate family reference of how to execute the demands.

Family trendsetter and pressure to perform. All participants spoke about being the first in their family to pursue HE comes with added pressure and family expectations. Thandeka says there is added pressure and feeling as though there is no room for human error in her pursuit, due to the high regard her family holds of her and the expectation to succeed to set an example to the upcoming generation:

So, for me what it means is...the added pressure of having to set an example, to the rest of your family perhaps, uhm who might wanna, you know, come to varsity later on. Cause I know in my family, they really look up to me a lot which is not great because you feel like you cannot fail because you have these people looking up to you. So, there's that added pressure. Uhm, it's great that you get to set the trail, you know like you get to be a trailblazer and if you succeed then people will wanna, like young

kids will wanna be like you, you know. So that's great. But yeah, I think there's a lot of pressure added to it.

Similarly, the weight of being the first to attend HE placed Mandisa in a position where she felt the pressure to perform exceptionally. She spoke about the barrier of not being able to participate in social activities and describing it a luxury to do so. The extract below suggests that first-generation students are not in a position of privilege to fully participate in social activities other than focusing on academic excellence, because there are people depending on them:

(Clears throat) Uhm. I feel like the main, main barrier, of course there's many things. As I said I feel like it's (sigh). There's so many, number one we really don't have the luxury to be university students. I mean that in a sense of, let's go out parting, let's go, let's go to a picnic by the beach, let's go kerr with the boys tada-da. I feel like...you don't have the luxury of that, as first-generation your priorities you have to do exceptionally well, there's people depending on you, there's people who are looking up to you. Uhm so that's barrier number one, you truly can't fully engage with your surroundings because you have shit to do. You can't.

For Azania, completing her undergraduate degree was met with her family's expectation for her to find a job. The family's inexperience of HE may have led to the misunderstanding. She said:

I think even after they expect me to sort of be done with my undergrad and get a job. Whenever, I went home and told them that I'm sort of continuing with my honours. They were always supportive. I think that something that I have realized that they may not understand that uhm...that in a way this is going to be my job. Like studying

doesn't stop, so I think for them I think they expect after you get your degree you go work.

The above shared extracts of first-generation participant experiences foreground the families' hopefulness for academic success, coupled with expectations and added pressure to perform exceptionally in their academic pursuits.

Financial pressure. The below extracts suggest that as first-generation students, participants often worried about finances because of their socio-economic background. More so if one is without a bursary to fund accommodation and academic expenses. Thandeka says her honours year was financially difficult, to a point where she almost discontinued her academic career:

Thandeka: Uhm, I thought I had applied for funding in my third year to do my honours, but I hadn't. So (chuckles) when I started my honours I had no money, nowhere to live, nothing. And... I remember calling my mom and crying and telling her to just send me money to come back home (sighs and is teary eyed). But then by some sheer luck or whatever I decided to go to the postgraduate funding office and tell them my situation and they were able to give me funding (Cries). Sorry...[.]. Uhm yeah, so that was one time for me I nearly dropped out. Uhm because I didn't have any way to pay for my fees, I didn't have any way to stay and even if I did get a place, I wouldn't be able to stay because I have a single mother so she wouldn't be able to afford it. So yeah.

And Azania expressed the following:

Azania: Uhm. For me personally I'm grateful for the fact that I had a bursary and that was the reason I was able to continue studying. So, I do think finances are a very big concern when you like a first-generation student. Uhm, yeah.

The above sentiments express the financial pressure Thandeka encountered as a first-generation student, something that made her susceptible to student attrition. She mentioned she almost dropped out, while Azania states that having a bursary was “*the reason I was able to continue studying*”, implying that had it not been for a bursary she would be unable to continue or advance her academic pursuits.

4.3.4. Impact on well-being. This theme reveals the impact of experiencing compounded tensions from navigating with marginalised social identities and the pressures of being a first-generation student. Participants expressed experiences of marginalisation as affecting their emotional and psychological well-being. The following subthemes epitomise the theme: i) Emotional impact, and ii) Psychological impact.

Emotional impact. The tensions of navigating SU with marginalised identities impacted participants' emotional well-being. Thandeka speaks of how frequently she felt ‘undeserving’ to be at the university, especially now that she is in academia. The feeling is said to be tied to the pressure to prove a point because of the negative stereotypes associated with transformation that include feelings of self-doubt and the imposter syndrome:

(Sigh) That also happens you know, more often than it should. Uh...let me see if I can think of a specific time. But I would say it ties in with a pressure of trying to prove myself because there's always this sense of...also because of the whole stereotype that you here because of your race and your gender. There's constantly that thought that comes at the back of your head like: Wait what if I'm just here for the numbers, you

know? Do I really deserve to be here? So, honestly it happens a lot for me especially again being in academia now. Uhm, what is termed the imposter syndrome? That's, that's real (chuckles) for us like that is really real. Where you feel like, am I smart enough? You know, when somebody, for example when you are presenting your project at a journal club or at a conference or something and somebody asks you a question and you like: Ahh, do I really know this? You know, and sometimes even though I know the answer, I would just blank out because there is this pressure to give the right and perfect answer. So yeah, I would say that happens.

For Azania, when she was asked to recall moments, if ever, where she felt 'underserving' to be at the university, she mentioned instances when counterparts presented their work and she felt less passionate about hers. The feeling is said to be triggered by insecurity, ideas of success and comparison. The latter is epitomised when she says: "*it made me feel like I'm not there yet, but they are*". This also brings to the fore how her emotional state impacted her perceptions of self-efficacy:

(chuckles) I think listening to people's presentations and them talk about their work. Like sometimes I'm like I feel like I don't have that passion in that way and then I think maybe I don't deserve to be here if I am not responding the same way that they are responding. [...]. Mca. It could've been my own insecurities uhm... [???] my own idea of what success looks like, it made me feel like I'm not there yet, but they are. So yeah.

Similarly, Mandisa says as a first-generation student feelings of insecurity and doubt are compounded:

Cause I feel like coming to university as first-generation, sis it's a lot, it's a lot.

There's so much of insecurity, there is so much of doubt.

Psychological impact. All participants expressed a decline in mental health since their arrival at the university. Mandisa expressed experiencing anxiety and depression as an attribute of stress in academics, life and being a first-generation student at the university:

(chuckles) Girlie! It has definitely declined. Like...truthfully when I started university, I never had mental health problems. In fact, the concept of mental health I came across it in university. So, you know going through anxieties and depressions a lot it definitely was here, definitely through university. So of course, that being attributed by stress of academics, stress of life, stress of being first-generation, you know students. Just so much stress man and... uhm...yeah it has definitely declined, 100%. Like (chuckles).

Thandeka mentions her underlying depression worsened since her arrival at the university. This is said to be attributed to the compounded issues of being away from family, not having a support system, finances and academics. She said:

Uhm. My mental health (sighs). I don't know if I would say it has (clears throat) declined because I have always had underlying depression. Uhm. It just wasn't as hectic as it got since I have been here. There have been multiple reasons why, I mean first of all being away from family. Uhm, being away from a support system well not having any support system, finances uhm and academics because its- (Clears nose). Sorry. [...]. It's difficult sometimes to concentrate on your academics when you have all these other issues that you're dealing with. And that...yeah, that really has hit my

mental health pretty hard. So yeah, I don't know if I would say it has gotten worse but maybe let's say it has gotten worse. Yeah (chuckles).

For Azania, her mental health was at its lowest in third year due to the pressure brought on by perceived family expectations. The following is said:

I think the whole adjustment from an....uhm...high school to university was sort of a shock. So, I think it was- I think my mental health was at its lowest in 3rd year. Uhm... yeah...and it was also my own sort of pressures with regards to what I thought my parents expected of me. What I thought what my family like wanted of me, that it sort of got to the point where it was too much. Uhm, yes.

The above extracts foreground the compounded stress and pressures the participants' experience. As such, increasing their susceptibility to a mental health decline and common mental health disorders (CMD's) such as depression and anxiety.

4.3.5. Resistance. This theme captures participants employed skills and acquired knowledge to resist the compounded experiences of marginalisation at the university. The theme is coupled with the following subthemes: i) Coping; ii) Exercising agency, and iii) 'Stay woke'.

Coping. In the presented extracts, participants express ways in coping with the experienced tensions when transitioning with marginalised identities at the university. I identified turning a blind eye to hostile marginalisation as a form of self-preservation from accumulative harm. Mandisa describes the negative stereotype Black females encounter when they vocalise experiences of discrimination and explains why in most cases, she chose to let it go to focus on her degree and avoid being labelled "*an angry Black women*" as a possible protection from accumulative harm. The label in itself also indicates the delegitimisation of

Black female students' racial and gendered experiences of marginalisation at the university.

Mandisa expresses the following:

And so like...I just let that go because...again you know as a Black woman you know if you like you talk a lot, then you are too vocal. So sometimes, you just, a lot of the times you just let a lot of things slide, I just kept quiet because I was like listen, I don't wanna be labelled an, an angry Black woman I just wanna get my degree. Keep it moving, keep it pushing.

Similarly, Thandeka ignored situations where she felt unwelcomed:

So yeah, thinking about it now it's weird, my brain did this weird thing where it just ignored it when I was going through it. And now that, you know, I am over that part of my life it's like woah...that was not so great actually.

The above extracts also show the emotional and psychological fatigue that results from constantly having to defend ones identity in discriminatory and marginalising encounters. In that, participants also expressed the ongoing support received from their families and friends (in the case of Azania) during the transition and integration at the university:

Azania: I think with managing the integration it had a lot to do with the support from my family and also with my friend group.

Mandisa: Literally my family has been my pillar of support from like day one.

Thandeka: Uhm, what has made it easier is probably WhatsApp (laughs) so I talk to my Mom on WhatsApp a lot.

Exercising agency. This subtheme illustrates the ways all participants exercise agency and somewhat forge their own sense of belonging to resist marginalisation by taking on various responsibilities in leadership committees that focus on transformation. The following is said:

Thandeka: So...I...the only way I was really able to integrate, and uhm you know make connections on, in the University I would say is by joining a whole lot of societies, committees, groups and all of that. So, I am at a fairly good point now where I think I've made, built a lot of relationships. Not just with students but with staff and yeah.

