

**ANALYSIS OF RACE AND RACISM DISCOURSE BY
ACADEMICS IN POST-APARTHEID HIGHER
EDUCATION**

by

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April 2019



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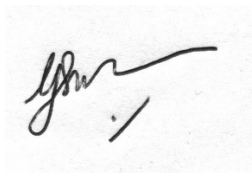


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PRELUDE

I wake up from a vivid dream. In the dream I hear the phone ringing from downstairs. I run upstairs quickly and notice that it's Joyce when I look at the caller ID. She says, "Hello..." There's a brief pause as I hesitate before answering "Hello..." After she explains that she is on holiday in Cape Town and having the time of her life, she asks me if I can guess who she is. I pause and blurt out "It's you Joyce..." It has been approximately twenty years since I last saw Joyce, so her excited response is: "Wow!!! I didn't think you would recognize my voice after all these years." This is when I laugh and respond to Joyce: "Oh yes, very impressive thanks to caller ID." We laugh and speak a bit more and then I abruptly wake up from my dream.

I am in the process of writing my PhD and issues of race are very salient in my mind. Now that I am awake, I begin to interrogate myself about why I feel somewhat unsettled by this seeming pleasant innocuous dream. To put you in the picture, it is important to mention that Joyce is white. I know her from high school and university and she would be what I consider a good friend from those days. However, when I question myself about the reason, I hesitated when I saw her name on the caller ID. I immediately conclude that it is because she is white and I have come to question the integrity of all my relationships with white 'friends' as a black person.

Many of these 'friends' I had visited but hardly any had ever visited me except perhaps briefly once or twice, once I had moved to the suburbs. I had flashbacks of comments or jokes (not very obviously derogatory) made about black people, myself included which I knew I detested but somehow knew I should not confront. There were also flashbacks of incidents and behaviours I remembered. I recall visiting the house of a white church member and being given a plate of food on a porcelain plate which I was told I could keep and should not give back. I remember traveling all the way to Cape Town from Lesotho for a wedding I had been invited to by a white friend and being told after the church service that I had not been included in the reception. I remember arriving at a church affiliated with one that I was a part of at home when I arrived in Durban and being the first black member of the church and feeling invisible. Being new to Durban I felt I needed to be welcomed and I remember that it was as if the church members did not see me. I then made the effort to be the one to reach out and bravely

pretended the stares I received from white and Indian church members were normal. The list of what I believed were slights is endless and though disturbing and hurtful I internalized them and made a note to be more cautious. As a result of humane and kind treatment of other white 'friends' I would relax and find myself once again at the tail end of a seeming slight or rejection and of course at times I would second guess these incidents.

Even after marriage and children I recalled that my children would ask why my visits with my 'friends' were not reciprocal. My children also longed to play with their 'friends' in their context, our home. Feeling guilty I asked one or two of my white 'friends' if their children could come and visit mine and they made excuses. I thought about the area where I lived, and it was not a township, it was safe, there was parking inside for visitors and some of my neighbours were even white. There was a temptation to explain why my friends should indulge the children and let them play together but the reality was I knew the status quo. I had been following the status quo all my life and my parents before me had been following the status quo too. My parents and I had been pandering to whiteness and this was never really reciprocated in our white relationships because no white person panders to blackness right?

There were exceptions however that left me longing for reciprocity in my black and white interactions. For example, my father's white friends from overseas would sleep over at my parents' house, once in a blue moon and it seemed very natural and comfortable. I suppose this is where my confusion comes from because there seemed to be evidence in some of my circles that it is possible for white and black people to interact as 'equal' human beings. After all, I do have black and white friends who are married to each other. So, it is possible for black and white people to live together in harmony isn't it? Prince Harry who is white and the epitome of whiteness and Meghan Markle who has a black mother and a white father also just got married so the case is closed right?

Later in the week I have a chat with a good friend who is living in another province. I tell her about my PhD topic and its social constructionist orientation where race is concerned. We have an animated discussion and later when I am back in Durban our conversation continues through social media. This friend of mine is black and we have

a similar upbringing. In one of her posts she states:

I'm just saying that instead of wishy-washy social constructs, from a PhD perspective, just like men and women are physiologically different, even their behaviours from MRI scans, what scientific tests and research is out there to explain the general differences between races for the majority of population groups (not outliers)??? I'm curious.

I then ask her if she believes she is inferior to white, Chinese and Indian people etc...

To which she replies:

With regard to intelligence (IQ) yes—I think Africans are inferior to other races. I'm speaking about the majority as mentioned earlier—not outliers or isolated cases in history. That's why I wish there was scientific research which had more factual tests...

Her response did not surprise me at all. When I explained that science had taken the Social Darwinism and Eugenics route to prove racial difference and has since been discredited, my statements did not dissuade her. It is the response of many in South Africa, no matter their so-called race. There were snippets of our discussion where she confidently admitted to not understanding why Helen Zille a prominent member of the Democratic Alliance (a South African political party and the official major opposition to the Governing African National Congress) was persecuted recently for stating that there were positive aspects of colonialism. She stated frankly that she agreed with Helen Zille. She also expressed understanding of where Kanye West (an American music icon) was coming from with his recent assertions that blacks' slavery seemed like a choice considering that it went on for 400 years (France-Pressé 2018).

South Africa is in turmoil and racial tensions proliferate in a myriad of contexts including that of higher education. To name a few of the recent incidents: Ashwin Willemse alleges racism against fellow commentators and walks out while on air; a South African policeman Henrico is accused of racism; Julius Malema states that Indians in South Africa believe black people are inferior and therefore Indians are racist; politics Professor Theo Venter is accused of racism, and an investigation is launched at North West University; Ms. Moodley is removed from the Kulula airplane after using the word kaffir; Adam Catzavelos celebrates the absence of kaffirs on a beach in Greece and Durban businessman Kessie Nair calls the president of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa a kaffir (Cele 2018; Stone 2018; Hosken 2018; Mitchley 2018;

Etheridge 2018; Castens 2018; Joseph 2018; Zille 2018). This research study is therefore as much personal as it is national and international in its relevance, the mention of current international racial tensions outstanding. The need to delve into discourses of race and racism in the current era is key, and in the higher education context where the study was undertaken it is particularly significant.

ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS

Despite being in the twenty-fourth year of a democratic South Africa with a constitutionally enacted goal of non-racialism, South Africa continues to be plagued by social explosions of race and racism incidents in various contexts including higher education. While there is abundant research on race and racism issues in South Africa there is still a need for more research in the multitude of specific and varied contexts that make up South African society. This research study explicitly focuses on the specific discursive positions of academics of the delineated racial categories of black, white, coloured and Indian, within the South African post-apartheid Higher education context.

The research study uses a social constructionist theoretical orientation that speaks to the methodologically complex nature of the study of the socially constructed categories of race. It was conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and was guided by a qualitative interpretive paradigm and employed a non-probability, purposive sampling method. Four academics from each of the four delineated racial groups were interviewed bringing the total to sixteen in-depth detailed interviews. Discourse analysis as delineated by Antaki (2009) was used to analyse the discursive way academics speak and position themselves with regard to race and racism in a post-apartheid higher education context. Coupled with discourse analysis, the researcher employed a critical Africanist standpoint in the analysis.

With the limitations of qualitative studies notwithstanding in terms of generalisability, there were some discursive elements identified that can add to the knowledge on the subject matter of race and racism in our higher education South African context:

- i. Despite South Africa being constitutionally non-racial, nuanced reproductions of apartheid divisions continue in the post-apartheid context. Regardless of having sampled the delineated four racial categories (black, white, coloured and Indian), racial bifurcation with either the white or the black identity was evident with some Indian, coloured and black academics exhibiting denial and internalised racism.
- ii. To straddle the racial division and the espoused norm of an integrated rainbow

nation, a deracialized discourse was used by academics. Selected academics also used race as a social construction discourse to solve the dilemma of race as an unreality and a reality.

- iii. Academics marginalisation discourse included experiences of being side-lined where specific and personal examples were relayed by some academics, while others discussed marginalisation in a more distanced manner.
- iv. The battleground on which some academics fought racial division was through the Africanisation discourse where the inferiority of black academics as compared to the superiority of white academics was expressed, being couched in terminology such as African scholarship versus scholarship which was represented as neutral.

The thinking of academics regarding race and racism would appear to be progressive and forward thinking overall; however, closer discursive scrutiny reveals thinking similar to academics who were the very architects of the racial categories and racism in an apartheid South Africa. To deal with the contentious subject matter of race and racism the academics used deracialized and racialized discourse to take recognisable racial positions on specific grounds. The ability of black academics and African scholarship was in doubt as compared to the capability of white academics within scholarship which is socially constructed as white and neutral. The study contributed to current post-apartheid scholarship from a critical Africanist standpoint.

Key Terms: *Academia; Affirmative Action; African; Africanist; Africanisation; Apartheid; Black academics; Black identity; Coloured academics; Higher education; Indian academics; Inequality; Internalised domination; Internalised oppression; Intersectionality; KwaZulu-Natal; Marginalisation; Post-apartheid; Privilege; Psychology; Race; Race discourse; Race thinking; Racial bifurcation; Racism; Rainbowism; Social construction; South Africa; Transformation; University of KwaZulu-Natal; White academics; White supremacy.*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will outline the background of the study, the problem statement, the rationale of the study, the research questions, the aims and objectives, the type of study and method, and finally the significance of the study.

At the outset, it is important to have a disclaimer regarding the South African racial constructs categorised in terms of black, white, Indian and Coloured. While I personally embrace all human beings as equal, unique and valuable, I have evolved to understand that these four racial categories are inescapable in South Africa notwithstanding their socially and methodologically problematic nature. Eagle and Bowman (2010:39) when discussing narratives for the Apartheid Archive Project appropriately state:

Without wishing to support narrow, inflexible and enduring racial categorisations and positioning, and recognising the intersection of race with other identity categories such as gender, it is nevertheless worth considering that in light of both structural and ideological constructions of racial identities, the terrain which black and white authors can convincingly occupy is likely to be of a different nature.

Post-apartheid South Africa is still very much ruled by structural and ideological realities that are a direct result of the legacy of apartheid and this is true for academics in the four delineated racial groups in South Africa. The four racial categories will therefore be used throughout the study.

1.2. Background to the study

Twenty-four years after the demise of apartheid, the transformation of South Africa into an ideal 'rainbow nation' continues to be a challenge. The legacy of tension between the different racial groups that was as a direct result of apartheid permeates all aspects of South African society. The South African higher education sector is not excluded and can perhaps be described as a microcosm of the challenges being

experienced on a larger scale regarding issues of race and racism in South Africa. Hutchinson (2005:9) also points out that, “although educated people appear to be more tolerant of diversity, they may oppose structures designed to promote equality.” Additionally, Vorster and Quinn (2017) explain that while there is focus on greater access for more black students in higher education, simultaneously there is the tragic continuation of conditions inherited from apartheid. Considering this, exploration of the dynamics of the current higher education transformation context with a legacy of gross inequality the core of which was race is warranted. As Beckman (2008:774) explains:

One scarcely needs to be reminded...that historical—educational disparities, skewed patterns of access, participation and success and socio-economic inequalities (running on racial lines) affect development negatively and that redress is vital.

Ideally, one would hope that the ‘rainbow nation’ is slowly but surely being realised in terms of greater unity and trust between the different racial groups in South African higher education as espoused by rainbowism. Rainbowism which espouses unity and equality in diversity, (Gibson 2016), is questioned by some, described as mythical, a mirage, fallacious and naive (Fikeni 2016; Gachago & Ngoasheng 2016; Louw 2016; van Graan 2016; Williams 2016) and intent on erasing historical systemic exclusions based on race. On the other hand, racial conflict, mistrust, accusations, and denials of racial issues and racism continue to proliferate. The theory of ‘race trouble’ as explained by Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011:30) expresses the above phenomenon by stating: “Everyone is troubled by race, regardless of their historical racial classification...” and this does not exclude academics. Meanwhile the standards of higher education in South Africa seem to be adversely affected by this tension in South African higher education, (Hassan 2011).

Dialogue that should be happening freely at an animated and passionate level with the goal of bringing solutions to this tension between academics of different racial groups is however not happening adequately and the chasm of mistrust is growing. The above is substantiated by Durrheim and Dixon (2005) who assert that despite the demise of apartheid the existence of patterns of informal racial segregation and clustering still exist in desegregated post-apartheid spaces which destabilises social relations and creates suspicion, threat and prejudice. This is true of higher education spaces as well. The study focuses on academics and analysis of their discourse as a case study, with

the goal of conceptualising the possible way forward for all South Africans. The research is interested in the unspoken and how academics portray and construct race and racism and the kind of socially constructed discursive positions that are part of racial discourse in a post-apartheid academic arena.

1.3. Problem statement

Despite copious amounts of research in South Africa on race and racism, there are multiple contexts within which further exploration is required and higher education is one of them. The higher education context is a specific arena that is currently troubled by challenges of race and racism. The most recent of these challenges include the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests coupled with calls for the decolonisation of higher education wherein race and racism discussions dominated (Maher 2015; Pather 2015; Essop 2016; Murriss 2016; Raath 2016; Langa 2017; Nyamnjoh 2017). Research that has been done within higher education usually focuses on demographics (Norris 2001). In the same vein when discussing higher education, Jansen (2014a:1) states that:

In our obsession with demographic correctness we privilege crude numbers over transformed minds; we re-inscribe offensive apartheid categories on post-apartheid mentalities; and we risk social cohesion by generating alienation, division and bitterness.

The study contributes to enhancing deliberation in terms of academics' discourse on race that covers numbers, apartheid racial categories and racial tensions in the academy.

In terms of students and lecturing staff, current tensions within the academy pinpoint a need for more in-depth qualitative research to document and analyse the subjective experiences of people. The wave of current racial tensions that play out from the micro level, all the way to the macro level of South African society necessitate this study which specifically focuses on academic staff and their discourse on race and racism. In this regard, Vorster and Quinn (2017:37) posit that:

South African universities have been using a discourse of transformation while not engaging in significant structural and cultural changes beyond changing staff and student demographics.

This is supported by Kiguwa (2014) who argues for the need for research to be less technician when looking at transformation within higher education with focus being on increasing staff and student numbers, whereas there is also a need to conceptualise and speak about race and subjectivity.

The study bridges this gap through analysing black, Indian, white and coloured academics talk about race and racism with the aim of contributing to breaking the current impasse of racial tension in South Africa and specifically within the academy. It is against this background that a contribution in terms of discourse about race and racism amongst academics in South African Higher education is necessary.

1.4. Rationale

The year I joined academia, it was fourteen years after the demise of apartheid, I was under no illusions about the challenges that faced South Africans who had been separated in terms of race and were now finding themselves having to live and work together. Positive as well as negative experiences in terms of race and racism within academia as well as my observations of colleagues' experiences convinced me that there was a need for rigorous interrogation of the issue of race and racism within higher education. I believed with such passion that this study (as mentioned in the title) needed to be done, that I approached one of the esteemed professors in my field. The said professor spoke from the heart and simply told me that I am entering territory "where angels fear to tread," and that I should rather wait until I was at least a professor before delving into such subject matter. I followed the advice of the professor and after much fumbling and dissatisfaction from reading about a different subject matter, I realised that I needed to go 'where angels fear to tread' and write about race and racism within South African higher education.

The professor who spoke to me was not wrong, because I have experienced the rush of emotions fuelled by the subject matter of race and have seen esteemed colleagues moved to tears by the same subject of race. Bearing the above in mind, the thought that immediately came to mind is whether I am doing the right thing ethically by daring to go into such an emotive subject matter. As stated by Becker (2000:253) when discussing the subject matter of 'researching race,' "doing research is always risky,

personally, emotionally, ideologically, and politically, just because we never know for sure just what results our work will have.”

I can obviously only speak for myself when I say that I think that talking about race and racism issues within South African higher education is mandatory. The ideal of rainbowism and the reality of the black and white positioning that haunts South Africans of all racial groups, academics included, is a pervasive tension. This is supported by Durrheim (2017:320) who posits, “...the struggle for non-racialism, colour-blindness, and post-racialism can work to keep racism alive.” This being the case, because it discourages dialogue about race and racism that can be part of the way forward by espousing the ideal that we are past race. As an academic in my own right I have observed the reticent responses of colleagues of different racial groups at official meetings followed by animated conversations in an unofficial forum where the issue of race was at the height of discussion. In my observation, people are not saying what they really want to say because of fear in one way or another of the consequences of their honesty. On the other hand, the tensions that are the result of this lack of communication are felt and at times reach a boiling point in higher education which makes this study a necessary feat.

1.5. Research questions

The research questions were as follows:

- i. How do academics speak about race and racism within the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)?
- ii. What are academics experiences of transformation as it pertains to race and racism at the UKZN?
- iii. What do academics articulate as unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN?

1.6. The aim of the study

In this study, I provided a safe environment where academics could speak about issues of race and racism without fear. The aim of the study was to find out how

academics were thinking about race, and to ascertain the silences, threats and conflicts associated with race. The purpose of this study was to try and understand the structure of this thinking in the South African higher education context where race and racism is concerned. As argued by Fourie (1999), the process of institutional transformation where academics are concerned is a precipitous one, where new issues constantly dominate the higher education debate requiring academic staff to make paradigm shifts in their thinking. What are academics not saying explicitly that could possibly have a bearing on the way forward in terms of higher education?

1.7. The objectives of the study

- i. To study the way in which academics speak about race and racism within the UKZN.
- ii. To articulate academics experiences of Transformation as it pertains to race and racism at the UKZN.
- iii. To explore the way academic' articulate the unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN.

1.8. The type of study and method

In terms of methodology the study analyses the reality of academics talk about race and racism within South African higher education through a qualitative interpretive paradigm. The research is informed by a social constructionist theoretical orientation and adopts a critical Africanist standpoint (adapted from Harding's standpoint theory) and specifically denotes a specific and subjective African standpoint. Documenting the otherwise implicit and explicit messages that permeate academia in terms of race and racism discourse of academics of the delineated racial categories in a South African higher education context is a goal of the study. Academics in this study were lecturers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The study acknowledges the controversial concept of race in terms of the dichotomous biological (non-existence/existence of race) versus the social view of race (Hutchinson 2005; Hochman 2017). Along the same lines Mangcu (2016c) puts forward the

historical and cultural view of race. Debates and proposals on the way forward regarding race continue to date. In the study, race as a social construction was discussed as it is 'understood' in the South African context to refer to the four delineated racial groups. These racial groups include black, white, coloured and Indian, the origins of which is, the hierarchised races evolving from the extinction discourse (namely, that all the primitive non-white races the world over were doomed to extinction) which was part of social Darwinism and eugenics (Brantlinger 2003). Racism which is related to race has to do with the belief of the superiority of one race over another, with the negative and / or positive consequences thereof being an underlying factor in this study. Racism can be personally mediated racism, based on prejudice and discrimination, internalised racism where biases and stereotypes about racial groups are believed, or institutionalised racism which involves unspoken societal norms in institutions that promote racial inequality (Acosta & Ackerman-Barger 2017:286). A more detailed discussion of race and racism follows in the ensuing chapters.

As suggested by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004) as well as Creswell (2014), qualitative research has the purpose of finding out what, how and why certain human interaction phenomena happen in the way they do, from the views of participants. The study therefore aims to qualitatively analyse the phenomena of academics' talk about race and racism issues within higher education in terms of how and why academics construct race discursively. This will be done using social constructionism. Social constructionism explores the socio-historical processes that have an impact on how racial categories are formed and how they occupy and change people's lives or break down people's lives. The above is important for research regarding race and racism especially in the South African context that is currently plagued by various racial dynamics that are a result of past and current socio-historical processes.

1.9. The significance of the study

The study aims to contribute to scholarship in terms of the ongoing struggle regarding issues of race and racism amongst academics through in-depth semi-structured interviews reviewed from a critical Africanist perspective. It proposes that there is racial tension within academia despite the current constitutionally enacted position of racial

integration and explores how academics are positioned in this regard. It is important to consider that the racial tensions are because of continuing racial explosions while non-racialism and norms against racism are part of the post-apartheid dispensation. The consequences of the above however are that this tension regarding issues of race and racism within higher education affects scholarship in the academy as well as teaching and learning. The study is necessary because analysis of academics' discourse about race and racism and the brewing tension within the South African higher education context can shed light on the current nuanced challenges of transformation.

1.10. Outline of chapters

The following is an outline of the rest of the five chapters that will be part of the study:

Chapter One: Introduction.

Chapter Two: Literature review. The chapter begins by discussing the pervasive inescapable concept of race and continues by focusing on race taboo, new racism and scholarship. Race and intersectionality is then considered. Thereafter, apartheid higher education, transformation within higher education, significant race and racism incidents within South African higher education and some psychological and spatial elements of race are elucidated. Finally, academics' varied experiences in academia are deliberated.

Chapter Three: Methodology. The methodology chapter outlines the methodological approach that the study follows which is qualitative in nature with a critical African paradigm. The research design, population, sampling, data collection methods and the methods of data analysis guiding the study are also outlined. Finally, the limitations of the study and ethical considerations on the study are extrapolated.

Chapter Four and Five: Analysis and findings. The findings and the analysis of the data is done with a social constructionist lens focusing on an analysis of academics' race and racism discourse in higher education. The analysis of the findings is performed using discourse analysis applying a critical African

standpoint.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations. The most pertinent issues and findings are drawn together regarding the academic discourse of race and racism within a context of South African higher education and final recommendations regarding the way forward are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The seemingly inescapable concept of race

Despite our now decades-longstanding empirical insights about the nature of race in society, and the quite extraordinary new understandings we have in both the social sciences and the hard sciences...we remain seduced by race (Soudien 2012a:20).

The question of why we continue to be seduced by the socially constructed concept of race even though it has been scientifically rejected and is believed to be non-existent and to have no biological validity (Brace 2005, Guess 2006, Warmington 2009, Maré 2014b) is a valid one. Alexander & Knowles (2005) maintain that understanding of race has undergone a radical change, when race was traced on skin or in blood and could be mapped into geographical space and is now recognised as a social construct. We are seduced by race because it is well known that the concept of race is an important social construct for many and has some “objective” substance for them (Golia, Kassidou, & Sechidis 2010). In other words when speaking about societies as racialized as South Africa, “... ‘race’ and the hard-won, oppositional identities it supports are not to be lightly or prematurely given up” (Gilroy 2001:12). Additionally, Mangcu (2001:19) points out that: “While the laws have changed, people cannot be expected to throw away their evolved identities and values.” On the other hand, there are also questions about whether it is even useful to continue to use racial categorisation in a post-apartheid South Africa because according to Maré (2011:65), “...the deliberate continuation of race classification defeats the moral, constitutionally-required, injunction to imagine and work towards non-racialism.” Over and above this, Erasmus and Ellison (2008) elucidate that there is no concrete definition of race and the meaning of the word race continues to be elusive wherever it is discussed.

The unsettling concept of race is expressed aptly by Soudien (2013:1) who argues:

...we are in a complete conceptual muddle in this country around the idea of race. What people are doing with race emotionally is the under-articulated dimension of this particular conversation.

This articulates the importance of this study whose aim is to discuss in part some of these dynamics about race and racism by analysing academics race discourse. This is further supported by Warmington (2009:285) who states that:

Race is one of the media through which historical subjects live and experience; it is for this reason that attempts at reaching premature post-racial positions may undermine social action and analysis.

Additionally, Mangcu (2016c) articulates race as an integral part of people's identities and as a cultural and historical concept. Hochman on the other hand proposes a post racial position of "...interactive constructionism about racialized groups... [which] posits that race is not real, but that racialisation is a real process that produces racialized groups...[offering] an alternative to realist views about race, such as racial naturalism and social constructionism about race" (2017:61). Notwithstanding South Africa's constitutionally articulated position of non-racialism and the varied positions of how to deal with the issue of race, its saliency is palpable and its analysis is current, ongoing and necessary. Analysis of academics lived experiences in terms of their discourse about race is therefore significant.

Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011:55-56) state:

The belief in essential race differences may be a thing of the past, racism may be outlawed, but race trouble persists... Our engagements with each other and our world are complicated because race is always both present and absent. It is present because race differences were set up by explicitly racist policies such as apartheid...Race is absent precisely because it is so troubling. We prefer not to speak about it.

What is apparent however is that promoting non-racialism does not erase race and does not minimise its influence on the lived experiences of all South Africans and other nations the world over. The concept of race therefore needs be analysed in terms of how academics of the delineated racial groups in South Africa position themselves when talking about race and racism and how this influences the social and institutional life in higher education.

Knowledge of race as articulated by Ramji (2009) is a reflection of the societies or the context that researchers come from more than it is about the people and the societies they are studying, and the relative nature of race in terms of context is therefore

evident. It is important to highlight the context within which the study is currently being done and the importance of this study at this time in South Africa's history, because it has contributed to the current race trouble for academics and South Africans as a whole.

Ruggunan and Maré (2012) point out that the UKZN continues to use apartheid race categories both administratively and for the bureaucratic functioning of the university because of the belief that the categories are necessary for racial redress. The use of apartheid race categories is also practiced in the wider South African society (Ruggunan & Maré 2012; Soudien 2012a). Despite research that points to the racial categories having no essence, this does not diminish the way South Africans assimilated them in terms of their sense of self and identity. In a systematic and calculated way, South Africans were indoctrinated to identify and socialise within four racial categories and the 'ethnic' subdivisions thereof and racial identities were officially constructed as unalterable historical and cultural truths; moreover, resources and privileges were allocated along racial identity demarcations (Esakov 2008). In terms of education and more specifically higher education, "Sites of education had a role of structuring the normalisation and naturalisation (and, indeed neutralisation) of racialized identities" (Esakov 2008:4). It would therefore be important to go back to sites of education when re-considering the social construction of race considering their role in the normalisation and naturalisation of the current South African race categories. This study is contributing to this process by focusing on higher education.

Erasmus (2010) challenges the continued pressure to use race classification which she states entrenches the normalisation of race categories despite the fact that they are false. In support of Erasmus, Duncan (2012) argues that race categories need to be challenged because of the ways they 'strait-jacket' or restrict associations and identities but also because they inevitably privilege some individuals at the expense of others. In their reflections on the concept of non-racialism Bass, Erwin, Kinners, and Maré (2012:33) however ask a pertinent question:

What is non-racialism if it is not the denial, or at least the questioning, of the validity of race categories as apparently unproblematic identifiable and meaningful social categories?

This statement further highlights the conceptually complex and seemingly contradictory nature of the concepts of non-racialism and race. Maré (2014b) further articulates the absurdity of claiming a post-race world because it inflicts more indignity on those who are experiencing racism in various forms. As problematic as race is (in terms of its validity), its influence cannot be denied. In the South African context, there is a need to bring to the fore the legacy of apartheid's sometimes enacted and sometimes denied resonance in the present where race is concerned (Hook 2012).

Although the Soudien Report (Republic of South Africa, Department of Education 2008:40) rightly points out that the numbers game is not enough and that there is a need to deal with 'deeper attitudinal and behavioural' change and the need to create a new institutional culture, the details of what this would involve is not made explicit. A new institutional culture cannot be created when the university has not considered in depth the fact that:

behind an institution there is a complex matrix of socio-historical contexts, human voices, emotions, fears, ingrained beliefs, counter discourses and personal ideologies... Government and universities need to critically examine their role or lack thereof in the decommissioning, deconstructing and critical re-imagining of racial identities as inherited from apartheid... transformation is deeply entwined with the attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the protagonists involved (Esakov 2008:122-123).

There is however a gap in research in terms of delving into the complex psychological and socio-political matrix expressed so eloquently by Esakov (2008) above. This study hopes to contribute to the critical examination of the higher education context through discursive analysis in terms of some of the attitudes, emotions and beliefs of current academics. This will hopefully chart the way forward in terms of the deconstruction and the critical reimagining of racial identities alluded to by Esakov (2008) and contribute to micro and macro level change for South African society as a whole.

This speaks to the important role higher education plays in terms of shaping the way forward regarding the way race is conceptualised in the future on a variety of levels including class, the race hierarchies in South Africa, and inferiority and superiority complexes in terms of race. Within the UKZN, race-based classification is practiced, as is the requirement in terms of the Employment Equity Act that focuses on requiring

that the staff complement reflects the broader demographic profile of the KZN province in terms of race, gender and disability (Ruggunan & Maré 2012). Discursive analysis of race and racism discourse of academics in post-apartheid South Africa is therefore paramount. Inevitably, in the current South African higher education context there are nuances in terms of race and racism the nature of which needs special analysis. Understanding the implications of these nuances is crucial for the future of higher education in the broader South African context.

The inescapable concept of race within higher education is therefore important despite being riddled by controversy and lack of scientific validity. This is because the influence of race from the legacy of apartheid continues to reverberate in South African society and the world over.

2.2. Race taboo, new racism and scholarship

Like sex in Victorian England, it has been said that race is a taboo subject in contemporary polite society (Vincent 1982:658 cited in Vucetic 2014:1).

Race in polite society because of its contentious nature, is taboo as alluded to by Vucetic (2014). It is particularly taboo where people of the different designated racial groups in South Africa are socialising together. This is because despite the universal presence of race and racism, there is a normative requirement for its absence and this creates tension. Unfortunately, however as seen in previous discussion this has not prevented race trouble which is becoming the norm. Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011:27) define race trouble as "...a social psychological condition that emerges when the history of racism infiltrates the present to unsettle social order, arouse conflict of perspectives and create situations that are individually and collectively troubling." Evident from the definition of race trouble is that it is a social and psychological condition that comes from a South African history of racism that is so internalised by South Africans that it surreptitiously unsettles current social order both individually and collectively. Hence the existence of extensive literature on internalised oppression also referred to as appropriated oppression, defined as the collective belief by those oppressed that they are inferior to those who have power over them (Tappan 2006; David 2009; Pinkey 2014; Banks & Stephens 2018). In South Africa internalised

oppression would be a feature characteristic of black, coloured and Indian South Africans with white South Africa being the oppressor. In line with new racism, David and Derthick (2014) indicate that there is also contemporary oppression, which is more subtly applicable to the current era. Similarly, Alleyne (2005:288) points out that, “interpersonal conflict in black/white relations were set off by subtle, silent and ‘not so easy’ to pin down’ incidents.”

Correspondingly Vice (2010:324) states that:

Although an honest and sincere public dialogue about race has not yet happened in South Africa, the subject is too close to the bone for many and too much is at stake and too confused—race is the unacknowledged elephant in the room that affects pretty much everything, in and outside academia.

This lack of acknowledgement is problematic considering its pervasiveness. Likewise, Franchi (2003) further points out that despite the fact that racialized meanings of self, imbedded historically and socio-politically in South African society exist discussion of race is still ‘taboo.’ The taboo nature of race seems to prevent free speech, which breeds fortified positions in terms of how the racialized meanings of self can be constructed by South Africans of the designated racial groups. This ultimately breeds new racism explained in the following:

Blatant racism, it is universally conceded, is on the wane. But many fear that racism itself has not disappeared, it has only been replaced by a new racism (Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock & Kendrick 1991:423).

The way academics understand and construct the meaning of race and racism in their talk is directly related to their context (Cresswell, Whitehead & Durrheim 2014). The post-apartheid norms espousing non-racialism may also influence academics constructions of race and racism. Moreover, the competitive nature of academia further fuels this silence around race. Omi and Winant (1994) outline this by stating that where studies about race are concerned, intellectual opinion is anything but favourable, especially considering the isolation and the competitiveness that are part of academia.

Current studies confirm that new racism is believed to be in existence because racism in its blatant form, from the past is frowned upon. The concept of new racism has

therefore arisen and manifests in society in ways that are not as obvious as was the case in the past (Romm 2010). In contrast, Picca and Feagin (2007) suggest that new racism is really just old racism which just has new terminology and which has simply moved from the front stage (where other non-white races are) to the back stage (where one is only with whites). It is further supported by Durrheim and Dixon (2000) who state that new racism in the form of cultural racism and new segregationism exist in the South African context. In addition, racial micro-aggressions that are described by Sue (2009) as referring to subtle often unintended slights to people on the basis of colour that make a person feel underestimated is also a 'new racism' concept. The micro-aggression concept is countered by McWhorter (2014) who is concerned that whites can't relax and be themselves with people of colour. This is because what they say is always potentially going to be judged as racist. In other words, the concern is that being white is a micro-aggression because whites are damned if they do not see colour and damned if they do!

A decade earlier similar sentiments were stated by Pityana (2004) when he expressed that it was surprising that democratic South Africa had not freed South Africans to speak freely about race and that there was evidence of defensiveness and an antagonistic posture that was elicited by any talk of race or racism. This was the case despite South Africans' preoccupation with race. In terms of talk about race among academics in the United States of America (USA), Sue (2013) explains that the protocol of politeness, academic protocol and the protocol of colour blindness discourages talk about race and instead a conspiracy of silence is entered by society. On the protocol of colour blindness however, Trepagnier (2010) when expanding on the concept of 'silent racism' in American society counters this argument stating that there is no colour blindness, because we see race. Colour-blind racism as part of 'new racism' including laissez-faire racism, competitive racism, symbolic racism, aversive racism, colour-evasiveness where racial inequality is believed to be result of differences in culture and individual effort as opposed to the legacy of racism, also includes explanations of race related issues being given raceless explanations (Bonilla-Silva 2015; Annamma, Jackson, & Morrison 2017; Burke 2017; Mueller 2017). Bonilla-Silva (2015:1364) further explains that there are four central frames of colour-blind racism namely:

- i. Minimisation of racism: Racial inequality is seen to be caused by other factors and not racism;
- ii. Cultural racism: Culture is either credited or blamed for success or failure;
- iii. Naturalisation: Racial dynamics are seen as a matter of specific preferences of people;
- iv. Abstract liberalism: The belief that equal opportunities have been achieved and that unequal outcomes are related to individual effort or the lack thereof not race.

The point therefore is that the construction of colour-blindness allows 'silent racism' to proliferate. This construction of the concept of colour-blindness is also applicable to the South African context as stated by Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) and the discourse of academics in this regard is of interest.

In the same vein a more covert form of contemporary or new racism related to internalised oppression is internalised racism. Bivens (2005:45) defines internalised racism as:

...the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominant group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power and privilege and limits the oppressed group's own advantages.

In other words, those experiencing racism can be described as colour-blind or in denial where they do not acknowledge or notice racism because it is systematically and structurally normalised. In the context of South Africa therefore black, white and Indian South Africans exhibiting internalised racism would be complicit in the co-creation of racism towards their own groups by not noticing or acknowledging it.

Denials of racism in the form of positive self-representation before stating "I am not racist but...", or "I didn't mean it that way" are also new forms of racism (van Dijk 1992). Other forms of denials of racism include the transfer move, "I have nothing against them but my customers don't like to deal with black personnel..." minimising or

downtoning: “I did not insult her...” as well as justification or the reversal of racism: “We are not the racists, they are the real racists” (van Dijk 1992:91-93). There are white South Africans who feel that they are being discriminated against by black South Africans on the basis of their race. The concern with subjective feelings of hurt that people can verbalise as racism is that inevitably there will be disagreement as to the validity of claims that racism has happened. Utt (2013) articulates this concern when explaining that people of all identities can feel slighted by someone from another identity but this certainly does not make it racism or any other oppression. He further explains that not all hurtful words or deeds are equal because there’s history and context to consider. Structural issues in discussion of race should also be considered in terms of power dynamics, oppression and privilege. This is particularly pertinent within higher education in South Africa that was racially demarcated in terms of power dynamics, oppression and privilege, with the white academy being the most privileged and the black academy being the least privileged, where higher education institutions were created for the apartheid social order (Badat 2007). The significance of this legacy is that even to date, patterns of disadvantage and advantage within higher education continue to affect the functioning and thinking within academia, as well as excellence in scholarship (2007).

Issues of excellence in scholarship and race seem to be another taboo area which is tied to the transformation agenda within higher education. Jansen (2011:147) declared:

Make no mistake, our universities are under huge pressure to lower standards and inflate results. When institutions of higher learning succumb to such pressure, we all lose—especially talented poor students (2011:147).

Considering the salience of race and the current transformation agenda in terms of students and staff, this is a serious situation that needs deliberation institutionally. The consequences of the lack of deliberation on these matters will affect scholarship in the academy according to Jansen (2011). Castagno (2008:314) similarly states that “...race is central to discussion of normativity, access and power.” In terms of scholarship, the issues of normativity, access and power are salient in South African higher education and inevitably they are dominated by issues of race. This has implications both relationally for academics as colleagues as well as for the learners

that academics lecture.

Jawitz (2010) points out that although South Africans use racial categories to talk about and make sense of their world there is not much research that clearly addresses the way in which the racial context of South African higher education has an influence on academic practice. In terms of scholarship Jansen (2011) argues that there is concern that Universities have lowered expectations regarding black students which he believes is racism of the worst kind. Stevens, Duncan and Sonn (2010) assert that the denial and avoidance of talk about the racism of the past is one of the reasons there has been a resurgence of racist incidents the likes of which can be compared to racism in the apartheid days. Of particular significance is the recent racially charged 2015 and 2016 student protests within historically white higher education institutions focusing on scholarship. The student protests specifically highlighted the need for decolonisation or Africanisation within South African higher education. Letsekha (2013:1) defines Africanisation as, “the call to adapt curricula and syllabuses to ensure that teaching and learning are adapted to African realities and conditions.” Vorster and Quinn (2017) refer to these calls to relook at the curriculum as well as assessment and teaching methods as the ‘decolonial turn.’

Academics are themselves products of a divided and unequal South African past and their ability to deal with issues of race and racism and scholarship if they themselves are troubled by them needs scrutiny. Dladla (2017b) highlights that higher education and the state were inextricably linked with former chancellors, council chair persons, rectors of universities, the professoriate and academics in general, having been part of the Broederbond, an Afrikaner secret society during apartheid. Costandius (2014:73) further argues that:

Ingrained perceptions and attitudes stemming from the country’s historical legacy are often not ‘visible’ because they are taken as the norm, and can consequently have an unconscious influence on the content of higher education curricula and the way in which they are structured.

This elucidates further the need for analysis of academics’ discourse about race and racism and its influence on scholarship because as stated by Jawitz (2012) there seems to be a discourse of silence that surrounds race in terms of research into

student learning and academic practice. Discursive analysis of how academics speak about race and racism currently in South Africa will shed light on some of the taboos and new racisms alluded to and the implications for scholarship. Any discussion about race and transformation also needs consideration of the concept of intersectionality.

2.3. Race and intersectionality

The image of a crossroads which is associated with intersectionality seems applicable to nearly any context, providing a useful way, for visualising how differences intersect within a particular person's identity or in a specific social practice or location (Davis 2008:76).

To foreground discussion of the concept of intersectionality it is important to highlight the role that the intersection of class plays in the formation of a racially differentiated South Africa. Bottomley indicates that:

Far from being a new issue, the poor white problem was instrumental in the creation of an entire people and was crucial to their identity (2012:13).

I would like to propose that the poor white problem was not only instrumental in constructing an identity and culture for white Afrikaners but the South Africans of the four delineated racial groups in South Africa. The South African history of race has a very powerful link with class, the roots of which can be traced to the poor white problem in South Africa. Davis (2008) points out that intersectionality is useful in assisting in the visualisation of how differences intersect in an individual's identity, specific location and specific social practice. In South Africa, racial identities were formed as a result of the practice of the social construction of whiteness in an effort to obliterate a class of poor whites, executed both materially and psychologically by the apartheid regime. The extent to which this was successful in South Africa was revealed to me starkly recently, when my six-year-old son asked me why it is only black people who are poor in South Africa, and why it is only black people who walk to work. It was an innocent question which revealed just how successfully the legacy of apartheid still reverberates in current South Africa, in terms of how race and class were constructed to normalise poverty for black people and prosperity for white people.

Intersectionality is a critical concept to consider in the context of discussions about race in South Africa. It refers to the interaction between other categories of difference

in individual lives including gender and race, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the way power is manifested through these interactions (Davis 2008). It is important at this juncture to explain the concept of transformation as it relates to the South African higher education context and the issue of intersectionality. According to Shackleton, Riordan, and Simonis:

Transformation in South Africa involves a multifaceted complex of interdependent interactions. Issues of race, gender, class, ethnicity, efficiency, accountability, culture, language, collegiality, academic integrity, epistemology and social responsiveness all contribute towards shaping an environment which is differentially perceived by different individuals and groups (2006:57).

The above description highlights the inevitability of dealing with intersectionality when delving into discursive discussion of race and racism in higher education. It is further stated by Bradley that:

In all situations, relative advantage and disadvantage are determined by the intersection of oppressions like race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability (2007:137).

It is therefore questionable whether it is possible to deal with intersectionality and issues of race and racism in terms of deracialisation without the other social asymmetries such as class and gender that co-exist alongside race getting in the way of race (Stevens, Duncan, & Sonn 2010).

Despite these intersections however, depending on one's racial grouping in the South African context, there will more than likely to be differences in the way life is experienced. With the issue of intersectionality brought to bear, the different experiences of academics can be influenced by other identity categories, which has implications for academics talk about race and racism. This implies that there will be an intersection of race and other identity categories. Gender or class for example may be a dominating factor alongside race in discursive discussions about race or it may be responsible for reticence when academics talk about race and/or racism. Who is to say that perhaps the areas of major tension when talking about race are not more related to gender than race? This is especially noteworthy when focusing on black women academics. As stated by Crenshaw:

Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism

and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which black women are subordinated (1989:140).

It is nevertheless paramount to point out that academics' discourse on race and racism issues will be the focal point of this research notwithstanding the intersections that happen with other social categories. This being the case, it is important to briefly draw attention to apartheid higher education to contextualise the history of higher education in South Africa.

2.4. Apartheid higher education

Race remains the main correlate of both education quality and quantity (van der Berg 2007:851).

The correlation of race with both education quality and quantity was a reality within apartheid education in South Africa and this included higher education. The history of apartheid higher education is a history about an education system that used race as a marker in terms of what type of education South Africans received. The fact that race has no essence did not minimise the impact this system had on all South Africans of the four delineated race groups in the South African context. The apartheid government through parliament in 1953 passed the Bantu Education Act which effectively meant that control of education for more than two thirds of Africans would have to be surrendered to the government or have state subsidies diminished for the churches and mission groups that were providing the education (Fiske & Ladd 2004). Bantu education was also designed to keep Africans out of the modern sector of the economy and was of poor quality, to ensure a steady cheap supply of labour mainly for domestic, mining and agricultural services (2004). Educational resources were also allocated on the basis of race by the government.

The 1983 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 110 of 1983) further entrenched the apartheid divisions in education. This resulted in higher education institutions having to be designated as being for the exclusive use of one of the four race groups namely: African/Black, Coloured, Indian and White, (Bunting 2006). Bunting (2006) explains further that there were thirty-six higher education institutions controlled by eight different government departments, which meant higher education was highly fragmented and uncoordinated, with legal constraints preventing different

race groups from attending the same institutions. In South African higher education institutions at this time there was also distinctions between technikons (focused on technology) and universities (focused on science). In 1985, there were:

- i. Nineteen (19) higher education institutions for whites only.
- ii. Two (2) higher education institutions for coloureds.
- iii. Two (2) higher education institutions for Indians.
- iv. Six (6) higher education institutions for Africans.

The so-called white universities were categorised as Afrikaans medium and English medium. Historically, black universities included the Indian, coloured and black population groups. South African blacks were stripped of their citizenship, legally becoming citizens of one of the ten tribally based and nominally self-governing Bantustans (tribal homelands) created by the apartheid government for them through Grand Apartheid (Reddy 2004). Grand apartheid involved a process where cities were not only divided in terms of race but there was the creation of black ethnic states. This spawned six 'self-governing' and four 'independent' homelands or Bantustans (van Vuuren 2006). These homelands were part of the TBVC countries as they were known and included the Republic of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. Table 2.1 illustrates these divisions in terms of race, with historically white universities and historically black universities and technikons versus universities as outlined by Bunting (2006:39).

Table 2.1.

Numbers of public higher education institutions in South Africa

Responsible Authority	University	Technikon	Total Institutions
House of Assembly (for Whites)	11	8	19
House of Representatives (for Coloureds)	1	1	2
House of Delegates (for Indians)	1	1	2
Department of Education & Training (for Africans)	4	2	6
Republic of Transkei	1	1	2
Republic of Bophuthatswana	1	1	2
Republic of Venda	1	--	1
Republic of Ciskei	1	1	2
Totals	21	15	36

Source: Bunting (2006:39).

In the 1970s, each black child's education within the Bantu Education system cost the state only a tenth of each white child. Higher education was provided in separate universities and colleges after 1959. Eight black universities or "Bush Colleges" were created in the homelands. The University of Fort Hare (UFH) in the Ciskei and in Transkei (now Eastern Cape) was to register only Xhosa-speaking students. Sotho, Tswana, Pedi and Venda speakers were placed at the newly founded University College of the North at Turfloop, while the University College of Zululand was launched to serve Zulu scholars. Coloureds and Indians were to have their own establishments in the Cape and Natal respectively. Even in the initial periods when black, Indian and coloured students were not compelled to attend universities that were designated to their specific racial groups by the Bantu Education policy, they were discriminated against in the 'open/white' universities. Black students could not enrol for the following

disciplines at the open universities: Chemistry, physics, zoology, botany, mathematics, applied mathematics, geography, psychology, agriculture, Afrikaans, English, history, economics, commerce, sociology, social work, anthropology, native administration, Bantu languages, classical languages, philosophy, political science, law or divinity or in the Faculty of Education (Horrell 1968).

The following description by Reddy (2004:9) highlights in detail the ideological functions of the educational policy during apartheid:

...educational resources were distributed unequally on the basis of “race,” its objective was to “teach” subaltern youth that their Otherness (inferiority) was “natural,” it aimed to imbue the subaltern child with an “ethnic” (tribal) cultural identity with the hope that it would identify with “its own” people and ethnically defined Bantustan, it aimed to constitute thoroughly docile subjects whose will to resist would be crushed and policed by themselves, and finally it aimed to establish two “types” of subaltern political classes—a small elite to operate the administrative structures of the subaltern (in the Bantustans and urban areas) and a labouring class to perform unskilled labour for the industrial economy. A differentiated higher education terrain was produced in keeping with the imperatives of the Grand Apartheid project.

This kind of legacy for South African academics highlights the polarity of experience specific to race that is the reality for many South African academics. It further elucidates the need to investigate the challenges this kind of legacy spawns.

The following represents some of the thinking articulated by H. F. Verwoerd, prime minister of South Africa from 1958-1966, in justifying a separate Bantu Education:

When I have control of Native Education I will reform it so that the Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them...People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for Natives...When my department controls Native Education it will know for what class of higher education a Native is fitted, and whether he [*sic*] will have a chance in life to use his [*sic*] knowledge...What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd (Hirson 1979:45).

Based on the above it can be inferred that the socio-psychological implications of the Bantu Education system have left its mark on the current South African higher educational context for the designated racial groups in South Africa. It created educational inequality that was concrete and that has contributed to the current racial

tension in South African higher education.

Contrary to the plan of the apartheid government to make sure they created a subservient student body, the inferior conditions in black universities only contributed to fuelling politicisation of black students. According to Reddy (2004), some of the things that contributed to student resistance were the location of black universities in rural areas, far from urban complexes, the state's emphasis on ethnically restricting the student body, the predominantly Afrikaner staff that was politically conservative, the close association of the residences, the brutal violence of the police against peaceful protest, and the emergence of a culture of political resistance from the early 1970's associated with the black consciousness movement. Resistance to apartheid both locally and internationally and within some South African higher education institutions therefore eventually led to the end of apartheid. With the demise of apartheid, transformation became a necessity.

2.5. Transformation in higher education and race

Whites experience transformation from apartheid in terms of blacks taking over, invading and displacing them, whereas blacks experience transformation in terms of whites' ongoing resistance to change, flight and retreat into newly created white enclaves (Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown 2011:159).

One of the central features of race trouble as explained by Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown (2011) and Durrheim, Greener, and Whitehead (2014) extends from fundamentally different life experiences that black and white South Africans have despite being in the same context. These incommensurable life experiences that black and white South Africans have can be attributed to their different experiences of transformation in South Africa. Jansen (2011) explains that in the South African context the citizens of South Africa of the different racial groups are angry and they exercise a brutality that is incomparable with poorer countries with more brutal colonial histories than South Africa. He further cautions that the only way out of the current racial trouble in South Africa is together, and South Africans need to talk in all arenas including universities.

Transformation within higher education involves three aspects including, structural, ideological and international discourses (Soudien 2010; du Preez, Simmonds &

Verhoef 2016). Within these three discourses higher education transformation explores power, epistemological change, decolonisation or Africanisation of the curriculum, racism and discrimination as well as exclusion in terms of religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class and language (Soudien 2010; du Preez, Simmonds, & Verhoef 2016). In the South African context, the transformation process is characterised by incommensurable life experiences fundamentally driven by race. Post-apartheid South African higher education therefore required the construction of a different and more complex policy environment which aimed to streamline and unify a previously fragmented system (Odhav 2009).

The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) according to Reddy (2004) set out proposals for reform in higher education with its major recommendations informing the Green Paper on Higher Education (1996), the Draft White Paper on Higher Education April (1997), the White Paper on Higher Education July (1997) and the Draft National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa (Republic of South Africa, Ministry of Education 2001). The NCHE was established in 1995 with the purpose of advising the Minister of Education on restructuring higher education for its transformation. The NCHE decided on the following to guide the process of transformation:

- i. Equitable distribution of resources and opportunities in higher education
- ii. Redress of historical inequities.
- iii. Democratic, representative and participatory governance (of the system and individual institutions).
- iv. Balancing the development of “material and human resources.”
- v. Quality in higher education services and products.

The NCHE proposals revolved around three areas: participation, responsiveness and governance. Participation focuses on the problem of increasing access to higher education and changing it from an elitist to a ‘mass’ system, a process referred to as ‘massification.’ Bringing more poor and African students into universities and technikons; requiring diverse programmes, curricula and qualification.

Responsiveness and governance refer to the need for higher education institutions to engage with problems in the broader society and define relations between the state, higher education institutions and various 'stakeholders, (Reddy 2004). The NCHE also called for a single unified system of higher education that would be run by the national government committed to serving students of all races. In May 2002 the cabinet approved a plan for the merger or consolidation of the thirty-six existing institutions in a restructured system of twenty-one institutions, consisting of eleven universities, six technikons and four 'comprehensive universities' offering both university and technikon programmes (Fiske & Ladd 2004).

Robus and Macloed (2006:70) explain that, "South African higher education was created as a highly racialized space through deliberate acts of policy during the Apartheid era." Robus and Macloed (2006) further argue that these racialized spaces still exist in higher education currently as a legacy of apartheid, also in terms of socialisation, the politics of space and staffing composition. Their analysis was confirmed by their study of two South African universities that were discursively constructed in racialized terms and included Rhodes University East London a historically white university and the University of Fort Hare, a historically black university. Potgieter (2002) states that in terms of transformation in South African higher education institutions, there were policy imperatives to overcome divisions and inequities that were a part of South Africa's apartheid past. Policy, leadership, student enrolments and staffing therefore needed to change particularly in what were historically white universities and technikons in terms of racial and gender demographics.

The UKZN was a merger between the former historically white University of Natal and the former historically Indian (black) University of Durban-Westville. Important to note where mergers are concerned is that the Higher Education Act (1997) did not give an outline of how to deal with the racial division of labour between higher education institutions (Odhav 2009). This would therefore account for some of the issues of race and racism that are prevalent for academic staff in South African higher education and highlights a need for discursive interrogation of these issues.

Some of the research that was done concerning the 'human side' of mergers,

evidenced that the process engendered some mistrust between academics (van der Westhuizen 2004). An example is a response from one of the staff members who was interviewed when there was a merger between College of Education, Pretoria and the University of Pretoria, resulting in some staff members losing their jobs. "We were real suckers to trust everyone and to believe they would look after us" (van der Westhuizen, 2004:158). The study also stated that staff members felt that they were not involved in the decision-making process before and during the merger which affected their levels of trust in the new higher education system which inevitably affected trust between academics depending on the way academics perceived those 'controlling' the higher education system and their agenda.

When discussing transformation in the South African context, it must be taken into account that, depending on one's racial group it carries different meanings for different individuals and groups. According to Hongwane (2009:33), transformation "...carries great promise and hope for many who have experienced prejudice and disadvantage across many generations; while for those on the other side of the fence it prompts fear, anxiety and uncertainty." This is further supported by Pillay (2009) who detailed that the context of mergers of academic institutions in South Africa, at UKZN in particular, for African staff was positive and hopeful, with Indian and white staff having varying degrees of fear and anger, with minimal trust between the race groups.

Additionally, there are those who feel they are victims in the transformation process in South Africa and that the execution of transformation is faulty. There is also not necessarily a uniform understanding as to the exact meaning of transformation. This is stated by Jansen (2014b:15) as follows:

What we need more than ever, is a fresh debate on how to pursue the twin imperatives of social justice and transformation. We can begin by recognising that they are not the same thing. Social justice must correct the evils of the past; transformation must shape the South Africa of the future. We must agree that the hated race categories conjured up by apartheid cannot be the instruments for transforming a new country.

The ambivalence regarding the use of the apartheid race categories or not is once again raised by Jansen because of the 'embedded' nature of race in the lives of South Africans. Hook (2004) rightly states that deliberating the overt discursive or structural forms of racism, can result in losing sight of the 'psychic density' of the phenomenon

of racism. Hook (2004:672) further argues that the phenomenon of racism has a “...visceral or embodied nature...apparent stubbornness to social, historical, discursive change, the intensity in other words of the individual racist’s investment in their own racist subjectivity.” In other words, racism dominates South African society in discursive, structural and psychological ways. The denial of this phenomenon does not eliminate its pervasiveness. Durrheim, Mtose and Brown (2011) claim that the legacy of racism continues to unsettle and infiltrate South African society and many other countries around the world. Race trouble proliferates in South Africa, despite its unsettling dynamics and therefore dominates the transformation agenda.

Jansen (2014:15b) posits that, “the message is clear: the transformation of post-conflict societies takes years, even decades, and is only possible when we start to talk about it.” Talking however may cause an explosion or an implosion considering the sensitive nature of these phenomena. An example of this is reflected in a study conducted by Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, and Rivera (2009) to document how white academics at Columbia university New York, perceive and react to difficult discussions of race in their classroom. The study revealed that white academics felt that these discussions were characterised by anxiety and intense emotions for both the students and the academics. This nevertheless does not negate the need to start some sort of dialogue in this regard with the aim of contributing to the transformation of South Africa that is already under way. As stated by Jansen (2014b), it is a journey that can be likened to a long marathon rather than a quick sprint. To add to this, Stevens and Laubsher (2010:3) explain an aspect of this aptly when explaining that the reason the ‘Apartheid Archive project’ was started was due to the “...organic experiences of citizens, academics and practitioners in context, attempting to understand and address the ongoing racialisation of South African society in all its perverse, overt and insidious forms.” The key aspect of the statement is that South Africa continues to be highly racialized and academics specifically need to engage about issues of race and racism. Furthermore, what is highlighted about this engagement is that it is not just about a morbid preoccupation about ‘past’ issues, but a need based on the experiences of South Africans. It is about current issues of race and racism and the attempt to understand them and in this study to discursively analyse academics race discourse in the academic context.

Transformation in South African higher education appears to have gone hand in hand with quite a number of racial incidents which even led to the commissioning of the Soudien Report in 2008 to investigate incidents of racism in higher education. Since 2008 racial tensions and incidents have continued within South African higher education institutions as well as South African society in general and incidents continue to date. Recent high-profile incidents within higher education include the #RhodesMustFall (challenging the display of colonial artefacts such as the bronze sculpture of Cecil John Rhodes) and #FeesMustFall movements that were marked by racial tensions. Evidently, the tension as a direct result of higher education institutional transformation where race is concerned needs discursive analysis. This statement is based on my own personal experience as an academic and the seemingly non-stop racial incidents throughout South African society and specifically in higher education. This is also supported by the Soudien Report (Republic of South Africa, Department of Education 2008) which outlines the incalculable damage that is caused by not dealing with complex higher education institutional transformation issues. The necessity for discursive analysis of academics' discourse on race in the South African higher education context and specifically at UKZN is therefore apparent because of these palpable tensions. Of particular interest is the nuanced discourse positions of academics of the specific delineated racial groups in South Africa that can hopefully help further develop the terrain in terms of race discourse.

In terms of the Soudien Report (Republic of South Africa, Department of Education 2008), the Ministerial Committee on Progress towards Transformation & Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions had a mandate from the Minister of Education in March 2008 to investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions. Particular focus was to be on racism and appropriate recommendations were to be made to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion. The Anti-Racist Network (a group of academics from several institutions of higher education established to act as a resource for focus on transformation) expressed some of the findings of the Soudien Report (2008:30) as follows:

...there was insufficient space for different voices to be heard and that the exclusion of these voices made individuals feel silenced...it was

noted by some participants that there is limited tolerance in terms of discussions of race at the institutional level.

This articulated the need for academics to be given a voice especially concerning issues of race. Where academics have felt silenced for whatever reason, this study contributes towards breaking the silence. Six years after the Soudien Report, Masombuka (2014) highlighted that racism and racist incidents are ‘alive and kicking, in South Africa’ giving examples of quite a number of allegedly racial incidents in higher education. As previous stated, the most recent of these incidents included the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests as well as calls for decolonisation of higher education (Maher 2015; Pather 2015; Essop 2016; Murriss 2016; Raath 2016; Langa 2017; Nyamnjoh 2017).

2.6. Significant events related to race and racism in universities in South Africa

In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, we need to acknowledge the fluidity and the openness of identity – but not at the cost of imagining a rainbow-land where our relations with one another are not shaped by the past, by new configurations of ‘race,’ or by emerging class and/or regional and broader politics on the continent (Erasmus 2001:5).

The South African higher education context has been one of the most public forums where racial relations have evidenced the fluidity and openness of identity as various academics have debated the concept of race. Various racially charged incidents within South African universities have also highlighted that it is impossible to deny that relations with one another in our ‘rainbow-nation’ are still shaped by an apartheid past within current political dynamics. Some of these racially charged incidents will be outlined below and the contexts within which they occurred, starting with an incident that happened almost twenty years before the study was conducted involving Prof Malegapuru Makgoba at the University of the Witwatersrand, who was the vice-chancellor when the study was conducted at University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2.6.1. University of the Witwatersrand

One of the most well-known events in South African higher education is the “Makgoba Debacle” which took place from late 1995 until April 1996. The “Makgoba Debacle” in

1995 involved the newly appointed black deputy vice-chancellor Malegapuru William Makgoba at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) whose conduct and credentials were being questioned. According to (Webster 1998), a group of thirteen senior academics who were led by a social historian, Charles van Onselen, accused Makgoba of administrative incompetence, disloyalty to the university and embellishing his curriculum vitae. At the height of the crisis, one of the signatories supporting the allegations against Makgoba, Etienne Mureinik, an alleged brilliant young law professor committed suicide while some of the academics involved in the debacle resigned. The majority of the signatories in the debacle have since withdrawn from university governance. The issue simmered down when Makgoba resigned as Deputy Vice-chancellor.

What is significant about the so-called 'Makgoba debacle' is that it polarised the University along racial lines and created inevitable distrust between academics in terms of race. Black supporters of Makgoba felt his character as the first black person to be appointed in a Senior Administrative position was being deliberately assassinated, he was being publicly vilified and "...his undoubted academic reputation rubbished and his plans to 'Africanise' Wits dismissed. How, black staff asked, can a black person advance at Wits if this is the way a distinguished scholar is treated? Wits they concluded, will never be transformed into a genuinely African University" (Webster 1998, 30). On the other hand, Webster (1998) pointed out that Makgoba's critics drawn largely from white staff and students argued the opposite was true regarding transformation at Wits and felt that transformation had gone too far and the standards at the University were dropping with Makgoba's attacks on Eurocentric education showing him to be a racist who is not committed to a non-racial ethos. "Many were disgusted by Makgoba's public attacks on Wits and felt that he showed a lack of appreciation of its history of liberal opposition to apartheid" (Webster 1998, 30).

As discussed above, the UKZN had Makgoba as its vice chancellor during the period of the study. The discussions his leadership generated between academics of different racial groups is interesting almost twenty years since the Makgoba debacle at WITS, with the higher education sector grappling with the same issues to date. This elucidates the continuing need for discursive deliberation of issues of race and racism and that it is as current as it was twenty years ago.

2.6.2. University of KwaZulu-Natal

The most recent racially charged incidents that rocked the UKZN include the decolonisation within higher education debates and the #FeesMustFall saga (Shay 2016). There were racial divisions where property and colonial symbols representative of white supremacy such as the statue of King George V were defaced by black students. This happened soon after black students at the University of Cape Town had called for the removal of the bronze sculpture of Cecil John Rhodes who was said to represent imperialism (Jansen 2015). When looking at another issue that thrust the UKZN into the spotlight, it was the leadership of Makgoba, the previous black vice chancellor of the UKZN from 2004 to 2014. He was accused of suppressing academic freedom, racialisation of issues when academics disagreed with him as well as intimidation and bullying of academics during his term at the UKZN (Davis 2008). He has also been accused of embarking on 'ethnic cleansing' along racial lines of white and Indian academics since 2005 (Potgieter 2012). Along similar lines, Chetty and Merrett, former employees of UKZN also published a book outlining harrowing experiences of academics and the threat to academic freedom at UKZN during Makgoba's leadership (Chetty and Merrett 2013). Other criticism against Makgoba included that he ran the university with an iron hand, with allegations of overt and covert racism (SAPA 2009). This legacy seemed to plague the UKZN despite Makgoba's departure from the UKZN in 2014 when his term as vice-chancellor ended. This was evidenced in that his replacement was Dr. Albert van Jaarsveld whose appointment many questioned because he was white.

In terms of population, Statistics South Africa (2017), shows that KwaZulu-Natal has about 11 074 800 million people with 80% of the total population being African (Zulu), 8.5% being Asian, 6.5% being coloureds and others, and 5% being white. As a direct result of South Africa's apartheid past the Zulu population continued to be marginalised in terms of education and in particular higher education. As a result, there were student quotas for admission, for example in the MBChB degree programme (Bachelor of Medicine), 69% of the 210 available places were allocated to black applicants, 19% to Indians, 9% to coloureds and 2% to white applicants and 1% to 'other' race groups (Anthony 2014). As a result of this quota system, the UKZN allegedly offered then

withdrew an offer of a place at its Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine after learning that the student that was offered the place was Indian and not black (Anthony 2014). The student was reoffered the place and an apology issued because it was deemed harsh to withdraw an offer once made. This sparked debate on the issue of race and the challenges thereof in post-apartheid higher education admission policies.

2.6.3. University of Pretoria

A black engineering professor at the University of Pretoria alleged victimization and systematic harassment on racial grounds by management at the university in 2011 which he accorded to his being black (Sehoole 2012; Nkosi 2011). The allegations made by the professor were that the organisational culture of the university was hostile to black employees because of its adverse institutional culture (Nkosi 2011). In the latter part of 2013, Dr Louis Mabile who was a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria publishes an article on the praag.org website alleging that the rape of babies is becoming a characteristic of black culture sparking outrage over her racist remarks (Moraka 2014). The university's rejection of the claims through their spokesperson however did not negate the issues at hand.

In another incident at the University of Pretoria in August 2014 there was an investigation into the 'possibly racist' black face photos of two white students. The students smeared their faces and arms with brown paint and stuffed pillows into their pants to make their buttock look bigger to pose as domestic workers. The photos which were for a private party were seen as promoting racist behaviour by the university's spokesperson Nicole Mulder, who described the conduct in the pictures as completely unacceptable (Bateman 2014). The students were subsequently expelled from their residence as a consequence of their action. There were various opinions over whether there was an overreaction to the photos and whether the punishment fitted the crime. The expulsion of the students could be questioned on the basis that most South Africans of the delineated racial groups do not interact across race. Any interaction that does occur across race, is often guarded to avoid pain and conflict. It is therefore questionable whether the students understood the offensive nature of what they did. This therefore underscores a need for discursive discussion of these matters with the hope of identifying a solution.

2.6.4. University of Cape Town

The suicide of Prof Bongani Mayosi who was a black Dean of the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences in July 2018, sparked speculation that gruelling work and insidious covert racism at UCT was responsible for his suicide (Cairncross 2018). In another incident in early 2018, UCT Prof Elelwani Ramugondo who is black, takes the UCT to court to challenge UCT's alleged 'anti-transformation' process of appointing the Deputy Vice-chancellor (DVC) for Teaching and Learning Prof Lisa Lange, a white professor, appointed in her stead (Issacs and Phaliso 2018). In yet another affair, Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng, the DVC for Research and Internationalisation at the UCT is alleged to have had a smear campaign launched against her by UCT alumni alleging her qualifications were fake, casting doubt on her credibility (Zondi 2017).

In the recent past, the Rhodes must fall and fees must fall incidents that were calling for decolonisation in 2015 and 2016 also rocked UCT. The bronze sculpture of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT) has been removed from the UCT upper campus as a result of the #RhodesMustFall campaign which some supported and others were against. Cecil John Rhodes has been dubbed by some as the 'founding father of colonial oppression in South Africa' and it was the heartfelt opinion by some that his bronze sculpture should therefore not have a prominent place at the UCT (Phakathi 2015:1). The #RhodesMustFall campaign resulted in similar debates and incidents of statues being defaced occurring at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and other contexts in South Africa. Despite there being no explicit discussion of race, the issue at the vortex of these incidents was race. Mangcu (2017:243) attests to this (when discussing the UCT's attempt to champion class above race) by stating that, "the ensuing racial fault lines among students, members of staff, and the administration debunked the notion that class mattered more than race in South African politics."

The University of Cape Town has also been in the media regarding race-based admission policies. In 2008 for example there was controversy regarding the admission criteria for medical students of the different racial groups at the UCT with the aim of redressing past educational inequalities. The university guidelines stipulated that prospective black medical students had to have a 74% senior certificate pass, coloureds 78%, Indians 88% and whites 91%. The concerns regarding the above were

due to the fact that the admission criteria were for students born after 1994, most of whom had attended the same schools and had the same opportunities (SAPA 2008).

Comments regarding the above included:

Does this not imply that whites are smarter than the rest? i.e. Only the best blacks are accepted with 74% and the best whites at 91%. Why not 91% for all? Read between the lines people.

If this isn't blatant discrimination what is?

And people wonder why we would rather go to a white doctor.

So now I question any black doctor where they got their degree from and if it is from UCT, I shall ask for a white or Indian doctor, because I am sure they probably did not scrape by or were pushed through for quotas. So, if I do that, I am not racist, I just want better percentage chance of staying alive.

Davis (2012) also commented on a race debate that took place at the UCT asking the question whether the UCT was racist, a part of a series of debates often held at the UCT. Some of the issues that were vocalised at this debate included:

- i. The racial divides that were evident on the campus.
- ii. The feeling of being culturally excluded by black students.
- iii. The unfairness of race-based admission policies vocalised by a white student.
- iv. The fact that racism existed at a peer level.
- v. A lack of black role models to look up to as a law student.
- vi. The frustration with white students who do not recognise their privilege.
- vii. Suggestions that white students were inherently racist.

Evident from the responses in the debate are that race issues seem to exist in terms of racial divisions with racism being highlighted at a peer level, cultural alienation of black students with a lack of black role models and concerns about unfair admission policies by white students as well as white students who do not recognise their privilege. This focuses attention on current racial tensions within higher education and

the need for discursive interrogation of these issues.

2.6.5. University of the Free State

At the UFS in 2014, two white students drove over a black student and in February 2016 white rugby supporters at the UFS Shimla Park attacked protesting black students and made news headlines Nicolson (2017), highlighting the continuing racial tensions at the UFS.

In 2008 the University of the Free State became the focus of attention because of the Reitz Residence incident involving a video made by four white students depicting five black workers from the residence in a derogatory and humiliating way to highlight the students' opposition to racially integrated residences (McCarthy 2009). Some black workers were seemingly served stew into which the white students had seemingly urinated and where the workers were shown vomiting when they learnt of the urinating later. What was particularly disturbing about the incident was that it happened at a time when there was a general belief that the transformation process was well under way in South African higher education with the younger generation embracing it. The Reitz Residence incident proved otherwise because it was perpetrated by young white students who were being raised post-apartheid and would have been assumed to have by-passed the 'apartheid era thinking' and to be embracing a new attitude (McCarthy 2009).

Different comments in the media from the different racial groups during this incident highlighted the apparent polarisation along racial lines in the higher education environment as well as the South African population as a whole. Two of the accused students claimed innocence despite the 'evidence' and there were comments that, what they did was in jest. Comments included:

It's sad to see what the communist blacks are doing here. But the Boers time will come.

They'll destroy these schools and then be able to demonstrate to the rest of the world negro excellence. Cry, the beloved land indeed.

A few students make a prank video. The people went crazy because of the "racism" in it. In the US it would all die down after a while. Not in South Africa.

These stories really piss me off, especially the rest of the world's hypocrisy. Whites in South Africa are being murdered and discriminated against on a regular basis, yet some stupid prank makes the news worldwide.

Nationalising the University of the Free State "to protect the national asset" must start immediately the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners said on Friday.

It has become clear that during all these years, while basking under the glory of being a transformed university, the UFS has actually been a breeding nest for racism and racist elements.

It's time we have a black vice-chancellor... (Stormfront.org 2008).

Having looked at some of the previously white and advantaged universities in South Africa and their issues around race and racism accentuates that the different racial groups within South African higher education continue to be affected by race. The higher education context highlights the tensions of South Africa's goal of a deracialized and transformed higher education with norms against racism, contrasted by vociferous racial arguments and explosions of racism that continue to multiply. The few racially charged incidents mentioned within higher education consistently show that despite the changes that have happened in higher education there is still need to go to a deeper level to ascertain what is driving these incidents. One of the ways this is being done is through discursive analysis of academics talk about race and racism in this study. Issues of white privilege and black alienation that were apparent in the incidents discussed are important. Nel (2009:41) states that when speaking about the faculty of psychology at the North West University, "as members of the faculty we cannot be blind to the extent to which power relations influence our behaviour in the faculty and university," and how these power relations affect the way race is constructed in society.

2.7. Psychological and spatial elements related to race

We live with race as a social fact (Warmington 2009:284).

In the South African context, it can be stated that, "we live within the four delineated racial groups in South Africa as a social fact." These racial groups have all gone through unique experiences in terms of how they've internalised what it actually means to be in their specific racial group or not. With the experiences and understanding of each identity which is very much tied up with each specific race comes a great deal of

'pride' or not. Notwithstanding the constructed nature of the racial categories, passionate defense of them often results when they are challenged or contested because they are so tied to South Africans' sense of self. Hence, any calls for re-examination of negative tendencies in one's race are seen as attacks on one's sense of self, and a defensive stance is then taken. Soudien (2012a:2) articulates this ontological struggle fittingly when he argues:

The central significance of South Africa is that it poses the question of being, of ontology, the capacity to feel, to know and to be aware of oneself, with an intensity not easily matched elsewhere in the world.

For this very reason South Africans find it very difficult and extremely disconcerting to talk about race. The reality however is that the legacy of apartheid and the resulting racial categories coined in South Africa live in all of us who are born into the constructs of black, white, Indian or coloured, necessitating engagement in the context of integration.

Jansen states that:

In the memorable words of Audre Lorde, "The master's tools can never dismantle the master's house." We should bring the best minds together and ask, what are the new tools with which we can rebuild South Africa, such that we correct the imbalances derived from the past (that is social justice) and at the same time change hearts and minds in a divided country (that is transformation) (2014a:15).

This is a current debate throughout higher education in South Africa. As discussed previously however, the master's problematic tools are still necessary within a post-apartheid context embroiled in race. South Africa's apartheid past necessitates redress in terms of the imbalances that were caused by the educational inequalities of the past which were linked to race. The second part of Jansen's statement however refers to the need to change the hearts and minds of South Africans in a 'divided country.' This is a loaded description for the so-called 'rainbow' nation of post-apartheid South Africa which Jansen is describing as divided rather than united. Fourie (1999:277), when referring to transformation as acceptance of a new set of values states that, transformation, "...can only be achieved through fundamental changes in mindset ("cognitive transcendence") of all stakeholders and role players, amongst which academic staff require particular attention." This suggests that there is a socio-psychological element to the challenges of transformation in South Africa and

specifically in higher education. Schoole (2012) when discussing some of the racial incidents in South African higher education states that it is apparent that written policies are not enough to effect the changes that are desired. The mindset of academics regarding race needs exploration. This existential dilemma is explained thus:

South Africa is a country which is simultaneously about integration and segregation, tradition and modernity, being safe and unsafe, being well and unwell, and which brings all these together into an ensemble of inexpressible tragedy and beauty...South Africans deal with an ever-present existential sense of malaise and possibility... (Soudien 2012a:5).

When speaking about academics at the University of Rochester in a blog, Lewis and Byrd (2009), state that generally discussion about race draws only small groups of people. They further pose the question of why it is so uncomfortable to talk about race. One perspective is that talking about race means individuals have to focus on their own circumstance whether race marginalises or mainstreams them and this endeavour, can be very painful (Nelson 2013). Schutte (2014:47) articulates this challenge as a South African white academic by stating:

It is a painful thing to come to terms with our role in the subjugation of other races— so painful that many prefer not to look inward and grapple with their personal reality of growing up in a racist world.

The current challenge with issues of race and racism popping up everywhere in South African society and in higher education however, draw attention to the need to grapple with this subject matter.

Ratele (2003) and Badat (2010) maintain that to a very large extent South Africans are the products of a system which used law to determine all spheres of people's social lives including thoughts, relationships, identities, and behaviours. Having to deconstruct this thinking in post-apartheid South Africa is however tumultuous and painful for South Africans. Thaver (2006:164) articulates one of the elements of this system where "...higher education was designed to reproduce apartheid-type social relations of white superiority and black inferiority." Despite apartheid's demise this is still very much part of the internal consciousness of many in South Africa. The concept of internalised oppression describes this clearly where Fanon explains how colonisation was responsible for this oppression:

If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an actual person. The goal of his behaviour will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth (1967:154).

In other words, the black man and the white man exist in terms of their worth in juxtaposition to each other. This speaks about the psycho-existential complex that is explained by (Fanon 1967). Schutte in turn questions her fellow white South Africans' ability to transcend what she labels an unconscious complex in terms of race when she states:

Indeed, the question still remains whether we are in fact able to overcome this unconscious racism entirely or whether it is embedded into our unconscious as a complex? How much awareness does it take to not fall back into learned beliefs and privileged behaviours when mixing in interracial social groups and even in personal relationships? (Schutte 2014:46).

In this context the psycho-existential complex is really about the thinking regarding what it means to be a human being and it is tied to the social construct of race. Soudien (2012a) points out that in the apartheid era in South African schools, young people are clearly marked by the experience of racial separateness and the identity constructions of being whites, coloureds, Africans and Indians and despite the post-apartheid era that promotes non-racialism the identity constructions and their tensions have not disappeared, creating a psycho-existential complex. The social construct of race as a way of identifying and thinking of specific human beings proliferates as a serious psycho-existential complex and plagues South Africans because they would be lost without the racial labels. In this regard Soudien postulates that:

False as race is as an idea, it is viscerally inscribed in our hearts and in our bodies. I learnt how disorienting the idea of 'racelessness' is, and that this disorientation disempowers people (2012a:xi).

Who are we without our racial labels? It is important to state that the psycho-existential complex phenomenon is discussed by Fanon specifically focusing on black people however, it is applicable to all designated race groups in South Africa as well. In other words, black, white, Indian and Coloured South Africans exist in juxtaposition to each other and derive their worth from each other as alluded to by Fanon (1967). Franchi supports this when she states:

Working through the psychological and inter-group effects of a history of structurally entrenched segregation of subjective, material and political realities involves the uprooting of deeply held beliefs about the self, the other, and inter-group relations (2003:184).

This inevitably results in a psycho-existential complex, which is highly discomfiting for all South Africans and can be blamed for the tension that can accompany normalised issues of race and racism.

Another area of concern when focusing on academics and the psycho-existential complex that goes with discussion of race is what Lewis and Byrd (2009) and West (1997) refer to as distance that academics tend to exhibit when discussing race. In the words of Lewis and Byrd (2009), academics see themselves as too fair-minded and logical to succumb to prejudice. On the other hand, West an academic himself expresses it this way:

The academic distance and the lack of personal stakes, the way of talking about “black people” and “racists” that left our own subject positions in the scheme of race relations perilously unexamined and pristine, left me at once anxious and hesitant to voice my opinions (1997:215).

The importance of the above is in the fact that West later explains that his request of fellow academics to include themselves and honestly examine their own positions in relation to racist social structures, literally drew silence on previously animated discussion about race. In other words, it is unsettling to focus on self when issues of race or racism are being discussed. It causes a perilous examination of one’s sense of being, existence and identity. How does one discuss race or racism without offending, getting emotional, having beliefs about one’s existence shaken and possibly creating enemies and distrust? MacMullan points out, “...that racism, like many other complex behaviour patterns, goes deeper than our intentional mind into the realm of habit” (2009:6). It can be argued that the realm of habitually not trusting each other as ‘racial groups’ in South Africa exists. The separateness of the different racial groups engendered a cycle of mistrust and misunderstanding between the different racial groups the legacy of which continues to date in South Africa. Higher education was inevitably a big part of this cycle. This is articulated well by Durrheim, Mtose, & Brown (2011:21) when they explain that with many things not seeming to have changed at all in South Africa, on the other hand, “We are accountable to black leadership...new

patterns have emerged that continue to be structured around race...old hierarchies reach into the present as the racial underclass (and much of the working class) remains insecure, exploited and under-resourced.” It is perhaps inevitable that these inconsistencies in terms of change that are alluded to would cause distrust between South Africans of the delineated racial groups. Ramphela (2009) also argues that the reality is also that South Africans of the delineated race groups, have had no experience relating with one another as citizens of a non-racial modern democracy which could further aggravate the distrust.

Erasmus alternatively asserts that:

The challenge of South Africans is to begin to recognise racist sentiments and practices as part of our everyday reality and the shaping of all our selves. It is to relinquish the desire to leave the past behind and instead, to start processing the past with due regard to the powerful emotional burden which accompanies it: feelings of anger, guilt, betrayal, shame, pain and humiliation. A progressive, transformative politics cannot be based on a denial of the past (2010:26).