Azania: I think uhm...sort of putting myself out there to be involved in... I guess leadership positions and being involved in campus activities. I think it's one way that I have done that.

Mandisa: You know uhm I have had the privilege of working with Stellenbosch leadership. And so...transformation is something that is very close to my heart and it's something that we worked closely, you know, to try and do in Stellenbosch.

Participants expressed their inclination to form friendship groups with other historically marginalised identities, this signifies a sense of solidarity and affirmation as support from the experiences of 'otherness' at the university. For example, Thandeka explained that because Black people are a mere handful, she would identify people she could relate to but she also did make friends with white people and everyone else. All participants say the following:

Azania: So, my friends here are either coloured or Black. Uhm and sort of we, we sort of gravitated towards each other.

Mandisa: *Uhm but of course with the years you I- like you find your people, you find your space and then, you know uhm things became better.*

Thandeka: *But then I was lucky enough to make friends, uhm I think living in res was really helpful for me to makes friends and that's where...even though there where very few of us, like a handful of us people of colour I could quickly identify people I could somewhat relate to. Uhm, obviously they were not my only friends I made friends with where of white people and... you know everybody. I made friends with pretty much everyone.*

'Stay woke'. The 'stay work' dialect is originally from the US and is also popularly used among SA Black youth. The term is used to denote the need to be aware and informed of social injustices that marginalise and discriminate against Black people. Participants illustrate a heightened conscientisation of their marginalised lived realities associated with their social identities at the university. Mandisa says the subtly conveyed messages of exclusion regarding her racial identity imbued a deepened pride and fondness of her Blackness, which includes her background, culture, community and language. This also signifies how conscientisation of her social reality is used as a buffer to shield her sense of identity at the university. The following is expressed:

Stellenbosch has found a way to tell me, subtly, just subtle jabs here and there, that this is not your place. Uhm, and as much as that is a negative it worked for me in a positive manner because I realized I'm Black (chuckles). Like you know I know that I am Black, but I didn't fully understand my Blackness until, until I came to univer- until I came to Stellenbosch. And for that I am incredibly grateful because you know, I love my Blackness, I love where I am from, you know my culture, my community, my

language. You know my skin, my broad nose and whatever. Like I don't feel I would have fallen in love with myself the way that I did if I didn't come here.

Azania says she stands by the choice she made to attend SU, pointing to the grown awareness of initially having a sheltered perspective on existing racial tensions to personally experiencing it at Stellenbosch campus:

Uhm, I still stand by it, like I feel I've grown and sort of seen the world cause maybe I was living in a bubble growing up that I really didn't see the racial tension that was there. Like you'd hear about it but because you've never experienced it you thought, oh uhm maybe it doesn't happen as much. But now that I've grown up and I've been here since 2014, even though I am on the Tygerberg campus like I think I have just grown from the experience of being uhm in Stellenbosch.

For Thandeka, when asked if ever she felt the need to make an impression academically or socially, she responded by laughing: *"I'm a Black female is there ever not a time (laughs)."* Thandeka shows an awareness of the racial and gendered stereotypes that foster feelings of making an impression. Further submitting had she been asked the same question five years ago; she wouldn't have an answer which signifies a developed critical consciousness of lived experiences as a Black female at the university:

Girl...! I'm a Black female is there ever not a time (laughs). [...]. No honestly, like it's ridiculous, how...I mean if you've asked me this question 5 years ago, I probably will not have an answer...

As postgraduate students now the above extracts show a developed critical consciousness of their social reality of marginalisation as Black African female students at SU. In Mandisa's case the knowledge was resourceful in shielding and embracing her sense

of identity. Azania and Thandeka respectively shared experiences that signify a grown awareness of racial tension and gendered racism.

4.4.6. Expressed support needs. This theme incorporates the participants' expressed support needs. All participants expressed a slow responsiveness in the progression of transformation and integration at the university. Further expressing a dire need for an increased representation of Black, particularly female academics. The following subthemes epitomise the theme: i) Urgency in transformation, and ii) Representation in academia.

Urgency in transformation. Participants have been able to gage the progress of transformation and integration from the years spent pursuing both their undergraduate and postgraduate degree at the university. The participants expressed their impression of transformation and noted improvements, however, it is said to be moving at a slow pace implying an expressed need for urgency in the progress. The participants say the following:

Azania: Uhm. I would say there is an effort to go towards transformation but also, it feels like it's happening at a snail's pace.

Mandisa: I don't want to lie I do see changes. I do see integration to some extent, but I feel like it's one of those things of we're moving at such a slow pace. And we are comfortable with moving at such a slow pace for the sake of but then we still doing it though, you know what I mean.

Thandeka: So, the transformation agenda I really like what is being done, what I'm seeing with the visual redress and everything, but it has progressed quite slowly. I mean I've been here, what like almost 8 years now.

Representation in academia matters. Participants expressed the need for representation of Black females and Black first-generation positions of academia. Mandisa recalls a moment when she witnessed a Black African female lecturer for the first time after five years of being at SU. She spoke about the significance that this moment had on her dreams and the importance of representation in encouraging boundless perceptions of self-efficacy. The following expresses the plea for more Black female staff:

Because when you don't see yourself or see yourself represented then what can you dream about? Because what your dreams are based on your imagination, imagination is triggered by what you see. So, if what you see is lacking. Then what are you gonna dream about? You know, your dreams will be very limited. And so, I remember seeing Dr. [inserts name], I was like (screams). Oh my God! Maybe I can have like a, like a research facility or maybe I can, you know. So, for me definitely I feel more Black staff please, Black female staff.

Similarly, Thandeka's sentiments illuminate the need for a vast representation in academia. Submitting that "they don't get it", which seemingly refers to white and non-first-generation academics that do not possess the lived experiences of Black and first-generation students to truly understand their experiences, she said:

They don't get it. They just don't get it (Chuckles). To be honest, I actually was talking to someone about this, how, because you are one of very few people here, you know and there is not a lot of people that look like you. Your lecturers have not experienced students that look like you, your supervisors have not experienced students who look like you, so they really don't get it. They try to understand but they don't because they don't have that lived experience of being Black and being a first-generation.

4.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the presented extracts and the researchers interpretation of the above findings string together a narrative of the lived experiences of Black (African) female first-generation three participants at an HWI's such as SU. Participants encounter compounded marginalisation with undertones of cultural exclusion, racialised and gendered microaggressions that are conveyed through institutional practices or personal encounters. In addition to being a first-generation student who is grappling with the adjustment and pressure of being the first to pursue tertiary education in their family. Seemingly, participants experience tensions of constantly having to negotiate their social identities at the university, which consequently impact their emotional and psychological well-being – feelings of self-doubt, insecurities and CMD's such as depression and anxiety are expressed. Despite the challenges, participants garnered skills to resist marginalisation, which include turning a blind eye as self-preservation, taking on various leadership responsibilities, establishing solidarity with other marginalised identities and a heightened awareness of their social and racial injustices related to their social identity. In retrospect of their lived experiences at SU, participants expressed support needs that require an urgency in the progress of transformation and increase in the representation of Black African female academics.

Table 1**Summary of findings**

| Theme | Subthemes |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4.3.1. Culture shock | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Geographical and social change ii. Diversity vs Inclusivity iii. Language exclusion iv. Micro-aggressions |
| 4.3.2. Vulnerable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Confronting racialised and gendered negative stereotypes ii. Toxic hegemonic masculinity iii. Feeling safety is under threat |
| 4.3.3. Breaking new ground | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A novel experience ii. Family trendsetter and pressure to perform iii. Financial pressure |
| 4.3.4. Impact on well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Emotional impact ii. Psychological impact |
| 4.3.5. Resistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coping ii. Exercising agency iii. ‘Stay woke’ |
| 4.3.6 Expressed support needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Urgency in transformation ii. Representation in academia matters |

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This research sought to explore and understand the lived experiences of Black African female first-generation students at an HWI, such as SU. It further aimed to explore possible racialised and gendered micro-aggressions and/or institutionalised exclusionary practices, employed strategies in negotiating the university system, and expressed support needs. The findings in Chapter 4 elucidate the compounded tensions Black African female first-generation students experience navigating with intersected and marginalised social identities at an HWI. I use a phenomenology approach to interpret the findings. The following will discuss the meaning and significance of the themes, followed by limitations and contributions, recommendations and potential implications of the research.

5.2. Discussion

The *culture shock* theme is potent in revealing the low sense of belonging and unwelcoming experiences Black African participants were exposed to when transitioning to SU. More so, it speaks of SU's lack in creating an inclusive campus culture that is representative of African culture, ethnic and linguistic identities. The term culture shock originates from Oberg and was conceptualised in the 1960's (Pacheco, 2020). Collins and Nickel (1975, p.24) described culture shock as an experience of torment, when people communicate or behave in an "antagonistic or antithetic to the cultural mores and customs of the first". The experience can be both exciting and perplexing, in some instances resulting in psychological adversities of moving into an unknown and new environment (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). Mandisa recounts her first year as the worst year due to the encountered challenges of moving from

her village community to Stellenbosch, a space which assumed the possession of a different habitus on which belonging depended. Thandeka's experience signified a challenge of connecting existing support structures from home into a new socialisation that require a new know-how. Azania pointed to the geographical distance from her family as most significant in her transition. Generally speaking, culture shock is expected when one is relocating from one geographical and social environment to another. However, this research's findings suggest antecedents of a profusely white Afrikaans homogenous campus culture as a prominent barrier in participants' transition at SU. The expectation to assimilate to an unfamiliar and dominant white Afrikaans campus culture for an 'easier' transition compounded the adverse effects of culture shock that participants experienced when adjusting into the space.