In other words within higher education in order to face the present issues of distrust where race is concerned, academics need to acknowledge the legitimacy of a past racially ordered higher education system that continues to infiltrate the present. The denial of this past and the absence of rigorous deliberation on its impact on the present stunts progress and allows the chasm of mistrust between the different racial groups to grow.

Ramphela (2009:79) contends that:

Coloured people looked down on Africans as members of the lowest socio-economic rung. Africans in turn despised coloured people as rootless and obsessed with identification with whiteness as a source of power and privilege. Indian people had their own prejudices against both Africans and coloured people who in turn mistrusted Indian people as ruthless merchants (2009:79).

These deeply embedded superiority and inferiority complexes continue to dominate South African minds today necessitating their diligent consideration.

In the higher education context, education is being delivered and there are cliques with both students and academics generally interacting within racial cliques. Cliques

produce different experiences and these experiences are mediated by social interactions which in turn produces mistrust. Within these cliques, people are speaking amongst themselves, about each other and inevitably there are also suspicions, fears and issues of trust in the cliques. This is the social form and the social structure of the silences about race and racism that develops in many contexts in South Africa including higher education because the delineated race groups do not trust each other. The origins of racial conflict and this lack of trust could be because of fundamentally different experiences of living in South Africa, a clear legacy of apartheid. Ultimately individuals can conclude that they can only be true to themselves and cannot trust these other people's experiences. This calls attention to the need for contemplation of the psychological elements of the social construction of race for academics in the delineated racial groups on personal and interactional levels.

Bhana suggests that:

Apartheid's geographies are implicated in preventing and limiting racial crossovers...interactions are limited under historical conditions, and the geographies of apartheid and economic inequalities continue to impact race relations at UKZN (2014:361-362).

In the higher education context as well as many other contexts in South Africa there is a post-apartheid condition that involves the different designated racial groups being together yet at the same time being apart. During apartheid, racial crossovers and interactions were prevented and reinforced by economic inequalities. The reality is that past racial geographies still have an impact on racial interactions in South African higher education. The nuanced difference however is that there is separation that is simultaneous with togetherness where academics inevitably work together but live in very different spaces in higher education. In some situations, as a South African it is relatively easy to avoid or ignore the phenomenon of race. One can live in one's ivory tower and race and racism issues may seemingly be a part of other people's world and not one's own space even in post-apartheid South Africa. In South African higher education however, different racial groups have to interact and work together. Academics are in contact, they have to collaborate for research, they have to teach courses together, they share students, they have to attend meetings and so on.

As discussed above, the legacy of apartheid has meant that despite the fact that for

the most part South Africans of different racial groups can live and interact in the same spaces, South Africans are still predominantly living separately. The importance of this is that the realities of South Africans of different racial groups in terms of crime, entertainment and lifestyle and other experiences, is very different. For example, whereas according to Ahlert (2013) and Steve Hofmeyer there is a deliberate campaign to kill white farmers a sentiment felt by most white people (van Niekerk 2017). On the other hand, black South Africans would be flabbergasted by this assertion. Their argument would be that black people in the townships are murdered everyday as a direct result of crime, which was a reality even before the demise of apartheid. This brings to light the fact that South Africans of different racial groups do not have an understanding of the lived experiences and realities of people not from their delineated racial group. The racial recidivism that is an integral part of South African society necessitates closer investigation of the nature of race and racism in academics talk in order to hopefully glean some insights into this obdurate phenomenon.

2.8. Varied experiences of academics in academia

It may well be that the claim of pervasive white dominance largely refers to the power associated with, or arising from, employment, positions in the workplace, and more generally, economic power and wealth (Ratele and Laubscher 2010:83).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the playing fields were meant to be levelled, socially, economically and educationally to deal with the white dominance referred to in the quotation above. As explained earlier economically South Africa's delineated racial groups received certain economic privileges depending on the race they belonged to. With the exception of a few South Africans for whom things have changed socially, economically and educationally, the majority of South Africans' lives have not changed. Keswell (2004) explains that South Africa has income inequality which is highly racial in nature and is among the highest levels of income inequality in the world. This inequality that is still along racial lines therefore perpetuates the social roles that existed during apartheid which makes it difficult for individuals to shed apartheid inspired thinking.

Also stated previously was that, Higher education in South Africa during apartheid

established, evolved and reproduced itself along racial and ethnic lines, which was mainly as a direct result of state policy (Reddy 2004). With the demise of apartheid and the educational transformational imperatives beginning to take place, various challenges emerged. While the student demographics began to reflect the populace of KwaZulu-Natal this did not happen with the staff demographics which continued to be predominantly white within higher education. The Draft National Plan for Higher Education (Republic of South Africa, Ministry of Education 2001) then articulated the need to increase the number of black staff persons in higher education institutions which was a challenge for various reasons.

Habib & Bentley (2008:3) explain that in the current South African climate there is "...tension that has tended to emerge between existing redress strategies and the country's constitutional goal to develop a single nation." Some of this tension is expressed by the white and Indian academics at UKZN who feel excluded from current policies that are addressing past racial imbalances in academia. Hall, Aiken, and Mohamed similarly point out that:

In the South African workplace, dissatisfaction with employment status is invariably coupled with race because of apartheid created labour aristocracies. Continuing skills shortages, the skewed nature of the education system, and the close relationship between race and class continue to reproduce these aristocracies, no matter what the overt policy of the institution (2010:220).

This therefore means that South Africans academics also experience the workplace in terms of an underlying apartheid legacy, education and socialisation which affects their experiences in the workplace and where they find themselves positioned in the labour hierarchy. There are also allusions to the idea that race has taken an attenuated form and has become increasingly sublimated by aspirations towards class and status (Leibowitz 2012; Soudien 2008) the effects of which are also felt by academics. It is therefore pertinent to consider aspects of how some academics of the delineated racial groups experience academia.

2.8.1. Some views on being a black academic in South Africa

Black Male Academic East London: I must admit, Rhodes has a good reputation. It's a very good university and it provided me with that challenge, to teach at a good institution, especially being a black

academic. [] To be able to teach at Rhodes and not at UFH as expected because being a black institution, black academics teach at Fort Hare (Robus and Macleod 2006:473).

The above quote by the black male academic highlights some key elements about the view that he had about his status as a black academic. His views include a belief that:

- i. It is a privilege for him as a black academic to teach at Rhodes (a historically white institution) with its very good reputation.
- ii. Teaching at Rhodes will be a challenge for him as a black academic because it is a good institution.
- iii. As a black academic it would be expected that he would teach at the UFH (a historically black institution).

The views of the black male academic call to attention that, for some black academics it is seen as upward mobility to teach at historically white higher education institutions as opposed to historically black ones. He repeats more than once that this historically white institution is good and has a very good reputation. By default, it follows that the historically black institution does not have as great a reputation. His conclusion that teaching will be a challenge for him as a black academic at Rhodes University is inevitable because ordinarily, he would have been expected to teach at the UFH because it was designated for black people. This highlights the salience of race for this black male academic, a condition that is pervasive throughout South African society as well as the internalisation of racism by him. Eagle and Bowman (2010:41) assert that, "it is not only the receipt of racism but its potential internalisation that is particularly damaging to identity." What appears to be internalised by the black male academic is his inferiority as an acceptable result of his race.

Being a black male academic in the South African context is a distinct category in the minds of South Africans despite its refutability scientifically and despite the fact that Erasmus (2010) explains that there are no pure black identities. Writing specifically on challenges with racism at the UCT, Mangcu (2016b:1) asserts that, "in the modern era no institution has done more than the modern university to create scientific racism..." which he also explains became untenable and was replaced by cultural racism. Racial

patterns in terms of reference to racial categories or labels according Pollock (2001) in the USA, become a very acceptable part of what school is about and ignoring this reality does not mean that these racial patterns and what they represent are erased from the brain. In South Africa, this racialized way of thinking is deeply imbedded in the psyche of all South Africans. Considering that racialized ways of thinking are part of socialisation both informally and within the school context, inevitably means, this thinking would continue into adulthood. Ramphele aptly points out:

We speak effortlessly of 'race relations,' of 'different races living in harmony' and of 'multi-racial schools,' while in the same breadth professing our commitment to a non-racial' South Africa (2009:89).

Racial categories are clearly still a big part of how South Africans identify themselves and experience life in different contexts, and the demise of apartheid has not relieved the racial tension psychically or socially despite commitment to non-racialism in South Africa. Franchi (2003:183) likewise states, "Framing conflict in "racially" or "culturally" constructed terms, inevitably leads to re-writing "race" into personal and organisational experience." Mangcu (2016a:1) alludes to the challenge of how black people speak about racism caused by this tension when he explains, "the weird thing is that it has become hard for black people to call racism by its name on the liberal universities." This further highlights the significance of the study in terms of scrutiny of academics' discourse on race and racism.

The obdurate nature of race in South African society and the nuanced ways it manifests within higher education needs to be brought out into the open. In his research Jawitz (2012) interviewed black academics and it was apparent that black academics in his study were unable to talk openly about racial issues in their departments. This led Jawitz (2012) to conclude that there is a powerful discourse that does not create much room for discussion of issues of race in their departments. Any discussion that black academics had with students pertaining to race could not be discussed in the tearoom which also led Jawitz (2012) to conclude that the black academic discourse in higher education is the unwillingness to talk to colleagues about issues of race. What was apparent from this research however was that the interviews done did not explain the silence evident amongst academics regarding race especially where academic practice is concerned. According to Kilomba (Hirsbrunner 2010)

additionally points out that the university space is a place where blacks have been made reticent by not being given the prerogative to speak since it is a space that has worked to advance and hone the political interests of whites. Moreover, Oelofse (2014) alludes to the fact that South African universities are a space where the Eurocentric order of knowledge is prevalent and any form of knowledge that does not conform to this is rejected as unscientific and pseudo-knowledge which inadvertently renders black voices invalid and reticent. Furthermore, Mangcu (2016d) and Modiri (2016b) also raise concerns about white South African academics who question the role of African knowledge production. Analysis in this regard and the reticence of black academics is therefore in need of further exploration.

2.8.2. Perspectives on being a white South African academic

White Female Academic Grahamstown: *For the past twenty years, no really self-respecting academic would have gone looking for a job at Fort Hare. Once you have a job at Fort Hare, you're not going to get out of Fort Hare. That is a reality* (Robus & Macleod 2006:472).

In contrast to the black male academic discussed previously, the white female academic in Grahamstown (a historically white institution in South Africa) expresses the following:

- i. During pre and post-apartheid South Africa no self-respecting academic would look for a job at the UFH which as previously stated is a historically black institution. By default, this can be said to mean that the university is not a respectable institution of higher learning.
- ii. Getting a job at the UFH renders you unemployable elsewhere so you will not leave Fort Hare. It can be inferred that this is because you lose your respectability as an academic if you go and work at the university and therefore cannot get employed at other academic institutions.

Considering that the primary social category assumed to determine recognition in South Africa is race (Leibowitz 2012), a white female academic is seen as a very distinct category. Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007) indicate that in South Africa whiteness was clearly marked, in terms of 'whom' it represented during and because of apartheid. The non-existence of the notion of race as an essentialist biological entity

does not negate the reality that this whiteness dominates thinking in South Africa and wields the same presence in current South African society as it did in apartheid South Africa. In the higher education context, Reason and Evans (2007:67) maintain that “The very nature of academic environments continues to perpetuate multiple characteristics that excuse white students from seriously taking the time to examine the role of race (their own and others) in their lives.” This statement applies to academics as well and not just students as was alluded previously by (West 1997).

Schutte (2014) points out that white people need to acknowledge that they are automatically part of a global system that favours whiteness over all other races and that whites need to admit to their own racist indoctrination and unconscious racism. It is therefore not surprising that the white female academic would question the respectability of academics that would choose to work in a historically black institution because of the pervasive thinking that white is superior to black racially (Thaver 2008). Vice (2010:335) argues that, “...in South Africa, where at least some aspects of whiteness are highly visible and explicitly acknowledged, reducing one’s presence through silence and humility seems right.” In other words, Vice is alluding to the need for some restraint in the way whites express themselves. This is because she argues that with all their best intentions white people cannot escape the morally damaging effects of their interactions which are purely based on their habits of white privilege (Vice 2010). Moreover, the lens through which the wrong actions of white people are judged as opposed to black people will always favour white people because of this unconscious racism. In support of this, Schutte indicates that:

...we are part of the fabric of a global system of domination which bestows privileges onto us by virtue of the colour of our skin and thus we are never ‘not benefiting’ from our whiteness (2014:38).

The benefits in the South African higher education context for historically white institutions were intellectual as well as material which would render the historically black institutions less productive because of poorer material and intellectual property. Although Salusbury (2003) explains that the end of apartheid and the birth of a new South Africa forced white South Africans to renegotiate their sense of whiteness, this is debatable. The assertion of the white academic about the UFH for example suggests that the superior sense of whiteness seems to be intact. Documented previously also

by various authors, is the pervasive racist incidents reported in higher education institutions and South African society in general. Schutte (2014) argues that unconscious racism is still rife and seldom reflected upon in broader white South African society. This reflection is important hence the importance of this study.

When discussing the silence that can characterise whiteness in terms of the violence that whites witnessed being perpetrated against black people by white people, Ratele and Laubscher (2010:95) make this observation about a white girl witnessing violence by a white neighbour to a black worker:

...the violence silenced because it was overwhelming and unfair, from the perspective of the victim so to speak, but also because of the perpetrator, who wields violence – one's kin, one's kind, "a loving man to his family and to us." Not unlike the incest victim who is silenced, who carries the secret not just or even primarily by some external threat, but because the one who hurts her is also the one she loves, a paradox that tears her apart, and that she cannot fathom or understand. Perhaps the trauma of whiteness that sees the victim, but also it sees the perpetrator, and the perpetrator looks like me.

This observation highlights the challenges to the girl's identity of whiteness where there is a psychological inclination to protect whiteness, warts and all because, collectively whiteness had implications for her as an individual. This further elucidates the psycho-existential complex that is part of the struggle with letting go of racial categories. Fanon (1967) does argue that whites project onto others the imperfections that they fear in themselves and therefore rid themselves of those faults. In this case the silence of the white girl would be complicit with whiteness and in defence of the goodness and purity of whiteness. Schutte (2014:43) explains this inevitable complicity of white children who grew up in South Africa by asserting:

White South Africans have grown up in a country that entrenched white supremacy and systematic oppression of black folks...none of us can escape this racist conditioning.

Reflection on this racist conditioning that continues to date is necessary for academics and all South Africans.

2.8.3. Opinions on being an Indian academic in South Africa

Often, the competition for political power is seen as a Black (African)—White divide that ignores the role and contribution of other minorities such as Indians in regional and national politics (Singh 2005:4)

It has been previously stated that within higher education in South Africa the need for more African black staff within academia is a very big issue that is at the top of the agenda where transformation of higher education is concerned (Potgieter 2002). Affirmative action is seen to be exclusionary of minorities such as Indian South Africans and anxieties for Indians are that they are being unfairly overlooked for employment because of race. As Gounden (2010:5) observes "...even though black economic empowerment policies were necessary and formulated with good intentions, they have been criticised in recent years for their exclusivity and their failure to reach out to vulnerable sections of society which are 'presumed' to have been advantaged by the apartheid system." In the apartheid system Indians were more privileged relative to blacks and this was not just a presumption. There are authors however who argue that this privilege was not applicable in the same way to all Indians and that the Indian working class is still very poor and they feel lost and displaced in post-apartheid South Africa. In part this has led to a search for "roots" for South African Indians where it has been popular to visit India in search of roots (Vahed & Desai 2010).

The identity-based conflicts are really a pervasive South African condition previously explained as a psycho-existential complex clearly applicable to Indian South Africans as well. For Indian South Africans there is a "...loss of perceived existential and physical safety—loss of unfreedom and apartheid—that prevented true self-realisation and this explained most problems and shortcomings in everyday life" (Hansen 2012:16). Additionally, the constitutional goal of having a united non-racial South African nation, is affected by the tension that has tended to arise related to the way redress is being done (Habib & Bentley 2008). Some of this tension is expressed by Indian academics who feel excluded from current policies that are addressing past racial imbalances in academia.

Historically in South Africa there's always been an uneasy and delicately balanced relationship between Indians and Africans (Vahed & Desai 2010). In earlier years Indo-

African relations were affected by the January 1949 racial conflict and another outbreak of violence was in Inanda in 1985. This Indo-African tension was brought to the public domain in 2002 when playwright Mbongeni Ngema's song 'Amandiya' attacked Indians for their supposed refusal to accept Africans as equals, for being interested only in making money, being exploitative and resisting change (Vahed & Desai 2010). Tension between Indians and Africans continues into the present with Julius Malema a leader of the Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) political recently stating that the majority of Indians are racist against black South Africans (Cele 2018). The relevance of this in the present is because this tension appears to also be evident within higher education. Vahed and Desai (2010) further point out that interaction between Indians and Africans, post-apartheid, remains mainly superficial at the levels of day-to-day interaction and socialisation. They state that although apartheid contributed to this distancing of Africans and Indians by legally separating "races" questions of affirmative action and access to resources are reproducing old stereotypes in new ways. The new ways include Africans being privileged over Indians in a similar plight in terms of class. Vahed and Desai also note that:

The irony is that a poverty-stricken resident of Chatsworth and an affluent Houghton-ite are characterised under the all-inclusive label 'Indian.' Poor Indians from Township schools compete with rich Indian children with unlimited resources for limited places in schools, universities and on the job market. As Neo-liberalist policies widen class differences, race is the sole criterion for opportunities (2010:6).

When describing this phenomenon Molla (2008) cited in Vahed and Desai (2010) argues that there is a sense that jobs are being reserved in apartheid style job reservation in post-apartheid South Africa through racist affirmative action equity laws with blacks being the beneficiaries and Indians not qualifying because they are not black enough. This study is therefore concerned about the case of academia on this score.

2.8.4. Standpoints on Coloured academics in South Africa

Knowledge of ourselves as white or coloured women or men, or any other identity, is always incomplete, even when we may have great facility in a language (Ratele and Laubscher 2010:87-88).

The coloured identity in South Africa has always struck me as the most incomplete in its description of individuals in South Africa. It is an identity which is rich in terms of heritage in the South African sense where there can be ancestry from more than one population group or race. South African coloured people however generally deny the fullness of this heritage by focusing on their white heritage. As asserted by Mckaiser, "South Africans are adept at broadly classifying one another as black, white, Indian or coloured, despite often complicated lineages" (2012:1). However, the coloured identity seems to be inhabited by the greatest confusion and displacement in South Africa. In terms of a psycho-existential complex, the coloured 'race' appears to have the most heightened complex. This is a direct legacy of apartheid and the social construct of coloured within which parts of one's identity have negative or positive elements. In post-apartheid South Africa this confusion and displacement continues and has been heightened in some senses.

As a black South African studying at UCT in the 1990s and having a great fascination with issues of race, I would often ask my coloured colleagues about their heritage. Without fail all of them would proudly speak about their Western heritage but not one person I asked spoke about their African heritage even when I asked them directly. I therefore came to understand this as a total denial of the African aspect of their heritage because it meant their racial status would be tainted if associated with blackness. It was therefore refreshing to encounter Erasmus where she declared what it meant for her to grow up coloured. She observed:

For me, growing up coloured meant knowing that I was not only not white, but *less than white*; not only not black, but *better than black* (as we referred to African people) The humiliation of being 'less than white' made being 'better than black' a very fragile position to occupy (2001:2 Emphasis mine).

Her description explained the need to deny blackness as a way of maintaining status and respectability in the coloured community. Having to choose between blackness and whiteness inevitably (because of the connotations of the two) meant the people I encountered chose whiteness and denied their blackness.

Coloured identities were positioned as midway between 'white' and 'African' in terms of race in South Africa (Erasmus 2001). It could even be argued that it was safe

because its in-between nature absolved one from having to be negatively associated with white supremacy on the one hand and black 'inferiority' on the other. Moreover, however as a coloured person this positioning demanded acknowledgement of complicity on the part of those historically classified as coloured in the exclusion of and disrespect of black Africans and a disassociation of all things African as well as living with the racist aspect of coloured identity (2001). Further to this, Soudien (2012:218) describes so-called coloured students and their dilemmas with coloured identity:

Try as they might students had difficulty in dismissing the 'coloured' label which was placed on them. While many rejected the term, they found the certainty and familiarity it offered hard to ignore.

There seemed to be an inability to identify with either blackness or whiteness.

As is the case with Indian South Africans in terms of employment there is the sense of not being black enough or white enough for coloured people in South Africa. It is argued by Mckaiser (2012) that the language of race has an honest element in the post-apartheid context because it accentuates irregular access to economic justice. Soudien (2012) argues that this differential access to employment in terms of race makes non-racialism less attractive to coloured people and has caused a growth in a sense of colouredness. This further highlights the psycho-existential complex that is a part of being part of the social construct of being coloured in South Africa. The analysis of coloured South African academic's talk about race and racism will therefore add to knowledge in this regard.

2.9. Chapter summary

As a start to the literature review, detailed deliberation of the inescapable concept of race was undertaken. It was apparent that while the conclusion has been reached scientifically that race is a social construct, it is nevertheless an integral part of people's identities and is socially, emotionally, psychologically, historically and culturally significant for them. Race categories continue therefore to be used in current South African society; the higher education context included. To highlight the possible reasons for 'silences' or the 'unspoken' in terms of race, race taboo, new racism and

scholarship was examined. The importance of race and intersectionality was also considered especially because of its continued saliency in current South Africa notwithstanding that it will not be the main focus of the study. A spotlight on apartheid higher education, transformation within the current higher education context and significant events related to race and racism at South African universities were also expounded. This spotlight elucidated the need for analysis of academics' race discourse in the current South African higher education context. To further illuminate the need for the study, psychological and spatial elements related to race were then expounded. Finally, the varied experiences of academics from the four delineated racial groups in South Africa were described further illuminating the need for investigation of academics' race discourse.

Chapter 3 follows and outlines the methodology of the study

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Researching race and racism, as any other topic, forces all researchers, implicitly or explicitly, to pose questions about the nature of reality that is being examined” (Bulmer & Solomos 2004).

3.1. Introduction

In the methodology section a detailed account of research reflexivity when doing qualitative research is the first point of discussion because of the value laden and methodologically complex nature of the study of issues of race. A discussion of the, research setting, research design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, and the strengths and weaknesses will then follow. Finally, some concluding remarks will be made.

3.2. Researcher reflexivity

Considering the emotive, controversial, methodologically complex subject of race that was studied and the subjective intervention that was a big part of my study, researcher reflexivity is paramount. Creswell (2014) also points out the impossibility of doing qualitative research without a researcher’s background, context, history and prior understandings having an effect on their interpretation of their research. The researcher reflexivity is necessary in terms of looking at my role epistemologically and methodologically in the study and the awareness that I am not an objective and neutral observer. When discussing management, researchers, Cole, Chase, Couch, and Clark (2011) explain that what is required, for a researcher is to critique their own epistemological pre-understandings, in terms of feelings, knowledge and experience of the social world and how this influence their engagement with the social world. Cole et al (2011) further state that there needs to be a realisation that understanding is interpretation as explained by the principles of hermeneutic understanding which is defined as the science of interpretation. Similarly, Dunn, Pryor, and Yates (2005) point out that as social researchers in a globalised world, we must be working toward our self-construction, reflexively monitoring our own sociality. Researcher reflexivity was

therefore done with my experiences, feelings and knowledge from the beginning of my conceptualisation of this research study, the process of the research and finally to the end of the research.

When conceptualising my research and attempting to identify a supervisor I was struck by how uncomfortable colleagues from the lowest ranks to the highest ranks were with the idea that I would be studying race. Even worse was the fact that I would be focused on academics. There was even a concern as to whether I would find a supervisor because on reading my 'concept' paper there were potential supervisors who would suggest I change my subject matter to something more benign. At some point I even followed this advice but found myself drawn right back to my core subject of interest which was race. Some of my own immediate family as well as my extended family also expressed what is tantamount to horror on finding out the subject of my study. A very close family member simply stated that I was going to 'induce illness on myself' by doing this study but I simply could not let it go. In fact, I was more convinced than ever that I had to do this study. What I failed to realise however was that there was some truth to some of the comments that were levelled at me. The comments were simply an indication that this was just the beginning of my woes when dealing with this study.

What surprised me in my search for a supervisor was that I expected black African, Indian and coloured potential supervisors to be intrigued by my study as I felt they identified more personally with my sensibilities where issues of race were concerned (being people of colour so to speak). This was not the case. With hindsight their responses to my study should not have surprised me. The subject matter is simply just too intertwined with who we are as South Africans and I did not have the insight then that whether coloured, black, white or Indian South Africans, we were all fighting our own demons whether consciously or sub-consciously concerning race. The subject of my study therefore terrified some of my colleagues and superiors either consciously or sub-consciously. Ultimately, I ended up with a white male supervisor which was unexpected. This is because on a personal level, I have experienced some of the most blatant and hurtful racist acts from white male South Africans. Nevertheless, on meeting my supervisor I was impressed and so I forged ahead with the study. There would always be the question in my mind of course when writing whether he would be offended by what I wrote or whether he would misunderstand some of the nuances of

what I wrote as a white male South African. At the back of my mind there was also the question of whether he really cared about my study as a successful white male South African professor.

The subject matter of my study was indeed too close to the bone and challenged me psychologically in unexpected ways. I struggled with fear that the subject was too personal on one level and whether it would make a dent in the vast sea of knowledge on the subject. My supervisor was instrumental in helping me deal with some of my naivety and being overwhelmed by the subject matter and some of the negative reactions of colleagues to my study.

The influence of my race was always a factor in my writing and later when collecting data, I struggled with whether to employ research assistants in a process of race matching to deal with the possibility of participants not from my own racial group clamming up because of fears of offending me in interviewing. After doing some pilot interviews I concluded that it would be prudent to do the interviews myself when I thought about the apparent disadvantages compared to the advantages to race matching. There was the fact that I was interviewing academics and the power dynamics that could intimidate research assistants and the terminology that academics use in interviews. The importance of consistency was also important. The overall comfort of interviewees being interviewed by someone from their own racial group was overshadowed by the disadvantages that I perceived in the pilot study.

There were also challenges from some of the academics who were adamant that they did not identify themselves with any of the four socially constructed racial designations that were part of the South African context. After initial resistance however, the academics decided to cooperate with the purpose of the study because they conceded that it was important despite the methodological concerns of studying a concept like race which has been described by many as having no essence or clear boundaries of identification.

3.3. Theoretical orientation of the study

The social constructionist theoretical orientation of the study which as stated by Burr (1997), Holstein and Gubrium (2008) has no comprehensive definition or description

that adequately covers the variations that are part of the social constructionist theoretical orientation. The important features as outlined by Burr (1997:3) that need consideration when doing social constructionist research and that are relevant to this study include the following:

- i. A critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge;
- ii. Historical and cultural specificity;
- iii. The idea that knowledge is sustained through social processes and that knowledge and social action go together.

In terms of the discursive nature of the study the above considerations by Burr (1997) are appropriate and academics' taken for granted knowledge about race in South Africa will be analysed from a personal critical Africanist stance in other words "...reality [will be seen] as a continuum in which both the subject, as the cognitive agent, and the object, as the cognised phenomenon, are part and parcel of the same reality" (Jimoh 2017:121). The historically and culturally specific context of South Africa and the individual academics and their varied backgrounds also has a bearing on their responses in the study. This is also in line with the African critical stance which postulates a culturally located idea of knowledge (Jimoh 2017). More intriguing are the social processes that are part of current post-apartheid South Africa and current knowledge and its impact on social action in the world of specific South African academics.

Furthermore, in the *Handbook of constructionism research*, Harris (2008) makes a distinction between "interpretive social constructionism" (ISC), which is used by individuals who are focused on the idea that meaning is not inherent, that meanings are created and how meanings are constructed versus "objective social constructionism" (OSC), which is used by individuals who are interested largely in the construction of real things as opposed to meanings. The critical African orientation of the study has a leaning towards OSC in that an aspect of African theory argues that, "There cannot be knowledge of reality if man detaches himself from reality" (Jimoh 2017:127). In other words, who we are in terms of race is really a socially constructed idea which is the result of interaction. There is the thinking in ISC in terms of deviance

that no person is inherently deviant and would have to be defined as such. Harris (2008) further states that the way people, situations or things are described or interpreted is not utterly spontaneous or by chance but is guided by material and conceptual resources that people have access to and are conditioned by physical and social constraints. This is relevant to this study because it seeks to analyse academics socially constructed meaning of race and racism in South African higher education considering their specific material and conceptual resources.

In terms of OSC the socio-historical context of the study which is current post-apartheid South Africa is a case in point. On the same note Berbrier points out that:

...when racial difference is reduced to ethnic difference, economic inequalities and power conflicts become matters of culture. The racial character of stratification is thereby denied (as is the stratified character of racial systems), bolstering political views that racial minorities demand too much from society (2008:571).

In the language of OSC in other words political, economic and cultural phenomena are factors that cannot be denied as part of power-conflicts in terms of their influence on racial stratification. This study therefore has a leaning towards both “objective” and “interpretive” constructionism.

3.4. Research setting: The University of KwaZulu-Natal

The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is located in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa and came to exist because of a series of mergers in a specific higher education sector in KwaZulu-Natal.



Figure 3.1. Map showing position of the city of Durban in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. (Source: www.southafrica.net).

It is predominantly located in Durban which is the largest city in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The mergers included the University of Natal which was founded in 1910 in Pietermaritzburg and had a legacy of having been an advantaged historically-white institution which had four campuses that were relatively independent despite being part of the University of Natal. Namely, the University of Natal in Durban (UND) campus, a Medical campus, as well as the University of Natal Pietermaritzburg (UNP) campus which is 80 kilometres from the Durban Campus. The Edgewood College of Education had been incorporated into the University of Natal in 2001 with a campus devoted solely to education (Council on Higher Education, 2011). The University of Durban-Westville (UDW) was incorporated in 2004. The University of Durban-Westville was established in the 1960s and was specifically designated for Indians but later became a site of anti-apartheid struggle with relative disadvantage (2011). Both the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville later opened up to all

racial groups. The merged University of KwaZulu-Natal is therefore comprised of five different campuses.



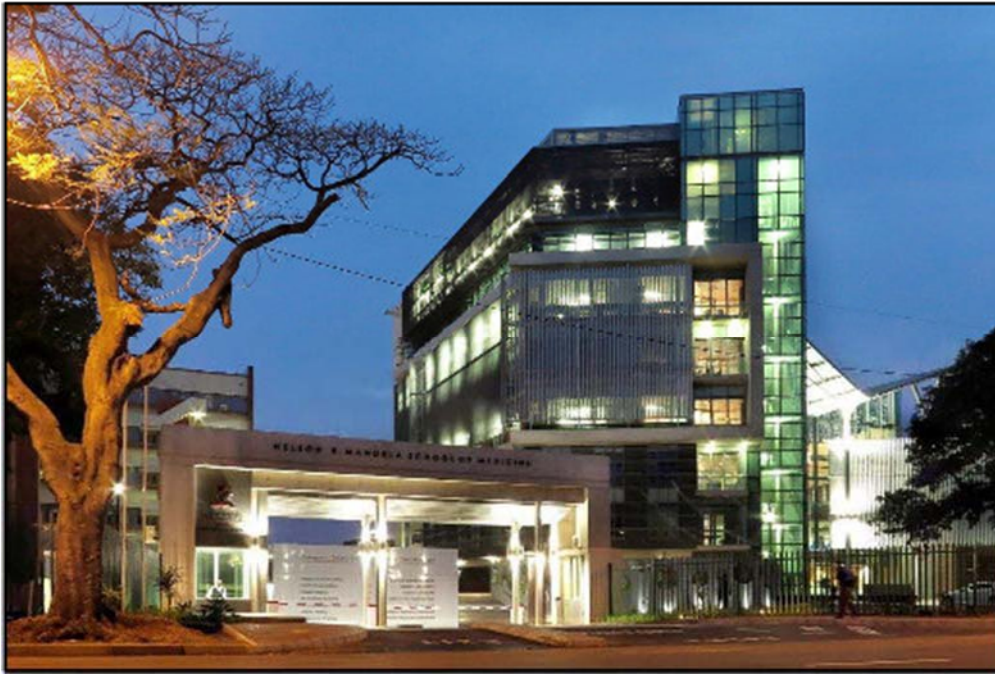
Figure 3.2. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban campus (Source: UKZN Facebook page).



Figure 3.3. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus (Source: UKZN Facebook page).



Figure 3.4. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban-Westville campus (Source: UKZN Facebook page).



3.5. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Nelson Mandela School of Medicine (Source: UKZN Facebook page).



Figure 3.6. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus (Source: UKZN Facebook page).

It is important to once again note the different socially constructed histories of University of Natal (UN) and UDW as a direct result of the legacy of apartheid, with UN having a legacy of privilege and UDW having a legacy of relative disadvantage.

The significance thereof is apparent in the findings of the study in terms of the talk of academics and one can sense the influence of the different legacies. The lingering ways that knowledge was perceived and the purpose and the reason for the existence of the academy is affected and to an extent pervaded the talk of academics in one way or the other because of the two university legacies.

3.5. Research design

Adopting a critical Africanist stance, the research is guided by a qualitative interpretive paradigm, which relies on "...a subjective relationship between researcher and subject" (Kelly 2006:278). The critical aspect of the study is specifically concerned with what Kress (2011:268) refers to as "...troubling existing hegemonic notions of education," specifically analysing academics' race discourse from an African standpoint pin-pointing the "...relations between the production of knowledge and practices of power" (Harding 2004:1). Unlike Harding (2004) who specifically advances a feminist critical standpoint, the study will put forward a subjective and specific African standpoint. Being an academic myself assisted me in the sense that it was easy for me to be subjectively involved in the social world of the academics that are the subject of my study in order for me to understand "... the meanings they attach to their actions and interactions with other people" as asserted by (Babbie & Mouton 2006:32). As well as doing private interviews with academics, there was an ethnographic element to the research which involved me observing the interaction of academics and their environment while taking field notes, in order to retain the information. This is important in that it helped me attain a well-integrated understanding (as far as is possible) of the area of study by using more than one method of inquiry. A particular focus was on observation of random interaction that culminated in discussion of race and or racism ranging from staff meetings, corridor talk to discussions during tea time or lunchtime.

3.6. Sample and sampling procedure

The research employed a non-probability sampling method with reliance on purposive sampling for the population of academics that were part of the study for the purpose of analysing the academics' talk about race and racism in higher education. Neuman states that purposive sampling can be used, "...when a researcher wants to identify

particular types of cases for in-depth investigation” (1997:206).

The academics chosen for the study came from three different Colleges namely College of Humanities, the College of Law and Management Studies and the College of the Health Sciences at the UKZN and were representative of the four racial groups as defined by South Africa’s apartheid past. Four academics representing each racial group were interviewed. There were two white male academics and two white female academics, two black male academics, two black female academics, two Indian male academics, two Indian female academics and finally two coloured male academics and two coloured female academics, which would bring the total sample to sixteen academics for the whole study. In each pair represented by gender, in each of the four designated racial groups there was an older male or female academic and a younger male and female academic.

These historically defined racial groups according to Duncan (2003) include the whites, ‘Indians/Asians,’ ‘coloureds’ and ‘Africans/blacks.’ As previously stated, and as noted by Ramji “...race is not an absolute category...in a research project one is trying to understand how ‘race’ happens in a particular case” (2009:9), and the case of concern in this study is how race happens or rather how race is socially constructed by South African academics within higher education.

Table 3.1.

Profile of the academics interviewed in the study¹

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Years in Academia
Kumaran	52	Male	Indian	29
Aditya	30	Male	Indian	5
Praneesha	58	Female	Indian	22
Tasneem	32	Female	Indian	5
Brandon	44	Male	Coloured	17
Igsaan	53	Male	Coloured	6
Charleen	42	Female	Coloured	15
Lavern	32	Female	Coloured	5
Thabiso	48	Male	Black	18
Mfana	32	Male	Black	1
Nomusa	40	Female	Black	13
Nonkosi	38	Female	Black	10
Christopher	59	Male	White	27
William	47	Male	White	15
Alison	46	Female	White	14
Claire	57	Female	White	22

¹ In terms of the research data, pseudonyms were used in the profile of the academics referenced in this study.

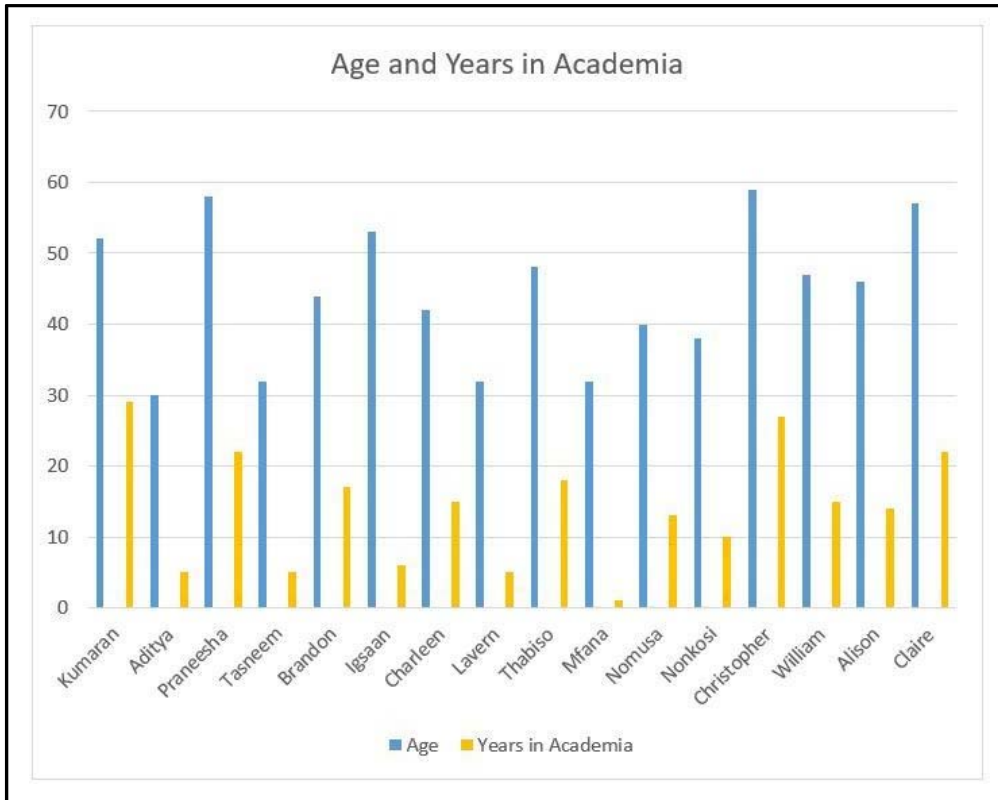


Figure 3.7. Age and years in academia

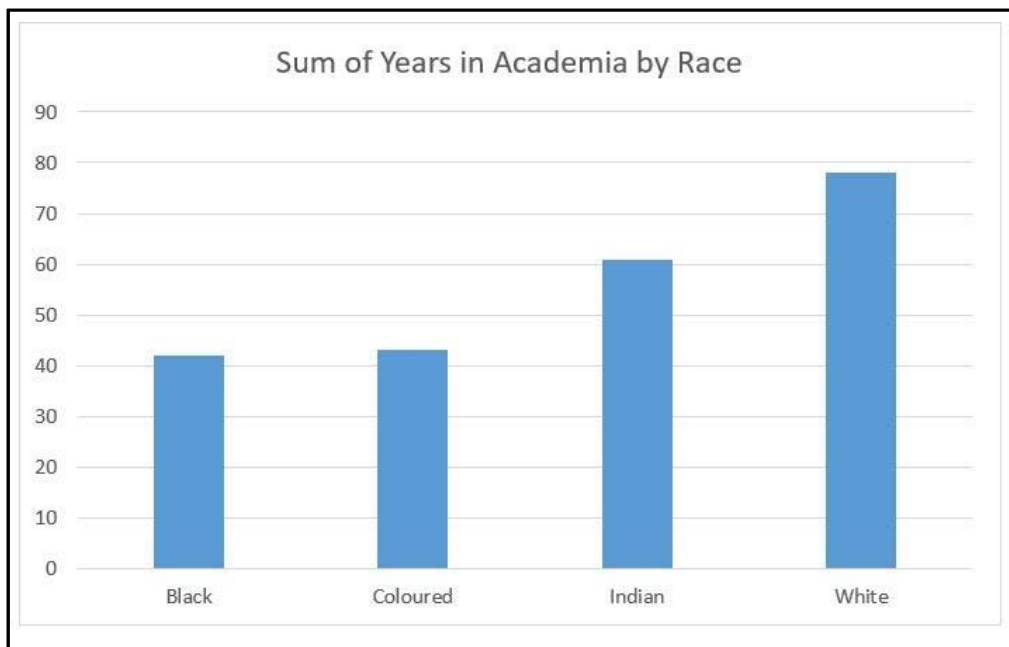


Fig. 3.8. Sum of years in academia by race

As seen in Table 3.1 where academics were represented by a few years of experience in academia for the younger and many years of experience in academia for the older academics, there was one exception in this regard where an older coloured academic Igsaan, had fewer years of experience. Figures 3.7 and 3.8 show that the white academics have the most years of experience in academia followed by the Indian academics then the coloured academics and finally the black academics with the least years of experience in academia. This can be attributed to the legacy of apartheid and the historically white nature of University of Natal and the historically Indian nature of the University of Durban-Westville which amalgamated as part of UKZN. Black academics are therefore newer to this academic context and would by default have fewer academics with many years of experience at UKZN.