Banning and Bartles (as cited in Cabrera et.al., 2016, p.57) submits "four types of messages of the ecology are sent to students: belonging, safety, equality, and societal roles." Focusing on belonging, the *culture shock* theme augurs the lack of inclusivity of Black African cultural identity and by extension their ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Cabrera et.al. (2016, p.52) argues that "racial composition of higher education may be changing, but this does not mean the institution's racial culture, climate, or ecology is changing." With that said, a distinct gap between diversity and inclusivity in campus activities and programmes was illustrated in participants' experiences of unmet cultural identity needs and representation of Black African cultural identities. For example, Azania mentioned the only time she would see her cultures is only on Heritage day. Secondly, participants expressed experiences of language exclusion which was evident in the dominant utilisation of the Afrikaans language and subjection of non-Afrikaans speakers to second-hand information by using translation (Afrikaans to English) devices in knowledge engagements during the monolingual/bilingual period at SU. Thandeka said: "...*the interpreters aren't really*

interpreting exactly what the lecturer is saying so you missing out on a few key points that the lecturer is mentioning first of all.” This act blatantly dismissed the linguistic diversity of South Africans as a whole and the diverse students admitted at SU post-apartheid. Mandisa pointed to the dissatisfaction of the utilisation of isiXhosa, questioning where in fundamental areas is the language used. This proposes a concern of the current multilingualism policy at SU as a possible ground of unequal utilisation of languages. The analysis supports Stroud and Williams (2017) observation on multilingualism being a possible way of maintaining hierarchal use of languages, which in SA’s colonial context is associated to racialisation. The expressed micro-aggressions in forms of non-verbal racialised interactions in campus events, classroom interactions and friendship circles, also indicate a low racial intergroup interaction among students. Similar to Schrieff et al. (2010) research findings of the low intergroup interaction of undergraduate students at UCT dining hall.

A body of knowledge report on Black students dissatisfaction with the campus climate in PWI’s (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Cabrera et.al., 2016; Park, 2009). Shahjahan and Edwards (2021) submit that whiteness is malleable enough to shape both historical and subsequent social and institutional structures. Gusa (2010) asserts that a lower sense of belonging is tied to the pervasiveness of whiteness in an institution. Therefore, a plausible conclusion is that a history of normed whiteness at the university is salient in the low sense of belonging of Black African participants and the adverse challenges of transitioning into the space.

Vulnerable theme gave insight on the double-folded hostility Black African females’ experience in a form of racist and sexist acts. Confirming Essed (1991) conceptualised term called gendered racism which capture the experience of most Black females double-folded experience of marginalisation based on racial and gender identity. Similarly, this theme elucidates compounded challenges faced by participants when navigating with intersected

and marginalised identities at SU. Wagner et.al. (2019) affirms that political intersectionality argues that Black women are systematically inundated with stereotypes and expectations that are oppressive. Shefer (2010) contends that apartheid history in SA was instrumental in the power dynamics and differences among race, gender and class, that are patriarchal in nature. The perspective was reached from studying stories from the Apartheid Archive Project to investigate dimensions and complications of “normative gender roles and gender power relations and overlapping sexual talk intersect with racialised discourse and racist practices” (Shefer, 2010, p.382). In this research, to navigate with their racial and gender identities, participants felt a pressure to make an impression to dispel negative stereotypes associated with their racial and gender identities. Thandeka says she felt added pressure among science researchers and lectures to show her capability and that she is deserving to obtain her degree. The experience is described concurrently with negative stereotypes associated with transformation, that perceive Black females as figures to only increase diversity numbers. For example, Thandeka said, *“Uhm...and because of the stereotypes you know, you probably are just here based on your skin colour or your gender...”* The stereotype implies that Black female students are academically underserving or eligible to be at SU. Cornell and Kessi (2017) found negative stereotypes associated with transformation as sustaining anti-affirmative perspectives that exclude Black students. As evident in Thandeka’s narrative, negative stereotypes attached to anti-affirmative perspectives are also tied to gender identity. Furthermore, Azania said she feels she has to *“...fight to be seen and be given the same opportunities”* and Mandisa says she would often overcompensate in group-work to dispel stereotypes of her Black identity. Similarly, Scott (2013) research found Black female students overcompensating in fear of race related discrimination that discredit their competence and commitment. Evidently, Black females are stereotypically confined to margins that underestimate their capabilities and stir up pressure to prove their value.

Researchers particularly found that Black females are often faced with pressure to prove their competence in PWI's (Winkle-Wagner, 2019; Lewis et al., 2013; Scott, 2013).

Manifestations of toxic hegemonic masculinity were exhibited in males undermining demeanour towards participants' intellectual input in academic journal club and leadership settings which are significant areas of knowledge production and decision making. Arguably, masculinity can be displayed by females, however, in the research we maintain Vescio and Schermerhorn (2021) description of hegemonic masculinity as an ideology that encourages only male power and success but can be supported by both male and female. The undermining act resembles an assumed position of authority that most males exhibit in such settings and the toxicity of silencing and minimising Black African female participants input. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argues that hegemonic masculinity in an urban middle classed society is likely to manifest in forms of male dominance in leadership supervision for instance. Mandisa's response when asked to recall instances where her capabilities were being underestimated by a male peer or lecture, she said: *"You know what this is a very complex one because I feel like a lot of the time it's a combination of gender and race..."* This statement points to marginalisation experienced as Black female students. Crenshaw (1991) conceptualised intersectionality as a way to understand dimensions of social identity. Pertaining to this research, the concept of intersectionality was significant in understanding race and gender identities as mutual reinforcers in how social inequalities are uniquely experienced by research participants. For instance, Thandeka mentioned being Black and female is a *"survival struggle"*, pointing to the challenge of navigating intersected and marginalised identities to exist.

Undertones of a patriarchal society is resembled in participants experiences with oppressive manifestations of hegemonic masculinity on campus. In addition to undermining male counterparts' demeanour in academic journal club and leadership settings as already

discussed. Participants also recounted traditional campus practices, resident rules and sports support that endorse normative gender roles that support male dominance and reserve certain privileges for male identities. For example, Thandeka mentioned “...in Tygerberg there- in [inserts res name] apparently there was a male section, there was (chuckles)...imagine this, in a mixed res, there is a male section.” the act of dedicating a section suggests unequal access to space in a gender mixed residence and male dominance in the space. In sports activities, participants expressed unequal ‘male sport’ and ‘female sport’ support. Thandeka says when she played female basketball, the team hardly got any recognition for their accomplishments compared to ‘male sports’. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) says sport is partly masculinised and Grindstaff and West (2011) affirms that sports is a profound symbolic practice of hegemonic masculinity. Azania and Mandisa perceive rugby at SU as the only sports team that is highly supported, especially compared to ‘female sports’. Grundlingh (1994) traces a link between the historical establishment of white Afrikaner nationalism, in which rugby was used as a site for cultural and male identity formation at SU. With that, the university’s white Afrikaans campus culture identity may have clung onto sports activities such as rugby, intentionally or unintentionally marginalising sports activities that do not resemble white Afrikaans culture or male identities, for instance female basketball (as evident in Thandeka’s case).

Participants expressed feeling their safety is under threat in and around campus, based on their gender identity. Thandeka expressed fears of being sexually violated, sexually harassed, sexually objectified and submitting her dissatisfaction of some security officers response on issues of gender-based violence. Azania recounted an occurrence where a male student that physically assaulted a female, that made her realise that the space is not as safe as she might feel. Mandisa recounts a fearful encounter that suggested a sexual or relationship advancement made by a security officer. Participants fears are not unreasoned, they shaped

by a long history of violation against Black female bodies in SA. For example, during colonialism and slavery Nathan (2013) and Clark (2013) recount the sexual objectification experienced by Sarah Baartman when she was displayed at a circus in London for white amusement and curiosity because of what they perceived as an ‘unusual’ body structure. After her passing, her body was dissected and placed in a jar in a museum (Clark, 2013). Such historical occurrences cultivated negative perceptions that “make acts of rape and physical violence against Black women by men dismissed as nondeviant behavior and not a violation of womanhood.” (Nathan, 2013, p.8). Consistent with that thought, Gouws (2020) analysed the 2016 #EndRapeCulture student protest against rape (majority of whom were Black African at SU, UCT, RU and Wits) on campus, situating the prevalent sexual violation acts as an intersection of history that position/ed Black females as subjects of sexual violation (Gouws, 2020).

Breaking new ground theme encompasses the novelty in first-generation participants’ experience of HE and the added pressure to set an example to their family and upcoming generation, meeting family expectations and perform exceptionally in academics. Two participants expressed the financial pressure experienced as a first-generation student. The novel experience subtheme elucidates participants unattained ‘insider knowledge’ and expectations of HE demands due to families’ inexperience of HE. Ives and Castillo-Montoya (2020) laments first generation students encounter difficulties due to unknown campus norms, practices and inexperienced social network for guidance. This is especially intense for students with intersected and marginalised identities (Ives & Castillo-Montoya, 2020). Thandeka and Mandisa respectively shared the following sentiments “*I didn’t have anybody tell me, like you know, what to expect and you know how things will be like.*” and “*You don’t really have a reference to look at in your family of someone who has done it before.*”

Drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital, as discussed in Chapter 2, the differences

of social standing between first-generation and non-first-generation students. Kraakamp and van Ejck (2010) describes cultural capital to include embodied, institutionalised and objectified forms of cultural capital. According to Kraakamp and van Ejck forms of cultural capital, participants' novel experience points specifically to unattained embodied and institutionalised forms of cultural capital that posed as a challenge when transitioning as a first-generation student. For instance, participants described the inaccessibility to 'transactional' benefits (e.g. embodied cultural capital acquired from the socialisation of parents who attended HE) that enhance expectation and by extension level of preparedness for HE. Yosso (2005) also argues that Bourdieu's cultural capital theory exposes the normalised and valued assimilation to white middle class standard of knowing in education. Which contrasts SA's first-generation student social realities, who likely to be from a low SES background (Letseka, 2009, Motsabi et al., 2020; Sennett et al., 2003) and Black African (Motsabi et.al., 2020; Sennett et.al., 2003).