3.7. Pilot study and procedures for data collection

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data through in-depth interviews with academics. As explained by Alshenqeti (2014), the flexible nature of the semi-structured interview allows probing and thereby allows greater depth and detail from respondents in terms of their interpretation of the meanings they ascribed to their world. The semi-structured interview is therefore ideal for this study.

A pilot study was conducted with three academics to test the adequacy of the interview schedule and whether academics could comprehend the questions and this informed the refinement of my final interview schedule. There were a few questions that were discarded as they were redundant. The pilot also assisted me in concluding that employing research assistants would compromise the research in terms of consistency in the way interviews were conducted and because of the power differential of students interviewing lecturers. I therefore decided to conduct all the interviews myself.

The final interview schedule² consisted of questions that focused on academics' identification of themselves in terms of race, their understanding of race and how it affects their treatment of others, how they are treated as well as interaction. The

management of the university as well as university policies and the issue of race was also probed and whether race was a threat to the future of academics. The issue of language and race and racism and the unspoken were also areas of focus.

All the academics were contacted either telephonically or in person to set up an appointment. During this time, they were informed of the subject matter, length of time and the procedure of the interview and for a number of academics' rapport was established even before the interview. Establishment of rapport only happened at the interview for other academics. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in spaces that the interviewees themselves preferred in terms of their comfort and their convenience. If however, a space was chosen where the interviewee had concerns about interruptions and other variables that could affect the integrity of the interviews, the concerns were made known to the academics. The interview spaces therefore varied for practical reasons and were not consist in terms of the ideal. On the whole, the combination of professionalism and comfort for the interview space as specified by Bartholemew, Henderson and Marcia (2000) was however achieved.

At the start of the interview session all the academics were informed about the anonymity and the confidentiality of the research and signed consent letters³ for participation in the study as well as for permission for me to record the sessions.⁴ It was also explained that academics could withdraw from the interview at any time if they did not wish to continue. All the interviews were conducted in English and were about an hour and a half with a few interviews progressing for more than two hours and one for just over an hour. Data collection starting with the pilot interviews lasted for a period of about a year and a half.

There was use of the ethnographic element of observation of the interaction of academics and their environment, including my interaction with academics as an academic myself, while taking field notes. During some of my random conversations

³ See Appendix 2.

⁴ See Appendix 3.

with academic colleagues I would sometimes request that I be allowed to record our conversations and academics would agree.

3.8. Data analysis

As previously stated, despite rainbowism the post-apartheid higher education context in South Africa has a legacy of social relations of white superiority and black inferiority indicated by (Thaver 2008). Central to this binary of white and black, inferior and superior, is the very universal and pervasive social construction of race and in particular whiteness which in South Africa is the proverbial elephant in the room from which all other foundational conundrums associated with race are found. Vice aptly elaborates that "...race is the unacknowledged elephant in the room that affects pretty much everything, in and outside academia" (2010:324). This study therefore logically focuses on academics' race discourse by analysing academics' interviews through discourse analysis. As such Gill (2000) supports that there exist numerous and different ways of doing discourse analysis, all of which reject the belief that language is neutral in its description of the world. Gill further points out that discourse analysts are convinced of the importance of discourse in constructing social life.

Burr (1997) agrees that we are immersed and surrounded by discourses which are recognised by the manner in which they construct and represent individual and all other objects. The inextricable link from the social constructionist orientation and analysing discourse within the context of a South African higher education institution situates the study appropriately. Specifically, the focus in this study is on analysing how the black, white, Indian and coloured academics are positioned within their discourses about race that is an indelible part of a post-apartheid higher education context navigating through transformation. These manoeuvrings and negotiations occur while being cognisant of the inherent power relations that manifest themselves.

The data were therefore analysed using discourse analysis which according to Wetherell and Potter, "...pre-eminently involves a practical engagement with texts and talk" (1992:4) and is therefore ideal when focusing specifically on talk about race and racism amongst academics within higher education. As appropriately stated by van den Berg, Wetherell and Houtkoop-Steenstra (2003:1):

Language has been re-conceptualised as social activity...The study of discourse is inseparable from the study of society.

The study of society and specifically current South African society has an inarguable discursive nature that is analysed focusing on academics' talk about race. This method of analysis is also compatible with the social constructionist orientation of the study which is concerned with the meanings that are created by academics talk about race and racism. The variable nature of discourse analysis as explained by Burr (1997) makes it clear that there is a myriad of ways of doing discourse analysis and the specific orientation of this study is unique and will focus on the discourse as well as the context where the discourse is taking place.

Academics constructive language, and the occasioned and rhetorical orientation of their discourses cannot be ignored (Gill 2000). Considering current post-apartheid racial tensions, the interrogation of the discourse positions of the academics of the delineated racial groups' incommensurable experiences on race and racism is essential. Van Dijk emphasises the, "...cognitive, social, cultural and historical 'contexts'" (1992:96) when engaging in discourse analysis which is necessary within the South African post-apartheid context when studying academics talk. Wetherell (1998) succinctly captures that in discourse people show each other their understanding of a particular context and setting and their perspective of the activities that emerge. The associated display by the academics in the study is therefore pivotal.

Analysis was done utilising Discourse Analysis as delineated by Antaki (2009). The analytical frame therefore focuses on academics' discourse as social action made visible by their talk and its effects on the immediate UKZN context and the concomitant implications for the South African higher education landscape. The central discourse analytic features as cited by Antaki (2009) further facilitate the exploration as follows:

- i. Academics talk is naturally found from the interviews done with them;
- ii. Academics talk is understood in their co-text and broader South African context;
- iii. The analyst is sensitive to the non-literal meaning or force of academics' words;

- iv. The analyst reveals the social actions and consequences achieved by academics' words, and experienced by their addressees, or higher education and South Africa broadly.

Initially I planned to do a straightforward analysis as delineated above. However, as I listened and read and re-read the data and began to analyse it, it was apparent that I had a specific standpoint that was not properly aligned with the rules of discourse analysis. From discussion and guidance from my supervisor it became clear that I had assumed a specific standpoint in the way that I was conducting discourse analysis. According to Harding (2009:195), "standpoint research projects are focused on critically examining what's wrong and what's still useful or otherwise valuable in the dominant institutions of society, their cultures and practices." Working from a critical African standpoint, somewhat within the parameters of discourse analysis is how the analysis was undertaken. As further argued by Harding:

Everywhere, seemingly every day, another under-advantaged group steps on the stage of history and says 'from the standpoint of our lives, what you over-advantaged people think and do looks different...wrong and harmful.' It is the 'wrong and harmful' that is morally and intellectually the most disturbing force of standpoint thinking, because this judgement challenges the presumed reasonableness and progressiveness of dominant institutional assumptions and practices. Moreover, it refuses to settle for only a tolerable ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical relativism (2009:194).

The lack of value neutrality exhibited in the discourse analysis is therefore the result of a critical African standpoint that is finding voice within dominant hegemony.

The analysis was done by listening to the academics' audio recorded interviews which ranged from between 14 to 30 pages long. Thereafter transcribed interviews were read while also listening to the tape recordings. The interviews conducted with the sixteen academics were read a number of times in order to ascertain the common themes that were evident from them. There were no specific expectations regarding what the interviews would reveal. What was striking from reading, re-reading and listening to the interviews was the myriad of themes instigated by the interview questions.⁵ Ultimately, there were four themes that became the main focus of the study. The first theme was the deracialized discourse of some academics. The second theme in contrast to the first theme was the racialized social construction of race discourse of

academics. Third, various academics also expressed a discourse of marginalisation within current higher education transformation. Finally, the academics described the unspoken by specifically highlighting an Africanisation discourse. The sixteen interviews were then coded and categorised within the four themes. The first three discourses, namely, the deracialized discourse, the social construction of race discourse and the marginalisation discourse will be dealt with in chapter 4, with chapter 5 being solely focused on the Africanisation discourse.

The uniqueness of the South African academic context and the nuanced interpretations that the academics highlight and the analysis given is from the specific interpretation of myself as a researcher guided by my intuitions, background and history. The following were the transcription techniques used:

- i. [] A portion of the text omitted.
- ii. ... Conversation trailing off or trailing in.
- iii. (..) An extensive pause.
- iv. (.) A short pause.
- v. **Words** Words are exclaimed or exaggerated.
- vi. *Words* While not explicitly exaggerated, emphasis in the sentence falls on these words.

⁵ See Appendix 1.

3.9. Trustworthiness and credibility of research

Kelly (1999) posits that good qualitative research practice which would be part of trustworthiness and credibility should:

- i. Remain close to the data at all stages of interpretive understanding generation.
- ii. Seek out rival explanations to the data interpreted.
- iii. Take into account the influence of the researcher on the study.
- iv. Keep in mind various other possibilities for the reasons for the results of data.

This has been the case for this study, where the researcher has remained close to the study, sort rival explanations and taken into account their influence on the study. The researcher also checked that transcription was done correctly, as well as keeping in touch with the supervisor of the research throughout the process for constant review.

3.10. Strengths and limitations of the research

The strengths of the research lie in the richness of detail in studying people in-depth and the ability to compare and cross analyse. The researcher had a friendly and collegial approach where she conducted herself as a confidant which was a strength. The interviews therefore provided rich data because of the openness and confessional nature of the academics' talk.

The limitations of the research are that interpretation of the data may be influenced by the subjectivity of the researcher and the possible biases of the researcher must be pin-pointed. The generalisability of the research to academics in the rest of South Africa may be problematic in terms of context specific differences here and there between institutions. The research will however add to the body of knowledge in South African higher education in terms of discursive analysis of the social construction of race discourse by academics.

As stated previously in terms of population I interviewed academics from the four designated racial groups as understood in the South African context. My race as an interviewer was possibly a limitation in the research because as pointed out by the

British sociologist Rhodes:

Closeness of identity and, in particular, shared racial identity is generally presumed to promote effective communication between researcher and subject and, conversely, disparate identity to inhibit it (Rhodes 1994:550 cited in Twine 2000:8).

The above statement is supportive of the so-called racial matching model which is of the belief that one obtains better results when interviewing someone from the same racial group because of understanding things that are invisible to those who do not share identity. There are however arguments that are contrary to the racial matching model because of the variations of experience of different racial groups with the possibility of other social signifiers such as class, education, accent, national origins, age, sexual orientation, context and others, possibly being more salient than race and possibly inhibiting communication or acceptance (Twine 2000). Furthermore, it cannot be taken for granted that being a member of a particular race automatically makes one sensitive to issues of race or racism. This is clearly articulated by Twine (2000:16) who states that when those being researched do not, “possess a developed critique of racism or idealise the racially privileged group, race matching may not be an efficacious methodological strategy.” Despite the contradictory views regarding racial matching it is worth noting that it may have been a limitation during interviewing.

3.11. Ethical considerations

In terms of the field research, ethical clearance⁶ for the study was obtained on the 02 October 2012 from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee, from the UKZN Westville campus. As stated above, staff that participated in the study were briefed about the purpose of the study and informed about its voluntary nature and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Consent for the interviews and for the audio-recording of the interviews was obtained from the staff and they signed consent forms for both. Confidentiality was assured and staff were informed

⁶ See Appendix 4.

that pseudonyms would be used in the analysis and discussion of the interviews. No harm was caused to the staff and they were assured that they could obtain the results of the study from the researcher if they so desired.

3.12. Chapter summary

A detailed account of research reflexivity when doing qualitative research was discussed and the methodologically complex nature of the study of issues of race outlined. A discussion of the research setting, research design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, strengths and weaknesses and finally ethical considerations were then discussed. It was apparent that despite the contradictory view regarding race this study will add to the body of knowledge about race. The following chapter focuses on analysis of academics talk about race and racism.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACADEMICS' NUANCED RACE AND RACISM DISCOURSE

There is sufficient documentation of the fact that the history of being-in-the-world (in-der-welt-sein) of the black and white races of the world is different (Manganyi 1978:28).

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the first two objectives and aims to highlight the discursive reproductions of deracialisation discourse, social construction discourse and marginalisation discourse specifically within the South African academic context of the UKZN. This illuminates South Africans academics preoccupation with race as current racial tensions proliferate. The analysis emphasises how academics experience and manage this tension.

In line with the objectives of the study the analysis focuses on:

- i. Studying the way in which academics speak about race and racism within the UKZN;
- ii. Articulating academics experiences of Transformation as it pertains to race and racism at the UKZN;
- iii. Exploring the way academics articulate the unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN (specifically focusing on Africanisation).⁷

The chapter consists of three sub-sections that directly relate to the study's first two objectives. The first subsection in line with the first objective examines the deracialized race and racism discourse of five specific academics. Using deracialized discourse these academics attempt to avoid racialized discourse to be politically correct. The second sub-section also in line with the first objective analyses how three academics

⁷ This will be dealt with in Chapter 5.

speak about race and racism using race as a social construction discourse. This discourse of race as a social construction is used as a way of straddling the expected norms against racism and the racial divisions that are alluded to. In line with the second objective the third sub-section then focuses on three academics in terms of their race and racism experiences of higher education transformation, revealing marginalisation discourse. A pertinent question concerning the marginalisation discourse is why and how all the academics are expressing marginalisation and its implications. The academics exhibited varied experiences of transformation, bifurcated along racial lines.

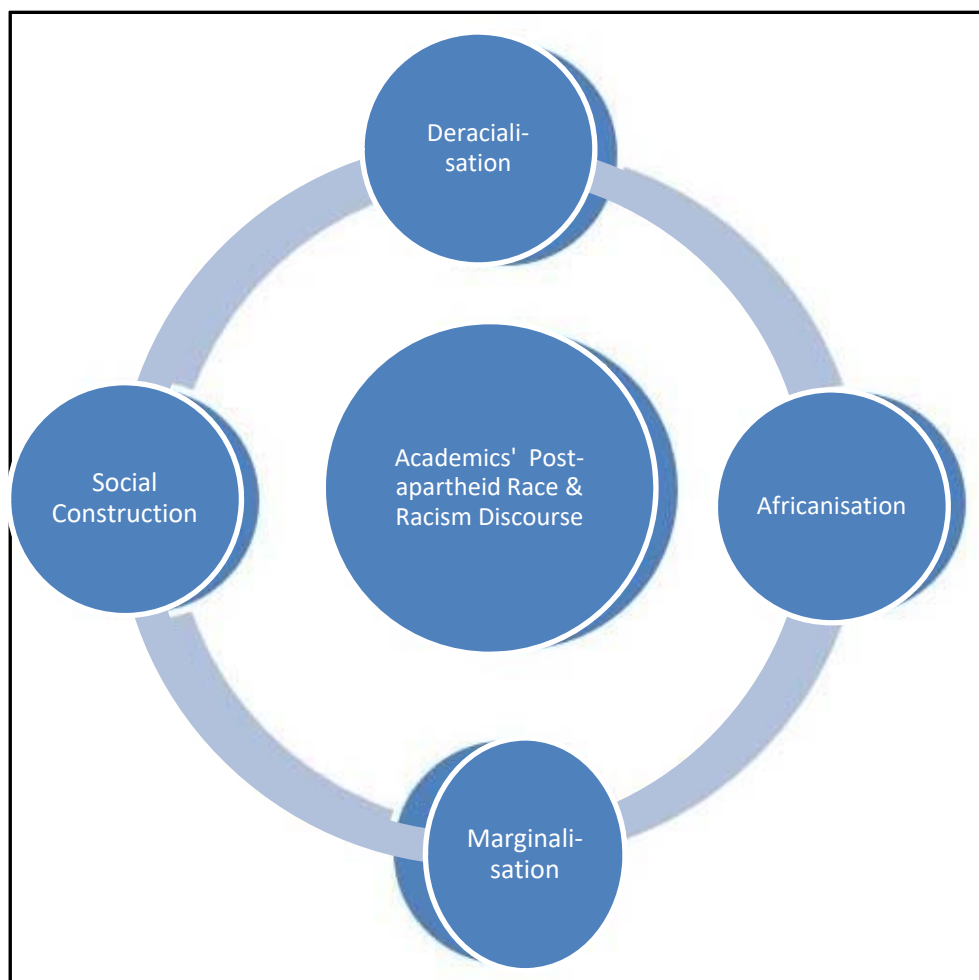


Figure 4.1. Thematic map of academics' race discourse

It is acknowledged by Malala (2015:67) that South Africa's non-racial constitution allows painful occurrences, and racism incidents that are more complicated constituting "...layer upon layer; woundedness upon woundedness." A democratic

election in 1994 has also not resulted in a political and social tabula rasa (Vale 2014). Furthermore, current South Africa has required the revitalisation of apartheid racial categories for the purpose of racial redress and as the appropriate way for post-apartheid grievances to be dealt with (Posel 2014; Maré 2014a). The need for redress has also been for correcting the institutionalisation and structural embeddedness of racial inequality in many institutions including higher education. The institutional challenges within the South African higher education context have witnessed the recent calls for 'decolonisation of higher education' and the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall incidents which are a manifestation of the layered woundedness that Malala (2015) alluded to earlier. These incidents also highlighted feelings of marginalisation in higher education which is confirmed by Posel:

In a country with a past as saturated with race as South Africa's, and with a present in which blackness continues to define a condition of marginality for a large majority of the population, the abiding power of racial interpellations should come as no surprise. After all, it is undeniable that the economic question confronting the polity now with mounting urgency is moored in a system that deployed its racist apparatuses to buttress a white monopoly of economic prosperity (2014:39).

The marginality of blackness and the economic prosperity that is monopolised by whiteness, referred to by Posel (2014), is articulated by academics in the study in diverse ways.

In line with Manganyi's (1978) argument made forty years ago relating to the dichotomous ways of being, of the white and black races in the world, this chapter focuses on this dichotomy by analysing South African academics discourse about race and racism in the current era. As previously argued notwithstanding the goal of non-racialism and the rhetoric of rainbowism, nuanced reproductions of 'apartheid' divisions continue in South Africa. Similarly, in the USA (whose challenges with race are often compared with those in South Africa) the post-racial narrative that followed the election of President Barack Obama over two terms as president has been challenged as a myth and an illusion constituting a liberal embrace of colour-blindness (Dawson & Lawrence 2009; Haney-Lopez 2010; Richomme 2012). Discussion of colour-blindness where race is concerned in chapter 1 and 2 constructed it as a form of contemporary racism. Ndlovu (2010) rightly questions the similarity of

deracialisation to colour-blindness and also questions whom it (colour-blindness and deracialisation and not talking about race) benefits. Every and Augoustinos (2010:251) further point out that, “it goes without saying that a ‘prejudiced’ or ‘racist’ identity is no longer a valued identity” which would necessitate a non-prejudiced or non-racist social discourse in current society. This necessitates seemingly innocuous discourses of colour-blindness or deracialisation for those not wanting to invoke contentious debates on race. A pertinent question is who benefits from discourses of colour-blindness or deracialisation considering that they are described as illusions evidenced by current South Africa’s experiences of an upsurge of racial tensions and race and racism.

To commence the analysis of each academic, a brief general description as well as a general overview (summarised from each interviewee’s transcript) of each academic’s perspective in the interview is narrated. This is followed by the academic’s numbered extract and thereafter an analysis of the extracts follows. The interviewer’s questions appear in bold font while the interviewee responses are in a different italicised font. The first sub-section of the analysis focuses on academics use of deracialized discourse

4.2. Deracialized discourse of academics

Races exist as social realities, and that is why racism was possible at all. To eliminate racism totally, we need to accept that racial identities continue. And that these identities remain a defining fault line in post-apartheid South Africa (McKaiser 2015:1).

South Africans speak about race and racism guided by the legacy of apartheid identities because as narrated by McKaiser (2015) racism would not be possible without the social realities of race. The academics in this study are therefore also included as those defined by apartheid identities as they speak about the existence of racism post-apartheid. Particularly riveting is the way South Africans who are designated coloured navigate the post-apartheid space. McKaiser described these coloured South Africans as “...still moored by the binaries of black and white” (2015:1). Their unique position of often having a very diverse cultural heritage and racial heritage, the politics thereof notwithstanding is significant in post-apartheid South Africa. To a similar extent the Indian identity is also caught between the binaries of black and white. Constitutionally, the coloured and the Indian populations of South

Africa are also categorised as black, however the political realities of the racial divisions in South Africa are contrary to their black categorisation.

The binaries of black and white as stated by McKaiser (2015) still moor coloured South Africans and I would add Indian South Africans as well. This once again supports the thesis that the bifurcated identities of black and white still characterise South Africans despite the seeming 'variety' of four category choices in South Africa, in terms of race. Coloured and Indian South Africans appear to be polarised between these two binaries of race. Moreover, this bifurcation further challenges rainbowism and the constitutional mandate of non-racialism as a cherished ideal. Coloured and Indian South Africans' deracialized discourse is therefore of interest.

The academics analysed in this regard include two Indian academics and three coloured academics.

4.2.1. Kumaran: 50s, Indian male

Kumaran has been an academic for twenty-nine years. In the interview he often refers to his experiences in an apartheid South Africa and how his past often reverberates in the current post-apartheid context in terms of his thinking. Working in the health sciences he is keenly aware of the biological non-existence of race and yet often recounts with clarity experiences with race in everyday life citing the present and the past. To the question of existence of racism and its victims and culprits Kumaran therefore provides a detailed account.

Question: In your opinion, does racism exist at the UKZN? If so, explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

1 ***[Laughs]*** I actually think it does exist. You know, the sad reality of this thing is that
2 everybody is a victim.

3 **Can you explain that?**

4 *You see, you could get some innocent little kid coming here as a student that could*
5 *suddenly feel the might of this thing, if it exists, and I think it does. He could be really*
6 *innocent of that, not knowing why he's being victimised or why things are being said to*

7 *him, or why is he being treated in a particular way and he's a victim right, then you*
8 *could get a worker, you know, working at a sort of reasonable level, you know, say a*
9 *secretary or an admin person, he could be treated adversely because he's of a*
10 *particular race group. Things could be said to him because of racial stereotypes and*
11 *he becomes a victim, you know?*

4.2.1.1. Analysis of Kumaran

In line 1 Kumaran answers by responding that he actually thinks racism exists which denotes that his argument is against those that may refute the existence of racism. He continues in line 1 to construct racism as a sorrowful and concrete 'thing' by explaining it as a 'sad reality' and as victimising everybody (lines 1-2). This does the work of generalising racism as equally affecting everybody individually and thereby minimises its dehumanising elements structurally in society particularly for black South Africans. Posel (2014) explains that to date the South Africa's democracy remains one the most unequal in the world. As an older Indian academic in the health sciences, Kumaran has been and is exposed to the extremely unequal nature of South African society, especially hierarchically in terms of race. To therefore state that everybody is a victim of racism seems to construct a balanced picture of racial experiences and bypasses discussion of the extremely unequal and differentially racialized South African society.

In line 3 Kumaran is requested to explain what he means. He immediately chooses to illustrate his point by speaking about how an innocent student, "...could suddenly feel the might of this thing, if it exists, and I think it does" (lines 4-5). Once again, Kumaran refers to racism as this 'thing' and metaphorically talks about it as if it is a mighty wind that can suddenly be felt, and at the same time have its existence questioned because it cannot be seen. He illustrates this in terms of racism by questioning its existence after he had stated that he thinks it actually exists. His talk about racism is troubled where on the one hand, he explicitly says it exists and soon after contradicts himself and questions whether racism exists at all. This is also evidenced by his abstract and impersonal example of racism where he talks about it by referring to an innocent student or a secretary or administration person being treated badly because of race (lines 9-10). It is significant that in lines 4 and 6, he refers to the student as the "innocent little kid" and as "really innocent" where he does not know why he is being

victimised. This does the work of positioning the student as naïve and blameless. When citing an example of an adult he also selects a support staff member who is not academic staff which further distances him personally from discussion of racism.

Kumaran uses deracialized race discourse to argue for the existence or reality of racism in an intangible manner. On the one hand, he identifies the victims but on the other hand the culprits are not identified and are constructed as abstract and elusive, where there is seemingly racism without racists. The institutional racism however remains unchallenged within deracialized discourse and those that are the most marginalised are not specified. Stating who the culprits are is perhaps seen by Kumaran as taking South African backwards from the current “non-racial” South Africa, therefore deracialized discourse about racism keeps the peace in the rainbow nation can perhaps account for Kumaran’s response.

4.2.2. Igsaan: 50s, Coloured male

Igsaan has been an academic for six years and was the most ambivalent of all the academics to interview. Pre-interview he cancelled three scheduled appointments and due to my persistence, when I was finally able to speak to him, he insisted that the interview would be very short and exhibited an initial hostile attitude. To the initial questions in the interview regarding race he simply would not directly answer questions about race and would respond that he did not understand. He would not classify himself under the socially constructed coloured classification or acknowledge it. As a man in his fifties, Igsaan grew up during apartheid when racial classification and the politics thereof were practiced blatantly, yet Igsaan expressed unfamiliarity in this regard. His antagonistic attitude towards me seemed to undermine and question the legitimacy of the study and I wanted discontinue the interview immediately. Nevertheless because of my persistence the interview continued. Just over an hour into the interview I posed the following question and he responded.

Question: In your opinion, does racism exist at UKZN? If so, explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

- 1 *Right, so we don't have race so now we must go with what is racism, right, so racism,*
- 2 *in my definition now would be people of one colour skin treating people with another*

3 *colour skin differently, that will be racism (..) Hell.. I don't think I've seen it, I don't*
4 *think I've observed it. What I have observed is people of the same classification having*
5 *a go at each other. Across the colour barrier? No, I haven't (..) and yet I know, very*
6 *often people speak of it, but I haven't seen it, I haven't seen it...*

4.2.2.1. Analysis of Igsaan

Following a now familiar theme, when questioned about his opinion about the existence of racism, Igsaan responds by rhetorically enquiring what the point would be of asking about racism if there is no race (line 1). He then defines racism as people of one skin colour treating people of another skin colour differently and then pauses and then states “Hell I don’t think I’ve seen it (lines 1-3). Igsaan’s response seems to highlight what can be termed ‘wilful blindness’ to the poor and marginalised black people which Heleta (2016b) argues is prevalent amongst white as well as many middle-class South African coloureds, blacks and Indians specifically at universities. The pause indicates that he reflects about his statement about people of different skin colours mistreating each other and then uses the exclamation “hell” inferring anger, trouble and pain and yet in the same breath he says he has not witnessed racism or observed it (lines 3-4).

Explaining what he has witnessed, is, that it is people of the same ‘classification’ going at each other. In the South African context this statement could conjure up rhetoric and images from the media of:

... black on black violence [which] did not mean anything in the apartheid imaginary in the sense that it did not mean anything other than itself. It was only violence, perpetrated by violent people on invisible (and potentially violent) victims, because blackness had long been classed as barbaric (Falkof 2015:178).

It is however interesting that Igsaan leaves this vague and indistinct, when he does not qualify who the people in the same classification are, or how they are going at each other, here he appears to be literally exhibiting colour-blindness. This does the work of invisibilizing the social construction of race. In lines 5-6 he reiterates once again that he has not seen racism across the colour barrier even though he knows people often speak about it. This positions Igsaan as innocent about racism and simultaneously it does the work of delegitimising the research being conducted as irrelevant or

unnecessary. In total from lines 3-6 he reiterates that he has not witnessed racism five times as he occasionally pauses. For a man in his fifties who grew up during the height of apartheid in South Africa it is completely perplexing that he did not want to communicate his thoughts.

Igsaan's deracialized discourse about race is expressed candidly and frankly regarding his experience with race and racism. Seemingly he navigates around the coloured identity that McKaiser (2015) explained as fixed by the binaries of black and white identity within the 'post-racial' post-apartheid South African context in this way. Igsaan does this by stating that he has not seen racism and by deracialising his discussion of race and racism.

4.2.3. Charleen: 40s, Coloured female

Charleen has been an academic for fifteen years. In previous interview questions about race she expressed her mixed-race heritage as difficult to classify. She explained race and racism as being about creating difference in terms of those who are good or bad in order to divide people and maintain power. She concedes that race is a social construction that is upheld by various systems and beliefs, and that, whether real or not, it has been internalised. Having come from the former UDW, she constructs UKZN as having a white, colonial and cold culture as compared to UDW. Her experience as a young academic that was eager to develop was of being given excessive work, preventing her from completing a PhD. Moreover, she felt her white bosses did not provide her with the space to develop academically. Her talk about race however is also peppered by ambivalence about whether her negative experiences were as a result of race, personality issues or other associated factors. The following is her response to the question about the existence of racism and its victims and culprits.

Question: In your opinion, does racism exist at the UKZN? If so, explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

1 *I've never experienced it like fully, all out. I think my little interactions with different*
2 *race groups may be perceived as racism, but racism is more an act of going out,*
3 *preventing, or stopping someone or having the stereotypes about the 'other,' if I can*

4 *call it that. So, it's hard for me to answer that, I would say yes it probably would still*
5 *be around.*

6 **But not in your..**

7 *And it could be subtle, it could be very covert, it could be hidden in the policies on how*
8 *things have to be implemented and people could perceive that as attacking, not*
9 *themselves personally, but also their racial group or their racial identity..*

4.2.3.1. *Analysis of Charleen*

In line 1 Charleen is adamant that she has not fully experienced racism, evidenced by the use of the word “never” and “all out.” She narrates her interactions with other race groups where she experienced racism as “little” and therefore insignificant, because she relates these little interactions as being perceived as racism suggesting that they can just as easily be perceived as not racism. (lines 1-2). Of importance however is that she does not specify the victims and culprits and leaves her answer quite vague and indefinite, similar to Kumaran. She defines racism as acting out by stopping or preventing others “...or having stereotypes about the ‘other,’ if I can call it that” (lines 2-4). Charleen positions herself as not really being part of the other in a significant way because she does not clearly implicate herself as part of the other on the question of experiencing racism and acknowledges as stated that she has not fully experienced it. When she speaks about stereotypes about others, she is also hesitant and questions her accounting of racism as related to stereotypes by stating “if I can call it that” (line 4). She further reiterates that she finds it difficult to answer the question on the existence of racism at the UKZN to solidify her tentativeness, also adding that racism is probably still around (lines 4-5). This signifies that Charleen’s talk about racism is ambivalent and nonchalant despite occupying a university context where students have expressed alienation in this regard.

In lines 7-8 Charleen then narrates the elements of symbolic racism (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown 2011), where she talks about racism that can be covert, subtle and institutional when she refers to it as hidden in implementation policies. It is however once again unclear in lines 8-9 who the victims and culprits of the racist policies are, as Charleen states that “...people could perceive that as attacking themselves

personally, but also their racial group or their racial identity.” In current post-apartheid South Africa where there are accusations and counter-accusations of racism within transformation in higher education the victims and culprits Charleen could be referring to are often specified. Charlene’s race and racism discourse are deracialized, possibly an indication of how she navigates within the current South African context. Where on the one hand, difference is supposed to be celebrated, simultaneously accusations and counter accusations of racism dominate in most spaces in the South African landscape including higher education.

4.2.4. Lavern: 30s, Coloured female

Lavern has been an academic for five years. In previous interview questions she explained race as very sensitive but as important because of its link to human identity. She also expressed its importance in terms of redress, a legacy of apartheid. Lavern also positioned herself as very proud of her coloured heritage and specifically being a Khoisan descendant on the black side of her family and not identifying as much with the white side of her family because of her darker skin and curlier hair which meant she did not fit in. She constructed encounters that involved race as not about race and prided herself on not immediately thinking about race when there were seemingly issues that could be construed as involving racism. Her opinion on the existence of race at the UKZN, as well as who the victims and culprits were, was therefore not surprising.

Question: In your opinion, does racism exists at the UKZN? If so, explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

1 *Even if we think of students uh-m I’ve never had students, I’ve never had the feeling*
2 *that the student is treating me a certain way because of colour; uh-m I think it’s more*
3 *because of what I can give to the student, it’s all about what you can give to me okay.*
4 *So, I don’t think it’s because of colour. I’ve not seen students treating lecturers in a*
5 *certain way because of their colour, I think it’s more because, if the students have the*
6 *opinion that you’re not a good lecturer or you’re not giving them enough then they start*
7 *bad mouthing you and so forth. But I don’t think it’s necessarily to do with race.*

4.2.4.1. *Analysis of Lavern*

In response to the question Lavern immediately replies to the question of her opinion on racism in terms of students (line 1). This does the work of distancing her personally from the discussion of racism and externalising the discussion as specific to students and her colleagues. She elaborates by pointing out that that she had never felt that students treat her in a particular way because of her colour (lines 1-2). To illustrate her point, she explains that it's about what she gives to the students, also indicating that it's also about what she is given (lines 2-3). She reiterates for the second and third time that the way lecturers are treated is not about colour (lines 4-5), a blatant use of deracialized talk, and that it is because students have the opinion that someone is not a good lecturer and is not giving them enough (lines 4-6). This positively represents Lavern as meeting students' needs and implicates others as being deficient because they are not cognisant of such needs (lines 5-7), and constructs the academic environment as being free from racism issues. To conclude, she reiterates yet again that that she does not think it is about race and that the differences are purely on not being student centred and the engagement academics demonstrate with their students (lines 6-7). Contextually, she also reiterates her commitment to the vision of UKZN being student-centred.

Considering that the question was about Laverne's opinion of the existence of racism at the UKZN it is unambiguous that she did not at any point in her response refer to race and racism. She focused her discussion on colour and the ability of colleagues and herself to perform their academic duties to the satisfaction of students. Moreover, she did not explain plainly who the victims and the culprits of this colour problem were, alluding to racism, and therefore exhibiting deracialized discourse.

4.2.5. Aditya: 30s, Indian male

Aditya has been an academic for five years and was a student during the merger of the five UKZN campuses. He communicates a need to move beyond race as South Africans and to value the inherent abilities of every person. He also expresses an understanding that because of past inequity, redress that focuses on race will be necessary for some time. He also expresses in detail about culture, ethnicity and language as being interlinked with race and as defining characteristics of individuals.

He offers various examples of the importance of broadly defining race as inclusive of culture, ethnicity and language. For example, he expanded on the importance of respecting people's culture and understanding the reason they behave the way that they do as well as focusing on people as human beings and getting to know their personality rather than the colour of their skin which is what he says he does. He pointed out that he did not see the essence of who I was as being a black woman and does not assess on that basis. The following was his response to whether race and racism exists.

Question: In your opinion, does racism exist at UKZN? If so, explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

1 *I really don't think I can formulate any particular answer to that. As I said, in my own*
2 *interactions with staff I've never experienced that kind of thing and I don't think I'd be*
3 *qualified enough to make a recommendation..*

4 **So, you think it doesn't exist then? [40:31]**

5 *I don't know if it exists. It's the same way like talking about, to someone, an Atheist*
6 *whether God existed, et cetera. It's something based on your own perceptions, et cetera,*
7 *racism, et cetera, is your own perception of, you know, of..*

4.2.5.1. Analysis of Aditya

In line 1 Aditya immediately reiterates the thinking that the question regarding the existence of racism at UKZN is not worthy of an explicit response. To further emphasise his point, he insists in line 2 that in his interactions with staff he has never experienced 'that kind of thing.' The selection of the word never by Aditya communicates certainty confidently on his part. It also leaves no room for contradiction and or ambivalence. Discursively, this does not afford elaboration and brings an end to the discussion since Aditya claims he has never encountered what is being discussed, and therefore lacks the qualifications to offer a recommendation (lines 2-3). Probed further in line 4, about whether he thinks racism does not exist, he then promptly responds that he does not know if it exists, and supports his claim by comparing himself to an atheist being asked about belief in God (line 5). In lines 6-7,

he concludes by stating that racism is "...based on your own perceptions..." which he states twice. Aditya's deracialized discourse, similar to Igsaan where there is simply obvious denial of the existence of racism using absence discourse (Nelson 2013). He uses the proverbial blaming-the-victim, when racism is claimed, namely that those claiming racism are possibly wrong in their perception as a way of denying or minimising racism (Nelson 2013; van Dijk 1992).

Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen, Lavern and Aditya's deracialized discourse is disturbing and problematic. While some of the academics circumvent the issue and express contradictory and ambivalent responses others simply deny the existence of race and racism or minimise racism as a general subject that affects everybody equally. The national race and racism incidents within the higher education context and other contexts previously described in South Africa however highlight that there exists a crisis of race and racism within higher education and South Africa. The lack of engagement and the seeming obliviousness demonstrated by Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen, Lavern and Aditya therefore reveal a deeper complexity problem whether it be at a conscious or sub-conscious level. Have academics so internalised their racist ideology in the practice of their profession that they cannot articulate the reality of South Africa? As the purveyors and creators of knowledge it is extremely disconcerting that their responses did not reflect more engagement and appropriate articulation on the question about race and racism since it prevails not only within the confines of Higher education but implicates itself nationally also. It would appear as stated by Kuljan (2016:266) that, "clearly post-apartheid education has not done enough to counter the false information taught to black people under Bantu education, nor the racist information that was taught to white people under apartheid." Bearing in mind that generally elite black, Indian and coloured South Africans are aligned with whiteness (Heleta 2016a), this perhaps accounts for Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen, Lavern and Aditya's inexplicable and perplexing responses.