Impact on well-being illuminates the emotional and psychological impact participants' compounded tension of navigating an environment that marginalises their intersected social identities. In addition to experienced pressure (e.g. family expectations) of being the first to pursue HE in their family. Emotionally, participants expressed feelings of self-doubt, imposter syndrome and insecurity. The analysis is similar, to a degree, to Cornell and Kessi (2017) findings that report on the accumulative racial stereotypes experienced by Black student participants at UCT that resulted in internalised inferiority that foster feelings of doubt, insecurity and being demotivated. Mandisa specifically expressed feelings of self-doubt and insecurity as a direct link to being a first-generation student. Canning, LaCosse, Kroeper and Murphy (2020) studied perceptions of classroom competition among science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) students and reported first-generation students as experiencing more enhanced feelings of an imposter, which lead to self-doubt and insecurity.

Consistent with that, Azania expressed feeling ‘underserving’ to be at SU, particularly during classroom presentations and hearing counterparts speak passionately about their work. An imposter phenomenon, colloquially known as imposter syndrome is individuals who “ignore and misattribute evidence of their own abilities, while readily accepting evidence in favour of their inadequacy” (Gadsby, 2021, p.1). Clance and Imes (1978, as cited in Parkman, 2016) coined the term imposter phenomenon when researching the conduct and characteristics of accomplished women who grapple to concede with their success. This was apparent when Thandeka mentioned stereotypes associated with increased admissions of Black and female students which made her question whether she deserves to be at SU, especially now that she is also in academia. Psychologically participants expressed a definite decline in their mental health since their arrival at SU. Two participants mentioned issues with CMD’s such as depression and anxiety. Parkman (2016) highlights the positive association between imposter phenomenon, psychological distress, anxiety, depression and minority social standing. In this research, participants respectively expressed mental health to be impacted by stress of academics, life, being first-generation, being away from home and not having a support system, finances and family expectations.

Resistance theme exemplifies participants coping mechanisms and employed skills used to resist marginalisation at an HWI. Yosso (2005, p.80) describes “the knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality” used by Black communities as resistant capital. Two participants used coping skills such as turning a blind eye, for example, Mandisa mentioned a time she was faced with gendered and racialised microaggression and chose to be quiet “...*I just kept quiet because I was like listen, I don’t wanna be labelled an, an angry Black woman I just wanna get my degree.*” Thandeka says her mind would disregard unwelcoming encounters. Lewis et.al. (2013) research yielded similar results and reported Black females using self-protective coping as a deliberate choice

to not engage in every toxic micro-aggression encounter to protect their psychological and emotional well-being. Which is consistent with Mandisa's choice to be quiet as a form of self-preservation from engaging in harmful negative stereotypes (angry Black women) that essentially delegitimise and minimise her struggle as a Black female and instead chose to redirect that energy to her academic responsibilities. Although turning a blind eye to micro-aggressions may be regarded as avoidance, specifically in this research, participants turned a blind eye as a form of self-preservation to minimise the accumulative harm of constantly defending ones social identity.

Findings also suggest, social support from family and friends as helpful in managing the transition at the university. In Thandeka's case she particularly mentioned her Mother, Mandisa mentioned her family and Azania both her family and friends. This analysis is consistent with the Lewis et.al. (2013) submission on Black females getting social support from friends and family in coping with gendered racism. Yosso (2005, p.79) affirms Black communities possess a social capital in establishing "networks of people and community resources." Social capital was also established in the *exercising agency* subtheme.

Participants also used student leadership and committee involvement as platforms to assert a sense of belonging, establish social networks and actively participate in transformation at the university. For example, Thandeka says she managed to integrate and establish plenty of relationships with students and staff by joining societies and committees. Participants also expressed an inclination to gravitate towards historically marginalised students when establishing friendships which signify a form of solidarity, affirmation and support. Perhaps it may also be a way to eliminate the possibility of being further ostracised by some white counterparts. For example, Mandisa says "...you find your people, you find your space and then, you know uhm things became better." Constatine, Wilton and Cardwell's (2003) research found social networks among Black students as a prominent resource. Yosso (2005,

p.80) affirms social capital provides “instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions”. The ‘*Stay woke*’ subtheme highlights participants’ awareness and conscientisation of social injustices from their lived experiences of marginalisation at SU. An autoethnography of three postgraduate students of colour submit that “wokeness is protective like armor, in that our critical consciousness can serve as a tool for survival by providing the power to name and actively contest our lived realities of oppression” (Ashlee, Zamora & Karikari, 2017, p.98). Consistent with that, participants illustrate an awareness of the marginalisation faced as Black and female students, that is a useful knowledge skill in resisting marginalisation and identifying it.

Expressed support needs theme illuminates the needs of Black African female first-generation participants. All participants acknowledged the efforts implemented to transform the university, however, highlighted the lack of urgency in the progress of transformation. It is noteworthy to mention that all participants have been at the university for at least 6-8 years. For example, Thandeka acknowledged the change in visual redress but also pointed to the slow progress. The progress and implementation of transformation has been contested, Nkomo (2013, p.14) submitted that in cases it was described as “uneven and in some critical sectors has been opposed either fiercely, passive-aggressively, or in what can only be described as consignment to benign neglect.” Two participants also highlighted a need for and importance of representation of Black female and Black first-generation academics. Mandisa’s recounts meeting an accomplished Black African female academic for the first time in 5 years at the university and expresses how limitless her plans for her career expanded. This suggests a positive association between representation and self-efficacy. Harper (2013) asserts that academics play a critical role, specifically Black academics in understanding racial experiences, validating proficiency and enhancing the sense of belong of Black students in PWI’s. A consequence of a low representation of Black female academics

in work positions such as academia is that it negatively impacts the perceptions of Black female postgraduate students as potential lecturers and researchers (Walkington, 2017).

5.3. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to foreground the lived experiences of Black African participants at an HWI. Research findings demonstrate echoes of an unequal past as salient in the multi-layered experiences of marginalisation experienced by Black African female and first-generation participants. It supports literature that argues that a transformation approach focused on the composition of a diverse student body is not effective in creating an inclusive environment. Instead, is a breeding ground for contemporary and subtle forms of exclusion, which appear to be pronounced for students with intersected and marginalised identities.

Black African female first-generation participants encountered hostile marginalisation based on their cultural, racial and gender identity while faced with the pressure of being the first to pursue HE. As a consequence, it significantly impacted their emotional and psychological well-being. It is also noteworthy to mention participants demonstrated tenacity in their coping skills and knowledge skills to resist marginalisation. However, it is important for the university to meet the expressed needs of participants by asserting urgency in the progress of transformation and increasing representation of Black female and Black first-generation academics.

5.4. Limitations and contributions

This research has six limitations that will be mentioned here. First, the quantity of participants in the research means that the findings are not generalisable to the rest of South African HWI's. However, pertaining to the aims of the research, the quantity does not interfere with the rich insights yielded in the lived experiences of the three Black African

female first-generation students at SU. Second, the research participant recruitment phase was during the period of tight presidential Covid-19 regulations, therefore the unreliability of internet connection often interfered with the interviews progress. For example, I would ask participants to repeat what was previously said and vice versa, due to minor internet glitches. In the case of Azania, we had to reschedule in the middle of the interview to the following day. I also find it noteworthy to mention that an online interview option provided participants with the autonomy to decide where (interview setting) they are most comfortable and at ease to express their experiences. Speaking of modes of expression, in spite of participants' eloquence in expressing their experiences in English, there were minor instances where a participant found it naturally easier to describe an experience in her mother tongue and then quickly revert to English. In part, this may have weakened the depth of what was expressed, because of the language of communication used for the interview. Fifth, in this research participants' educational background is homogenous, relative to that they all shared similarities in department and faculty of studies they pursuing. According to Etikon (2016) a homogenous sample is a group sharing similar characteristics. This means it is likely that participants navigate within similar academic, leadership and social networks. Meaning the findings are less representative of students studying in different faculties and departments at SU. Sixth, participants are referrals from one participant, it is possible that they share similar worldviews, nevertheless, it still does not take away from their personal experiences and subjective meanings construed from their social realities.

As much as there are limitations in this research, there are relevant contributions for the progress of transformation in policy making and debates in HE, particularly in HWI's. Participants experiences illuminate the tension of navigating intersected and marginalised identities in an HWI which in turn affects their emotional and psychological well-being. Additionally, the knowledge of intersectionality is not adequately explored in SA literature

for HE studies. This research will hopefully inspire a less homogenous campus culture in HE, enhance cultural inclusivity on campus, a reimagining of residence rules and practices to dismantle hegemonic masculinity that disempower and threaten the safety of female students, which are seemingly more pronounced for Black female students. In summary, this research posits for a transformation approach that enhances a sense of belonging and comfort for Black African female first-generation students identities and overall inclusivity of ‘othered’ social identities.

5.5. Recommendations

In consideration of the identified limitations of the research, this section provides recommendations that will advance future research. Firstly, facilitating a focus group discussion after the semi-structured interviews to present the findings and gather opinions, attitudes and experiences of participants regarding the findings. This will hopefully provide a platform for participants to feel a sense of support and reassurance from shared experiences. Secondly, replicating a similar research to the lived experiences of Black female first-generation students in HWI’s for white male non-first-generation students in HWI’s will be significant in investigating possible differences in experiences based on their intersecting social identities. It is hoped that this will be valuable in showing that campus culture plays a critical role in feeling a sense of belonging, or lack thereof, based on students identities and inspire inclusivity in that regard. Lastly, majority of SA literature investigates the challenges of marginalised identities in HWI’s. This research proposes future research to widen the scope of research and investigate social agents that perpetuate marginalisation, discrimination and micro-aggressive behaviour in HWI.