In the wake of the recent calls for the decolonisation of higher education and the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall incidents, Maher (2015); Pather (2015); Essop (2016); Murriss (2016); Raath (2016); Langa (2017), and Nyamnjoh (2017), that were highly racialized, academics reticence and denial of the crisis is particularly abhorrent. This is because it delegitimises students' experiences of racism and alienation where

often students do not have the eloquence to articulate their experiences and would require academics to engage with them accordingly. Based on these academics' responses it is evident that such critical engagements on these matters with students would be highly improbable. Their reticence to acknowledge or interrogate also has broader ramifications for higher education, for example on how they reflect such contentions in their writings and publication. If the mandate of higher education is accepted as, a space that produces new knowledge, how then does this dichotomy become contradictory?

The deracialized talk regarding the existence of racism by Kumaran, Igsaan and Charleen and Lavern would appear to be in line with the need to preserve rainbowism and integration. However, being cognisant of the current racial tension and challenges within higher education, if these pertinent areas are not confronted and interrogated then the *status quo* will remain. Manganyi (2004:48) therefore aptly warns that "... we need to come to terms with the fact that the past is still with us in all its ugliness. Despite superficial appearances to the contrary, racism is still deep seated and difficult to eradicate." The determination to protect the ideal of rainbowism through colour-blindness proves counterproductive, exacerbating racial bifurcation. As correctly observed by Durrheim (2017), wrestling for post-racialism and non-racialism can work to keep racism alive. This warning of sustaining racism even within academics deracialized race discourse without the potential of deeper reflection and interrogation will exacerbate the problem. The following discusses three academics' views on race as a social construction discourse.

4.3. The discourse of race as a social construction

Part of eradicating racism would be to eradicate the forced identification of oneself as a particular public and political product (Vice 2010:323).

As submitted by Vice (2010) there exists the perspective that postulates that eradicating the forced racial identification categories which were and are politically motivated needs to occur for racism to end. The calls for the eradication of these racial categories is also because of the often-argued non-legitimacy of their biological existence and their well-documented socially constructed existence (Burton 2007; Maré 2014b). The extent to which the racial categories are forced is questionable

especially for Vice who is white. There is privilege and a material comfortability in lived experience that accompanies whiteness that is pronounced within the South African context. The predicated privilege that accompanies race and racism will therefore not be removed by eradicating racial categories. The awareness of the socially constructed nature of race that was apparent in the interviews and embraced by academics does not negate the profitability of these categories for both black and white South Africans in varied ways. Regarding social constructionism, Stevens admits the maintenance of the old narrative:

Debates about the socially constructed nature of human experience and activity as opposed to hard empiricist understandings thereof continue to gain traction more than ever in a technologically advancing world; and while these problematics may emerge in new iterations, they often reflect old and ongoing conundrums (2016:1).

Steven's assertion also resonated with academics in the study where the *status quo* was advanced in a nuanced manner. The 'old and ongoing conundrums' alluded to by him within the higher education context include a dominating Eurocentric curriculum and an infrastructure through which blackness is victimised (Sithole 2016; Heleta 2016a). Talking about race in this socially constructed method invariably detracted from the controversial racial categories. The responses of some of the academics from the different racial groups suggested a sense of an existential comfort and discomfort when confronted with the question of the meaningfulness or the value of the concept of race, particularly because of the pervasive and pertinent socially constructed racial labels in South Africa. The awareness of the socially constructed nature of race does not in any way negate its meaning for the academics interviewed. What was evident was the nuanced 'race as a social construction discourse' of academics which is about the common-sense idea that race is a social construction. The social construction of race is itself constructed and discussion of race as a social construction focuses on how there is a nuanced perspective when talking about race through a discourse of race as a social construction by some academics. The first academic who provides such justification in this respect is Thabiso demonstrated below.

4.3.1. Thabiso: 40s, Black male

Thabiso commenced his academic career prior to the merger. He worked during a period when the profile of students and staff were predominantly white and presently

however the profile has changed to predominantly black. His account of his experiences of race and racism throughout the interview is very vivid and is illustrated with pertinent examples. Occasionally, the pain in his accounts is almost palpable. He constructs the subject of race and racism as accurate, realistic and indisputable and positions himself as a casualty of the social construction of race.

Question: What is your understanding of race?

1 (.)Race is a social construct and a lot of people are confusing themselves saying race
2 does not exist. Race exists as a social construct. So, you hear people say ‘oh well people
3 share about 99.9% genetic variants, so we are all the same.’ **We are not interested in**
4 **race as a biological construct, race is a social construct**, it has got a long history, so
5 race exists as a social construct and it will continue to influence the way other people
6 see us. It has got dire consequences, your race has got dire consequences, especially if
7 you are not aware of it or you maintain a colour-blind attitude towards it, willy nilly, it
8 will affect you even without your awareness... So, this is a social construct, it is there,
9 it will always be there []

4.3.1.1. Analysis of Thabiso

In line 1, Thabiso first pauses before communicating his understanding of race indicating his hesitation and discomfort with the question. He then indicates that others, position race as non-existent, while they confuse themselves (lines 1-2). This positions him as possessing clarity about the existence of race. In lines 2-3 he demonstrates his understanding of the argument against the existence of race as an entity by mentioning that others declare that, “oh well we share 99.9% genetic variants so we are all the same,” a discursive move to prevent any potential challenge by implying his appreciative thoughts on the genetics of race. The distinctive dichotomous usage of the terms “we” and “us” can be interpreted to be referring to other black people because Thabiso is black. It is also significant that Thabiso includes himself when talking about ‘we’ which personalises the experience of the social construction of race for him. In other words, he reinforces the notion that for black people, himself included, the existence of race as a social construct is very tangible and a part of his lived experiences. The use of the expression “oh well” (line 2) to describe how others

speak about race scientifically, rhetorically signifies resignation and a detachment that weakens the scientific argument against race. Additionally, to reiterate his point further, he offers that “we are not interested in race as a biological construct, race is a social construct” (lines 3-4). It is significant that he uses the word “we” to emphasise his position on the existence of the social construct of race implying once again that there are others who agree with him and relating a binary opposition position while also creating a shared identity with me as a black academic.

In other words, the position of colour-blindness, often encouraged by whites suggesting that in effect the social construction of race, ‘does not matter’ is contrasted by the position of some blacks for whom the concept of colour-blindness is ludicrous, as alluded to by Thabiso (lines 6-8) its biological non-existence notwithstanding. Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown also attest to this colour-blind framing of race by stating that “...the theory of colour-blind racism shows how white people minimise the ongoing impact of discrimination in society today, using arguments such as ‘the past is the past,’ ‘you can’t continue blaming things on apartheid’... (2011:75)” Similarly, Sithole (2016:51) argues that:

...there is a concerted effort to nullify race and racism in the anti-black world through euphemisms like non-racialism, humanism, race transcendence, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, colour-blindness and so on.

The conviction with which race is discussed by Thabiso where he reiterates that ‘race is a social construct’ five times (lines 1-5, 8) demonstrates that race exists as a social construct for Thabiso as he positions himself as being directly influenced by race and its long history in the way “people see us” (lines 5-6). The use of the word “people” is non-specific and therefore can be interpreted to refer to all people no matter their racial specification and it is open to interpretation. This alludes to the power of the social construction of race which affects the way “people” see one another. To solidify his position in lines 4-6, Thabiso has problematised the issue of seeing race as something that does not exist, and has constructed the problem of not seeing race as having “dire consequences,” which he states twice (line 6). To further emphasise his argument, he problematises having a ‘colour-blind attitude toward race’ (lines 6-7). His words are doing the work of locating this particular way of viewing race as non-existent, as extremely problematic as evidenced by his use of the word “dire.” The idea of

subterfuge seems to be inferred by Thabiso, where he is arguing that if people are encouraged to focus on the non-existence of race, they will be blinded to the extreme consequences that result from not seeing race. In lines 7-8 he states that "...willy nilly, it will affect you without your awareness." Metaphorically, this creates an image of an insidious spirit which latches itself onto one's psyche consciously or subconsciously and also influences people's existence whether they like it or not. Thabiso specifies again that race is a social construct highlighting that "...it is there, it will always be there" lines 8-9, once again constructing its perpetuating existence and pervasiveness.

Thabiso therefore positions himself and others he considers to be like him as influenced by the powerful 'social construction of race.' He is suggesting as self-evident that race is not controversial when discussed as a social construction and that the constant dispute regarding the non-existence of race is irrelevant because 'race as a social construction' does exist. In this respect, Distiller and Steyn (2004:7) posit that "to insist on the constructed nature of 'race' is to make it impossible to talk about the material reality generated by the concept." Hence, Thabiso's insistent positioning of the social construction of race is notable as well as his silence about the debilitating nature of racism, which he simply describes as dire. As a black interviewer, he has possibly assumed that I recognise exactly what he means by dire and appreciated the freedom to express himself without too much elaboration.

Following is William, designated white, who is a contemporary of Thabiso in terms of age, gender and the number of years he has been in academia.

4.3.2 William: 40s, White male

William has been an academic for fifteen years. In the interview he constructs himself as a privileged white male who needs to and has to talk about race even though talking about race reifies it. He also presents himself as cognisant of the dynamics of the socially constructed nature of race especially as it relates to crime. He offers a detached and distanced account of race and how it relates to him, he also interrogates taken for granted knowledge about race and whiteness. Throughout the interview he consistently refers to race academically without any mention of private spheres of his life.

Question: Is it important to talk about race?

1 *Yes, I think it is, but I think it's important but it's dangerous because when you start*
2 *talking (.) I mean, for instance (.) I mean, it's always better to be more specific. I work*
3 *a lot on the problem of violence in South Africa, and when people think about violence,*
4 *they think about race. This is always already happening, there's already race built into*
5 *the assumptions about violence. For example, I don't know if you saw this Red October*
6 *thing last week? It was a big protest that was organised in Pretoria by these white*
7 *people who were protesting against what they believe is a black genocide against white*
8 *people in the form of violent crime (.) well, if you are interested in race, go back and*
9 *look at that (.) just look for it on Facebook, and it was hugely controversial but it's this*
10 *Afrikaans musician, what's his name, Steve Hofmeyer, and he makes these statements*
11 *all the time (.) but he, anyway (.) I mean, it's an interesting example because here you've*
12 *got people who self-identify as white, they are very strongly identify as being a white*
13 *community, and they see themselves as a community under siege, and they see*
14 *themselves as a white community under siege by black South Africans in general and*
15 *black criminals in particular, and so this is quite interesting, and obviously it's a very*
16 *extreme example of the kind of white race thinking about race, but in fact it's also a*
17 *very normal way of thinking about the problems of violence and crime. When people*
18 *think about violence and crime, they think about black men, and this seems to be across*
19 *social groupings, different socio-, economic-, race-, ethnic groups all seem to have this*
20 *idea that this big South African threat of crime is actually, in some deep sense is a*
21 *threat of criminal black men and very few people think about violence and criminality*
22 *in terms of whiteness... apart from Julius Malema, I mean that is quite interesting, he's*
23 *publicly said that white people are criminals and we must actually punish them for that.*
24 *That is the kind of interesting inversion of discourse, but okay, for me to talk about*
25 *crime and violence, which is what I talk about, I've got to look at the racial construction*
26 *of these things, I've got to look at how these fears that are fundamental to South African*
27 *social life become racially inscribed, and why it is that people for instance fear being*
28 *mugged, but they don't fear being defrauded by their insurance company, or something*
29 *like that, and when you start looking at those things you actually see, well underneath*
30 *those things, is race. I mean blue collar crime versus white collar crime, which is kind*
31 *of black crime versus white crime also (.) so these are interesting things. So, on the one*

32 *hand I need to talk about racialisation in terms of these fears and constructions of risk*
33 *that are racialized, on the other hand I need to talk about certain things, like why in*
34 *certain social groups there are higher prevalence of certain kinds of violence than*
35 *others, and to talk about why that is without collapsing it into race. For instance,*
36 *economically disadvantaged groups tend to have more social violence, globally, it*
37 *doesn't really matter what the racial organisation of the society is. I need to be able to*
38 *talk about that, and um (.) so it becomes (.) to do my work, I have to talk about race,*
39 *but the question is to talk about race without reifying race into causal categories which*
40 *is (.)*

4.3.2.1. Analysis of William

When questioned about whether it is important to talk about race William instantly agrees, but immediately states that it is dangerous and pauses before stating the reason (line 1-2). To explain the danger of speaking about race, after pausing, he specifically relates it to the work that he conducts on violence and states that, when others think about violence they think about race (lines 2-4). Pausing and relating race to others and his work is a way of distancing himself from race and implies that he is not like others, namely other whites. This supports the notion of white people as individuals (Falkof 2015), and William positions himself as such. In other words, he is positioned as a white academic who is not like other whites. After explaining the prevalence of raced thinking and assumptions about violent crime he provides an impersonal example, namely, the “Red October protest in Pretoria by whites regarding black genocide against white people” to illustrate his point (lines 4-7). Once again, the distancing from the subject of race becomes evident, and frames “these other white people” as concerned about black people and violent crime. In lines 8-9 he insists twice that if I am interested in race, I should consult Facebook, a move that once again deflects attention from himself personally in discussing race as a macro issue that prevails in South African society. This is substantially different to Thabiso who constructed race as a personal reality.

He further mentions that in the protest the Afrikaans musician Steve Hofmeyer was involved and that the protestors very strongly self-identified as white which he states

twice (lines 9-13). It is striking that he mentions Steve Hofmeyer's Afrikaans ethnicity, from which the Apartheid ideology was birthed, and that he externalises white people and their actions as not being part of who he is by referring to them as "they," further distancing him. In lines 13-17 William specifies twice that these white protestors see themselves as under siege (a strong military metaphor suggesting pressure from attack) from "black South Africans in general and black criminals in particular," which he refers to as 'a very extreme example of white race thinking' which he says is also normalised within the violence and crime arena. While separating himself from this extreme thinking, William is implying that these white people are outliers or deviant elements who are the exceptions revealed by his reference to them as "very extreme" (lines 15-16). He is drawing on the racist Afrikaner discourse argued by Durrheim, Mtose, and Brown (2011:95) to be "...built around such prototypically vivid images of people like Eugene Terreblanche, the right-wing political leader" also viewed as very extreme.

Interestingly in lines 14-18 he specifies that the thinking that black men are the perpetrators of crime and violence and not whiteness is 'very normal' thinking, 'across social groupings and different socio, economic, race and ethnic groups' constructing a perceptual metaphor of the naturalisation of race thinking. He also speaks academically about the binary of black versus white in the way he constructs "them." This does the work of further distancing him from the issue of race as an individual and constructs race as a collective South African problem. Even when speaking about the exception of Julius Malema whom he says stated that white people are criminals that should be punished, he still refers to white people as "them" and does not include himself (lines 22-24). Moreover, he distances himself more from the subject of race by speaking academically about Julius Malema's isolated response which he declares was an "interesting inversion of discourse." Interestingly, the recent protests labelled apartheid, by white, right-wing supremacist South Africans (#Black Monday) against the killing of white farmers by black people had both Steve Hofmeyer and Julius Malema at the forefront of speaking in binary opposition to one another; with Steve Hofmeyer lamenting the excessively high number of farm murders and Julius Malema vowing that a counter protest would be organised next time" (Khaas 2017; Manyathela 2017; Nel & Eybers 2017; van Niekerk 2017). William's, academic language, as well

as his positive representation of himself, by not identifying himself with the two polar extremes in South African politics is therefore apt. William is also by default representing himself as not racist by not identifying himself with the white identified individuals he describes.

In lines 25-27 William insists that his occupation necessitates that he engages with race when he states “I’ve got to” twice implying that he is forced and has no choice in having to talk about the social construction of race, and how fears become racially inscribed in his work, which he confines to academic spaces. His description of fear becoming racially inscribed locates fear of crime and violence in racial constructions, and he explains his job as an interrogation of the process by which fears become raced.

He goes on to equate mugging with defrauding by insurance companies (lines 27-29), which may be a questionable move by a liberal white scholar. This being because there is a fairly obvious reason for people to fear mugging over any kind of fraud (raced or not). This includes direct physical violence which is scary on multiple levels while indirect financial violence may cause anxiety and anger. In lines 29-30 he justifies: “when you start looking at those things you actually see, well underneath those things, is race.” By asserting this, he positions himself as questioning taken-for-granted knowledge around crime and race, by posing questions about, why it is the way it is (lines 27-28), and this is supported by his stating that “when you start looking,” lines 29-30, which implies that most whites do not look “underneath those things” as he does, “what you actually see is race.” The use of “actually” specifies that this is a specialised perspective that others do not necessarily have access to, also a truth claim, namely that is not really about violence, but about race. This he confirms in lines 30-32 when he remarks that blue collar crime versus white collar crime is really black crime versus white crime which in his perspective is interesting. Once again, William distances and detaches himself personally from the discussion by directing and centering race academically.

He consistently uses “I” throughout this explanation of race and his work. In lines 32-35, he mentions twice that he “needs to talk” about race and these things twice, which

implies that there is a lack of willingness to discuss it on his part and that he does not really want to discuss his work and conflates it all into race. However, he points out the complexities and questions how it is possible to discuss his work and prevalence of violence in one group more than another without focusing on race. He accordingly explains that he needs to talk about problematising “racing” fear and risk while being careful to not attribute criminal status to groups in which crime prevalence is high. He is detailing that discussions of race are fraught and problematic and he has to talk about race but he also cannot, “talk about why that is without collapsing it into race” (lines 33-35).

William deliberates further on the same theme in lines 30-31 where he speaks about economically disadvantaged groups tending to have more social violence globally regardless of race and yet there is a link to race. He thus concludes that he needs to talk about race to do his work (lines 35-37). Additionally, he reiterates: “but the question is to talk about race without reifying race into causal categories which is (.)” (Lines 37-40). William’s hesitation and pauses illustrates some degree of struggle with the topic of race and its comfortability but he “needs to” “has to” talk about it although he never wants to, because race must be topicalized but not reified.

Overall, William attempts to provide a distanced and disconnected account of race and how this relates to him. He consistently speaks in language associated with his profession rather than his personal life. The issue of the private versus the public when discussing race, seems to be a constant internal debate for William, often silenced and shrouded by his duplicitous messages of refusing to relate his talk to himself as a white South African man, while implicating others. Earlier in the extract, William equated mugging with defrauding by insurance companies attributing the fear associated with muggings to raced constructions of crime and the criminal. Afterwards he positioned himself as questioning what he constructs as taken-for-granted knowledge around crime and race but in doing so appeared to implicate others (other whites) as accepting of this knowledge. His use of “actually” indicates that this specialised point of view is also a truth claim—saying it is not really about violence, it is really about race. Using academic discourse, he is also positioning himself as a specialist that has access to special knowledge that other whites do not.

His distanced account about the importance of race revealed by his referencing of the subject in terms of professional life and his discussion of it in academic terms, indicates that William is uncomfortable discussing race as a social construction in the interview. Another indication that race is uncomfortable for William, are the multiple occasions when he shifts between positioning himself as having to talk about race and having to not talk about race in particular ways. This exhibited that William had difficulties with the social construction of race even at this dissociated academic perspective. The manner in which he positions the social construction of race is thought provoking, as he constantly references it as something that he “needs” to address, implying that it is not something that he necessarily *wants* to address. He uses sophisticated academic language as a defence to avoid addressing the relationship between the private and the professional which he is implicated in, where he vocalises his need to talk about this public and professional issue of race. In short, William is, discursively speaking, in trouble. He needs to talk about race but at the same time his attempts to do so is troubled and tense. He is caught in the inextricable position of what May refers to as being “...socially located in multiple and overlapping ways (2015:23),” where the personal and professional self, interacts.

Towards the end of the extract, William’s discomfort and awkwardness becomes more apparent in his pausing and circumventing. He once again seems to need time to formulate an answer which involves the difficult juxtaposition between having to talk about race and having to not talk about it in particular ways that are ‘taboo.’ As a white South African and an academic, this means that he likely identifies as liberal and non-racist, and has solemn concerns over being perceived as or being accused of being racist, particularly when engaging with a black interviewer. This likely accounts for some of his discomfort. The South African context includes the production of white domination politically, socially, historically and culturally and its pervasiveness in relationships as described by DiAngelo (2012), which William is cognisant of. This would explain his actions of positively self-representing as non-racist.

What pervaded William’s talk about the social construction of race overall was uneasiness which he disguised by speaking about it expertly and professionally and within an academic space. Through distancing himself from it by problematising it as

plaguing other whites William seems to be exhibiting a form of denial of his personal stake in the “white collective unconscious” (Hassim 2014), that is part of current South African society where an identity that is racist is no longer valued (Augoustinos & Every 2010). He actions his denial by focusing on the binary opposites of the extreme right with Steve Hofmeyer and the extreme left with Julius Malema when speaking about race, therefore positively self-representing. As an academic the issue of the private versus the public is a constant internal debate for him, often silenced and shrouded by duplicitous messages where on the one hand he expresses the need to analyse race and yet on the other he worries about reifying race if he analyses it.

In contrast next academic to be discussed is Tasneem who is a young female academic.

4.3.3. Tasneem: 30s, Indian female

Tasneem has been an academic for five years. The general focus of her race as a social construction discourse is as a concerned young developing academic and for her colleagues.

Question: Do you think there’s any value in talking about race?

1 *I think that in today’s climate in certain instances that it is –you have to, there is lot of*
2 *emphasis on race; whether you going to join the employment arena or uh when it comes*
3 *to any issues that might crop up a bit affect your rights uh-m yah so race is important*
4 *in those respects (..)*

5 ***And in general just, do you think it is important to talk about race even***
6 ***over and above issues of employment? I mean—I mean there are those***

7 *Unfortunately, it’s a reality. And even though you don’t want to talk about it, it crops*
8 *up; its ugly head rears you know uh-m...;*

9 ***Why do you say its ugly head?***

10 *I think that in certain instances I mean if you're looking at the you know, let's just take*
11 *the employment for example right; so you're looking for a job I mean and now at the*
12 *UKZN we had a meeting a few weeks ago and they were enquiring if we had any*
13 *colleagues that were looking for a job to join the institution here, I mean they are*
14 *looking for a job here. And we were like we had like XYZ people that we could bring*
15 *forward but unfortunately, we were told, but they have to be of a certain race group;*
16 *black-black-black South African. And if you didn't fall into that category and even*
17 *though there was this scarcity and there was a need for lecturers uh-m unfortunately*
18 *our colleagues wouldn't or people that we knew that we could refer they wouldn't*
19 *obviously be you know, looked at.*

4.3.3.1. Analysis of Tasneem

In response to the question of the value of talking about race (line 1), Tasneem immediately refers to the present climate in South Africa. Milazzo (2017) too describes South Africa as having a climate that is still dominated by white privilege, institutional racism, exploitation and unemployment which predominantly affects black people, post-apartheid. Similar to William, Tasneem asserts that a discussion on race presently is imperative which compels her to talk about race while not necessarily wanting to (Line 1). She further emphasises race and employment (line 2) which alludes to the current agenda of affirmative action concerned with redistributive justice in terms of racial categorisations, provoking controversy as one group is advantaged over another (Durrheim, Boettiger, Essack, Maarschalk, & Ranchod 2007; Southhall 2016). She also refers to race as “cropping up” when talking about any issues (line 3), which metaphorically constructs race as suddenly appearing unexpectedly, and affecting your rights (line 3) which are personal and political. The cropping up of race also suggests that it is made relevant by others who bring it up. Tasneem is therefore referencing the importance of race as affecting the personal and political (lines 3-4) and that it's deliberately topicalized. Interestingly however as was the case with William, Tasneem does not speak about the social construction of race from a personal perspective and speaks about it in a relatively distanced manner and refers to it legally as in how it affects employment generally and yet does not mention how it has affected her employment personally.

During her pause she questioned if there exists any value to talking about race other than in reference to employment (lines 5-6), and immediately responds “Unfortunately it’s a reality...” (line 7), constructing discussion of the social construction of race as regrettable and negative but here to stay and existing as real. By also stating that it ‘crops up’ (stated for the second time) even when “you don’t want to talk about it” (line 7) once again creates the idea of being forced to constantly confront race. To reinforce her point Tasneem points out that “...its ugly head rears you know uh...” (lines 7-8) when referring to race, and by using the “rearing its ugly head” idiom, constructs race as something undesirable and unpleasant. The use of “you know” also suggests that in South Africa it is taken for granted that race will crop up and not necessarily in a positive way, hence her statement “you know.” Probed further about her reference to its ugly head (line 9), Tasneem replies after slight hedging, and reverts to the issue of employment (lines 10-11).

She details that her colleagues were seeking employment at the UKZN and refers to her colleagues as “X, Y, Z” and offers little and yet peculiarly explains that they “unfortunately” had to be “black, black, black South African” (12-15). Stating ‘black’ three times could be an indication of unease with revelation of this detail which led to slight stuttering during her response. By default, it is apparent that her colleagues were not black South African which she explains as unfortunate because of the scarcity of lecturers (lines 16-17) which meant that they would not be considered (lines 18-19). By her statement about non-black lecturers not being considered despite scarcity of lecturers, and adding ‘you know’ (line 19) as a rhetorical question, seems to signify hesitation and embarrassment at having to state this obvious acknowledged selection practice. It is apparent that Tasneem is troubled by her colleagues’ inability to obtain suitable employment because they are not black which was unfortunate, an indictment on affirmative action. As an Indian academic however Tasneem is herself a beneficiary of affirmative action and seems to exhibit the ambivalence and duality concerning affirmative action referred to by Durrheim et al. (2007), being in a racial juxtaposition where she is experiencing the benefits of affirmative action as well as its drawbacks. Tasneem, nevertheless does not speak about this positive personal factor regarding her race at any point in the interview, further distancing race issues as personal for Tasneem.

Tasneem explains race as negative and unfortunate. Her talk was troubled and uneasy, where she felt compelled to talk about race against her will while constructing the social construction of race very negatively. She also spoke about race in a relatively distanced manner focusing on employment in reference to others and not personally. Despite alluding to the way race affects the personal and political, she does not reference it positively in terms of herself. Her current employment in a previously, historically white university at the UKZN through affirmative action is not factored into her talk, however she speaks about the regrettable situation of her colleagues who cannot obtain employment because they are not black. The conclusion that can be deduced from this is that she does not identify with blackness as defined in the South African constitution which includes Indian, coloured and black South Africans. On the other hand, it could also be that the employment policy does not subscribe to the Constitution's definition of blackness. The UKZN specifically employs black African academics over Indian academics. In support of this, IOLS Research, Ruggunan and rccrri (2010:12) explain that:

...non-legislated policy prescriptions from the National Department of Education also mandates higher education institutions...to undertake classification on the basis of race.

Moreover, schools, units and departments further develop specific equity plans keeping the legislated policies in mind (Ruggunan 2010).

It is therefore apparent that the social construction of race discourse of Thabiso, William and Tasneem solves the problem of talking about race as a reality and an unreality and that "interpretive social constructionism" (ISC) and "objective social constructionism" (OSC) is implicated in their talk. This is bifurcated along racial lines. Thabiso exhibits OSC when he speaks about race as a 'real' construction manifested in South African reality. While on the other hand, ISC is acknowledged by William and Tasneem that despite its socially constructed and non-inherent nature, there exists the obligation to talk about race.

Other forms of OSC and ISC that permeated the talk of three academics exhibited through their marginalisation discourse follows.

4.4. Marginalisation discourse of academics in the context of transformation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Marginalisation discourse seems to have been adopted by all the academics in the study regardless of racial designation. As a consequence, this requires deeper reflection in order to ascertain the reasons that lie behind this.

How can everybody claim to be marginalised in current higher education South Africa? In the present South African climate where blackness continues to inhabit a position of marginality, (Posel 2014; Falkof 2015; Sithole 2016) specifically in the South African higher education domain as compared to whiteness, the question of how academics can all claim to be marginalised is a pertinent one. Whiteness is still currently privileged and this highlights the importance of determining academics marginalisation discourse. Higher education in its entirety is dominated by Eurocentrism which originally served to maintain and construct the apartheid order, economically, politically and socially (Heleta 2016a), thereby buttressing white supremacy. Based on this history therefore, marginalisation of black academics and not white academics would therefore seem to be the logical result.

The primary force that keeps white supremacy firmly in place is the material and psychological gains that come to white people, which are bolstered by an ideological support system (Jensen 2005:45).

Jensen (2005) is arguing that white supremacy is kept solidly in place because of the benefits it bestows on white people both materially and psychologically. He further contends that ideological support strengthens white supremacy thereby indicating the existence of beliefs and thinking that keep white supremacy firmly in place. Jensen (2005) is also insinuating that the ideological support that fortifies white supremacy is implicit or silent by not stating it explicitly. Juxta-positioned with white supremacy is the taboo subject of anti-black racism (More 2014; Sithole 2016) which is a consequence of white supremacy that is also therefore inadvertently implicit as well. In a similar vein Milazzo asserts that "...despite the visible consequences of white supremacy in our time, many white people portray racism as exceptional rather than structural to minimise its effects, or deny its existence altogether" (2017:559). Milazzo (2017) is also similarly claims that white supremacy (which is directly implicated in

race and racism and people's attitudes and beliefs) is really about, political, economic and symbolic power, and that silence in this regard, naturalises white supremacy and thereby race and racism.

Additionally, Sue (2013:664) argues that "...race talk is often silenced, ignored, diluted, and or discussed in very superficial ways for fear of offending others or creating potentially explosive situations." This silencing supported by the ideal of non-racialism in the South African context as has been outlined, has however not curbed the explosive incidents involving race and racism in higher education and South African society as a whole in the context of transformation. The specific racially explosive incidents in higher education are coming from black students predominantly and some black academic staff members who are responding to the build-up of tension resulting from the silencing and alienating nature of a higher education sphere dominated by white supremacy. This silencing on the other hand also highlights the bifurcated nature of many white and black South Africans' post-apartheid experiences, many of which manifest within the current South African higher education landscape. Of interest is that there is a marginalisation discourse for all academics within higher education transformation that is still rooted in "...colonial, apartheid and western world views and epistemological traditions [reinforcing] white and western dominance and privilege" (Heleta 2016b:1).

Relating this to the academics in the study insinuates that the inevitable silences in terms of race and racism and the attitudes and beliefs of academics which are directly related to the monolith of white supremacy. The embedded and yet unobtrusive nature of the social construction of whiteness, being the standard from which 'all' is measured (Scott 2012; Mare 2014b) in terms of race and racial thinking in South Africa means South African academics in the study are solicited to talk about some taken for granted issues, the core of which relate to white supremacy and anti-black racism. A post-apartheid South Africa needs this silence broken considering the deeply embedded nature of whiteness for all South African identities, and the current crisis around issues of race and racism.

The following is Nonkosi's account of her experiences of marginalisation in the higher education transformation context as a young female black academic, illustrating the operation of some of these silences.

4.4.1. Nonkosi: 30s, Black female

Nonkosi has been an academic for ten years. She was the only black woman academic in her department which was in the early stages of transformation at the UKZN. It was also a period when the demographics of the UKZN reported in the "UKZN Merger Report," were not predominantly black but relatively mixed, with staff being 48% white, 31% Indian, 19% black and 2% Coloured (Makgoba 2007:16). In her narration overall, Nonkosi positions herself as a residual casualty of transformation that offered little support considering the legacy of apartheid and its dynamics. She aptly captured how university is a microcosm of society which Balfour (2016:135) concedes, reflects the social norms and values that in themselves can be exclusionary. Such complexities become evident also as she constructs academics of other races other than her own as prioritising her career pathway outside academia which she was perplexed by and as such was construed as condescending. The comments from her colleagues implied that she would be more productive in private practice because of her colour. Moreover, their unsolicited advice disturbed her immensely as she could not comprehend their motives.

Question: [] How does race affect the way you are treated by others at the University of KwaZulu-Natal?

1 *[] Eish, it dep... OK it depends, but firstly when you talk about race and the environment*
2 *in the university at large (.) I think the issue of race is one of the issues that, post-*
3 *apartheid, (.) it's something that was just pushed under the carpet and if it's being dealt*
4 *with, it's dealt with selectively Uh-hmm And people try so much to put on gloves when*
5 *they deal with issues of racism. But overall, I feel that hmm South Africa at large is not*
6 *ready to deal with issues of racism and transform. Coming to universities as well,*
7 *people are not ready to transform. The issue of transformation is not uhmm embraced*
8 *positively. Uhmm. Especially in the department that we are at; you'll find that uhm; I*
9 *speak about my own experiences, and what I've come across; Uhmm. When I first came*

10 *here as an Academic, you know, I'll receive like (.) people would just pass comments,*
11 *like colleagues who are not the same race as I am, that I should go and work in private*
12 *practice or I should go work in other organisations, because I'm black. And just*
13 *because I'm black I would get a better position. And secondly, I would come to my*
14 *office and I will open the door, there a post like people would put on like an*
15 *advertisement of a job, without me requesting them to look for a job for me; but they*
16 *will go out of their own will they decide to look for a job to do job search for me and*
17 *without me understanding why was it being done. So but that..*

4.4.1.1. Analysis of Nonkosi

In answer to the question of whether race affects the way she is treated by others at the UKZN Nonkosi commences by “Eish,” line1, equivalent to a despairing sigh which suggests exasperation with discussion of race. She follows this by adding “OK it depends” suggesting that her answer would be different in different situations and that possibly she is unsure of the answer that she should provide. Her apprehension seems to be reflected in that she does not answer the question directly and deflects the question of race on the wider post-apartheid university environment, even though the question was specifically directed at her personally (lines 2-3). Reference to the larger university environment submits that there is pervasiveness of race issues within the university community. Nonkosi’s deflection when she refers to the university environment as a whole, seems to demonstrate her self-representation as having an evolved non-racial view. Ahmed alludes to this when contending that, “...the very idea that we are beyond race, that we can see beyond race, or that we are “over race” is how racism is reproduced; it is how racism is looked over” (2012:182-183). Nonkosi’s deflection although contextually understandable, therefore may be inherently how racism is replicated and ignored, fuelled by an overriding national South African narrative of non-racialism and living beyond race. This could also be a reflection of the debilitating nature of anti-blackness that marginalises and silences, where, “...Blackness is something that is rendered estranged in humanity itself...” (Sithole 2016:60).

After circumventing and pausing, an indication of discomfort was communicated by the assertion that, “it’s something that was just pushed under the carpet and if it’s being dealt with, it’s dealt with selectively” (lines 3-4). When Nonkosi refers to race as being ‘pushed under the carpet’ she is metaphorically emphasising the contentious, uncomfortable, often disconcerting nature of discussions of race which lead to it being avoided, marginalised, concealed, ignored as in sweeping it under the carpet which perpetuates the silence and hypocrisy and leaves it concealed. Such hidden and buried consequences ultimately compounds and incrementally exacerbates the lack of engagement. Her use of passive language when discussing race distances her from race, where she is unconvincingly referencing race impersonally and detachedly. Stating that “it’s dealt with selectively” (line 4), alludes to the conducive circumstances under which it is most acceptable or not to discuss race, which almost infers that such selection further perpetuates inexpressiveness.

Additionally, Nonkosi communicates the sensitivity when she narrates that others engage with it delicately (lines 4-5). Moreover, she states that with their gloves “people try so much” line 4, which specifies and constructs how cautious others are when approaching racism and how awkward they are when they attempt to manage a discussion of racism without causing conflict. The sensitive overtones are obvious. Metaphorically, gloves dress up our views and protect us, not allowing us to deal with race more intensely, creating an element of detachment where discussions of race become impersonal. Once again, her reference to “people” conveys her remoteness from the discussion and locates difficulties with discussions of racism as being others centred and not how it affects her personally. She argues her point further by explaining that “...overall she does not feel that hmm South Africa at large is ready to deal with issues of racism and transform” (line 5-6). By using the word, “overall,” Nonkosi is positioning herself as unconvinced that race is being dealt adequately in South Africa in that she is implying that her judgement is based on considering all things leading to the conclusion that, South Africa is not ready to deal with racism and transformation (lines 6-7). Her statement that her judgement is based on how she feels however submits that her judgement is personal although she positions it detachedly and academically. Compared to William however she still provides a more descriptive personal account of her experiences with race in her daily interactions at the UKZN.

Nonkosi moreover points out that transformation is not embraced positively especially in our department (lines 7-8). Up to this point it seems clear that Nonkosi externalises others as encountering issues with race and racism, however there are no specific addressees as such that she is implicating, which to some extent communicates other-centred rather self-centred (Zuber-Skerritt 2013:229) and in some ways suggests invisibility within a contested context in academia (Balfour 2016:135). She continues to discuss race in a very passive and distant manner and does not too explicitly. In lines 9-10 she however finally speaks about her personal experiences as an academic and after pausing and evading she explains that people who were not from her race would pass comments that she should go and work in private practice or other organisations because she was black (lines 10-13). Nonkosi continues to be non-specific and refers to her colleagues as people of a different race to her but does not specify their race and not specifically implicating addressees once again indicates a sense of being invisible in the academic context. In lines 12 and 13 she states twice that all her rejection within academia was because she was black, which she re-emphasised in line 13 that, it was “just because I’m black,” that they stated qualified me for a better position. This implies that her colleagues assumed that she was ill placed in academia and her career opportunities post-apartheid were numerous and that she would obtain employment “just” or only because she was black and not because of her skills or expertise in academia. Her description of finding advertisements of posts for employment that she did not specifically solicit from her colleagues infer that their initiatives were certainly unwelcomed and she did not understand them (lines 13-17), which positions her as receiving assistance by her colleagues who create ironic opposition binaries which is not collegial support (Harrison 2016:24). She however refers to colleagues as “people” and “they,” not extending the collegial spirit.

Nonkosi’s encounter is affirmed by Divala (2014:2084) when discussing the experiences of black women academics in higher education where she asserts that:

...both internal and external circumstances have been used by others either to pedagogise or to argue and reinforce the idea that the higher education sector is not the place for a woman, less so a black woman!

Nonkosi is constructing her colleagues of other racial groups as antagonistic towards her and of lacking collegiality where they are patronising her and in an indirect but explicit manner suggesting her career is destined for outside academia. This transformative agenda adopted in South African higher education has acknowledged sentiments by white academics that the government was motivated to replace them resulting in their reluctance to assist black academics (Msimanga 2014), which was perhaps accounts for the hostility Nonkosi was confronted with.