5.6. Implications

The below section presents the potential implications for transformation that are gathered from the obtained insights of the research findings:

- i. **Reimagine a new campus culture and practices.** The campus cultural ethos of a university influences the sense of belonging and the lack thereof, of students based on their cultural identity. A dominant campus culture perpetuates an exclusion of ‘othered’ cultural identities and by extension their racial, ethnic, language and social class background. Campus culture also permeates in campus activities and practices, for instance Mandisa expressed her experience and the lack of representation of African culture in the executed activities for first-year welcoming programmes. It can be said that a campus culture is a praxis used to create a university environment and practices. If it is not representative of the multiverse cultural identities that occupy the space, then it is likely to be exclusionary especially for Black students in HWI’s. Therefore, this research agrees with Lopez (as cited in Gusa, 2010, p.480) on the responsibility of HE institutions in creating cultural environments that “encourage respect and intercultural understanding.” However, that is only attainable once a university equally embraces all cultural identities, particularly HWI’s.
- ii. **Develop a holistic transformation approach.** As some researchers have already gathered, a focused increase on the numbers of historically marginalised students for transformation is not affective in creating an inclusive environment. The findings on this research suggest that marginalised and intersecting social identities need to be taken into consideration when developing intervention strategies for an inclusive campus climate. Furthermore, the findings illuminate the fact that Black students social identities are heterogeneous and a blanket approach (e.g. increasing numbers) will not meet their uniquely intersected cultural, ethnic, language, gender and social

class background needs. Outclat and Skews-Cox (as cited in Park, 2009, p.293) asserts that “campus communities must embrace their students in their diversity, particularity, and uniqueness.” Participants in this research highlighted the discrepancy between the diversity of students at the university versus how they experienced the space as exclusionary and less receptive to their social identities. At a tangible and most attainable level, the university should focus on the representation of Black, particularly African female and first-generation academics (lecture and researchers). Related to the findings, it will hopefully heighten Black African female first-generation students sense of belonging, lower feelings of self-doubt, imposter syndrome, insecurity and enhance self-efficacy.

- iii. **Develop progressive academic curriculum programmes.** Participants experiences of racial and gender marginalisation were mostly explained as acts from white counterparts and male counterparts. Pointing to the lack of awareness and conscientisation some counterparts have regarding their racial and sexist selves. Cabrera et al. (2016) uses the concept of racial arrested development to highlight the inadequacy of educating and challenging White students of their own racial privilege and acts of racial microaggression at university. In relation to teaching and learning White privilege pedagogy (Cabrera et al., 2016) modules such as Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness should be incorporated in every qualification at the university. This will be beneficial in heightening an awareness of conscious and subconscious racial prejudices that are supported by structural whiteness in HWI’s. Hopefully it will encourage more white students engagement in transformation of the campus climate and form allyship with racially marginalised students. In doing so, intergroup contact will possibly be enhanced because of an understanding of the lived experiences of marginalised students and their awareness of embodied whiteness.

Similarly, manifestations of toxic hegemonic masculinity practices, as evident in the findings, subordinate and undermine female identities also needs addressing. Two participants also mentioned a female student who was physically assaulted by a male student on campus. Pointing to the need for gender studies in all qualification programmes for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees as essential in disrupting hierarchal perceptions of gendered and sexuality differences, power and violence. Bryne (2017) reports on women and gender study units in SA public universities and found that they tend to be marginalised in terms of funding due to neoliberal perceptions that undervalue its significance within the job market and that most SA universities do not offer it as a mainstream study programme. Thirdly, only two universities have gender studies mainstream, namely the University of Western Cape and University of KwaZulu-Natal (Bryne, 2017). In short, this research submits that issues of racism and sexism among students also need to be tackled from a pedagogical aspect, to cultivate critical engagement and prevent behaviours that replicate social inequalities. Relating to first-generation students Ives and Castillo-Montoya (2020) says in addition to the known challenges first-generation students encounter, it is important for lecturers to understand first-generation students' lives at a microsystemic and macrosystemic level because it ultimately affects their academic experience, especially students with intersected and marginalised identities.

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Appendix A

TABEL 4: INGESKREWE STUDENTE VOLGENS PROGRAMVLAK, GESLAG EN RAS
TABLE 4: ENROLMENTS BY PROGRAMME LEVEL, GENDER AND RACE

| Ras/programvlak Race/programme level | 2007 | | | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | | 2012 | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total |
| Voorgaads/Undergraduate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W/White | 5600 | 5816 | 11416 | 5786 | 5789 | 11575 | 6030 | 6083 | 12113 | 6286 | 6189 | 12475 | 6379 | 6311 | 12690 | 6362 | 6172 | 12534 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 971 | 1379 | 2350 | 1050 | 1477 | 2527 | 1063 | 1480 | 2543 | 1112 | 1564 | 2676 | 1106 | 1684 | 2790 | 1087 | 1637 | 2724 |
| Swart/Black | 443 | 361 | 804 | 487 | 413 | 900 | 501 | 480 | 981 | 570 | 555 | 1125 | 641 | 656 | 1297 | 673 | 717 | 1390 |
| Indië/Indian | 79 | 140 | 219 | 81 | 136 | 217 | 88 | 144 | 232 | 101 | 147 | 248 | 107 | 167 | 274 | 114 | 170 | 284 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 7093 | 7696 | 14789 | 7404 | 7815 | 15219 | 7682 | 8167 | 15869 | 8069 | 8455 | 16524 | 8233 | 8818 | 17051 | 8236 | 8696 | 16932 |
| Nagraads/Postgraduate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W/White | 2230 | 2182 | 4412 | 2289 | 2271 | 4560 | 2368 | 2381 | 4749 | 2614 | 2599 | 5213 | 2782 | 2580 | 5362 | 2673 | 2609 | 5282 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 474 | 572 | 1046 | 606 | 796 | 1402 | 708 | 993 | 1701 | 687 | 1098 | 1785 | 666 | 945 | 1611 | 639 | 896 | 1535 |
| Swart/Black | 1119 | 916 | 2035 | 1208 | 1007 | 2215 | 1327 | 1203 | 2530 | 1475 | 1295 | 2770 | 1527 | 1261 | 2788 | 1504 | 1263 | 2767 |
| Indië/Indian | 146 | 102 | 248 | 144 | 106 | 250 | 139 | 114 | 253 | 142 | 133 | 275 | 154 | 128 | 282 | 147 | 122 | 269 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 3969 | 3772 | 7741 | 4247 | 4180 | 8427 | 4542 | 4691 | 9233 | 4918 | 5125 | 10043 | 5129 | 4914 | 10043 | 4963 | 4890 | 9853 |
| Spesiale studente/Special students | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W/White | 258 | 442 | 700 | 334 | 477 | 811 | 364 | 527 | 891 | 394 | 499 | 893 | 385 | 478 | 863 | 373 | 413 | 786 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 5 | 44 | 49 | 11 | 37 | 48 | 23 | 63 | 86 | 20 | 43 | 63 | 20 | 33 | 53 | 29 | 30 | 59 |
| Swart/Black | 106 | 44 | 150 | 85 | 70 | 155 | 99 | 45 | 144 | 85 | 55 | 140 | 91 | 57 | 148 | 95 | 72 | 167 |
| Indië/Indian | 7 | 3 | 10 | 17 | 9 | 26 | 13 | 7 | 20 | 17 | 14 | 31 | 18 | 17 | 35 | 15 | 11 | 26 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 376 | 533 | 909 | 447 | 593 | 1040 | 499 | 642 | 1141 | 516 | 611 | 1127 | 514 | 585 | 1099 | 512 | 526 | 1038 |
| Alle studente/All students | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W/White | 8088 | 8440 | 16528 | 8409 | 8537 | 16946 | 8762 | 8991 | 17753 | 9294 | 9287 | 18581 | 9546 | 9369 | 18915 | 9408 | 9194 | 18602 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 1450 | 1995 | 3445 | 1667 | 2310 | 3977 | 1794 | 2536 | 4330 | 1819 | 2705 | 4524 | 1792 | 2662 | 4454 | 1755 | 2563 | 4318 |
| Swart/Black | 1668 | 1321 | 2989 | 1780 | 1490 | 3270 | 1927 | 1728 | 3655 | 2130 | 1905 | 4035 | 2259 | 1974 | 4233 | 2272 | 2052 | 4324 |
| Indië/Indian | 232 | 245 | 477 | 242 | 251 | 493 | 240 | 265 | 505 | 260 | 294 | 554 | 279 | 312 | 591 | 276 | 303 | 579 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 11438 | 12001 | 23439 | 12098 | 12588 | 24686 | 12723 | 13520 | 26243 | 13503 | 14191 | 27694 | 13876 | 14317 | 28193 | 13711 | 14112 | 27823 |