It is significant that Nonkosi constructs this selective delicate manner of dealing with race as othering before referring it to herself. This vulnerability is evident in post-apartheid universities by the opportunities and responsibilities associated with power and how they influence how people understand and perform their humanity (Knowles 2014:89). On the other hand, it would appear that in her initial distanced account of her experiences with race she is very cautious and selective in telling her story. Similar to William there is an element of externalising and distancing in discussion of race issues where South Africans are positioned as being prone to avoiding and being uncomfortable with discussions of racism. Even though she later speaks about her experiences as an academic, she does not provide specifics of her antagonists, except to state that they were people who were adversarial towards her. Such academic positioning (Pillay, Naicker and Pithouse-Morgan 2016) can be challenging as she navigates her relational self within transformation. She constructed her colleagues as hostile towards her by undermining her blackness. This positioned Nonkosi as a casualty of undeserved hostility and marginalisation caused by her blackness and therefore seemingly deserving the label racism. Nonkosi however does not explicitly state this which seems to indicate her desire to position herself as distant from racism and to appear more objective when her response in the interview reveals the contrary.

Overall, Nonkosi's marginalisation discourse conveys how racism affected her personally using a very specific and personal example. She has therefore taken Thabiso's explanation of being affected by race further by stating specifics, supporting objective social constructionism (OSC) for both of them where they construct race from their lived experiences.

Following is Aditya's account of marginalisation within the higher education transformation context which is dissociated with a nuanced focus.

4.4.2. Aditya: 30s, Indian male

As stated above, Aditya was a student during the merger of the five UKZN campuses. The experience of the merger has left him feeling that there were Indian cultural elements in the process of the merger that were erroneously left out of the UKZN branding therefore failing to reflect the diversity of the UKZN and marginalising Indian South Africans. He for example thinks, that the Lotus flower could have been included in the new branding of the UKZN as it is sacred to the Indian population. In the interview he generally speaks about race academically, and discusses it in terms of the historical link of race to racism, culture and inequality. He constructs the UKZN as not aesthetically reflecting diversity and positions himself as giving considered opinions about the UKZN and would often refer to the need to move beyond race. When questioned about what he thought is unspoken in terms of race and racism at the UKZN, his immediate response is to cite black students who protest on campus, while he states that there are also white, Indian and coloured students at the UKZN who do not join these protests. He thereafter explains in detail that the poverty of Indian and black students is comparable and even positions himself as having come from what is equivalent to a poor rural black school which in his opinion would justify their (Indian students) need to be part of the protests by black students. This could be construed to what Olivier (2016:160) refers to as the, "simultaneous recognition of differences but the acknowledgement of shared humanity..." Within racial hierarchy however, the more privileged position of South African Indians relative to blacks is historical, with Indians having benefitted more than other race groups except the white race group (Fakie 2017; Patel 2017) suggesting that Aditya's claims may be contextually inaccurate. The extract chosen then begins when he has evaded for over five minutes regarding what is unspoken about black students protesting and had to be probed further.

Question: [...I mean, because we're really talking about the unspoken, and I'm still waiting for what you have to say about it because there's something to be said there, because clearly, you're saying...? [48:12]

1 *[Sigh] Well, I've made an observation. My observation is that you find it's only one*
2 *particular race group that participates in that. I've tried to understand why that's the*
3 *case by looking at my own.. I was thinking that if I was a student, would I want to*
4 *participate in a very belligerent protest, and I would probably not, and I think that that*
5 *is... my thoughts of that would probably be followed by a lot of people in my own*
6 *community itself.*

7 - **Which are what exactly? [48:54]**

8 *What's that?*

9 - **Because there's something you want to say there, you haven't said it yet..**
10 **[48:57]**

11 *No I don't have a.. I'm not saying that... and here again, there are students that are*
12 *involved in these protests, et cetera, it's a very small group of those protesters that have*
13 *a very belligerent attitude, it is not everyone, because I'm observing. Everyone has a*
14 *legitimate, you know, a grievance, which is within their rights to exercise that, but*
15 *there's a very small percentage, like maybe in a group of a 100, maybe three or four,*
16 *that would have a very belligerent attitude towards doing this, et cetera, that would*
17 *then create the impression that this is a hoard of, you know, hooligans, which you don't*
18 *want to associate with.. and sometimes some people might not want, other race groups,*
19 *I'm not saying it in the context of Indian and Black, but maybe the entire protest would*
20 *now, you know, in unison, would probably recite to different things in a different*
21 *language, like there would be songs that are sung in a different language, et cetera,*
22 *that might create a.. maybe someone wants to join the protest, but how does one now*
23 *participate in it if one doesn't know how to, et cetera, if one doesn't know how to sing*
24 *the songs that are being recited and then sometimes... it's also racially based but then*
25 *also there's an aspect of politics that also comes in as well because student protests are*
26 *sometimes organised by different political parties and you know in South Africa,*

27 *sometimes political parties are based on race, you know, some of.. a lot of White and*
28 *Indian students support the Democratic Alliance and a lot of Black students will*
29 *support... that's just, that's not the general case, but there are exceptions to that, so*
30 *sometimes student protests are run by different political parties which some people*
31 *might not find an affiliation for, so ya. That's pretty much the situation with that.*

4.4.2.1. Analysis of Aditya

In line 1, Aditya first begins by sighing, an indication that he finds the question uncomfortable and that he is uneasy about the response that he needs to provide, also made more poignant by my black racial designation because he is about to speak about black students. He commences by stating “Well, I’ve made an observation,” is also a way of circumventing; “well” being a verbal pause, preceding an important matter to be relayed in terms of what was observed (line 1). His reemphasising twice that it’s what he “observed” alludes to the evidentiality of what he discovered, to position what he states as relatively truthful. Aditya then reveals that his finding from observation is that, only one race group participates in belligerent protests, and that he has tried to understand why this is the case by looking at his own (lines 1-5). He has mentioned previously in the interview that this ‘one race group’ is black, but however does not state this explicitly in line 2 once again displaying his discomfort with the subject of race. His questioning of the participation of this one race in protest constructs a deviant picture of their activities. Additionally, his positioning of himself and his own community, as against participating “...in a very belligerent protest...” reinforces his deviant construction (lines 2-6). His description of the protesting students as being part of a ‘very belligerent protest’, constructs them as being extremely aggressive, threatening and antagonistic. An Indian herself and speaking about Indian South Africans, Patel (2017:1) contends that “We come from spaces where wilful ignorance is bred and racism is the norm” with Fakie (2017:1) also a South African Indian asserting that the, “colonialist legacy and white supremacy oppressed all our minds.” This contextualises the reason for Aditya’s very negative construction of black protesting students because of his historically superior positioning as an Indian South African whose gaze is colonial when judging black protesting students. Ratele (2015:55) further notes that “...white-identified people include people of darker skin...” inclusive of Aditya who dysconsciously (King 1991) justifies his attitude to the *status quo*

uncritically.

When questioned about what he is really trying to say (lines 7-9), his response seems to indicate a desire to take his words back when he says, "No I don't have a ..I'm not saying that... And here again, there are students that are involved in these protests, et cetera, it's a very small group of those protestors that have a belligerent attitude, it is not everyone, because I'm observing" (lines 10-12). His hesitancy and circumventing draws attention to his extremely negative construction of black students as being quarrelsome which he attempts to minimise by summarising it as a very small group. Rephrasing his construction as only referring to only a few black protestors is supposedly communicating that he does not appear racist nor offensive to me as a black interviewer that he is cognisant of. Aditya further reinforces his argument by pointing out that it's within everybody's legitimate right to share their grievances and that in a group of hundred protestors it's only about three or four that would have a very belligerent attitude (lines 12-15). Of interest here is that he is now speaking about protest as legitimate and positioning himself as not being opposed to protesting as such and that his concern situated itself with the very few belligerent elements. In other words, he states: "...that would then create the impression that this is a hoard of, you know, hooligans, which you don't want to associate with..." (lines 15-17). Once again Aditya distances himself and describes black student protestors using an extremely negative construction by referring to them as hoodlums that no one would want to associate with. He elaborates on his answers of why only one race group engages in protest, which according to him is because a few of them have a very belligerent attitude and can create the impression of being a hoard of hooligans.

Aditya then explains that other reasons that the protests are not a preferred and shared method, which do not have the other race groups participating, include:

- i. Language;
- ii. Not knowing how to join the protest and because they do not know how to sing the songs;
- iii. The protest is racially based;

- iv. It possesses political aspects where protests are organised by different political parties which are also based on race with white and Indian students supporting the Democratic Alliance and not supporting the political parties of the protestors (lines 17-30).

It is significant to note that he states three times that there is a racial element to these protests and that despite himself he constructed the black racial element of the protests as negative (belligerent and hooliganish) and constructed the alternative as positive in not wanting to be associated with the former. The reasoning that not knowing the language, songs and being opposed to politics of the protestors constructs the black protestors as having little commonality with the Indian, white and coloured protestors. His stating that the protests are racially based, line 23, implies that were the protest to include the other race groups it would automatically be neutralised and deracialized, thus alluding to the 'invisible' nature of whiteness and all associated with it (Steyn 2001; Vice 2010; Scott 2012). It is also interesting that he points out that the white and Indian race groups predominantly support the same political party (lines 26-27), which highlights, the seeming Indian alliance with whiteness. It is also significant that Aditya never mentions what political party(s) the black students' support, which positions the black students' political affiliations as secondary and not worth mentioning. What he does mention though is that their non-affiliation with these political parties is the reason for not joining the student protests.

Overall, Aditya has positioned himself as an academic observer of a racial phenomenon when it comes to student protests. Aditya exhibits discursive trouble with the discussion of race as demonstrated by his hesitation and reluctance in his talk and also in that, he hesitates for some time before he actually states the race of the black students as he talks but appeared more comfortable mentioning whites and Indians for example. That in itself furthers the understanding of othering. He attributes the lack of participation of white, Indian and coloured South Africans in protests by black students to be caused by the belligerent and hooliganish attitude of black students but is careful to describe this as only a problem for a few black people. Seemingly, this is to appear non-racist in a South African context that espouses non-racialism and rainbowism. His social construction of race in terms of black students is extremely negative with descriptions of a belligerent attitude and hooligans evoking images of

antagonistic, hostile, violent, angry and intimidating students. In contrast, he positions himself, other Indians, whites and coloureds positively, by constructing them as being opposed to belligerence and hooliganism and therefore avoiding black student protests. His marginalisation discourse therefore can be summarised as related to blackness and its negative exclusionary characteristics. Despite himself and his positive self-representation as objective, Aditya exhibits interpretive social constructionism (ISC) which is anti-black. He justifies his constructions of black students who protest as constructed from interaction. Alison was the next academic who shared her interpretations.

4.4.3. Alison: 40s, White female

Alison has been an academic officially for fourteen years but in total has been lecturing for twenty years. In the interview overall, she describes the university as rightly following the transformation agenda but communicates her displeasure of the manner in which transformation is evolving. She constructs the UKZN as conducting transformation where white academic staff are being systematically removed from academia (Msimanga 2014; Govender 2016; Ramoupi 2017) and being replaced by black academics. Her opinion is that transformation is being hastily incorporated which results in negative academic and emotional consequences. She positions herself as a victim of a the UKZN transformation agenda that silences (Vice 2010), and invisibilizes her by being racist against her because she is white. She describes herself as being in a juxtaposition where she knows the importance and necessity for transformation and to some extent supporting it, (Jawitz 2016) while simultaneously being offended and appalled by it. Alison's marginalisation discourse regarding race and racism is contradictory and discursively troubled.

Question: What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? [54:08]

1 *I think I have alluded to most of the things. I think for example, our academic leader,*
2 *favours and supports Black students more than White students in terms of their access*
3 *to things, so..*

4 - **So you're thinking it's racism in that regard? [55:02]**

5 *I think it is racism, I'm not sure if it's problematic racism or not. I think he doesn't see*
6 *White students, like he doesn't see White lecturers. It's sort of like off his radar. You*
7 *couldn't pin it down to any policy or say that he's gonna do it, but in that sort of.. Like*
8 *when I said, the agenda, or the focus of the institution is on promoting Black students*
9 *and Black academics, it is a form of racism. I mean, what is racism? Racism is a*
10 *prioritising or favouring of one race over another..*

11 - **So you think it's unspoken that there is racism against Whites, so to**
12 **speak? [55:47]**

13 *Ya, in favour of Black students and academics and I think that if you are trying to apply*
14 *for a post here it's very unlikely that you'll get it if you're a White person...*

15 - **And it's really racist for it to be that way considering that.. [56:08]**

16 *You see, I'm sort of saying it's racism but.. I think it is a form of racism but I'm not*
17 *saying it's necessarily a bad thing. Is racism bad? Is that what the starting point is?*
18 *You see, if racism is the favouring of one race over another, I think that is what we are*
19 *doing. At times we favour Black students over White students in selection; we might put*
20 *all sorts of other things on it. We might say 'they've got more community experience'*
21 *or 'speak the language' or whatever. I think we are sometimes deliberately favouring*
22 *Black students over White students and I think it happens in selection of staff, and I*
23 *think it happens in other places too. So, that is a form of racism.. Is that wrong? I don't*
24 *know. That's the way people perceive one can achieve transformation. If you mean*
25 *deliberate strategies to ridicule and undermine and belittle Whites, I don't think that*
26 *happens..*

4.4.3.1. Analysis of Alison

In answer to the question about what is tacit at the UKZN, Alison mentions favouritism and support provided to black students as compared to white students by the academic leader who is a black academic (lines 1-3). When questioned as to whether she thinks this is racism she acquiesces (lines 4-6), however she qualifies her statement by stating that she is not sure if it is problematic racism or not. This qualification indicates that she is uncertain of her racist label, and could also be

prompted by the affirmative action imperative that is part of the transformation agenda in South Africa. The arguments that black people cannot be racist (Mzwakali 2015; Phala 2017) because they do not have white privilege and power solidified over years of systematic racial oppression and the requirement of affirmative action as part of the transformation agenda where black staff and students are being provided with opportunity in employment for example is contextually salient in Alison's context. Possibly, therefore, Alison is careful to state that she is not sure of her label of racism regarding a black academic leader. She goes on to mention that her academic leader does not see white students and white lecturers and metaphorically refers to white students and staff as being 'off his radar' implying that they simply do not exist for him (line 6). This is a questionable move by Alison because as a relatively senior academic with a great deal of experience it is unlikely that she is 'off his radar.' In line 7, she seems to suggest that the academic leader is practicing this racism against white staff and students in a stealthy manner, where she states, "You couldn't pin it down to any policy or say that he's gonna do it..." implying some suspiciousness in his favouritism. The charges of reverse racism however do the work of silencing the current lived experiences of blacks in terms of the "...perversity of anti-blackness" (Sithole 2016:5).

In lines 8-10, her dilemma with whether what her academic leader is doing is racist or not is apparent when she refers to the institutional agenda which is to focus on promoting black academics and black students and declares it as a form of racism. Constructing it as a "form of racism" allows Alison to define the racism she is speaking about in her own terms; which she does by questioning what racism is and promptly defining it as "...a prioritising or favouring of one race over another" (line 10). Further probing on the unspoken (line 11), does the work of positioning Alison, white academics and white students as victims of a "new racism" of black students and academics against white students and academics in terms of study and employment (lines 11-13). Alison is therefore using counter racism claims as alluded to by Van-Dijk (1992) to support her claims of institutional victimisation at the UKZN.

When probed further about this racism (line 14), she hesitantly asserts: "You see I'm sort of saying it's racism but (.) I think it is a form of racism but I'm not saying it's necessarily a bad thing. Is racism bad?" The use of the phrase 'sort of' is vague and suggests that Alison is now uncertain, and wants to soften the impact of the use of the

word 'racism', which she does by stating that she was not saying "...it's necessarily a bad thing" and for a second time questions whether racism is a bad thing (lines 15-16). Rhetorically Alison is seemingly feigning ignorance of what racism is as a way of escaping contradictions in her own words when claiming reverse racism. She continues to deliberate on the meaning of racism bringing in arguments about favouritism of one race over the other in selection while claiming "...more community experience...language or whatever" (lines 17-20). Her conclusion ultimately is that sometimes, black students and staff are being favoured over white students and staff, and that is racism; but whether it is wrong or not, Alison concludes she does not know (lines 20-22). Her inconclusive discourse on racism highlights how discursively troubled she is where lines 23-24 confirm this further, as she declares that she is not saying that transformation has deliberate strategies to ridicule, undermine and belittle whites.

Overall, Alison's marginalisation of her race and racism discourse is troubled, contradictory and seemingly inconclusive. As previously discussed, Heleta (2016b:6) draws attention to the everyday struggles and realities of the black poor as being self-evident even at universities and he cites Macedo (1993:189), who highlights the problem of whites in South Africa, as having the problem of the "social construction of not seeing" and "wilful blindness." This social construction of not seeing could be argued to account for Alison's inconclusive discourse that does not adequately delineate the transformational challenges in higher education where the marginalisation of black students and black staff are concerned (Heleta 2016b). Instead Alison positions herself as a victim of reverse racism, silencing and marginalisation which she does not however express definitively.

4.5. Chapter summary

Our normative framework in South Africa through which the world is perceived is white. In order for Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen, Lavern and Aditya to have a deracialized discourse as counter-intuitive as was demonstrated in their responses, in the current South African racially explosive context, is evidence of this. Their discourse also illustrates a pervasive denial discourse which is a prevalent feature of new racism (van Dijk 1992; Wetherell & Potter 1992; Augustinous & Every 2007a). The kind of race

trouble exhibited by Igsaan and Aditya specifically is referred to by Nelson (2013) as absence discourse where they simply asserted that there is no racism, possibly a result of the prohibitions in society on making claims of racism. This however means the *status quo* remains and the question is who benefits from the *status quo* being sustained? The reality of the experience of race in South Africa is actually not encapsulated in the abstract issues of the public and political racial categories per se. It is encapsulated in the material reality and hegemony of whiteness and the subordination of blackness which most South Africans have internalised as normal.

A comparative analysis of Thabiso, William and Tasneem's social construction of race discourse reveals bifurcated post-apartheid race and racism discourse of black and white positioning. Whereas Thabiso exhibits a personalised common-sense race as a social construction discourse, William and Tasneem exhibit a distanced and troubled social construction of race discourse. Thabiso is unequivocal about how race as a social construction affects 'us' (black people) and includes himself personally. He positions himself and others like him as indelibly affected by the social construction of race. He uses academic language to refute notions of the non-existence of race because of the recently debunked scientific notion of race, and reiterated its socially constructed existence for himself and others. He further posits that a colour-blind attitude has dire consequences, emphasising the conviction with which he expresses himself. This supports his position as a black academic with others like him including myself.

On the contrary, William and Tasneem exhibit a social construction of race discourse that is personally distanced from their personal lives, compared to Thabiso. For both William and Tasneem the public versus the private when discussing race seems to be the cause of internal trouble which they solve by implicating others in their talk about race. William employs academic language to explain taken for granted notions about crime and race but implicated other whites as accepting of these notions, not including himself, while positioning himself as an expert. Unlike Thabiso, he also used academic language to distance himself personally from race while expressing the need to talk about it in acceptable ways. Discursively speaking however, he implicates himself and exposes himself as a white, privileged male academic who understands his position

of power and the need to distance himself when talking about race in specific ways. His talk therefore institutionally ratifies his position of an expert academic who does not however personally introspect on the implications of his privilege for himself and those around him, hence his troubled and apprehensive race talk. Similarly, Tasneem also expressed a compulsion to talk about race despite not wanting to because of public and private divides that brought issues of race to the forefront. A distancing is also evident in the way she speaks about others being looked over for employment because they were not black. On the other hand, she does not introspect personally as an Indian female academic employed as a result of affirmative action. For William and to a certain extent Tasneem, this could arguably be explained as representing the whiteness positioning which is normalised, allowing theorisation about racialized others because it is not lived reality in normalised whiteness.

Despite the deracialized nature of the former as compared to the racialized nature of the latter's discourse, close examination of these discourses however reveal affiliation between them. This affiliation is in terms of alignment with the discourse of deracialisation which is colour-blind. William and Tasneem's racialized social construction of race discourse is expressed as obligatory for them to do despite not wanting to do it in a 'colour-blind' or acceptable manner. This aligns with whiteness and 'wilful blindness' to the daily realities of black people argued by Heleta (2016b) including middle class, black, coloured and Indian South Africans. Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen and Lavern on the other hand express a deracialized discourse of race and racism that explicitly aligns a non-racial national narrative in South Africa. They are therefore inadvertently preserving a contestable and nuanced rainbowism and integration.

Thabiso on the other hand stands alone in his racialized social construction of race discourse, in that he explains it as common sense, matter of fact and part of his lived experience as a black person and others like him. Despite some awkwardness initially Nonkosi's marginalisation discourse aligns with Thabiso when she narrates her experience of race and racism very specifically, despite not identifying the race of colleagues that antagonised her. Nonkosi therefore demonstrated some caution regarding explicit racial talk. This aligns Thabiso and Nonkosi with blackness which is experiential and a lived reality rather than theoretical as discussed by William at times.

Aditya's hesitant marginalisation discourse however is also distanced, theoretical and diplomatically anti-black, especially as he was being interviewed by a black interviewer. It can be argued that his negative construction of black students aligned with past apartheid discourse of the barbarity of blackness as contrasting with civilised whiteness, which he extends to Indians and Coloureds as well. This aligns Aditya with whiteness.

Alison's racialized marginalisation discourse in contrast focuses on white students as victims of racism which she later qualifies as part of the transformation agenda. She is also expressing her experience of marginalisation as a white lecturer who is not seen by her black academic leader, positioning herself as a victim of an anti-white transformation process. She is therefore arguing that there is academic bifurcation of black and white, which leaves her feeling marginalised. Alison is therefore aligned with marginalised whiteness.

Objective social constructionism (OSC) is evident in the discourses of Thabiso and Nonkosi for whom race is a 'real' construction that they live experientially, affiliated with blackness. Interpretive social constructionism (ISC) on the other hand which considers meaning as constructed and created was shown by William, Tasneem, Kumaran, Igsaan, Charleen, Lavern, Aditya and Alison and can be aligned with whiteness.

Chapter 5 follows and focuses on the third objective of the unspoken and academic discourses and discussion of Africanisation within the academy.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO GET AWAY WITH RACISM: THE AFRICANISATION DISCOURSE?

...the problem of anti-black racism [is] something ubiquitous and prevalent across the entire social, cultural and psychic fabric of South Africa and not merely, a set of isolated incidents and outbursts (Modiri 2016c:1).

5.1. Introduction

The question of how to get away with racism would seem absurd in current post-apartheid South Africa, were it not for the present incidences of racism and racial tensions both in higher education and within South African social, economic and political contexts. Moreover, considering the above quotation the pervasiveness of anti-black racism is a reality. In essence Modiri (2016c) acknowledges the intersecting nature of such racism, which affects the basic daily functioning of South African citizens. Contextually anti-black racism refers to anti-indigenous or native black South Africans not coloured and Indian South Africans who constitute the middle in the racial strata of the country. The main goal of apartheid was the subjugation of black indigenous Africans who were in the majority (Brantlinger 2003). This is pertinent since the Africanisation discourse of academics in this study is also reflective of such specification. As evident in the narratives of the academics that participated in this study who inadvertently communicate this very ubiquitous racism with seeming finesse, without the discursive scrutiny of the study, some of them may get away with racism. This perspective is observed by others and specifically by Rojas-Sosa (2016) who notes hesitancy in recognition or denial of such racism.

A comparative discursive analysis of the academics talk about race and racism in the study reveals a seemingly irreproachable manner of speaking where the terminology of race is barely uttered by some of the academics and the preference of the use of terminology such as Africanisation and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). A part of the mandate for the transformation of South African higher education was to Africanise higher education (Letsekha 2013). In particular, the UKZN's vision outlines

a former vice-chancellor's explanation of Africanisation as:

...a process of exclusion, but inclusion...a learning process and a way of life for Africans. It involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village. Africanisation is the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture. It is formed by the experiences of the African Diaspora and has endured and matured over time from the narrow nationalistic intolerance to an accommodating, realistic and global form (Makgoba 1997:199).

Oyeshile (2008:60) too further explains that African philosophers who are traditionalist are concerned with how the present relates to the past and "...the discovery of authentic African ideas and thought systems uninfluenced by alien accretions." In addition, he further emphasises that it involves "...logic criticism and synthesis to the reflections on issues that are of paramount importance to the African needs and ways of life. African in this context is not based exclusively on geographical congruity, but also on certain shared values among Africans" (Oyeshile 2008:62). The two definitions notwithstanding, African philosophy is challenged by Egbunu (2013) who questions its authenticity which he describes as inconclusive, with its nature having yet to be properly defined. This is also echoed by Prinsloo (2010) who expresses the lack of clarity regarding the parameters of Africanness. What is unequivocally communicated however is the continued hegemony of canons of knowledge that are ontologically and epistemologically Western in South African higher education and worldwide (Grosfoguel 2007; Ramose 2008; Prinsloo 2010; Mekoa 2011; Letsekha 2013; Mbembe 2016; Vorster & Quinn 2017). Africanisation of higher education as previously mentioned (its contested nature notwithstanding) has been mandated as part of the transformation agenda, and is part of dealing with the ontological and epistemological Western hegemony in South African higher education. It must be conceded and accepted like Vorster and Quinn (2017:31) do, that there is a "failure of the discourse of transformation to lead to real change." The dominance of Africanisation discourse in terms of the unspoken for academics is therefore anticipated.

Comparative discursive analysis identified academics of different racial groups supporting each other's comments to some extent, despite being from differing faculties, disciplines and backgrounds. Of interest are the discourses that academics employ that do not refer to race directly but that are nevertheless racially problematic.

An apt example is the concept of *Ubuntu* which refers the idea that ‘we are because of our interaction with others’ which is performative and contextual and has been widely used by some academics. As posited by academics such as (Ramose 2003; Oelofsen 2015; Dladla 2017a) regarding concern about the African concept of *Ubuntu* often being elucidated by academics other than African, concepts such as *Ubuntu* are employed by some academics to support their positions without comprehensive understanding of the language, their non-static nature and the context for their use. The significance of this is that the contestation is specifically regarding the authenticity of the indigenous black scholarship which is racialized. The issues that academics covered in their talk is pertinent in current South African higher education because of the recent student uprisings that dominated the higher education landscape particularly in 2015 and 2016 where decolonisation of higher education and the #FeesMustFall protests dominated. This “decolonial turn” coined by Grosfoguel (2007) and acknowledged by Voster and Quinn (2017) within higher education is viewed within institutional culture and practices as complex.

In this chapter, six academics were selected specifically for narratives of the unspoken in terms of race and racism as associated to the Africanisation Discourse in Academia which related directly to the third objective of the study. Of pertinence was how they constructed themselves, the UKZN and others in terms of endorsement or non-endorsement of Africanisation and their reasons for this. This also conforms to the social constructionist orientation of the study and the Africanisation discourse as it related to racism, is framed as either getting away with racism or not. To commence the analysis of each academic, (as was the case in Chapter 4) a brief general description of each academic’s perspective in the interview is narrated, followed by the academic’s numbered extract and thereafter an analysis of the extract is presented. The interviewer’s questions to the interviewee as in previous extracts appear in bold font while the interviewee’s responses are in a different italicised font. The first academic to be analysed is Claire.

5.2. Claire’s perspectives

5.2.1. Claire: 57, White female

Employed by the university for over twenty years, Claire is almost sixty years old, which is the retirement age for academics. The general content and focus of her talk throughout the interview concentrated on changes (such as the racial demographics of the academic staff at the UKZN) that had occurred at the university through its commitment to the agenda of transformation, all of which had proved challenging for her personally. She attempted positioning herself as an older white academic who is proud of her white identity and who under the circumstances is doing her best to demonstrate that not all white people do bad things or are racist. For the most part Claire constructs herself as having achieved this. On the other hand, she exhibits some defensiveness of her position as a white academic and communicates an unwillingness to engage with what her whiteness represents and perpetuates.

In the interview, she constructs the university as being exploitative of her skills (notwithstanding whether this is commensurate with her job description and her capacity to mentor as a senior academic) while at the same time not utilising her to her full potential hence contradicting herself. The imperatives of higher education that are no longer the preserve of an elite white minority is however what is being challenged with more black academic staff as well as massification markedly increasing student numbers. She constructs transformation as responsible for silencing white, Indian and coloured academics because 'white, Indian and coloured academics fear that they will be labelled racist if they critique black academic staff in leadership. Claire also portrays White, Indian and coloured academics as marginalised in terms of employment, and alleges that they are not being employed and promoted despite meeting criteria notwithstanding that promotion criteria have now become more stringent at the UKZN. Her co-opting of Indian and coloured academics to support her position is officious and overreaching and serves only as an attempt to strengthen her argument. On a personal capacity, on being unsuccessful in her promotion application, Claire declares that despite not meeting the required promotion criteria she was merely not appointed because she was white. In her view the black academic that was promoted was inferior in quality to herself. Such "authoritarianism" is embedded within many previously white universities (Ramphela 2008:210). This was a direct challenge to her seeming internalised perception that black people cannot legitimately occupy a position of authority over her (DiAngelo 2011). As seen in the

extract that follows, Claire embodies the position that she speaks about and constructs transformation as it relates to race as being currently problematic in the UKZN.

What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at University of KwaZulu-Natal? [46:05]

1 **[Laughs]** *Like the elephant in the room? (..) I mean, I guess it's really(.) how do you*
2 *talk about these things without people being labelled or told that you're wrong, you*
3 *know, or that you're anti-something, you know, that, it's very difficult to have an open*
4 *discussion(.) 'what do you actually mean by Africanisation?' you know, then there's*
5 *something wrong with you because you haven't gone and studied it, you know? (..) I*
6 *don't know how to put it into words because so much is unspoken...*

7 - **So what do you think is so unspoken? [] [47:36]**

8 *I think it's exactly that unspoken thing that needs to be spoken about. We need to be*
9 *able to say 'what is it that we are not speaking about?', 'do you really think I'm racist?',*
10 *you know, 'when you do XY and Z, I perceive that as being racist', we don't ever have*
11 *that kind of conversation because it's just way too scary, so we have like, you know,*
12 *throw-away comments that are 'White people holding onto their jobs and not wanting*
13 *to let younger people come into positions of authority', we have throw-away comments*
14 *about the 'old guard,' and then, but nobody actually says 'what do you actually mean*
15 *when you say that?' you know, it's kind of like we quickly glance it over, just in case.*
16 *We have comments, I mean, at a staff meeting, the Colonisation of the mind, I mean,*
17 *Melissa asked a simple question about [Laughs] how many students actually wrote*
18 *their essays, their entrance essay in Zulu? And it was taken that she was now criticising*
19 *the fact that we had the essay in Zulu and the answer was 'not that many wrote in Zulu*
20 *and the reason why they didn't write it in Zulu is because their minds have been*
21 *Colonised.'* And [Sigh] *yah, you know, so we had Melissa in the space, we had*
22 *Nokubonga in the space, the two going at each other and Prof. Malan would say 'let's*
23 *just calm down, we're all feeling...'*

24 - **At the Board meeting? [50:20]**

25 *No no, it wasn't a Board meeting, it was a Staff meeting.. Oh yeah, that's when it was.*
26 *So very quickly, you know, things can be misconstrued, misinterpreted and then what*

27 *the heck do we mean, 'their minds have been Colonised'? And then I get a template*
28 *from somebody who's now going to be offering a course in Africanisation, and so the*
29 *aim of the course is to de-Colonise the mind of the students. [Laughs] But it seems to*
30 *me that there's something else underneath that, there's another message underneath*
31 *that, that African is good and Western is not good. African has Ubuntu, Western has,*
32 *we're all selfish and individualistic. Africans are in touch with the spiritual world and*
33 *all of that kind of thing, Western is scientific knowledge, whatever, whatever, and it is*
34 *kind of, like 'this is one thing and it's good and this is the other thing and is bad.'* *And*
35 *it's kind of quite difficult to have those, you know, to have some kind of debate about*
36 *that because somehow or other, if you criticise that view then you're being racist, or I*
37 *don't know. I don't think they use the term racist anymore, they use the term 'you're*
38 *anti-transformation,' 'you're anti-transformation' or 'you haven't transformed', which*
39 *I think is perhaps another way of intimating that you're racist. So, I think it's those*
40 *kinds of things that we don't talk about because it's just too(.) I mean, I was thinking,*
41 *like how am I gonna like say to this guy that I can't see the aim of the course?*

5.2.1.1. Analysis of Claire

When asked about the unspoken regarding race and racism, Claire laughs and mentions appropriately that it is like the elephant in the room (line 1), a well-known metaphor depicting the monolithic nature of race, which people however do not want to address (Vice 2010). Added to the laughter Claire also pauses a few times and talks about how difficult it is to dialog about these things without being told you are wrong or anti-something (lines 1-3), which suggests how invested she is, in getting to the point about what she thinks is unspoken about race. After a pause, she asks about what is actually meant by Africanisation and whether there is anything wrong if one has not studied it (lines 3-5).

Claire's questioning of whether there is anything wrong if one has not studied Africanisation, is concerning considering her senior position as an academic and the UKZN mandate to transform with a focus on Africanisation which Makgoba (1997) explained as a learning process. When focusing on Africanisation, Claire deliberately makes race and racism about herself and white people and constructs Africanisation as an attack on white people and not as part of academic deliberation within the

transformation agenda. In response to the alleged attack on white people through Africanisation, she then deliberately goes on the defensive about her position of privilege and exhibits white fragility, "...a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (DiAngelo 2011:57). She denigrates, belittles and delegitimises the discussion on racism vis a vis Africanisation deflecting the discourse that can specifically delve into the privileged space she occupies. Claire's defensive stance, a defensive move to avoid discussion about race as it relates to white privilege illuminates her white fragility (Hines 2016).

As her defensive perspective persists, she does not actually engage with the "problem" because she is questioning what the problem really is. Of interest here is that she mentions race in a way that reflects her self-justification. Her talk is linking Africanisation to race without explicitly mentioning the racial designations of black or white. Interestingly, she refers to the black designation in terms of race as African. This emphasises that it is easier for Claire to talk about race without targeting race specifically. She is positioning Africanisation as a subject that is problematic and questionable and is undermining the concept of Africanisation and not endorsing it. The paradox is that historically the black race is undermined and viewed as problematic in human relations (Modiri 2016a).

When I probe further about what is so unspoken (line 7), Claire responds that we need to be explicit when we think someone is being racist, which we do not do because it is too scary (lines 8-11). She suggests that if one questions Africanisation, they are opening themselves up to critique and accusations of racism. In terms of white fragility, the challenge to white centrality and white liberalism DiAngelo (2011) that is represented by Africanisation, elicits a defensive move from Claire of argumentation that being against Africanisation does not mean one is being racist. She is positioning Africanisation as a tool that is being used against whites and in lines 11-13, she continues to mention that we use "throw-away comments" to say white people are holding on to their jobs and not letting younger people into positions of authority. These "throw away" comments discursively by Claire is peculiar because but she does not attempt to deconstruct what for example the comment about "old guard" actually means. These are pervasive comments, which she does not totally engage in from her position as a white female and almost infers that she expects others to interrogate it.

She illustrates transformation as confusing and positions herself as victim of a system that is perplexing, disorganised and not clearly communicated. The use of the word “actually” twice in line 14, suggests that these concepts that are being used, may not be clearly communicating what is meant or understood because Claire is questioning what these concepts “actually” mean. In questioning the use of the concepts, their importance and meaning is undermined, rendering these concepts that challenge her position as an older white academic almost void in their poorly communicated state. Her dissenting voice is doing the work of trying to render the concepts confused and muddled and therefore powerless.

In lines 16-28 Claire then goes on to discuss the idea of the ‘colonisation of the mind’ where she begins the discussion by talking about Melissa, a colleague, who posed a simple question about how many students “actually” wrote their essays in IsiZulu and then laughs in line 17. Once again, the use of the word “actually” was used which seems to question why students are “actually” being provided an opportunity to write their essays in IsiZulu when students are not “actually” taking the opportunity. Once again, the undermining of the need to deal with students’ colonised minds shows her disregard for the UKZN academic mandate to Africanise and decolonise which she would be acquainted with as a senior academic. Moreover, it has been acceptable with many institutions of higher learning and not only the UKZN, “moving towards the adoption of a combination of dual and parallel-medium instruction” (Mekoa 2011:114). The adoption of such a supportive measure of offering an essay in IsiZulu is the University’s attempt to address the language challenge experienced by many second language users. Clearly the effort to decolonise is a process. Oelofsen (2015), Nandy (1983), and Fanon (1967), highlight how colonialism (an extension of apartheid) does not end with political freedom and is psychological and crippling, and that there is a need to decolonise the mind which affects the colonised and the colonisers leaving a psycho-existential complex. Her laughter in line 17 appears to be sarcastic, and further minimises her discussion of the ‘colonisation of the minds’ of students and Melissa is positioned as a victim for simply questioning the use of IsiZulu.

Once again Claire’s white fragility distorts the reality, DiAngelo 2011, of the issue of marginalised students for whom English is not a first language and the normalised and very privileged English-speaking students. In lines 18-20, Claire explains that the fact

that not many students wrote their essays in IsiZulu was seen as Melissa's critique of this process, (which it was) and the conclusion is that it was because "student's minds had been colonised?" after which Claire sighs. Claire is questioning the idea of the colonisation of the mind, a question that Modiri (2016) states is often posed by mostly white academics which in terms of white fragility directly challenges white racial codes and authority (DiAngelo 2011). The sigh (line 21), gives the impression of exasperation from Claire who once again seems to be baffled by the conclusion that not many essays were written in IsiZulu because the students' minds had been colonised, resulting in an argument between Melissa (white) and Nokubonga (black) (lines 20-21). Notwithstanding Claire's bewilderment on the question of the colonisation of students' minds, Oelofsen explains that:

In order to overcome the legacy of colonialism, it is necessary to also decolonise the intellectual landscape of the country in question, and ultimately, decolonise the mind of the formerly colonised (2015:131).

Similarly, Voster and Quinn (2017) articulate the importance of contributing to debates regarding how to respond to calls for institutional decolonisation by academic developers within South African higher education. Nevertheless, to what extent does the space that Claire occupies make it conducive to respectfully interrogate such moot issues is questionable. Does the sensitivity of such debates perpetuate silences and not afford authentic engagement? Should the university in its historically grounded intellectual tradition not become fertile ground for such participative conversations (van Marle 2014)? Claire declares ambiguities, which rightfully can be addressed within spaces that promote robust debates within a transformative environment.

Claire further constructs the idea of the 'colonisation of the mind' as ridiculous and confusing when in lines 25 to 26 she speaks about things getting misconstrued and misinterpreted and finally stating "what the heck do we mean their minds have been colonised?" In the academic environment globally, in South Africa and at the UKZN specifically, colonisation and decolonisation are monolithic and her portrayal of not understanding impresses as being disconnected a "...demonstration that many white people are unprepared to engage, even on a preliminary level, in an exploration of their racial perspectives that could lead to a shift in their understanding of racism (DiAngelo 2011). Evidently, for her the progression from colonialisation to

decolonisation in higher education is viewed as a tedious process as she questions the prioritising of African being “good” and Western “not so good” (lines 30-31). In essence she questions the intent of decolonisation as embracing a hidden philosophy that is also divisive and creates dichotomy of viewpoints. The reality is unavoidable as Mekoa (2011:117) suggests that South Africa is “...an African country and not another pocket of Europe, and this Africanism must be reflected in its education.”

Moreover, in lines 27-29 Claire explains further that she had somebody who was offering a course in Africanisation whose aim was to decolonise the minds of students and laughs again. Her reference to her colleague as ‘somebody’ constructs the colleague as unimportant. As a white academic by default she is stating that her kind are viewed as bad and black people are viewed as good. The questions of the badness of whiteness as individualistic, selfish and scientific as opposed to the goodness of blackness which is about *Ubuntu*, spirituality (lines 29-33), is mendacious in current society universally where blackness is still constructed very negatively socially as compared to whiteness (DiAngelo 2012, Modiri 2016a). This is therefore a distortion of reality because Claire’s argument about Africanisation which is part of the academic mandate of the UKZN, requiring rigorous analysis by a senior academic at her level is simply denigrated by her because it challenges white centrality and authority (DiAngelo 2011). Any academic environment prioritises and expects tacit critical engagement and analysis. The assumption is that debates need to move beyond the Africanisation versus Westernisation coherence, especially within restructuring of curriculum as per demographics of the student population.

In lines 33-36 Claire positions herself and those who critique Africanisation as victims of the label of racism or anti-transformation, which Claire states is another label for racism which prevents debate. She states that anti-transformation is the preferred term to use when referring to someone as racist instead of using the direct term of racist. Through this construction Claire is indirectly inferring that this label of racism and/or anti-transformation silences people for fear of being labelled racist. She concludes in lines 37 -38 that the above is the unspoken and then pauses. The pause suggests that she had to contemplate carefully before her next point: she questions how she is supposed to tell this guy (a fellow academic) that she cannot see the aim of the Africanisation course. Therein is a judgement from Claire and a need to correct this

academic and yet as stated before there are schools of thought which cause debate and disagreement between academics and yet they co-exist within academia. However, when it comes to Africanisation Claire feels entitled to challenge the course's aim, which is encouraging but she is aware that such a challenge may be construed as anti-transformation or racist inevitably.

Fundamentally, Claire has constructed a defence against Africanisation in this extract and as an older academic in her late fifties, has framed her position correctly through the use of the metaphor "old guard." Her narrative throughout the extract can be headlined as an "old guard discourse" where despite herself Claire cannot help but challenge transformation and be a defender, guardian and protector of the old in response to the threat of Africanisation to her position as an older white academic. Claire's apparent questioning of concepts such as Africanisation and colonisation of the mind while at the same time defining and explaining them, demonstrates a degree of non-reflexivity, and instead highlights how 'old guard' and anti-transformation she really is and how she aligns herself with the old guard. She is unable to escape the old guard discourse because even as she tries to construct a position of victimisation, it is explicitly in defence of the old and she explicitly constructs arguments undermining and questioning the new at the university. Although change is a constant, Claire's questioning of these new concepts which she constructs as very unclear, confusing and questionable and yet explains eloquently is redundancy. Despite herself, Claire does not appear to get away with racism and infers that anti-transformation is construed as being racist.

To follow is Brandon's account of the unspoken and he also highlights African scholarship in this regard.

5.3. Brandon speaks

5.3.1. Brandon: 40s, Coloured male

Brandon when responding to an earlier interview questions on his understanding of race positions himself as someone who is not subject to his coloured racial designation. There he elaborated about students and staff being confused whether he was either white, Indian or coloured and being disappointed he is not white or

Mediterranean or Egyptian. He clarifies that he is never offended when the same individuals say he does not act coloured. Despite technically being classified as Coloured, Brandon therefore often escapes categorisation and can pass often as white. He positions himself as a person who transcends race literally and yet his talk seems to indirectly betray his identification with whiteness and his contempt for blackness without any direct reference to blackness or whiteness specifically.

In the extract below there is some initial text that is not included in Brandon's response to the question. He slowly matured into responding to the question after some probing to eventually addressing then one sensitive issue that is unspoken about race and racism.

Question: What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? [71:27]

1 *[] Okay, from what perspective?*

2 **From a race perspective. It's obviously not something comfortable, and**
3 **that's why we don't want to go there, but it's there... [74:49]**

4 *Yes, it is uncomfortable. Yes, it is there. The corporatisation of the University, the whole*
5 *idea of African Scholarship, I've had a serious problem with this idea of African*
6 *Scholarship. I just think it's a silly idea, but it's not the reason that I've disinvested...*

7 - **Can you expand a bit about the African Scholarship? [75:27]**

8 *We, and it's always been my opinion, and there was someone who was in this office*
9 *who's not here, but one of my staff members who died, who was an African, him and I*
10 *used to have this discussion, he was asked to give a paper on African Scholarship, and*
11 *he came and asked me and said 'look, I've often listened to you, I want to know your*
12 *opinion. I won't tell you what I think, but be honest with me. What do you think of*
13 *African Scholarships?', I said 'it's a load of bollocks, it should be a scholarship and*
14 *that's it. You don't go to Europe and hear about European Scholarships, you don't.*
15 *Scholarship is scholarship, you can't racialize it, and he agreed with me, and he went*
16 *and he spoke about it at a conference of people who had been appointed on this, about*
17 *to talk about it, and he was the only one who disagreed with it, and said that 'I don't*

18 *think that we should racialize scholarships,' you know, medicine is medicine, science*
19 *is science, there is no such thing as African science, science is science. That was my*
20 *perspective, whether it's influenced by racism or not, I don't know, but Bokang*
21 *completely and 100% agreed with me. I think that forging our identity around*
22 *something like that is artificial, it shouldn't have happened, but is it the reason I*
23 *disinvested? For me it was an issue, it is an issue that I'm willing to talk about, but is*
24 *it the reason why I've disinvested from this place? No, it's not. There're many other*
25 *things that have happened. The corporatisation of the University, the increasing*
26 *intrusion of the institution into the kinds of things that I do on a daily basis...*

5.3.1.1. Analysis of Brandon

Brandon's hedging around the question is partly evidenced in lines 1-3 where the question is further rephrased to engage him directly. Initially he is dismissive of unspoken aspect and rather offers an explanation about the corporatisation of the university and African scholarship which he maintains is a ludicrous idea (lines 4-7). Brandon's dismissiveness betrays his "...bias against and condescension towards "non-European" thought and even more especially against the African thought and experience" (Dladla 2017b:211). At this point, Brandon has demonstrated how easily dismissed the Africanisation discourse can be. He does not even engage in Africanisation in academic terms and asserts rather that it is meaningless. This is despite the pervasive counter-narrative within South African higher education that espouses Africanisation as necessary to challenge the continuing historical hegemony of Western ontological and epistemological canons (Prinsloo 2010; Mbembe 2016). He quickly adds though however that, that is not the reason he has disinvested in the university, despite not being questioned on his disinvestment. He continues to substantiate however that he has not disinvested because of Africanisation. In a post-apartheid higher education context championing Africanisation, undergirded by a constitution that espouses non-racialism, Brandon explains that he wouldn't disinvest from the university because of African scholarship and is conscious of the need to construct himself as 'not racist' and against African scholarship as such. He is however a product of a "... historical relationship between racist ideology and practice in the development of [South African] universities..." (Dladla 2017b:216). His expressed position of being against African scholarship is therefore not an anomaly despite being

concerning.

When probed further about his thoughts about African scholarship from lines 8-16 Brandon transitions from an “I” to a “we” to an “I.” He appears to be cognisant of constructing his position as not unique but as shared by others. He specifically speaks about one of his deceased staff members, (“my staff member” framing the staff member as subordinate), and describes the staff member as “an African” a reference more associated with racist accounts, as opposed to referring to the staff member as African. He describes how the staff member solicited his assistance on a paper he was presenting on African scholarship, positioning himself as the expert on African Scholarship from his African colleague’s perspective. Brandon is therefore constructing himself as an expert on Africanisation even though in previous discussion he describes himself as not African and does not even mention African as part of his identity. This constructs the idea that Brandon as a coloured person who does not endorse African scholarship cannot be racist if a black staff member (Bokang) approves and endorses Brandon’s perspectives unquestioningly.

It is significant that in his conversation with Bokang he commenced with stating that African Scholarship was a load of bollocks and should just be termed “scholarship” without the word “African” (lines 13-15). A “load of bollocks” is a powerful metaphor indicating the disdain that Brandon has for the concept African. He justifies his reasoning in lines 15-17 by explaining that one does not hear about European scholarship in Europe and that you cannot racialize scholarship, this suggests that Brandon is thinking about African scholarship in racial terms. This assertion is made by Brandon despite evidence to the contrary which acknowledges the cultural and epistemic hegemony that is white, Eurocentric and not neutral (Ramose 2007; Modiri 2012; Oelofse 2014; Mbembe 2016). With this assertion Brandon is aligning himself with the hegemonic Eurocentric thinking that “...there is only one sole epistemic tradition from which to achieve Truth and Universality...a universalistic, neutral, objective point of view” (Grosfoguel 2007:12-13). This elucidates the point that the reason that one does not hear about European scholarship is that it is assumed that all scholarship is European and that this dominant and hegemonic discourse predominates universally and it is expected that it would be unquestionable and undeniably accepted. He is further dismissing that there could possibly be a different

form of scholarship other than current scholarship. Brandon is also framing current scholarship as a neutral entity, a standard from which all learning emanates, making it race neutral in the context of the discussion about race. His effort to neutralise current scholarship also constructs it as learning that exists in its purest form without bias which certainly is contentious. This is affirmed by Modiri (2016b:2) when he states, “For Eurocentrism involves not only centring European culture and affirming the West as the apex site of civilisation; it also involves appropriating other cultures and erasing their contributions to world history.” Oelofse elaborates further that in the South African context, knowledge must be understood, “...as a product not only of western imperial and colonial ambitions, but also of Apartheid South Africa under Afrikaner Nationalism” (2014:20).

From lines 17-23 Brandon once again presents himself as an expert on African Scholarship in relation to Bokang’s acceptance of his explanation. Bokang was then able to gain confidence thereafter and became the one voice of dissent against African scholarship at a conference. Brandon reiterates the validation as Bokang unequivocally agreed with him. The consenting that his one black colleague was against African scholarship, asserts the common concept, “I have black friends” argument that is often cited when accused of racism. In lines 20-21, he uses the two most scientific arguments when referencing medicine and science, that mainly follow the positivist paradigm and does not include a social science example despite being a social scientist himself. This further reasserts his construction of the neutrality of scholarship. There is however a need to epistemologically decolonise and transcend the non-neutral Eurocentric and western canons epistemologically (Grosfoguel 2007; Vorster & Quinn 2017). In line 23, he reiterates that Bokang agreed with him 100% once again emphasising endorsement from his one black colleague which legitimises his perspective. By illustrating his point by choosing the interchange with Bokang he justifies his perspective and feels validation. However, he illustrates his ambivalence when he concedes that “That was my perspective, whether it’s influenced by racism or not, I don’t know” (lines 19-20). Curiously, in lines 24-29 he once again defends his disinvestment in the university as not being about African scholarship but other concomitant issues such as the corporatisation of the university.

Having expressed his acquiescence with the Eurocentric ‘white’ conceptions of

knowledge Brandon is in effect endorsing, a relationship in which "...white subjects are privileged and powerful and have access to and can produce certain 'knowledge' and the black subjects are deprived and powerless and positioned as objects about whom certain 'knowledge' can be produced" (Moraka 2014:11). Is Brandon a person who chooses not to critique within a knowledge producing environment the concept of who produces knowledge and who consumes it? If he particularly extrapolates "scholarship is scholarship you can't racialize it" (line 15), then to what extent has he considered what components of his curriculum that he teaches, contextually and reflectively inclusive? His position as a lecturer affords him considerable influence on not only his students, but on the curriculum also. In this context this view does not synergise with the transformation agenda and the UKZN's mission of being the premier university of African scholarship. The example he alluded to in detail when discussing his late colleague Bokang is a case in point. Considering Brandon's Coloured designation and its marginality in terms of race his discourse reveals internalised oppression where he has adopted the thinking that the subordinate state of the African is inevitable natural and deserved (Banks & Stephens 2018). His discourse also betrays his own thinking as an academic who does not question Eurocentric scholarship. His expression of not understanding why there is even a need to Africanise scholarship perpetuates racism and challenges the current South African higher education mandate.

In lines 19-20 alluded to earlier Brandon does state that he does not know however if his non-endorsement of African scholarship is influenced by racism. This suggests that Brandon is consciously aware at some level that his non-endorsement is easily interpreted as racism but he cannot deny his disdain of African scholarship. He does not consider that the possibility of shared components of scholarship does exist between African and European scholarship. His statement seems to be about positioning himself as a non-racist, non-endorser of African scholarship. However, given his seeming contempt for the word "African" (an official racial identifying category for black people in South Africa) when associated with scholarship and that he speaks about the need not to racialize scholarship, his positioning of himself as non-racist can be challenged. Brandon uses racial, problematic, and dangerous discourse throughout this extract where the concept African is concerned. In as far as disseminating and

constructing the normalised and Eurocentric canons of knowledge as superior and African scholarship as not only inferior but nonsensical, he also refuses to academically and rigorously engage with African scholarship. Such a level of disengagement could be part of his acceptance to maintain the *status quo* and not include contextual pervasive questions posed during the national discussion on scholarship in South Africa. He displays what Makgoba (1997:199) suggests is a “narrow nationalistic intolerance.” In addition, he does not identify the necessity of African and identity and culture, Prinsloo (2010), and merely reduces it to a “load of bollocks.” This again communicates his lack of engagement of the essential elements of differentiation of what constitutes an African identity which has implications for current and future scholarship.

Despite attempting to evade the question about the unspoken in terms of race by bookending his discussion with the corporatisation of the University he digresses from the focus. He merely contends that validation received from a black colleague is adequate justification for his disregard on the discourse of Africanisation. He does not get away with racism but inadvertently perpetuates it.

The next academic to be deliberated in Nomusa who is female and black and has never been able to ‘transcend’ her socially constructed racial label as is the case with Brandon.

5.4. Nomusa’s point of view

5.4.1. Nomusa: 40s, Black female

Nomusa has been an academic for thirteen years, intermittently. She commenced with academia, thereafter, worked for an NGO and then returned to the UKZN. She worked at the University of Durban-Westville before it merged with the University of Natal to form the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 01 January 2004. Earlier in the interview, she relates how at university she encountered what she referred to as sub-conscious racism that she also later labels innocent racism, where white colleagues engaged in racist comments because of a latent sense of superiority that they were unaware of, conceptualised by Tappan (2006) as internalised domination. This is significant as she points out later in the interview that the current challenges at the UKZN are not new

since they existed at the former UDW. Nomusa's extract follows which depicts some of the problematic aspects of her situation.

Question: What is the value of talking about race? [4:57]

1 *[]And so we shouldn't be pretending as though we are starting from the same line; um*
2 *we still see each other in different ways; there are subject matters that we would like to*
3 *pursue that are not traditional in –in certain spaces to even pursue.*

4 For example? [8:47]

5 *Well, I still doubt very much that I could write a paper on IKS for an international*
6 *journal and it just gets simply, accepted.*

7 Indigenous Knowledge Systems? [9:03]

8 *Indigenous Knowledge Systems; I still doubt very much that I could actually, um write*
9 *a paper on how the concept of Ubuntu can sit side by side or be an interpretation of the*
10 *notion of democracy. Um and different forms of democracy for that matter and –and*
11 *articulate issues around um communal land and –and security of tenure and security*
12 *of livelihood in the whole configuration of different notions of Ubuntu, and find that*
13 *I'm understood. I will not. I would be fooling myself but the – it is as if certain concepts*
14 *and certain ways of thinking are not supposed to contribute to scientific production.*
15 *They are this other thing, almost like ghettoised science; um and yet when you go to*
16 *spaces such as where we are operating there's this premium that you should be um*
17 *publishing in spaces, in international journals as if they understand what the hell you*
18 *are talking about. Or they want to, it's not that they do not understand, it is that they*
19 *do not make a first step to understand in the first place, because we actually do not*
20 *respect each other's concept um equally as yet. We haven't been there yet. And –and*
21 *because we are not transparent about that we are pretending as though there is one*
22 *science there is one everything, we understand what you mean when you say now it's*
23 *theory time to a student. And you know in the same way in all corners of the world.*

5.4.1.1. Analysis of Nomusa

In the above extract, Nomusa endorses the idea of Africanisation of the University. In

line 1 she communicates about white lecturers and black lecturers not starting from the same level which she had mentioned previously and that “we” (meaning academics) should stop pretending that we commenced equally. In lines 2-3 she reiterates the existence of the dichotomy that divides between black and white academics and how such a division finds resonance between African and western. She continues that “we” would prefer to pursue module content that is not traditional, namely Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) which Letsekha (2013:3) describes as “...local knowledge, which is unique to every culture or society, embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals...” an integral part of the focus on Africanisation. In this case because of her referral to IKS in lines 5-7, the “we” used by Nomusa seems to refer to black academics which includes herself. In lines 5-6, she suggests her doubts of acceptance of a publication on IKS in an international journal which constructs her as a victim of the elitist nature of academia (Van Dijk 2006; Botsis, Dominguez-Whitehead and Liccardo 2013). Her doubt regarding the lack of acceptance is despite the articulated need and requirement for academics to decolonise university curricula, cultures and practices within South African higher education (Vorster & Quinn 2017). Nomusa implies that international journals would probably question the acceptability of a paper on IKS as even being worthy of inclusion into the journal.

She positions herself as an academic who is an outsider and constructs the international community representing white academics (with international journals being western white journals) as against IKS which can just as easily be framed as Africanisation. In lines 8-14 she describes a scenario where the concept of *Ubuntu* would be perceived as inferior as an African concept which she emphasises by mentioning that *Ubuntu* could be considered a concept that co-exists with concepts such as democracy and other western concepts. Nomusa is suggesting that the concept of *Ubuntu* is viewed as so radical that even the salient and prominent aspects of it, such as communality, communal ownership cannot be discussed and in lines 12-13 she says that “she would not be understood” (when discussing *Ubuntu* in this manner) and would be deluding herself to make such an assumption. This is supported by Ramose (2003), Prinsloo (2010) and Dladla (2017a) who express their concern about use of *Ubuntu* without a holistic, contextual and linguistic understanding of the

concept by some academics. Considering Claire's response to Africanisation which she constructed as unclear and confusing, and Brandon's perception of African scholarship as "a load of bollocks" Nomusa's definitiveness seems justified regarding African conceptualisation not being "understood." Although she does not state explicitly that she is referring to African knowledge she further reiterates in lines 13-15 that certain ways of thinking are not supposed to contribute to scientific production as they are seen as "this other thing, ghettoised science," supported by Dladla (2017b:212) who states:

Ghettoising then comes to denote both the forcible placement in an inferior and precarious location subtracting from equal "citizenship" as well as an ethnic quarantine where those Ghettoised are identified for particular ethnic or racial reasons. What one finds in practice then, in the university, are African history, African politics and African literature, within this Ghetto...

Nomusa therefore constructs others globally as seeing IKS or African discourses as inferior, "this other thing," obscure, marginal and not even worthy of a name, let alone a scientific name and also poor and substandard as described by the ghetto metaphor she uses. Once again Claire and Brandon's perceptions that undermined Africanisation or African scholarship evidently support Nomusa's marginalised notions of what occurs when African discourses are incorporated into mainstream academia. Such rigidity from a Western hegemonic knowledge perspective is purported to be independent of context and universal, Mbembe (2016:33) notes that:

The hegemonic notion of knowledge production has generated discursive scientific practices and has set up interpretive frames that make it difficult to think outside of these frames...This hegemonic tradition also actively represses anything that actually is articulated, thought and envisioned from outside of these frames.

It is within such cognitive frame that content within curriculum is supported to be constructed and anything that digresses is considered dubious. The marginalisation that Nomusa expresses is therefore not surprising in this context. In lines 16-20 Nomusa speaks emphatically about the gatekeepers of academic knowledge, outlining a dilemma regarding the university expectations and her interest in publishing on IKS and even being informed to publish internationally but being unable to. Ironically it is a contested and confusing space as the vision of the UKZN suggests championing

African scholarship and yet publishing on African discourses is according to Nomusa a challenge. Her angry statement that it is as if “they” (the gatekeepers of international journals) understand “what the hell” you’re talking about (lines 17-18) which she suggests that they do not and will not proceed to understand because they do not respect the others’ concepts on an equal basis. Nomusa’s complaints about the marginalisation of Africanisation are legitimated by Claire and Brandon’s assertions where Claire questioned its meaning suggesting she did not understand it, and Brandon who simply maintained that African Scholarship was a ludicrous idea, because scholarship is scholarship science is science. It is significant that Nomusa is stating they do not want to understand and do not see these concepts to be on an equal basis (lines 18-20). Nomusa’s sentiments echo Claire who superficially explained the very concepts she stated that she did not understand when discussing Africanisation which then undermined the validity of the concepts. Brandon’s words communicated his disrespect and contempt for African scholarship and by default it could be concluded that he would not be interested in understanding African discourses and envision its place as it aligned itself to current academic discourses. Nomusa positions herself as a victim and constructs the gatekeepers of international journals as the perpetrators in her sustained exclusion for engaging within this global knowledge space.

In lines 20-23, she talks again about the lack of transparency and the unsafe assumption that all knowledge is the same the world over. She expresses disillusionment with the reality of how knowledge is perceived. On the one hand, the perception that in contemporary society there exists multiple perspectives which are relative is applicable at face value. Essentially, in reality, there are areas that are seemingly monolithic where knowledge is concerned, namely in science for example. All systems are not equal and there is still just one way of doing things and there is still just one science namely white western science. This is supported by Dladla (2017b:211) who asserts that:

Much of the curriculum in South African universities *[is]* the most classical and unapologetic Eurocentrism. It has a bias and condescension towards ‘non-European’ thought and even more especially against the African thought and experience.

Along the same talk in lines 22-23 she is cognisant of the relativity of global theory and

acknowledges more specifically that in South Africa theory is raced and “we” (referring to academics) recognise it when teaching theory to students. From her positionality, Nomusa communicates the contested space of the publishing world, she especially illustrates the challenge of the value of African discourses within the global community that may not appreciate her local focus and content. The pervasive condescension is also echoed by Claire and Brandon when she reiterates that the conducive spaces for African discourses are as ghettoised science, namely underprivileged and sub-standard and “this other thing.” She seems to echo the supposition that Claire and Brandon do not get away with racism.

5.5. Praneesha deliberates

5.5.1. Praneesha: 50s, Indian female

Praneesha is an academic who is a full professor. Generally, throughout the interview she uses academic and management discourse. She constructs herself as very concerned about the difficulty South Africans (herself included) have, transcending racialized thinking, and reiterates that racism, classism and sexism have been normalised, and is particularly concerned about gendered racism as a woman (Crenshaw 1989). She talks about the significance of critical consciousness and self-reflexivity as vital for South Africans in order to eliminate the false consciousness that prevails, an opinion supported by Vorster and Quinn (2017). Praneesha identifies socialisation and messages from politics, religion and the media impacting on these internalised constructs. Throughout the interview she is particularly concerned about what she says is ‘race trumping everything’ particularly the African/black race which she states sometimes results in incompetent black people being appointed as academics. Having constructed herself as a self-reflexive, critically conscious academic, Praneesha positions herself overall as discussing race from a more or less ‘objective’ perspective. Through her words she builds a defensive account to justify her position on transformation and black academics who are employed in spite of their lack of ability. Her constructions convey skill at managing the political aspects of being a staff member at the UKZN during transformation. Her response to the subtle but unspoken regarding race and racism at the university follows.

Question: What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? [1:11:15]

1 *[]The whole dominant discourse that's based on the African identity and African*
2 *ideology, you know, er (.) The whole dominant discourse is around race, I've spoken*
3 *about that, so much. The issue of language and the way transformation is constructed*
4 *purely in terms of reaching equity targets, and um (.) as I said you know, all other*
5 *criteria are not considered. And I feel like we are setting ourselves up, an impossible*
6 *task. If you've read what Makgoba and somebody else did on transformation in South*
7 *Africa, it appeared in last week's Mercury. Now the thing is, he's been involved in that*
8 *study and he says that the universities that are worse off in terms of transformation with*
9 *regard to race, in terms of student demographics and staff, are Stellenbosch and UCT*
10 *right. Um (.) The UKZN is doing fairly well but he makes the point that Stellenbosch*
11 *and UCT are very high in ranking, internationally right? Now we want, we want*
12 *absolutely high ranking, we want high ratings and we want an absolute radical*
13 *transformation in terms of equity and I'm telling you, I've sat in selection interviews*
14 *where I would never have placed a black woman third in line to get the position, right,*
15 *because she just does not cut it as an academic. So, we are saying we want to get higher*
16 *up in world rankings, but we are willing to make sacrifices you know, of possibly*
17 *excellent researchers only to get black people in. And I think we can't have it all, we*
18 *must be reasonable about it. We can't have it all. In fact, I told professor Makara the*
19 *other day, I said, I was thinking what if the UKZN dared to be different? What if the*
20 *UKZN surely lived up to Ubuntu? What if UKZN didn't reduce the value of human*
21 *beings to a number, and a rating and a ranking? You know, what if the UKZN said,*
22 *instead of pursuing research you know, that we prioritise above all else, what the*
23 *country needs is good graduates, that we are going to invest all our energy in real*
24 *excellent teaching. We're going to recruit the best teachers, not the 'A' rated*
25 *researchers, right? We go it on our own, like Fidel Castro was willing to go it on his*
26 *own small island against the might of the United States and for over forty years*
27 *withstood it and you know did it on his own. Wouldn't we gain a lot more credibility as*
28 *an institution? And we ride the crest of the wave by showing how different we are. But*
29 *now we want to be like everybody else and compete with Harvard and Cambridge. You*
30 *know, and we want equity and transformation on the scale that we want it. And the*

31 *thing is, it's not because I don't believe that black people are smart enough and*
32 *intelligent enough. You know my students, you know how I validated them and I do*
33 *believe that we've got excellent staff here because we selected well right? But the truth*
34 *is, if we now say, you know what, we've got two people for equity, we will place the*
35 *third one for equity there, who has not made the grade at all. I have huge qualms about*
36 *it.*

5.5.1.1. Analysis of Praneesha

Praneesha states the unspoken as the dominant discourse about the African identity and African ideology, which she identifies, is really a dominant discourse about race; something she admits which is a focal point in the interview (lines 1-2). Her statement that talk about the African identity and ideology is dominant is striking because universally the Eurocentric/ Western ideology dominates in South Africa (Nkoane 2006; Ramose 2007; Modiri 2012; Oelofse 2014; Mbembe 2016). She pauses before she mentions that the African identity and ideology discourse is a discourse about race, which suggests she is hesitant to talk about race. In lines 3-4 she talks about her concern that equity targets are dominating transformation and language constructions at the expense of "other criteria." Her academic and management discourse is apparent when she refers to equity targets. Despite talking about the main issue being race, Praneesha no longer mentions the word race in lines 3-4 and leaves it up to the listener to read between the lines about how race features in terms of language, equity targets and transformation. In other words, African identity and the African ideology dominates these constructions, which Praneesha states should not dominate at the expense of other criteria. However, considering the domination of the Eurocentric canons of knowledge and the clear mandate of Africanisation at the UKZN her concerns seem misplaced. Moreover, Makgoba (1997) declares that Africanisation involves the definition and interpretation of African identity.

Praneesha further suggests that "we" are setting ourselves up for an impossible task (lines 5-6) referring to academics at the UKZN in terms of being ranked at the top as a university. She then introduces Makgoba (the previous vice-chancellor of the UKZN known for championing higher education transformation at the time of the interview) and illustrates using Makgoba's analysis about the UCT and Stellenbosch University

(SU) being worse off in their transformation agenda (Lines 5-9). She reiterates that Makgoba makes the point that the UCT and the SU despite being ranked highly internationally, the UKZN is comparatively performing fairly well (line 9-11) which is dismissing and minimising the point that the UKZN is doing well by using “fairly” well and using “but” before she concludes her thought. The study she is referring to was by Govender, Zondo and Makgoba (2013) specifically looked at the demographic transformation in 23 South African universities. The findings of the study of the 23 universities, were that the UCT and the SU had poor equity indices with UCT ranking 22 and the SU, 23. The SU and the UCT however scored well as high level knowledge producers. She then pauses before she concludes on the university’s performance (line 10).

She asserts that Makgoba, makes the point that the UCT and the SU are higher ranking internationally with the statement “right?” as a question, a rhetoric strategy to get agreement (line 10). By referencing Makgoba, she positions the UKZN as expecting three aspects that it cannot have at the same time. She goes on to imply that Makgoba is stating that if “we” want very high ranking and high ratings, as well as wanting “absolute radical transformation” it cannot occur simultaneously and instantly. She reiterates this by stating: “and I’m telling you” (line 13), denoting that she has intimate knowledge since she was involved in selection committees. She cautions that if we get black academics at the UKZN that “just don’t cut it,” at the expense of possibly excellent researchers the situation of ranking is immediately compromised (lines 10-17). However, Praneesha is not interrogating the very real challenge of the historically unequal distribution of educational resources which influence who gains entry, succeeds, excels or fails in academia (Shay 2016). She is contrasting what the UKZN expects as an institution with what she is aware, can actually happen based on her experience. Emphasising “just don’t cut it” pin-points the utter deficiency and “lack of cutting it” of these academics. In lines 16-17, Praneesha is positioning hiring only black individuals as making sacrifices instead of hiring excellent researchers implying that blacks are not researchers since excellent researchers are being replaced by black people. She dismisses black scholars as excellent researchers by not even speaking

about blacks as researchers but simply as people who potentially do not add to the knowledge economy.

She immediately follows this up by reiterating, “we can’t have it all” twice, and that we have to be reasonable (lines 17-18) suggesting that it is indeed impossible for the UKZN to be highly ranked and radically transformed simultaneously and that at some point standards will be affected. The untransformed nature of the UCT and the SU in terms of equity and their high score as knowledge producers is also a case in point that Praneesha is making. In terms of equity, Paphitis and Kelland (2016:197) also argue:

Considering transformation in the higher education sector of post-apartheid South Africa should include considerations of equity, redress, social justice, development, the decolonisation of the curriculum and institutions themselves, as well as a reintegration of higher education institutions into the new democratic social fabric of the country; all of which create a particular socio-historical milieu in which higher education transformation takes shape in the particular context in which South African higher education Institutions operate.

Praneesha however is suggesting that this is not possible. She illustrates her interpretations by her example of prof. Makara who is black and senior in rank to her and “told him” about an alternative direction that the UKZN should consider and by daring to be different and living up to a humanising discourse of *Ubuntu* when she speaks about not reducing the value of human beings (lines 18-19). It is significant that she is drawing on *Ubuntu* which is part of the African discourse that Praneesha constructed as dominant and about race in lines 1-2 when speaking to an African professor whom Praneesha and the interviewer are both aware is an esteemed academic on African discourses. She is using *Ubuntu* to justify the position she is about to put forward by describing a context where she discussed it with a senior ranked African professor. As discussed above, Ramose (2003), Oelofsen (2015), and Dladla (2017a) are concerned about academics that employ a concept such as *Ubuntu* to support their positions without a solid comprehension of its non-static nature, the context for its use and the language from which it originates. Nevertheless, in lines 19-24, Praneesha seems to support her position that as compared to other universities, in her experience at the UKZN, blacks are not excellent researchers and suggests that

the *Ubuntu* approach at the university would be ideal. This approach from her perspective would be concerned with developing good graduates, investing in excellent teaching, instead of pursuing research, ratings and university rankings and further suggests that the UKZN would recruit the best teachers and not 'A' rated researchers (lines 18-24).

Considering that within most higher education institutions globally, research is privileged over teaching and the position that Praneesha adopts is that since the vast majority of black academics do not contribute substantially to research outputs, she is suggesting that the UKZN should focus on teaching, (aiming lower than the ideal in academia). This as Praneesha has stated previously is essential in transformation, race, and the African ideology. Praneesha compares this suggested position to Fidel Castro in Cuba and aligns the UKZN with the small country of Cuba versus the mighty United States representing Harvard and Cambridge which the UKZN would be competing with and then questions if (UKZN) would not gain credibility following this alternative route (lines 25-28). This ironically suggests a contradiction that the UKZN is not currently credible as an institution despite her stating in line 9 that the UKZN is doing fairly well in terms of ranking.

In lines 28-30 she mentions that it is not because she thinks black people are not smart enough which she supports by noting that she validates students. She further states that we have excellent staff and that we select staff well which is a contradiction of her previous statement, which is that we cannot compete with the best universities in the world (lines 29-33). Her immediate positioning of herself as believing that blacks are intelligent is in line with the norm of not appearing racist. Hence the need for her to point out that she is not saying that all black people do not meet the norm and seemingly attempts to have me endorse her position. She endorses the excellence of the selection committee despite the challenge and seems to be taking credit for appropriate appointments and not acknowledging black interview candidates' credit for securing the positions.

Finally, Praneesha communicates her concern about "the truth" is that black candidates are ultimately employed despite not meeting the standard criteria of that position (lines 33-36), a point she also reiterates in lines 13-15. Ultimately her truth

about the unspoken is that incompetent black staff are employed at the expense of the advancement of the university academically and internationally. Her perspectives communicate her position that does not allow her to get away with racism. Mfana is the next academic to be surveyed.

5.6. The case of Mfana

5.6.1. Mfana: 30s, Black male

Mfana is relatively new to academia and has been employed for approximately a year at the university. In previous interview questions Mfana constructs white supremacy, racism, colonialism and other related oppressive phenomena as psychologically and materially damaging to 'black South Africans' and other 'black people' the world over. He echoes Manganyi (2004); Posel (2014); Malala (2015), and Sithole (2016), who concede that the majority of blacks continue to occupy such marginality. When he addresses being black and racism, he asserts for blacks to define themselves without the externally imposed identity that was influenced by white supremacy. In this extract, he positions blackness through the prism of whiteness and the influence thereof.

Question: What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at the University of KwaZulu-Natal? [1:05:55]

1 *It's this issue around I mean with this merger, with the merger of UKZN what it is now, I think*
2 *one thing I think which is not spoken about, at least honestly. Look I mean we're having a lot*
3 *of resource difficulties which I don't know I mean there could be management issues, I don't*
4 *know or poorly trained staff in certain departments or whatever I don't know. But I think every*
5 *time I hear that conversation around what we are not getting uhhmm or the lack of resources*
6 *(.) I think the conversation there is really about race.*

7 **Can you expand please?**

8 *You must remember blackness in the way that it's been defined here is about lack of, so lack of*
9 *intelligence, lack of material, lack of...lack of... incompleteness. Blackness is about*
10 *incompleteness and management is black uhhm the demographic is, is largely black now in*
11 *many, in many schools and staffing is starting to get very black and that's what I think people*
12 *are really saying. When blacks arrive, we lose out. When blacks arrive things...materially*
13 *things will get less, not enough, which is true because look at very white universities (.) you*

14 *know or the previously white ...the very white ones and I'll give you UCT for one, and I'll give*
15 *you Stellenbosch for one, I'm sure they don't have the same kinds of material ...ag gosh I'm*
16 *going off track...*

17 *But I think often when we hear those conversations in meetings every time like half the time,*
18 *I'm thinking yeah but people say we need resources, we are not getting resources. . .this is not*
19 *here, this is not there. I think that's a.. that really is a discussion around race. And what arrival*
20 *of blackness does is that it sucks up ...isn't we are supposed to be lacking so, this dependency*
21 *of blackness, is just to milk you and take, and take, and take, and take, and take, and take, until*
22 *you have nothing [Laughing]. So, when I hear those I'm just like yeah well to me that's just*
23 *reminiscent of what's always been said about what blackness is, you know, the dependent*
24 *people without, whether you are old or young we are all infants. All they do is need, and take,*
25 *and don't reciprocate.*

5.6.1.1. Analysis of Mfana

When questioned about the unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN Mfana commences with the merger of the university and what he thinks is not honestly spoken about, stating “I think” twice but does not progressively arrive at the point of what he perceives as unspoken (lines 1-2). He is immediately constructing the unspoken as difficult and challenging to honestly communicate about. Thereafter he starts foregrounding the unspoken constructing the university as lacking resources and uses “we” when referring to himself and others in the university that are being affected by resource deficits, positioning him and others as victims (lines 2-3). Mfana maintains he has no definitive idea what the reason for this lack of resources is, on occasion, he however suggests the probability of poor management or unskilled trained staff and his stating “I don't know” suggests he cannot advance a confident opinion (lines 2-4). The final “I don't know” prefaced by “or whatever” in line 4 is dismissive and suggests ambivalence even on possible reasons for mentioned lack of resources. Constructing himself as unsure and hesitant constructs him as privy to the general discourses by others and distances him from the discourses at the same time. He is questioning these general discourses while he also talks about them.

In lines 1-6, by stating “I think” four times and “uhhmm” before pausing, it illustrates that Mfana seems to have trouble introducing the next idea, which is that the previous reasons given for “lack” at the university are not the issue but that the talk about what

“we are not getting is really about race.” He considers race as pivotal and central in the reasons he attributes to why race is unspoken. This perspective is often witnessed within the South African narrative when pervasive apartheid systems of thought are still largely evident by the negative and positive stereotypes attached to this thinking despite apartheid’s supposed “demise” (Modiri 2016c). Mfana’s tentativeness when talking about race is therefore not surprising and his lack of confidence in articulating his thoughts seemed informed by what is perceived as reason, from the perspective of white mentality. Clearly as Vice (2010) suggests, Mfana finds race as a problematic subject to talk about.

In finally identifying race as the unspoken and uncomfortable issue, Mfana talks about blackness as being the reason for the lack in the university in its various forms and the incompleteness of blackness (lines 8-10). Sithole (2016:3, 5) succinctly captures this as “...what informs the existential condition of blackness is oppression...What plagued blackness in the past continues to plague blackness in the present...the perversity of anti-blackness.” Mfana expresses this anti-blackness when he mentions “lack of” five times in terms of how others define blackness and incompleteness which does the work of solidifying and emphasising Mfana’s description of the way blackness is defined pervasively in South Africa. He then links incompleteness with black management of the university and states that the demographic at the UKZN having become largely black is the reason “we” lose out, it’s really about the arrival of blacks (lines 8-14). He is emphasising that when blacks arrive, materially things diminish, constructing blacks negatively as regular consumers of resources and then states: “which is true.” Discursively this is noteworthy because even though he is attributing this negative discourse to those saying it, he does state that ‘it is true’ (lines 13-14) seemingly endorsing this negative discourse. Mfana’s assertions can perhaps be attributed to hundreds of years of consistent messages of the inferiority of blackness which have systematically become unconscious, automatic and involuntary, as a collective and personal component of internalised or appropriated oppression for black people (David 2009; Pinkey 2014; David & Derthick 2014; Banks & Stephens 2018). To what extent is he aware that he is perpetuating the internalised oppression seems unclear, but his utterance about it being “true” lends itself to him having thought about it but perhaps not having considered the deeper ramifications.

He goes further in lines 13-16, and substantiates his thinking about white universities such as the UCT and SU that do not encounter similar resource difficulties positioning them positively in comparison to UKZN. He justifies his statement that it is true that the arrival of blacks brings shortage and deprivation to an institution of higher learning. Mohamedbhai explains that massification resulted in increased access and that:

...South Africa in its attempt to overcome the overtly racial inequity in higher education after the end of apartheid 1994...laid out a series of policies, guided by its new constitution, to achieve “race blindness” in higher education. Not only was there a need to increase black students’ access to higher education and to raise their proportion in institutions of higher education so as to reflect the country’s racial demography, but the institutions themselves, which had been established on purely racial grounds, had to be transformed through a series of mergers to achieve these goals (2014:69-70).