Appendix B

TABEL 4: INGESKREWE STUDENTE VOLGENS PROGRAMVLAK, GESLAG EN RAS
TABLE 4: ENROLMENTS BY PROGRAMME LEVEL, GENDER AND RACE

| Ras/programvlak Race/programme level | 2014 | | | 2015 | | | 2016 | | | 2017** | | | 2018** | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total | Manlik Male | Vroulik Female | Totaal Total |
| Voorgraads/Undergraduate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wit/White | 6 134 | 6 266 | 12 400 | 6 178 | 6 468 | 12 646 | 6 140 | 6 622 | 12 762 | 5 976 | 6 608 | 12 584 | 5 859 | 6 595 | 12 454 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 1 278 | 2 119 | 3 397 | 1 425 | 2 298 | 3 723 | 1 482 | 2 429 | 3 911 | 1 522 | 2 541 | 4 063 | 1 539 | 2 581 | 4 120 |
| Swart/Black | 834 | 1 088 | 1 922 | 926 | 1 274 | 2 200 | 1 050 | 1 308 | 2 358 | 1 131 | 1 448 | 2 579 | 1 250 | 1 593 | 2 843 |
| Indiër/Indian | 163 | 256 | 419 | 183 | 290 | 473 | 219 | 332 | 551 | 248 | 366 | 614 | 269 | 382 | 651 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 8 409 | 9 729 | 18 138 | 8 712 | 10 330 | 19 042 | 8 891 | 10 691 | 19 582 | 8 877 | 10 963 | 19 840 | 8 917 | 11 151 | 20 068 |
| Nagraads/Postgraduate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wit/White | 2 677 | 2 676 | 5 353 | 2 644 | 2 665 | 5 309 | 2 616 | 2 653 | 5 269 | 2 669 | 2 684 | 5 353 | 2 500 | 2 656 | 5 156 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 679 | 870 | 1 549 | 588 | 846 | 1 434 | 599 | 871 | 1 470 | 623 | 924 | 1 547 | 619 | 956 | 1 575 |
| Swart/Black | 1 569 | 1 351 | 2 920 | 1 572 | 1 441 | 3 013 | 1 621 | 1 492 | 3 113 | 1 588 | 1 629 | 3 217 | 1 618 | 1 764 | 3 382 |
| Indiër/Indian | 170 | 127 | 297 | 161 | 134 | 295 | 160 | 142 | 302 | 164 | 153 | 317 | 152 | 173 | 325 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 5 095 | 5 024 | 10 119 | 4 965 | 5 086 | 10 051 | 4 996 | 5 158 | 10 154 | 5 044 | 5 390 | 10 434 | 4 889 | 5 549 | 10 438 |
| Geleentheidsstudente/ Occasional students | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wit/White | 394 | 489 | 883 | 385 | 424 | 809 | 412 | 464 | 876 | 541 | 459 | 1 000 | 386 | 450 | 836 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 36 | 33 | 69 | 44 | 37 | 81 | 37 | 25 | 62 | 58 | 51 | 109 | 22 | 39 | 61 |
| Swart/Black | 95 | 69 | 164 | 91 | 51 | 142 | 96 | 62 | 158 | 121 | 100 | 221 | 76 | 73 | 149 |
| Indiër/Indian | 9 | 11 | 20 | 13 | 12 | 25 | 16 | 6 | 22 | 9 | 12 | 21 | 9 | 11 | 20 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 534 | 602 | 1 136 | 533 | 524 | 1 057 | 561 | 557 | 1 118 | 729 | 622 | 1 351 | 493 | 573 | 1 066 |
| Alle studente/All students | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wit/White | 9 205 | 9 431 | 18 636 | 9 207 | 9 557 | 18 764 | 9 168 | 9 739 | 18 907 | 9 186 | 9 751 | 18 937 | 8 745 | 9 701 | 18 446 |
| Bruin/Coloured | 1 993 | 3 022 | 5 015 | 2 057 | 3 181 | 5 238 | 2 118 | 3 325 | 5 443 | 2 203 | 3 516 | 5 719 | 2 180 | 3 576 | 5 756 |
| Swart/Black | 2 498 | 2 508 | 5 006 | 2 589 | 2 766 | 5 355 | 2 767 | 2 862 | 5 629 | 2 840 | 3 177 | 6 017 | 2 944 | 3 430 | 6 374 |
| Indiër/Indian | 342 | 394 | 736 | 357 | 436 | 793 | 395 | 480 | 875 | 421 | 531 | 952 | 430 | 566 | 996 |
| TOTAAL/TOTAL | 14 038 | 15 355 | 29 393 | 14 210 | 15 940 | 30 150 | 14 448 | 16 406 | 30 854 | 14 650 | 16 975 | 31 625 | 14 299 | 17 273 | 31 572 |

* Geleentheidsstudente. Hierdie studente skryf slegs vir enkele modules in. Die inskrywings is nie met die oog op die verwerwing van 'n kwalifikasie nie.

* Occasional Students: These students only enrol for selected modules. These enrolments do not have the attainment of a qualification in mind.

** Sluit uit studente met geslag nie-binêr en ras weerhou

** Excluding students with gender Non binary and Race Withheld

Appendix C: Participant recruitment poster

UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
Jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner






Call for research participants

I am Nombasa Mbatyoti, a Masters Psychology research student at Stellenbosch University. I am conducting a research titled Black female first-generation students' in an historically white South African University.

I would like to invite interested participants to the research. The following is the inclusion criteria:

- (i) Identify as a Black African female first-generation student
- (ii) South African citizen
- (iii) 18 years of age or older
- (iv) Postgraduate student, and
- (v) Currently enrolled or graduated between 2019-2021 at Stellenbosch University

You are welcome to invite associates who share the same characteristics.

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| What does it involve? |  | A confidential semi-structured interview on Microsoft Teams for 45 minutes to 1 hour each. |
| Who approved the research? |  | The Stellenbosch University ethics board and the internal Institutional Permission board has granted permission to conduct research. |
| Are there incentives? |  | Yes, a R100 Takealot voucher. |
| Contact |  | If you are interested to participate in the research, please email mbatyotin@sun.ac.za |

Appendix D: Semi-structured interview schedule

Lived experiences at Stellenbosch University

1. Tell me about your experience of being a student at Stellenbosch University?
 - 1.1 Prompts: Experience of first arriving at the University; experience in residence; experience in lectures; experience of meeting new people; experience of interacting with academic and support staff; social settings and sports clubs?
2. What, if any, support did you receive to help you transition into the university?
 - 2.1 Prompts: Form of support? Who provided the support? How was it experienced? Was it formal or informal? Was it ongoing or once off?
3. How has the universities strong commitment to the Afrikaans heritage, culture and language impacted your learning experience at Stellenbosch University?
4. Do you feel a sense of community and representation in terms of your heritage, culture and language at Stellenbosch University?
5. What are your impressions of transformation at the university?
 - 5.1 Prompts: What have you observed? What is being done? What else could be done?

Sociocultural integration/isolation on campus

1. Can you tell me what it was like to make friends and establish social networks when you first arrived on this campus?
 - 1.1 Prompts: Did you have any difficulties in making friends and establishing social networks?
2. In retrospect, how do you feel about the decision to come to Stellenbosch University?
 - 2.1 Prompts: How did you manage the transition? To what extent do you feel a level of integration in social and academic activities?

3. Can you tell me about any time you might have felt isolated and unwelcomed?
4. Can you tell me about a time you felt connected and welcomed on campus?
5. Based on your experience, what additional support needs should the university implement to ensure appropriate and affective practices of inclusion are practiced at Stellenbosch University?

Academic and mental health concerns related to ‘race’

1. How do you feel other students and lecturers respond to you as Black student?
 - 1.1 Prompts: Based on your experience, have you ever felt there are stereotypes of Black students at this university? What stereotypes of being a Black student are you aware of? Do they have any meaning to you ?
2. Tell me about a time, if ever, you felt the pressure to make an impression academically or socially?
 - 2.1 Prompts: Why did you feel the need to make an impression? To whom did you feel you need to make an impression to?
3. Tell me about a time, if ever, when you felt “undeserving” to be at Stellenbosch University?
 - 3.1 Prompts: What triggered that feeling? How did you manage to overcome that feeling?
4. How comfortable or uncomfortable are you in raising questions in class or discussing your academic performance with your lecturer, tutor or fellow classmates?
5. Tell me about a time, if ever, when you felt yourself losing interest in activities (e.g. socialising with friends, playing sports or participating in cultural activities) you used to enjoy?
 - 5.1 Prompts: How have you managed the feelings of losing interest?

6. What suggestions would you offer in promoting an easier social adjustment and successful academic attainment of Black female first-generation students?

Stereotype concerns based on gender

1. Tell me about a time, if ever, you felt that your capabilities (i.e. intellectual or physical capabilities) are being underestimated by your male peers or male academic staff because of your gender?
2. Are there any traditional practices on campus or residences, that you feel promote the perils of a patriarchal system?
3. Do you think competitive sports at Stellenbosch University is a symbolic practice of masculinity? If so, how?
 - 3.1. Prompts: Does it impact the extent of your involvement in competitive sports?
4. Do you feel there is equal amounts of “female” sport support on campus compared to “male” sports support?
 - 4.1 Prompts: What have you observed in terms of the support of “male” and “female” sports on campus?
5. In positions of leadership (i.e. SRC, student parties, head of department) on campus, is there enough representation of Black females?
6. Do you feel comfortable enough to walk around on campus at any time of the day without feeling a sense of fear?
7. Prompts: Do you feel your safety in threat on campus because of your gender?
 - 7.1. Do you think the safety and security measures on campus are effective enough to prevent, if any, gender based violence on campus? If not, what suggestions do you have to ensure safety measures are effective?

Transitioning concerns of first-generation students

1. What does it mean to you to be a first-generation student?
2. What, if any, barriers do first-generation students encounter at Stellenbosch University?
3. Have you ever felt you want to dropout at Stellenbosch University? If so, why? Why did you stay?
4. Do you feel that your mental health has declined or improved or stayed the same since you have arrived at Stellenbosch University? If so, how? Why do you think this is so?
5. Do you feel that your families educational, cultural and economic background has impacted how you socially position yourself at Stellenbosch University?
6. How, if at all, have your family supported you in your transition to university?
- 6.1 Prompts: What is the role of your family in supporting you at university? What has made it harder or easier for your family in your transition into Stellenbosch University?

Appendix E: Symbols on transcripts and extracts

- Participant or interviewer discontinues sentence abruptly

- ... Participant or interviewers natural pauses

- [...] Omitted interviewers response

- [???] Internet disconnection

Appendix F: Ethical approval



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NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

28 April 2020

Project number: 12979

Project Title: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university

Dear Miss Nombasa Mbatyoti

Your response to stipulations submitted on 11 March 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

| Protocol approval date (Humanities) | Protocol expiration date (Humanities) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10 March 2020 | 9 March 2021 |

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1) There is currently a postponement of all research activities at Stellenbosch University, apart from research that can be conducted remotely/online and requires no human contact, and research in those areas specifically acknowledged as essential services by the South African government under the presidential regulations related to COVID-19 (e.g. clinical studies).

2) Remote (desktop-based/online) research activities, online analyses of existing data, and the writing up of research results are strongly encouraged in all SU research environments.

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (12979) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

| Document Type | File Name | Date | Version |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Default | NM Letter | 16/10/2019 | First version |
| Default | NM HPCSA Letter | 06/11/2019 | First version |
| Data collection tool | APPENDIX B- Interview schedule | 17/02/2020 | Second version |
| Data collection tool | APPENDIX C- Focus group outline | 17/02/2020 | First version |
| Budget | Estimated research budget | 17/02/2020 | Second version |
| Informed Consent Form | APPENDIX A- Consent form | 17/02/2020 | Second version |
| Research Protocol/Proposal | MA Proposal (2019) - Copy | 17/02/2020 | Second version |
| Proof of permission | Institutional permission | 18/02/2020 | First version |
| Default | Ethics response | 18/02/2020 | First version |
| Default | Approval stipulations response | 11/03/2020 | First version |

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

Continuing Review: The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits: If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix G: Institutional permission



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION:

AGREEMENT ON USE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION IN RESEARCH

Name of Researcher: Nombasa Mbatyoti

Name of Research Project: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university.

Service Desk ID: IRPSD-1771

Date of Issue: 20 July 2020

The researcher has received institutional permission to proceed with this project as stipulated in the institutional permission application and within the conditions set out in this agreement.

| 1 WHAT THIS AGREEMENT IS ABOUT | |
|--|---|
| What is POPI? | <p>1.1 POPI is the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.</p> <p>1.2 POPI regulates the entire information life cycle from collection, through use and storage and even the destruction of personal information.</p> |
| Why is this important to us? | <p>1.3 Even though POPI is important, it is not the primary motivation for this agreement. The privacy of our students and employees are important to us. We want to ensure that no research project poses any risks to their privacy.</p> <p>1.4 However, you are required to familiarise yourself with, and comply with POPI in its entirety.</p> |
| What is considered to be personal information? | <p>1.5 'Personal information' means information relating to an identifiable, living, individual or company, including, but not limited to:</p> <p>1.5.1 information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth of the person;</p> <p>1.5.2 information relating to the education or the medical, financial, criminal or</p> |

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| | <p>employment history of the person;</p> <p>1.5.3 any identifying number, symbol, e-mail address, physical address, telephone number, location information, online identifier or other particular assignment to the person;</p> <p>1.5.4 the biometric information of the person;</p> <p>1.5.5 the personal opinions, views or preferences of the person;</p> <p>1.5.6 correspondence sent by the person that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature or further correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence;</p> <p>1.5.7 the views or opinions of another individual about the person; and</p> <p>1.5.8 the name of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person.</p> |
| Some personal information is more sensitive. | <p>1.6 Some personal information is considered to be sensitive either because:</p> <p>1.6.1 POPI has classified it as sensitive;</p> <p>1.6.2 if the information is disclosed it can be used to defraud someone; or</p> <p>1.6.3 the disclosure of the information will be embarrassing for the research subject.</p> <p>1.7 The following personal information is considered particularly sensitive:</p> <p>1.7.1 Religious or philosophical beliefs;</p> <p>1.7.2 race or ethnic origin;</p> <p>1.7.3 trade union membership;</p> <p>1.7.4 political persuasion;</p> <p>1.7.5 health and health related documentation such as medical scheme documentation;</p> <p>1.7.6 sex life;</p> <p>1.7.7 biometric information;</p> <p>1.7.8 criminal behaviour;</p> <p>1.7.9 personal information of children under the age of 18;</p> <p>1.7.10 financial information such as banking details, details relating to financial</p> |

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| | <p>products such as insurance, pension funds or other investments.</p> <p>1.8 You may make use of this type of information, but must take extra care to ensure that you comply with the rest of the rules in this document.</p> |
| 2 COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL AND LEGAL RESEARCH PRACTICES | |
| You must commit to the use of ethical and legal research practices. | <p>2.1 You must obtain ethical clearance before commencing with this study.</p> <p>2.2 You commit to only employing ethical and legal research practices.</p> |
| You must protect the privacy of your research subjects. | <p>2.3 You undertake to protect the privacy of the research subjects throughout the project.</p> |
| 3 RESEARCH SUBJECT PARTICIPATION | |
| Personal information of identifiable research subjects must not be used without their consent. | <p>3.1 Unless you have obtained a specific exemption for your research project, consent must be obtained in writing from the research subject, before their personal information is gathered.</p> |
| Research subjects must be able to withdraw from the research project. | <p>3.2 Research subjects must always be able to withdraw from the research project (without any negative consequences) and to insist that you destroy their personal information.</p> |
| Consent must be specific and informed. | <p>3.3 Unless you have obtained a specific exemption for your research project, the consent must be specific and informed. Before giving consent, the research subject must be informed in writing of:</p> <p>3.3.1 The purpose of the research,</p> <p>3.3.2 what personal information about them will be collected (particularly sensitive personal information),</p> <p>3.3.3 how the personal information will be collected (if not directly from them),</p> <p>3.3.4 the specific purposes for which the personal information will be used,</p> <p>3.3.5 what participation will entail (i.e. what the research subject will have to do),</p> <p>3.3.6 whether the supply of the personal information is voluntary or mandatory for purposes of the research project,</p> |

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| | <p>3.3.7 who the personal information will be shared with,</p> <p>3.3.8 how the personal information will be published,</p> <p>3.3.9 the risks to participation (if any),</p> <p>3.3.10 their rights to access, correct or object to the use of their personal information,</p> <p>3.3.11 their right to withdraw from the research project, and</p> <p>3.3.12 how these rights can be exercised.</p> |
| Consent must be voluntary. | 3.4 Participation in the research project must always be voluntary. You must never pressure or coerce research subjects into participating and persons who choose not to participate must not be penalised. |
| Using the personal information of children? | <p>3.5 A child is anybody under the age of 18.</p> <p>3.6 Unless you have obtained a specific exemption in writing for your research project, you must obtain</p> <p>3.6.1 the consent of the child's parent or guardian, and</p> <p>3.6.2 if the child is over the age of 7, the assent of the child, before collecting the child's information.</p> |
| Research subjects have a right to access. | 3.7 Research subjects have the right to access their personal information, obtain confirmation of what information is in your possession and who had access to the information. It is strongly recommended that you keep detailed records of access to the information. |
| Research subjects have a right to object. | <p>3.8 Research subjects have the right to object to the use of their personal information.</p> <p>3.9 Once they have objected, you are not permitted to use the personal information until the dispute has been resolved.</p> |
| 4 COLLECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION | |
| Only collect what is necessary. | 4.1 You must not collect unnecessary or irrelevant personal information from research subjects. |
| Only collect accurate personal information. | 4.2 You have an obligation to ensure that the personal information you collect is accurate. Particularly when you are collecting it from a source other than the |

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| | <p>research subject.</p> <p>4.3 If you have any reason to doubt the quality of the personal information you must verify or validate the personal information before you use it.</p> |
| 5 USING PERSONAL INFORMATION | |
| Only use the personal information for the purpose for which you collected it. | <p>5.1 Only use the personal information for the purpose for which you collected it.</p> <p>5.2 If your research project requires you to use the personal information for a materially different purpose than the one communicated to the research subject, you must inform the research subjects and Stellenbosch University of this and give participants the option to withdraw from the research project.</p> |
| Be careful when you share personal information. | <p>5.3 Never share personal information with third parties without making sure that they will also follow these rules.</p> <p>5.4 Always conclude a non-disclosure agreement with the third parties.</p> <p>5.5 Ensure that you transfer the personal information securely.</p> |
| Personal information must be anonymous whenever possible. | 5.6 If the research subject's identity is not relevant for the aims of the research project, the personal information must not be identifiable. In other words, the personal information must be anonymous (de-identified). |
| Pseudonyms must be used whenever possible. | 5.7 If the research subject's identity is relevant for the aims of the research project or is required to co-ordinate, for example, interviews, names and other identifiers such as ID or student numbers must be collected and stored separately from the rest of the research data and research publications. In other words, only you must be able to identify the research subject. |
| Publication of research | <p>5.8 The identity of your research subjects should not be revealed in any publication.</p> <p>5.9 In the event that your research project requires that the identity of your research subjects must be revealed, you must apply for an exemption from this rule.</p> |
| 6 SECURING PERSONAL INFORMATION | |
| You are responsible for the confidentiality and security of the personal information | <p>6.1 Information must always be handled in the strictest confidence.</p> <p>6.2 You must ensure the integrity and security of the information in your possession or under your control by taking appropriate and reasonable technical and organisational measures to prevent:</p> |

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| | <p>6.2.1 Loss of, damage to or unauthorised destruction of information; and</p> <p>6.2.2 unlawful access to or processing of information.</p> <p>6.3 This means that you must take reasonable measures to:</p> <p>6.3.1 Identify all reasonably foreseeable internal and external risks to personal information in your possession or under your control;</p> <p>6.3.2 establish and maintain appropriate safeguards against the risks identified;</p> <p>6.3.3 regularly verify that the safeguards are effectively implemented; and</p> <p>6.3.4 ensure that the safeguards are continually updated in response to new risks or deficiencies in previously implemented safeguards.</p> |
| Sensitive personal information requires extra care. | 6.4 You will be expected to implement additional controls in order to secure sensitive personal information. |
| Are you sending any personal information overseas? | <p>6.5 If you are sending personal information overseas, you have to make sure that:</p> <p>6.5.1 The information will be protected by the laws of that country;</p> <p>6.5.2 the company or institution to who you are sending have agreed to keep the information confidential, secure and to not use it for any other purpose; or</p> <p>6.5.3 get the specific and informed consent of the research subject to send the information to a country which does not have data protection laws.</p> |
| Be careful when you use cloud storage. | <p>6.6 Be careful when storing personal information in a cloud. Many clouds are hosted on servers outside of South Africa in countries that do not protect personal information to the same extent as South Africa. The primary example of this is the United States.</p> <p>6.7 It is strongly recommended that you use hosting companies who house their servers in South Africa.</p> <p>6.8 If this is not possible, you must ensure that the hosting company agrees to protect the personal information to the same extent as South Africa.</p> |
| 7 RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION | |
| You are not entitled to retain personal information when you no longer need it for the purposes | 7.1 Personal information must not be retained beyond the purpose of the research project, unless you have a legal or other justification for retaining the information. |