This therefore inevitably led to the resource shortage and deprivation alluded to by Mfana which is a direct result of transformation. Its conflation with race is simply the result of internal race scripts that prevent Mfana from seeing the broader picture of transformation throughout Africa, including South Africa, where massification in higher education has not been supported by appropriate financial, material or human resources (Teferra 2014). Furthermore, Vorster and Quinn point out that:

“One of the enduring effects of the long history of exclusion of black people from basic social and economic rights is the achievement of epistemological and ontological access to the life and goods of the university remains an ongoing challenge (2017:37).

Constructing the UKZN as being blacker than it was in the past seems to denote speaking in the voice of ‘the other’ by Mfana, possibly a White university institutional discourse, bemoaning the years gone by before the blacks arrived and drained a flourishing white establishment with their blackness (lines 12-17). When Mfana chastises himself deviating from the discussion, in lines 15-16, it might be an indication of his discomfort with his positive ‘white’ university institutional discourse (vis-à-vis SU and the UCT) as compared to his negative ‘black’ university institutional discourse when referring to the UKZN. He is unable to broaden his thoughts in this regard in terms of the positive aspects of massification for creating greater access to all in sub-Saharan countries including South Africa (Darvas, Ballal, & Feda 2014). He seems to once again be exhibiting internalised oppression also characterised by “...self-doubt,

identity confusion and feelings of inferiority” (David & Derthick 2014:8). Mfana therefore chastises himself realising that his ‘white’ university institutional talk is dominating his thinking despite himself and his alignment with blackness. His construction of race is still a bit hesitant. He is finding it difficult, not to align himself with white hegemonic academic discourse, which he does not subscribe to. The way Mfana talks, it seems challenging for him to find an alternative discourse. In lines 17-18 and 20 it is more apparent that Mfana does not align himself with the negative constructions of blackness when he suggests that “...when we hear those conversations in meetings...people say...isn’t we are supposed to be lacking.” “We” seems to refer to him and I as black colleagues, and “people say” seems to refer to those that construct blackness as responsible for the lack at UKZN and “isn’t” seems to be questioning the discourse around blackness.

With the gloomy metaphor of blackness, (lines 19-25) Mfana further emphasises his point about the results of increasing blackness (in terms of demographics of the university staff). He constructs the university as having a parasitic mood where blackness sucks up, is dependent, reliant and lacks any signs of reciprocity until there is nothing left, like an infant without giving back. He mentions “takes” six times and laughs (perhaps to dilute the morbidity of his words) denoting blackness as being like a bottomless vacuum which is an extremely negative construction. Despite his non-endorsement of the negative discourse about blackness, Mfana once again caught, portrays extremely negative discourses about blackness. His talk indicates that dominant discourses about blackness are negative and easily accessible to him hence their dominance in his talk, and his lack of positive constructions demonstrates that he cannot find alternative discourses to make appropriate references. Mfana exhibits fragments of an internalised racial oppression expressed through his seeming inability to disentangle himself from dominant ideology of black inferiority and white superiority, where his talk about blackness inadvertently accepts its “...subordinate status as deserved, natural, and inevitable” (Banks & Stephens 2018:91). Mfana is confronted by what Ratele (2015:51) calls the “intensifying contradictions” evident in society as it navigates its way through realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

Mfana’s extremely negative construction of blackness in the university, positions him

as a victim of the dominant negative social construction of blackness that he ostensibly cannot escape in his talk. It demonstrates once again how difficult it is even in this situation to talk about race. There appears to be no non-racial discourses about current post-apartheid society or positive epistemologies about blackness for Mfana to draw from to discuss the current changes in higher education. This could be attributed to the fact that "...the majority of academics, being products of a curriculum in which only the ideas of white Europeans and Americans count as knowledge... are simply not sufficiently trained or literate in non-Eurocentric paradigms of thought emanating from the Global South" (Modiri 2016.:2-3). In the case of blacks in South Africa Grosfoguel (2016:10) would class them as part of the subaltern and would posit that "...the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualities and epistemologies are denied." Therefore, despite not endorsing racism, Mfana seems to be resigned in the face of hegemonic anti-blackness in the current higher education context. Although Mfana is in a pivotal position as a lecturer to contribute towards changing the hegemony that exists, he seems unable to adequately articulate himself beyond white hegemony and towards Africanisation, "...a learning process and a way of life for Africans...through African visions...African identity and culture... (Makgoba 1997:199). He does not offer a logical argument regarding the lack of resources, including the necessity for more equitable access within the continuing inequities in African higher education that need attention (Darvas, Ballal, & Feda 2014).

Christopher is the next academic examined.

5.7. Christopher weighs in

5.7.1. Christopher: 50s, White male

Christopher is a full professor with twenty-seven years of experience as an academic. In the interview in general, he is explicit about having been socialised within a racist household with his parents being racist and expresses his awareness that his upbringing would have inadvertently resulted in him displaying some racist tendencies. He labelled himself as racist but followed this up by stating that we are all racist.

This is supported by Croteau (1999), David (2009), and Grosfoguel (2016), who posit

that, racism is a global hierarchy that is not mainly the result of the individual, but is socially taught and learned and is a collective experience of the superiority of whiteness with socially assigned privileges, which are inherited. Christopher does however pride himself on not choosing relationships on the basis of race but acknowledges that someone looking at him objectively from the outside may discern some racism in him. He openly acknowledges his resentment of the expectation for him as a senior academic to mentor younger black academics because he contends that he achieved his success without mentoring. His account in the extract is about the divide between black Africans as he calls them and non-black Africans which includes white, coloured and Indian South Africans and their understanding on Africanisation within the social science curriculum.

Question: Does race affect the way people interact with each other? i.e. Staff, students? (Give examples) [16:47]

1 *I think it does, I mean, one example, there's quite an interesting tension in the social*
2 *sciences between how social science should be Africanised and there seem to be two*
3 *broad views. The one view is that we need to have specific courses in African social*
4 *science. The other view is that, is what you call a saturation view, is that you don't have*
5 *specific courses in African social science but you bring African social science into*
6 *everything you teach, so it becomes that flavour that covers everything. So, let's call*
7 *that the saturation view and the other is the kind of specific module view. What seems*
8 *to be happening is that there's an unstated tension in the School between people who*
9 *are Black African and people who are not in relation to which of those two views they*
10 *favour. Black Africans tending to favour 'we must have the module' and the rest kind*
11 *of tending to kinda go for the saturation. That's quite quiet but antagonistic battle that's*
12 *going on, and modules have been introduced and there's a lot of unhappiness.*

13 Can you speak about that a little bit based on the two sides? [19:05]

14 *Well, basically I suppose if you were to speak to (.) Black Africans in the School you*
15 *might get a sense that nothing is happening and therefore we need to introduce these*
16 *modules. Like 'it's been ten years and it's been twenty years and nothing's happened.'*
17 *Social science remains a Western discipline. The other view is the fact that if you speak*
18 *to sort of non-Black Africans in the School, I have got to use these terms because of the*

19 way it's divided, because they would argue that there is a lot of work that's been done.
20 In other words, some people would sort of say 'I'm quite offended because the work
21 I'm doing on HIV is African work, I'm doing it in Africa.' It's not a module and it
22 doesn't have kind of uniquely African scholarship, but what it does have is addressing
23 issues and problems that are important in Africa and that's just being ignored. So
24 there's quite a weighty climate, never stated, never mentioned in public debate, it
25 happens in the corridors where.. how.. I don't know if this is so much race than, I don't
26 know what it is, it's Africanisation, but it plays itself out in terms of racial categories,
27 and I think that's a fascinating debate. I mean, if I were to say this, people would say
28 it's not true, because it's never come up in the board meeting, it's never been discussed
29 in any meetings, you know what I'm saying?

30 **I think they would be honest actually [21:04]**

31 *Maybe they would, but I mean, it's corridor talk, it's sensitive, it's not official [Laughs]*
32 *I mean, that's one of the core places that I think where it gets acted out between staff,*
33 *I mean, there might be other areas or other interpersonal issues that come up and I*
34 *don't really know what those are, but that's one of the more consistent places where*
35 *the tension is and it certainly is.. there's nobody I know who is Black African that*
36 *doesn't go for the Module view, that I know in the social sciences.*

37 **So, the non-Black Africans would include Indian, Coloured, White? [22:00]**

38 *Yes*

5.7.1.1. *Analysis of Christopher*

The question posed to Christopher is whether race affects interaction between academics and students and Christopher immediately starts talking about Africanisation of social science and the two broad views of how it should be done (lines 1-4). Without mentioning race as was the case with Claire, Brandon and Nomusa, Christopher also uses the Africanisation discourse as one of the academic ways to speak about race indirectly. Speaking about race in these academic terms also distances Christopher from the topic of race and positions him as an objective observer of his colleagues, constructing them as the ones grappling with the issue as opposed

to himself being an observer. This is also evidenced in that whereas in line 3 he speaks about “we” from line 4 he speaks in the third person and speaks about his colleagues as two groups of people but does not include himself in the discussion. The academic way he deals with the question could also be an indication of his discomfort in terms dealing with the question directly and personalising it. His words are doing the work of minimising the actual focus of the question which is race and positioning the question as academic. His seniority as an academic similar to Claire necessitates that he interrogates the concept of Africanisation as part of the mandate of South African higher education and UKZN specifically to Africanise higher education, (Letsekha 2013). Christopher however does not do this.

In lines 4-8, Christopher explains in detail the two broad views of the possibilities of how Africanisation should be brought into the social sciences namely through a specific African social science module, or through the saturation view, where Africa would pervade the module, namely “...you bring African social science into everything you teach, so it becomes that flavour that covers everything” (lines 5-7). The metaphor of African social science flavouring everything conjures images of it being sprinkled which suggests that a small amount of African scholarship is necessary in the social science curriculum to make it more palatable. This supports the notion of western epistemologies as the centre of scholarship and non-western (and in this case African social science) epistemologies being peripheral (Grosfoguel 2016). He then explains that the tension is apparent in that the black African academics favour the specific module view and the other non-African staff favour the saturation view which he states led to great unhappiness in the social sciences (lines 8-11). In his account Christopher speaks about an unstated tension between “black African people” and “people who are not” (lines 9-10) regarding the module view and the saturation view. This positions “black Africans” who have been racially labelled explicitly as the antagonists as opposed to “people who are not” and constructs “people who are not” as vague and ‘raceless’, shown by the absence of racial labels for them. The “people who are not” are therefore constructed as raceless, invisible, normative, a position known to be associated with the social construct of whiteness (Steyn 2001; Bell & Hartmann 2007; Green, Sonn, & Matsebula 2007; Vice 2010; DiAngelo 2012; Scott 2012). The antagonistic discourse of the “black Africans” is evidenced further in lines 11-12, when

Christopher states that they said “we must have the module” implying a demanding attitude, whereas ‘the rest’ “kinda went for the saturation,” suggesting a more casual cordial attitude. Once again, he labels the “black Africans” but does not label “the rest.”

When invited to expand on the tension between the two sides, Christopher then goes on to explain that if one were to speak to black Africans (lines 15-19), the impression is that nothing has been done for the last ten to twenty years and that social science remains a western discipline. This is supported by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC 2018:3), in which Adv. Gaum stated that “...there was a need for greater inclusivity and review of curricula to ensure its responsiveness to the context and needs of the economy and the country,” in a report on the transformation at public universities. Christopher’s previous statement however seemed to imply that the assertion that western hegemony dominates in the social sciences is questionable. Christopher then contrasts this by stating that the “other view...sort of non-black Africans” (and then apologises for having to use these terms), argue that there’s a lot of work that has been done lines 19-22. The pause before saying ‘black Africans’ line 16, could be indicating discomfort about racializing black Africans which is confirmed in line 21 when he apologises for saying non-black Africans in line 20. It is significant however that non-black is still not a specific racial label and serves to continue to construct the non-blacks as ‘raceless.’ The reference to social science as being a western discipline line 19 is not disputed by Christopher possibly indicative of his awareness of the dominance of western paradigms in the social sciences. In lines 22-26, he explains that his non-black colleagues’ reasoning for saying that they are doing a lot of work regarding Africanising the curriculum (despite not having a module teaching African scholarship) is that their HIV work is African work being conducted in Africa and its being ignored. The example of HIV is significant because of the negative stigma that Africa carries as a result of the positioning of HIV&AIDS in western media coverage universally (Machungo 2012). Christopher continues to distance himself from the position of his ‘non-black’ colleagues by framing them as ‘some people’ line 22. He is using a form of denial of racism that Nelson (2016) refers to as ‘deflection of the mainstream’ where he discusses racism as a problem of specific individuals and not a problem of the collective.

Christopher further explains that these issues are weighty, they are spoken about

quietly in corridors but never stated and never mentioned in public, and despite saying he is unsure they are about race he says that it is Africanisation playing itself out along racial lines, specifically racial categories (lines 26-30). The use of the word weighty (line 27), metaphorically constructs Africanisation as heavy and burdensome and the use of the definitive word 'never' twice (line 27) regarding the discussion of Africanisation in public, constructs Africanisation as a very taboo subject matter. He then states in lines 30-32 that it is a fascinating debate that people would say is not true if they were asked about it, because it's never been discussed in a public forum such a staff meeting or board meeting. By default, this would therefore appear to implicate Christopher as being one of the people involved in discussing Africanisation in the corridors however, he has positioned himself as distant from the discussion and has instead implicated his colleagues. This is indication that he wants to self-represent as non-racist and his colleagues as the racist culprits, once again indicating 'deflection of the mainstream' denial discourse (Nelson 2016).

When I state that I think staff would agree with the truth of the discussion about Africanisation, Christopher says perhaps they would but immediately mentions that it is "corridor talk, it's sensitive, it's not official" and laughs (lines 33-35) seemingly his way of deflecting the possibility of the conversation being seen in a formal and professional manner and laughs to neutralise his unease. In lines 35-40 he states that Africanisation is a "core" area that gets acted out between staff although he acknowledges that there might be other core issues or interpersonal areas that he is unaware of. He states that Africanisation is a consistent place "where tension is, certainly is" and he does not know of a black African who does not follow the module view. The use of the word 'core' and 'certainly' suggests that despite himself Christopher expresses a definitiveness about the racial tensions concerning Africanisation in his academic context and is particularly preoccupied with the position of the black Africans on the issue. When probed if non-black Africans refers to White, Indian and Coloured academics, he acquiesces with a "yes" (lines 41-42). This seems to support the positions of Claire, Praneesha, and Brandon who seemed to be aligned in their nuanced ways with the position that African scholarship is not on an equal level with current scholarship. Christopher does not get away with racism.

5.8. Chapter summary

The chapter analysed Claire, Brandon, Nomusa, Praneesha, Mfana and Christopher's racialized Africanisation discourse. An explicit struggle between the norms against racism and the current racial division in South Africa was managed by academics through a racialized Africanisation discourse. Other discourses that permeated academics talk included equity targets, language, African scholarship, decolonisation, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), university rankings, whiteness, white supremacy, blackness and university standards. Africanisation became the battleground against social change specifically for Claire, Brandon, Christopher and Praneesha while Nomusa and Mfana were overwhelmed by their need to defend the negative construction of blackness while also struggling with alternative positive constructions or narratives of blackness. Through the interviews therefore there was a black and white bifurcation of identities.

The equating of Africanisation with the negative construction of blackness and consequently the black race was stark. While direct reference to race and racism was not made, it was apparent that the Africanisation discourse was really a euphemism for race. The rejection and aversion with Africanisation, by Claire and Brandon respectively was really a rejection of blackness which in terms of racial categorisation was a rejection of black scholarship. Praneesha and Christopher on the other hand questioned the competency of black staff and the legitimacy of African or black scholarship in the mainstream respectively. Nomusa and Mfana also spoke explicitly of the anti-black hegemonic discourse. Overall, it would seem that construction of race and racism continues framed in racialized concepts such as Africanisation, in the academy. This is a way for academics to navigate the dilemma of currently being bombarded by a plethora of racist incidents while having clear norms against racism. The Africanisation discourse is therefore a way to cope with this dilemma and inadvertently get away with racism for some of the academics. None of the academics were able to adequately articulate Africanisation as expressed by Makgoba (1997). It was apparent from the discourse of academics that they were unable to discard the racialized lens through which transformation is viewed and they used the Africanisation discourse perpetuating a history of racism and anti-blackness. The study illuminated the need for rigorous intellectual rumination to further contribute to the post-apartheid

scholarship from a critical Africanist standpoint.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contemporary race talk also functions in ways that legitimate and rationalise existing social relations and inequities between groups (Augoustinos and Every 2007b:137-138).

6.1. Introduction

The main aim of the study was to analyse academics discourse about race and racism within post-apartheid South African higher education in order to ascertain the silences, threats and conflicts for academics in this regard. Augoustinos and Every (2007b) point out that there is a contemporary way of talking about race that seems to maintain the *status quo* and the study aimed to study this contemporary race talk for academics, with specific focus on academics at the UKZN. The focus of the study was on academics of the delineated racial groups of black, white, Indian and coloured. In line with the objectives of the study, the following was analysed:

- i. How academics speak about race and racism within the UKZN?
- ii. Academics experiences of transformation as it pertains to race and racism at the UKZN?
- iii. What academics articulate as unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN?

The study had a social constructionist theoretical orientation, aptly encapsulating the methodologically complex nature of the study of the social construction of race. It was guided by a qualitative, interpretive paradigm and used a non-probability, purposive sampling method. In analysis the study used discourse analysis as delineated by Antaki (2009) incorporating a critical Africanist stance, looking at academics' discourse as social action elucidated by their talk within the UKZN context and the implications thereof for higher education in South Africa.

- i. There were academics who exhibited a baffling deracialized discourse;

- ii. Some academics managed race as a reality and an unreality (non-racialism mandate) using race as a social construction discourse;
- iii. Academics expressed varied experiences of marginalisation with the transformation process within higher education;
- iv. The unspoken for academics was expressed through a racialized discourse of Africanisation.

6.2. The normalisation of race and dealing with the exhibition of deracialized discourse and the social construction of race discourse by academics

The study has focused on the higher education context as one of the sites that were responsible for the naturalisation and normalisation of the current South African race categories. As such the non-racialism mandate that has been part of the South African post-apartheid context has therefore been a contradiction both practically and psychologically for South Africans. In practice, for millions of poor black South Africans the non-racialism mandate is suggestive of the need to maintain the *status quo* which is highly racialized and unequal and disadvantages them. On the other hand, calls for the abandonment of race categories, Erasmus (2010) and Duncan (2012) reflect the reality of the socially constructed nature of race and how it limits interaction and identities and reifies race categories. Psychologically, the historical legacy of apartheid has resulted in internalised oppression and internalised domination. The subconscious nature of internalised oppression and internalised domination means the political demise of apartheid may not have translated to the demise of apartheid psychology. As stated by David (2009:85)

Historically oppressed groups have been, both in subtle and overt ways, consistently receiving the message that they are inferior to the dominant group. Eventually, members of historically oppressed groups may no longer need the dominant group to perpetuate such inferiorizing messages; they begin telling themselves in overt and subtle (and automatic) way.

While internalised oppression is the acceptance of inferiorization, Tappan (2006:2116) defines internalised domination as describing and explaining:

...the experience and attitudes of those who are members of dominant, privileged, or powerful identity groups...members of the dominant group accept their group's socially superior status as normal and deserved.

This is significant when discussing academics deracialized discourse and social construction of race discourse because the positioning of academics in their race discourse may be determined by internalised oppression or internalised domination. Generally, the internalised oppression would be exhibited by black, Indian and coloured South Africans with varying degrees and the internalised domination would be exhibited by white South Africans. However, it is important to note that because of the hierarchical nature of racial categories the internalised domination could be exhibited by Indian and Coloured people over black people because hierarchically Indian and Coloured South Africans were superior to black South Africans. As previously mentioned, one of the main findings of the Soudien Report (Republic of South Africa, Department of Education 2008) was that it is necessary to focus on South African attitudes and behaviour at a deeper level within higher education which Esakov (2008) explains can involve, an in depth look at the complex interconnection of ingrained beliefs, personal ideologies, fears, emotions and socio-historical contexts in higher education institutions. The findings of the study in this regard in terms of the way academics speak about race and racism in a deracialized way revealed:

- i. An ambivalent and contradictory engagement with issues of race and racism within the UKZN;
- ii. Minimisation of race and racism issues at the UKZN;
- iii. Blatant denial of the existence of race and racism issues at the UKZN.

This suggests ingrained beliefs about the normality of the *status quo* because despite obtrusive racial tensions in South African higher education nationally and within the UKZN there were academics who deracialized current tensions in varying ways. This is reminiscent of the business as usual phenomenon during apartheid despite gross racial tensions and blatant inequalities. This is suggestive of internalised oppression and internalised domination appropriation by Charleen, Lavern, Igsaan, Kumaran and Aditya who exhibited the above deracialized discourse. This is evidenced by their ambivalence and denial of the current tensions and their inability to identify with the

plight of black South Africans who are the most affected by the current racial tensions.

The way forward in terms of assisting academics to interrogate their subconscious internalised beliefs from the past would be follow Banks and Stephens (2018:101-104) model of psychological liberation to deal with elements of internalised oppression:

Awareness/acknowledgement of oppression...an individual grows to understand the systemic nature of oppression. Individuals can name the ways institutions create, manage and distribute resources disproportionately and restrict opportunities for some groups while privileging others.

Awareness/acknowledgement of impact of oppression on self—the realisation that oppression has a personal cost bio-psycho-socially

Ability to see oppression as separate from self—observing harmful thoughts about the self from a distance and as the oppressive tools they are.

Ability to see the humanity in oneself in spite of oppression—self-reflection not rooted in oppression starts.

Willingness to notice/reflect on/wrestle with contradictions in real time—the practice of ongoing action and reflection—creating a new vision, narrative.

Action to create a new personal narrative towards liberation—developing a sense of self that's not in reaction to appropriated oppression.

Action to transform broader systems toward liberation—working to dismantle the system of oppression—systemic change (Banks & Stephens 2018:101-104).

In terms of dealing with internalised domination, Banks and Stephens (2018) model of psychological liberation can be rephrased for dealing with privileged groups to state as follows:

Awareness/acknowledgement of privilege—an individual grows to understand the systematic nature of privilege. Individuals can name the ways institutions create, manage and distribute resources disproportionately and privilege some groups while restricting opportunities for others.

Awareness/acknowledgement of the impact of privilege on self—the realisation that privilege has a cost bio-psycho-socially.

Ability to see privilege as separate from self—observing harmful thoughts about others from a distance as the oppressive tools they are.

Ability to see the humanity in oneself in spite of privilege—self-reflection not rooted in privilege starts.

Willingness to notice/reflect on/wrestle with contradictions in real time—the practice of on-going action and reflection—creating a new vision, narrative.

Action to create a new personal narrative for liberation—developing a sense of self that is not in reaction to appropriated privilege.

Action to transform broader systems toward liberation—working to dismantle the system of privilege through systematic change (adapted from Banks & Stephens 2018:101-104).

The significance of dealing with internalised oppression and internalised domination simultaneously is particularly important because the two conceptualisations are two sides of the same coin in terms thinking. As aptly argued by Tappan (2006:2135, 2138), “there is an inter-relationship between oppression and privileging...appropriated oppression’s mirror image is appropriated domination/privilege.” It also critical to point out that the experiences of oppression however can differ between individuals (David 2009). The way forward when dealing with academics would therefore have to be cognisant of the possible individual differences.

The findings of the study in terms of the nuanced social construction of race discourse of academics denoted the common-sense idea that race is a social construction. This discourse by Thabiso, William and Tasneem included the idea that:

- i. The social construction of race is itself constructed.
- ii. The social construction of race is regrettable, dangerous and uncomfortable.
- iii. The social construction of race is real, indisputable and pervasive.
- iv. The social construction of race cannot be seen through a non-racial or colour-blind lens.
- v. The social construction of race has extreme material and psychological consequences.

- vi. The social construction of race necessitates mandatory compulsion to discuss race.
- vii. The social construction of race discourse further reifies race.
- viii. The social construction of race discourse is troubled and tense and academics tend to speak about it in a more distanced manner as related to others and not themselves.
- ix. The social construction of race discourse affects political and personal life.

The race discourse of academics indicates that talk of non-racialism and colour-blindness although ideal is disingenuous and premature within higher education. On the other hand, the troubled nature of academics' social construction of race discourse and the passionate manner in which they express the need to deliberate on race despite being troubled by it is diagnostic. The way forward for the managing the social construction of race discourse issues mentioned above would therefore be to once again to use the previously suggested model of psychological liberation proposed by Banks and Stephens (2018) for dealing with both oppressed groups and privileged groups.

6.3. Deconstructing a post-apartheid higher education context and the marginalisation experiences of academics during transformation

The past apartheid higher education system with unequal resources and a differentiated educational system with historically white universities and historically black universities, guaranteed that for many South Africans there would be a dichotomy of experience in terms of higher education based on race. The subsequent mandate to transform higher education after the demise of apartheid then worked towards deconstructing higher education institutions in South Africa, materially, racially and in terms of scholarship. The well documented racial incidents within higher education institutions within this period concerning both academic staff and university students themselves, has highlighted major turbulence that has accompanied this process. Academics' race and racism discourse about their marginalisation experiences of transformation in this current context therefore yielded noteworthy

results.

Examples of some of the marginalisation experiences of Nonkosi, Aditya and Alison include:

- i. Having a sense of being residual casualties of transformation with minimal support in a higher education context exuding apartheid dynamics.
- ii. Concern that South African higher education is not ready to deal with issues racism and transformation.
- iii. A sense of being invisible in the academic context.
- iv. Rejection within academia based on being black and female.
- v. A lack of collegiality between academics of different racial groups.
- vi. Sentiments by white academics is that the government just wants to systematically remove white academics and replace them with black academics, resulting in their unwillingness to assist up and coming black academics.
- vii. Marginalisation of Indian cultural elements in the branding of the UKZN.
- viii. Protesting black students are constructed very negatively.
- ix. Sentiments that transformation is being done too hastily with negative emotional and academic consequences.
- x. Description of the UKZN transformation agenda as racist against white staff as well as silencing and invisibilizing of white staff.
- xi. Charges of new racism or reverse racism by black staff and black students against white academics and white students.

The marginalisation discourse academics revealed was troubled. For Nonkosi, she experienced rejection that she attributed to her female gender and her black race. For Aditya his marginalisation came from negative anti-black sentiments that prevented

him and others from participating in protest because of hooliganish behaviour by black protesters. Alison's marginalisation was experienced as racism, silencing and being overlooked, a position she was obviously not used to. Banks and Stephens (2018:93) posit that, "Racism is conceptualised as a biopsychosocial stressor with biological, psychological and social factors that contribute to how individuals perceive, cope and navigate racism..." As such the varied marginalisation experiences of South Africans that are also bifurcated along racial lines for many, necessitate liberation either from oppression or privilege through 'critical consciousness raising' alluded to by Tappan (2006:2134) adapted from Freire (1970). Appropriation of critical capital for the oppressed would include:

- i. Unveiling the world of oppression.
- ii. Expelling the myths and images created and promulgated by the old order, and rejecting the oppressive images of one's own culture (i.e. rejecting oppressive cultural tools and resources, voices, and ideologies).
- iii. Replacing old myths with new images, stories, and ideologies that are more liberating (i.e. appropriating liberating cultural tools and resources, voices, and ideologies).

On the other hand, appropriation of critical capital for the privileged would include:

- i. Unveiling the world of privilege.
- ii. Expelling the myths and images created and promulgated by the old order, and rejecting the privileging images of one's dominant culture (i.e. rejecting privileging tools and resources, voices, and ideologies).
- iii. Replacing old myths with new images, stories, and ideologies that are more liberating for all people (i.e. appropriating liberating cultural tools and resources, voices, and ideologies).

6.4. The taboo Africanisation discourse and recommendations for the transformation of South African higher education

The interview responses of academics regarding Africanisation which also denotes blackness highlighted the challenges of race and transformation within the higher education context. What is particularly overwhelming was that academics responses implied that they were simply products of an apartheid legacy and therefore drew their epistemologies and understandings of current post-apartheid South Africa from there. Despite a clear mandate to Africanise the university curriculum many of the academics found this conceptualisation foreign and abhorrent to their sensibilities of the transformative way forward for South Africa. Some academics simply lacked new discourses to draw from, to reshape the new South African higher education landscape and some were seemingly unable or unwilling to engage in a process of re- education through rigorous research. Modiri (2016b:3) correctly points out that:

No serious form of social change and radical transformation of our universities will be possible if we are not sufficiently literate in the discourses and powers that organise and shape our social reality; if we are not well-read in the historical processes and events by which we arrived at our contemporary situation.

This highlights the fact that academics have internalised discourses that prevent transformation of their thinking regarding Africanisation, and need radical literacy in this regard. Challenges with teaching and learning, epistemology, accessibility, equality and decolonisation of the curriculum, du Preez, Simmonds, and Verhoef (2016), were illuminated in academics' discussion of Africanisation in higher education. Furthermore, du Preez, Simmonds, and Verhoef (2016:8) posit that:

To develop a deep understanding of the ideological phenomenon of racism in higher education – which – is malleable and fluid – is part of the nature and challenge of transformation of higher education.

Academics' responses in the study supported this sentiment in that there was a dearth of this deeper ideological understanding of racism and its impact on current transformation challenges in higher education. The defensive stance of Claire for example unscored the how the cultural and social consequences of the past were underestimated in terms of their obstinacy and how institutions and groups have vested interests to defend (Kamsteeg 2016).

In light of the above the following are recommendations in terms of the way forward for academics:

- i. Substantive historical redress, Modiri (2016b), is needed within higher education with more concepts and research from the African context. As stated by Heleta (2016:15) “Universities must incorporate epistemic perspectives, knowledge and thinking from the African continent and the Global South into their teaching and research.”
- ii. Notwithstanding efforts by African scholars including Nyowe (2018); Mbembe (2016); Chitindingu and Mkhize (2016); Mkhize (2004) and others on Africanisation of curricula, there is still lots of work to be done. Eurocentric and western grounding of academics needs to continue to be deconstructed as demonstrated by Mfana’s inability to call forth positive African discourses. After all, Oelofse (2014:22) emphasises that “it is impossible to be free until the internal oppressor is removed...it is an imperative strategy for many African and African Diasporic scholars, to deconstruct their own realities within white academia.
- iii. Epistemic coloniality where the European traditions dominate needs to be replaced by epistemology that is pluriversal, namely it should inculcate epistemic diversity where different epistemic traditions are discussed (Mbembe 2016). The Africanisation discourse would therefore be considered with the seriousness of all other epistemic traditions. The calls for the deconstruction of the continued hegemony of canons of knowledge that are ontologically and epistemologically Western in South African higher education (Grosfoguel 2016, 2007; Mbembe 2016), and the need to replace them with positive African discourses are therefore pertinent.

6.5. Recommendations for further research

- i. African scholarship needs more intensive interrogation and does not need to be taught as an optional extra (Modiri 2016b), or as a flavour as suggested by Christopher but with a positive attitude noting its profound implications. As

posited by Prinsloo (2010:27), "...higher education should not only interrogate the Eurocentric canons but also question the new epistemologies of perpetual nostalgia for an Africa lost and found."

- ii. Racism research needs to be understood at a deeper level in terms of its anti-black agenda, its dehumanising of Africans and its relationship to power.
- iii. White supremacy and the collective, socially learned nature of whiteness and its privileging of whites materially and psychologically requires interrogation. This is particularly imperative for white academics who will be unable "...to undo and unravel this matrix called whiteness if [they] remain in denial of being a participant of this construct..." (Schutte 2014:47).

6.6. Personal reflection

One of the complex things about studying race as an ideology is its call to unsettle and critique universal and oppressive logics and normative political strategies (May 2015). This has been the single biggest challenge for me as a researcher of this study in terms of finding my voice as a black woman in South Africa, studying race. The norms of male dominance and white supremacy that are part of South African society were subliminally present in my thinking influencing my confidence as a researcher on the subject matter of race. Did I really think I could make a dent in the vast sea of research on race? The subconscious and implicit sense of being less than both in terms of my gender and race seem to have remained constant, despite my beliefs that I am relatively free thinking, critical and self-reflexive.

The added post-apartheid South African norm of non-racialism and subconscious elements of internalised oppression that were part of me added to my tentativeness in analysis of the data. Not to mention awareness that I had a white supervisor, who I was conscious not to offend with personal sensibilities about race. The gender and race dynamics as well as the power dynamics between supervisor and supervisee, and academic protocol were also important factors in my not fully expressing my voice. There is a level at which I believed that my supervisor does not understand the black

experience. I felt the pressure to assimilate his ideas about where the research should go some of which I did not agree with. I felt that at times he minimised the areas I wanted illuminated in the research but felt powerless to challenge him. There is a part of me however that knows that he gave me the best feedback he could according to his expertise.

These were some of the realities of being steeped in the subject matter that one studies. I have often second guessed my worries and insecurities in the study, as paranoia about race. What I realised however is that my experience is my reality and that my voice needs to be heard in all its tentativeness.

My research has been part of identifying the gaps between stated goals and actual realities of silence in practice (May 2015). These gaps are in terms of the goal of non-racialism in South Africa and the higher education context specifically and a case study of some actual realities for academics in practice. What the study revealed that May (2015) alludes to, was that the binary logics of race in terms of white superiority and black inferiority and the hierarchical practices thereof endure. More importantly input was made adding to the body of scholarship espousing the need for marginal voices to be better included and empowered within the current post-apartheid higher education context.

6.7. Final conclusion

The study analysed academics discourse of race and racism in post-apartheid higher education in the specific context of the UKZN. This was done by analysing:

- i. The way academics speak about race and racism within the UKZN;
- ii. The way academics articulate their experiences of transformation as it pertains to race and racism at UKZN;
- iii. The way academics express the unspoken regarding race and racism at the UKZN.

The findings indicated that academics used four specific discourses. These were as follows:

- i. A deracialized discourse;
- ii. A race as a social construction discourse;
- iii. A marginalisation discourse;
- iv. An Africanisation discourse.

In terms of the deracialized discourse academics minimised or denied the existence of race and racism exhibiting internalised oppression and internalised domination. Academics using the race as a social construction discourse expressed a compulsion to speak about race because of the constructed nature of race, its complexities notwithstanding. The marginalisation discourse of academics on the other hand was relayed in either a distanced manner or with very specific and personal examples with all academics expressing their marginalisation in varied ways. Finally, the study revealed that there are serious challenges with academics who are not willing (and some who may be willing but are unable) to engage with the decolonisation or Africanisation of the curriculum. The deconstructing of Eurocentric canons in terms of thinking and attitudes towards blackness (“negative scholarship”) and whiteness (“positive scholarship”) seem to be at the heart of the problem for academics.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Student Number: 201511615

I am doing a study analysing academics talk about race and racism within higher education. The aim of the study is to analyse talk about race and racism within South African higher education. I want to contribute to breaking the silence on issues of race and racism amongst academics through in-depth semi structured interviews. You need to understand that you not being forced in any way to participate in this study. You need to also understand that you can stop the interview at any point should you not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect you negatively.

All the responses will be kept highly confidential and the results will be used to make recommendations to UKZN and academics in respect of facilitating better understanding of the factors that are affecting academics regarding talk about race and racism within higher education. You may choose not to answer some of the questions if you are uncomfortable. Confidentiality in the reporting of the data is assured.

Gender

MALE	FEMALE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Age

How long have you worked at UKZN? Since (Year)

--

Are you a South African citizen?

YES	NO	OTHER (SPECIFY)

How do you identify yourself in terms of race?

BLACK	WHITE	INDIAN	COLOURED	OTHER (SPECIFY)

What is your understanding of race?

.....

.....

.....

Do you think there is any value to talking about race?

.....
.....

How does race affect the way you are treated by others at UKZN? Give examples.

.....
.....

Is race important in terms of the way you treat others at UKZN? Give examples.

.....
.....

Does race affect the way people interact with each other i.e. staff, students? Give examples.

.....
.....

Does race affect decision making at UKZN? Does it shape management and policy? Examples?

.....
.....

In what ways are you treated well being in your specific racial group at UKZN?

.....
.....
.....

How is race threatening your future at UKZN?

.....
.....
.....

Do you think language is a factor when dealing with issues of race and/or racism?

.....
.....

In your opinion does racism exist at UKZN? If so explain what you mean. Who are the victims and who are the culprits?

.....
.....

What do you feel are the current pertinent issues regarding race and racism that are unspoken at UKZN?

.....
.....

Have you ever wanted to say something about race and racism at UKZN and felt unable to say it? What was this? Please explain? Please remember that everything you tell me is strictly confidential.

.....
.....

Do you think people of other race groups have unspoken beliefs and feeling about your race group? What might these be?

.....
.....

APPENDIX 2

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Student No. 201511615

Dear Sir/Madam,

Mrs. S. Motlounge of the School of Applied Human Sciences at UKZN is undertaking a research project to analyse academics talk about race and racism within higher education.

Please participate in the research regarding academics talk about race and racism within higher education. You need to understand that you are not being forced in any way to do so. You need to also understand that you can stop the interview at any point should you not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect you negatively.

All the responses will be kept highly confidential and the results will be used to make recommendations to UKZN and academics in respect of facilitating better understanding of the factors that are affecting academics regarding talk about race and racism within higher education. You may choose not to answer some of the questions if you are uncomfortable. Confidentiality in the reporting of the data is assured and should you agree to participate in the study please complete the consent form below

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. Siphwe Motlounge
Cell: 083 519 5385

Informed Consent

The purpose of this study has been explained to me, and I understand what is expected of my participation. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received a telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues that may arise in this interview.

I, _____ the undersigned understand the contents and conditions of the study and consent to participating in the study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Acknowledgement to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and anonymous member of the HSRC Research Ethics Committee cited by (Wassenaar 2008: 75) from whom the above was adapted.

APPENDIX 3

ADDITIONAL INFORMED CONSENT TO AUDIO RECORDING

Student No. 201511615

I agree/do not agree to the audio recording of the research regarding academics talk about race and racism within higher education for the purpose of data capturing. I understand that no personally identifying information or recording concerning me will be released in any form. I understand that these recordings will be kept securely in a locked environment and will be destroyed or erased after 5 years from completion of the study.

I, _____ the undersigned understand the contents and conditions of the recording of this study and consent to it.


Signature of Participant

Date

(Acknowledgement to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and anonymous member of the HSRC Research Ethics Committee cited by Wassenaar 2008:75 from whom the above was adapted)

APPENDIX 4

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

2 October 2012

Mrs Siphwe Maneano Motloung 201511615
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs Motloung

Protocol reference number: HSS/D991/012D
Project title: *An analysis of Academics Talk about Race and Racism within Higher Education*.

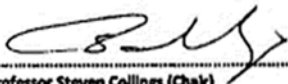
EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Kevin Durrheim
cc Academic Leader: Professor Johanna Hendrina Bultendach
cc School Admin: Mrs Doreen Hattingh

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee
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Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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