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| of the research project. | |
| If personal information is retained, you must make sure it remains confidential. | <p>7.2 If you do need to retain the personal information, you must assess whether:</p> <p>7.2.1 The records can be de-identified; and/or whether</p> <p>7.2.2 you have to keep all the personal information.</p> <p>7.3 You must ensure that the personal information which you retain remains confidential, secure and is only used for the purposes for which it was collected.</p> |
| 8 INFORMATION BREACH PROCEDURE | |
| In the event of an information breach you must notify us immediately. | <p>8.1 If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the personal information in your possession or under your control has been accessed by any unauthorised person or has been disclosed, you must notify us immediately.</p> <p>8.2 We will notify the research subjects in order to enable them to take measures to contain the impact of the breach.</p> |
| This is the procedure you must follow. | <p>8.3 You must follow the following procedure:</p> <p>8.3.1 Contact the Division for Institutional Research and Planning at 021 808 9385 and permission@sun.ac.za;</p> <p>8.3.2 you will then be required to complete the information breach report form which is attached as Annexure A.</p> <p>8.4 You are required to inform us of a information breach within 24 hours. Ensure that you have access to the required information.</p> |
| 9 MONITORING | |
| You may be audited. | <p>9.1 We reserve the right to audit your research practices to assess whether you are complying with this agreement.</p> <p>9.2 You are required to give your full co-operation during the auditing process.</p> <p>9.3 We may also request to review:</p> <p>9.3.1 Forms (or other information gathering methods) and notifications to research subjects, as referred to in clause 3;</p> <p>9.3.2 non-disclosure agreements with third parties with whom the personal information is being shared, as referred to in clause 5.4;</p> |

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| | 9.3.3 agreements with foreign companies or institutes with whom the personal information is being shared, as referred to in clause 6.5. |
| 10 CHANGES TO RESEARCH | |
| You need to notify us if any aspect of your collection or use of personal information changes. | <p>10.1 You must notify us in writing if any aspect of your collection or use of personal information changes (e.g. such as your research methodology, recruitment strategy or the purpose for which you use the research).</p> <p>10.2 We may review and require amendments to the proposed changes to ensure compliance with this agreement.</p> <p>10.3 The notification must be sent to permission@sun.ac.za.</p> |
| 11 CONSEQUENCES OF BREACH | |
| What are the consequences of breaching this agreement? | <p>11.1 If you do not comply with this agreement, we may take disciplinary action or report such a breach to your home institute.</p> <p>11.2 You may be found guilty of research misconduct and may be censured in accordance with Stellenbosch University or your home institute's disciplinary code.</p> |
| You may have to compensate us in the event of any legal action. | <p>11.3 Non-compliance with this agreement could also lead to claims against Stellenbosch University in terms of POPI and/or other laws.</p> <p>11.4 Unless you are employed by or studying at Stellenbosch University, you indemnify Stellenbosch University against any claims (including all legal fees) from research subjects or any regulatory authority which are the result of your research project. You may also be held liable for the harm to our reputation should there be an information breach as a result of your non-compliance with this agreement.</p> |
| 12 CONTACT US | |
| Please contact us if you have any questions. | Should you have any questions relating to this agreement you should contact permission@sun.ac.za . |

Annexure 'A'**Instruction:**

Please send this Notice to permission@sun.ac.za. If you have any difficulty completing the Notice, please contact the Division for Institutional Research and Planning at 021 808 9385. You must confirm that the Notice was received.

NOTIFICATION OF INFORMATION BREACH

Name of Researcher: _____

Name of Research Project: _____

Service Desk ID: _____

A security breach happens when you know (or you **reasonably believe**) that there has been:

- (a) loss of Personal Information ("PI")
- (b) damage to PI
- (c) unauthorised destruction of PI
- (d) unauthorised access to PI
- (e) unauthorised processing of PI

| | |
|--|--|
| Date and time of security breach: | |
| Brief description of the security breach (what was lost and how). Please identify the equipment, software and/or physical premises and whether it is by hacking, lost device, public disclosure (email), theft or other means: | |
| Name of the person/s responsible for the security breach (if known): | |
| Is the security breach ongoing? | |
| Describe the steps taken to contain the security breach: | |
| What steps are being taken to investigate the cause of breach? | |

Appendix H: Latest amendment approval**NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

REC: SBER - Amendment Form

19 January 2021

Project number: 12979

Project Title: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university

Dear Miss Nombasa Mbatyoti

Co-investigators:

Your REC: SBER - Amendment Form submitted on 24/12/2020 21:27 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

| Protocol approval date (Humanities) | Protocol expiration date (Humanities) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10 March 2020 | 9 March 2021 |

GENERAL REC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT:**INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (12979) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

| Document Type | File Name | Date | Version |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|
| Research Protocol/Proposal | (2) Amendments MA proposal | 24/12/2020 | 5 |

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

Continuing Review: The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits: If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix I: Annual progress report

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NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Annual Progress/ Final Report

12 March 2021

Project number: 12979

Project Title: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university

Dear Miss Nombasa Mbatyoti

Your response to stipulations submitted on 11/03/2021 14:18 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

| Protocol approval date (Humanities) | Protocol expiration date (Humanities) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 9 March 2021 | 8 March 2022 |

GENERAL REC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT:**INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (12979) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

| Document Type | File Name | Date | Version |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|
| Informed Consent Form | Consent form | 11/02/2021 | 6th version version |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Research Protocol/Proposal | Amendments- MA proposal | 11/03/2021 | 7 |
| Default | Response letter | 11/03/2021 | 1st version |

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

Continuing Review: The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is the PI's responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.

Provision of Counselling or emergency support: When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits: If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix J: Protocol deviation



NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Protocol Deviation form

4 June 2021

Project number: 12979

Project Title: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university

Dear Miss N Mbatyoti

Co-investigators:

Your REC: SBER - Protocol Deviation form submitted on 27/05/2021 11:59 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Please note below expiration date of this approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

| Protocol approval date (Humanities) | Protocol expiration date (Humanities) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 9 March 2021 | 8 March 2022 |

GENERAL REC COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT:

INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: SBE, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (12979) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

You are required to submit a progress report to the REC: SBE before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Once you have completed your research, you are required to submit a final report to the REC: SBE for review.

Included Documents:

| Document Type | File Name | Date | Version |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| Default | Focus group outline | 27/05/2021 | Same version |
|---------|---------------------|------------|--------------|

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioral and Education Research

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

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Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

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Final reports: When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits: If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

Appendix K: Participant consent form



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

TITLE: BLACK FEMALE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES AT AN HISTORICALLY WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

I am Nombasa Mbatyoti, a Masters Psychology research student at Stellenbosch University. My supervisor Prof. J. Bantjes and I would like for you to participate in a research conducted by us. You have been invited to participate in the research because you might be able to offer helpful insights into the experiences of Black female first-generation students at Stellenbosch University.

A. Purpose of the research

This research study is concerned with Black female first-generation students' experiences in a historically white institution (HWI). This research will explore the following: (i) Lived experiences of attending an HWI, (ii) perceptions (if any) of gendered and racialized microaggressions and/or institutionalised exclusionary practices, (iii) strategies employed to negotiate the university system, and (iv) expressed support needs.

B. Participant procedure

If you agree to participate in the research, the following participant procedures apply to you:

1. Attend a semi-structured interview, which will take place in Prof. J. Bantjes's office in the Department of Psychology, Wilcock's building or online. The face to face semi-structured interviews will be audio recorded and online semi-structured interviews will be video recorded. Interviews will be 45 minutes to 1 hour long.

C. Participation and withdrawal

Participation in the research is voluntary, if you decide to participate you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

D. Potential discomforts for participants

A couple of questions that are asked during the semi-structured interview session may evoke emotions. If this happens, you have a choice to withdraw from the study. Alternatively, the Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic (Tel: 021 808 2696/ Email: wcp@sun.ac.za) has

confirmed to be available for service to support participants that may suffer psychological distress during the research I will conduct.

E. Payment for participation

There will be R100 Takealot voucher provided to participants.

F. Confidentiality of participant

Only my supervisor, Prof. J. Bantjes and I will have access to the information (data) shared during semi-structured interviews. In addition, the data will be transcribed by the professional transcription services for researchers in the Department of Psychology. The transcriber will sign a non-disclosure agreement to ensure the confidentiality of the data. The data will be stored electronically in an external hard drive that will be securely kept and backup data will be stored using Microsoft OneDrive. The data will be stored for a year after it has been collected. Participants will remain anonymous by using pseudonyms. All participating members in the focus group will be aware of the confidential nature of the study, no one will be allowed to share any information shared during focus group discussion.

G. Identification of researchers

If you have any questions or concerns with the research, please email me at naumbasa@gmail.com or my supervisor at jbantjes@sun.ac.za.

Signature of participant

I _____ hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the research. I am fully aware of the confidential nature of the research and agree to not share experiences with friends, family or acquaintances. I was also given the opportunity to ask questions with regards to the research and they were answered to my satisfaction.

_____ Sign

_____ Date

Signature of researcher

I Nombasa Mbatyoti declare that I have thoroughly explained the information on the consent form. The explanation was done in English or isiXhosa.

_____ Sign

_____ Date

Appendix L: Welgevallen community psychology clinic



WELGEVALLEN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC

Department of Psychology, Stellenbosch University

Tel: 021 808 2696 Email: wcpcc@sun.ac.za Web: www.sun.ac.za/wcpcc

16/10/2019

RE: Free Psychological Services

The Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic is a clinic offering free psychological services to people in need within the greater Stellenbosch area.

This letter serves as confirmation that the clinic services are available to provide support to any research participants who may experience psychological distress during or due to participation in the research being conducted by Nombasa Mbatyoti.

The abovementioned research student is conducting her Masters research under the supervision of Dr Jason Bantjes from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

Her research title is: Black female first-generation students' lived experiences at an historically white South African university

The aforementioned researcher agrees to provide the clinic details to all research participants to ensure that they are aware of the support available, and are thus able to access the necessary support should the need arise.

Please do contact me for further information

Megan Snow

Clinical Psychologist
Clinic Manager
Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic
Stellenbosch University

Web: www.sun.ac.za/wcpcc

Tel: 021 808 2696

Email: wcpcc@sun.ac.za